

Cooperative Connections

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Help Fund
Education
Aspirations**

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**Tech School
and Go!**

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Board has 2020 vision

Retires \$2 million in capital credits



Walker Witt

CEO and General Manager
wwitt@bhec.coop

Your directors also refinanced and restructured \$11.6 million of debt, which results in a savings of over \$1.5 million.

Your board of directors had a busy beginning to the holiday season. The board approved the 2020 budget of \$21,025,344. Your directors also refinanced and restructured \$11.6 million of debt, which results in a savings of over \$1.5 million. The other significant action item on November's board agenda was the proposed 2019 capital credit retirement.

I remember discussions at a board meeting a few years ago, when a director commented that the capital credit retirement would be a nice Christmas gift for the members. That comment resulted in a spirited discussion with the gist of it being that you cannot gift what one already owns! As a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, you each own a portion of this company in the form of capital credits. Capital credits are the profits or margins left over from revenue after all of the operating expenses have been deducted. Each year the margins are allocated to you based upon amount/percentage of the electric service you purchased. The allocated margins or capital credits are used to help finance capital improvements such as poles, wires, and substations and to help pay for unexpected emergencies like an ice or snow storm. Allocated capital credits help decrease the need to raise rates to pay for infrastructure and emergencies and increases the financial strength of your co-op.

Your board took action to retire \$2 million of allocated capital credits at the November board meeting. The capital credit retirement has been applied to your December electric bill. The decision regarding whether to retire capital credits and how much to retire, is based upon the financial condition of your co-op. The past several years your board has set goals of strengthening the financial condition of the co-op, decreasing the capital credit retirement cycle to get your allocated capital credits back to each of you sooner, and to structure the retirement in a manner that lessens the impact for future years as a result of those years that have high margins. It is difficult to accomplish all three goals at the same time. Retained allocated capital credits strengthens the financial positions of our co-op by strengthening equity levels. Retiring capital credits decreases equity. Your directors have done a good job maintaining the right balance between retiring capital credits and retaining sufficient equity on the balance sheet.

Your co-op's member advisory board met on November 25th at the Battle Creek Post 303 American Legion Hall in Hermosa. The committee and cooperative employees discussed renewable energy, wholesale power supply concerns, and territorial issues and potential state legislation that could impact electric cooperatives. If you would like to be a participant in this committee to give input and learn more about your co-op, please e-mail Mike Chase at mchase@bhec.coop or call 673-4461.

Our area meetings have been scheduled and we look forward to visiting with you at a meeting in your area. Area meetings are a great opportunity for you to enjoy a free bowl or two of soup, eat lots of great desserts and visit with your neighbors and friends all while helping support a local civic organization or fire department. Please turn to page 11 for a complete schedule of 2020 area meetings and plan to gather family and friends and join us at one or more meetings.

Until next month, from all of us at Black Hills Electric, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections

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BLACK HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, 25191 Cooperative Way, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730-0792. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at www.bhec.coop.

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See D.C. for free

One high school junior will win an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., this summer. The trip, sponsored by Black Hills Electric Cooperative, is open to students in the 11th grade who are dependents of BHEC members.

To apply for the trip, send a one-page, double-spaced, typewritten essay on "How does Black Hills Electric Cooperative differ from an Investor-Owned electric utility?" to Washington Trip, Black Hills Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730. The deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, February 14.

In June, BHEC's winner will join more than 1,500 other rural electric cooperative students from across the nation for a one week tour of Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area.

During the trip, approximately 30 students from South Dakota will shadow the state's Congressional delegation and then join other participants for tours of the U.S. Capitol and national monuments, view museums and exhibits, meet new friends and have a great time sight-seeing.

In addition to the trip, the essay winner will be awarded a \$1,000 BHEC scholarship upon his or her graduation from high school. The scholarships are awarded each year at the cooperative's annual meeting.

If you would like more information, call 673-4461 or e-mail mchase@bhec.coop.

Scholarship Applications Available

For the 29th consecutive year, Black Hills Electric Cooperative is offering two college scholarships to graduating high school seniors. One of the \$1,000 scholarships is provided by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, BHEC's power generation cooperative located in Bismarck, N.D.

The second \$1,000 scholarship is awarded by Black Hills Electric to the high school senior who won the cooperative's essay contest and trip to Washington, D.C., as a high school junior. Applicants for the remaining scholarship must be U.S. citizens and a dependent of a Black Hills Electric Cooperative member. He or she must be planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.



The recipient will be chosen based on a combination of SAT or ACT scores, overall grade-point average, a personal statement of career goals, a one page essay,

and an adult appraisal. Applications may be picked up at the cooperative headquarters west of Custer or at www.bhec.coop. Completed applications and supporting documentation must be returned to BHEC before 5 p.m. on Friday, January 31. The winner will be announced in April.

To request an application, please call 673-4461 or 1-800-742-0085 or e-mail mchase@bhec.coop. The application form is also available at www.bhec.coop by clicking on the scholarship application quick link. Print the form and fill out and return to Mike Chase, Black Hills Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 792, Custer, SD 57730 prior to the January deadline.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Our office will be closed on Tues. afternoon, Dec. 24 and on Dec. 25 and Tues. afternoon, Dec. 31, and on Jan. 1. Call 673-4461 or 800-742-0085 to report an outage.

We wish you and your family the best for the holidays.

Winter Electrical Safety Tips

In South Dakota and western Minnesota, December through March is a particularly hazardous time of year for storms and electrical power outages. Heavy snow, ice and wind can ravage power lines, both on the main power grid and at home. Add to that the increased use of home heating equipment such as space heaters and electric blankets and the potential for dangerous electrical hazards and home fires only intensifies.

Keep your home and loved ones safe this season by following these important winter electrical safety tips:

- **Use space heaters safely.** Keep them a minimum of three feet from furniture, bedsprads, drapes or clothes and never leave them unattended when they're on. Don't use extension cords with your space heaters and always unplug the heaters when they're not in use. Keep space heaters away from wet or damp areas and never touch a heater when your body is wet.
- **Use caution with electric blankets.** Never use an electric blanket while you're sleeping. Make sure the plug and cord are in good shape; otherwise it can pose a fire hazard. Be sure to dispose of electric blankets that have worn or damaged areas.
- **Be careful with your kitchen appliances.** While crockpots and other slow-cooking devices get a lot of use in the winter, you should never leave them turned on when no one is home. Leaving them unattended is a major fire risk. And be sure to check electrical kitchen appliances for frayed or damaged cords and plugs before use.
- **Make sure your home is equipped with functioning carbon monoxide detectors.** Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless gas that kills at high concentrations and causes serious and irreversible injuries at lower levels. Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning increase during the winter months due to the use of common fuels like natural gas, wood and coal. Installing an inexpensive carbon monoxide detector can save your family's life.
- **Are your smoke alarms in working order?** It's important to make sure that you have an adequate number of smoke alarms throughout your home and that they are functioning properly. Simply push the test button to make sure it beeps and replace the batteries if needed.
- **Don't overload circuits or wattage.** Despite the shorter, darker days of winter, don't go above the recommended wattage for your light fixtures. Don't overload wall outlets either and only plug three-prong cords into three-prong outlets. Use extension cords sparingly and only for temporary purposes.
- **Have your home's electrical panel inspected by a licensed electrician.** Because electric usage goes up significantly in winter, you may need an upgrade in order to meet this increased demand.
- **Keep outdoor outlets closed.** Check your outdoor outlets regularly to ensure that they don't have an accumulation of ice and snow on them. Keep them cleared off and closed to avoid moisture from invading the receptacle box and causing an outage.

Source: www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips

✓ STOP AT THE BANK

✓ GRAB THE GROCERIES

✓ FIND MY POLLING PLACE

✓ REMEMBER TO VOTE

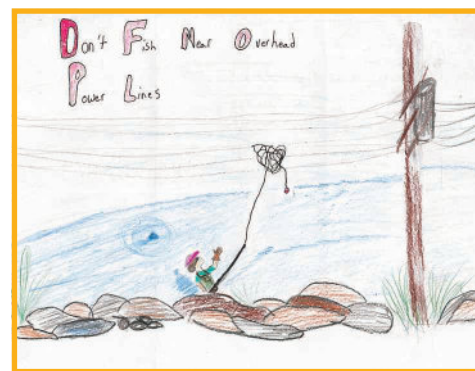


CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
WWW.VOTE.COOP

**ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't fish near overhead power lines"

Lily Gums, 14 years old

Lily is the daughter of Dave and Kathy Gums, Clear Lake, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake.

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

Super Soups

Leftover Turkey Chowder

4 slices bacon, chopped	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup chopped onion	2 cups half-and-half
2 cups water	2 cups cubed cooked turkey
4 medium red potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)	1 (8 3/4 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained
1 pkg. McCormick® Turkey Gravy Mix	1 tsp. McCormick® Sage, Rubbed

Cook bacon in large saucepan on medium heat until crisp. Add onion; cook and stir 3 minutes. Add water and potatoes. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir gravy mix and flour in medium bowl. Stir in half-and-half with wire whisk until smooth. Stir mixture into saucepan. Add turkey, corn and sage. Bring to boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Makes 8 (1 cup) servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 258, Fiber 1g, Protein 16g, Cholesterol 68mg, Total Fat 14g, Sodium 427mg, Carbohydrates 17g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Crockpot Potato Soup

1 (30 oz.) bag hash browns	1/2 cup chopped onion
3 (14 oz.) cans chicken broth	1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

Combine first 5 ingredients in crockpot. Cook on LOW 6 to 8 hours. Add cream cheese 1 hour before serving.

Bonnie Weber, Aberdeen, SD

Taco Soup

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained	1 (10.75 oz.) can tomato soup
1 can chili beans, undrained	1 soup can water
1 pkg. taco seasoning	Tomato juice

Combine all ingredients; heat through. Serve with shredded cheese, corn chips or crackers if desired.

Velma Schmitz, Bonesteel, SD

Curried Pumpkin Soup

8 oz. sliced fresh or canned mushrooms	1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
2 T. butter	2 T. honey
2 T. flour	1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 tsp. curry powder	Salt and pepper
3 cups vegetable broth	

In a large saucepan, saute mushrooms and onions in butter until tender. Stir in flour and curry powder until blended. Gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pumpkin, milk, honey, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Heat through.

White Tail Ridge Bed & Breakfast, Hermosa, SD

Cheddar-Ham Chowder

2 cups water	1/4 cup butter
2 cups cubed potatoes	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sliced carrots	2 cups milk
1/2 cup sliced celery	2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup chopped onion	1 (16 oz.) can corn, drained
1 tsp. salt	1-1/2 cups cubed, cooked ham
1/4 tsp. pepper	

In a large saucepan, bring first 7 ingredients to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until vegetables are just tender; remove from heat but do not drain. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, melt butter and blend in flour. Add milk all at once, cooking and stirring until thickened and bubbly. Add cheese, stirring until melted. Stir into undrained vegetable mixture. Return large saucepan to heat; add corn and ham. Heat through, stirring occasionally.

Diane Fode, Rapid City, SD

Please send your favorite brunch, seafood or appetizer/ beverage 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Start the New Year Right with Energy Savings



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Here are energy-saving measures you can do right away and some for later.

Taking some of these easy steps now should provide some quick energy savings. To save even more, you'll need a plan that includes the "later" steps we've shared here. An energy audit can help you determine a much better plan and your electric co-op may be able to provide an audit or recommend a qualified local auditor.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Dear Pat and Brad: My neighbor claims they were able to cut their energy bills nearly in half. Is that even possible? What would I have to do to get there? It sounds like it would take a lot of time and money. – Luke

Dear Luke: The story you heard is not far-fetched. We've been involved with energy efficiency programs that have achieved those kinds of results. Let's talk about some energy-saving measures you can do right away and how you plan for greater savings down the road.

Dial in savings.

Now: The first place to start is your home thermostat. In most homes, the largest portion of the energy bill goes toward heating and cooling. Setting back your thermostat by 7 degrees to 10 degrees for eight hours a day can save you up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling. In the winter, you could aim for 56° F at night and when no one is at home and 68° F when you're up and around. If you're used to a warmer house, it may mean throwing on a sweater or pair of slippers. It should be noted this tactic is not as effective for some homes with radiant heat systems.

Later: Make sure to adjust your air conditioning settings next summer. If you have a manual thermostat and don't always remember to adjust it, consider purchasing a smart thermostat or at least one that's programmable.

Set refrigerator and freezer temps for efficiency.

Now: Make sure your refrigerator and freezer aren't set to a colder temperature than needed. The fridge should be at 38° F to 40° F and the freezer compartment should be 5° F. If you have a separate chest freezer, set it to 0° F. Also check your water heater setting. You should aim for a setting of 120° F.

Later: Old refrigerators and freezers can use a lot of electricity. If yours was made before 1993, you can save upwards of \$65 a year with a new ENERGY STAR® model. If you eliminate a second refrigerator or freezer, you can save even more, especially if they are stored in your garage.

Maximize the heat you've got.

Now: Look around each room and make sure the vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or other objects. If the floors feel cold even when the room is warm, put down area rugs for additional warmth. Open curtains and blinds to let the sunshine in and close them at night.

Later: Enlist the help of an energy auditor or HVAC specialist to test for duct leakage and ensure your whole system is balanced and running efficiently.

Make bright moves with your lights.

Now: The obvious first step is to make sure lights are turned off when they're not in use. You can do this manually or employ one of many automated strategies. If you're still using incandescent bulbs, you could switch the five most-used bulbs to LEDs and save about \$75 per year. LEDs last much longer and use about one-fourth as much energy. Prices on LED bulbs have decreased in the past few years and you can save more if you buy them in packs.

Later: Over time, plan to replace all your old incandescent bulbs and consider smart lighting options that can be programmed to turn off when a room is not in use.

Eliminate drafts.

Now: Look carefully around your home for signs of air leaks. If you have a gap under an exterior door, you can block it with a towel or better yet, install some weather stripping. Make sure windows are sealed with caulk and you can also seal areas around plumbing and wiring penetrations.

Later: Have an energy auditor do a blower door test, which is the best to identify all air leaks.

Fiegen Elected to SPP Leadership Spot

South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen was elected to serve as vice president of the Southwest Power Pool's Regional State Committee at the group's meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, in November.

Southwest Power Pool is a regional transmission organization that partners with member companies to manage the power grid, facilitate the wholesale purchase and sale of electricity and plan upgrades to transmission networks in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. Through these partnerships, SPP helps ensure the reliable supply of power, develop adequate transmission infrastructure and lower wholesale electricity prices.

The Regional State Committee is tasked with overseeing the fulfillment of the on-target, customer-driven goals of SPP as it provides bulk transmission, reliability and market services to transmission companies, utilities and end-use customers in the region. A member of each state's regulatory commission sits on this committee to provide input on matters of regional importance like recommending cost allocation policies that determine the amount electricity customers pay for the cost of building and operating transmission lines that cross several states in the SPP region.

"I am honored to be a part of the Regional State Committee," said Fiegen. "We are moving through a period of rapid change in the electrical supply industry. Given the value and cost of electricity in our daily lives, it's important for less populous states to have their voices heard as we navigate these changes. This leadership role allows me the opportunity to represent South Dakota's interests and ensure South Dakota consumers receive reliable and affordable electricity," she stated.

Fiegen is familiar with holding a leadership role on the committee having previously served as vice president and secretary.

Fiegen began serving on the PUC in August 2011 when Gov. Dennis Daugaard appointed her to fill a vacancy on the commission. She was elected to her first full, six-year term in November 2012 and re-elected in November 2018. Fiegen is a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' Committee on Gas and Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety, and serves on the Gas Technology Institute's Public Interest Advisory Committee.



Kristie Fiegen
South Dakota
Public Utilities
Commissioner

FEMA Can Assist With Furnaces, Wells and Septic Systems

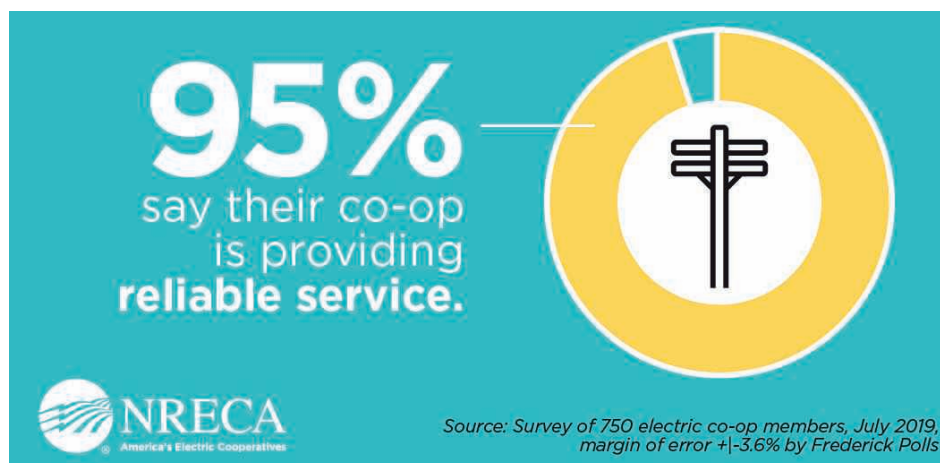
As the temperatures drop, the furnace becomes the most important appliance in the home. South Dakotans who had a furnace damaged by the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding between Sept. 9-26, should contact FEMA, even if they have already made repairs or purchased a replacement. FEMA can also help with wells and septic systems impacted by the disaster.

There are several ways to register:

- Go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or [DisasterAssistance.gov/es](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov/es) (for Spanish).
- Call the disaster assistance helpline at 800-621-FEMA (3362) or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Help is available in most languages.
- At a Disaster Recovery Center. Visit www.fema.gov/DRC or call the helpline for a listing of open locations.

FEMA may pay up to the actual cost of the receipt or estimate for furnaces, wells and septic systems. If you have repaired or replaced the furnace, FEMA may provide assistance when valid estimates or receipts are submitted. If you have additional questions, contact the disaster assistance helpline number above or visit a disaster recovery center.

Individuals in Brookings, Charles Mix, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody and Yankton counties and the Flandreau and Yankton Indian Reservations are eligible to register for assistance.





Electric cooperatives are offering more than \$100,000 in scholarships for area students.

COLLEGE AHEAD?

Electric Cooperatives Offer Scholarships to Fuel College, Technical School Aspirations

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

For more than 30 years, South Dakota's electric cooperatives have been helping fund the continuing education dreams of students planning to attend four-year colleges or technical schools.

Over the decades, the scholarships have funded students on their way to careers in education, medicine, government, energy and everything in between.

Through the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship Program, each cooperative that is a Basin Electric member cooperative awards a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a co-op member. Additional scholarships through the program are available to the dependents of co-op employees

Several cooperatives offer scholarships to individuals to become electric line workers or electricians. These scholarships, in addition to those awarded by the South Dakota Rural Electric Line Superintendents Association, amount to more than \$10,000.



Future Engineer?

Nationwide Scholarship Available

Since its inception three years ago, the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship Committee has awarded almost \$10,000 in scholarships to individuals pursuing a career in engineering.

This annual opportunity would not be possible without the foresight and generous contributions of the IEEE: Rural Electric Power Committee (REPC). Together, we hope to support future engineers with an interest and passion for defining and solving the electric utility challenges of the future, specifically in the rural parts of America.

Dates & Deadlines:

- Applications will be accepted starting on Dec. 14, 2019.
- The deadline for application submission is 11:59 p.m. EST on May 15, 2020.
- Winners are selected by a scholarship committee and announced after the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association summer board meeting in Mid-July, 2020.
- Awards are distributed in August/September, 2020.

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a US Citizen
- Applicant must be enrolled in an ABET, four-year program of electrical engineering or electrical engineering technology, and have at least a 'B' average in major subjects.
- Applicant must be enrolled as a full-time student.
- Applicant must have already received academic credits equal to at least one year of college.

Essay Requirement Information

- To be considered for the Engineers of the Future Scholarship, you must submit an essay using the following requirements as your guide:
 - Essays need to be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.
 - Essays must describe, in detail, plans to pursue a career as an electrical engineer, with an emphasis in electric power, in an electrical utility serving a rural area.
 - Essays must demonstrate knowledge of the unique challenges facing the electric industry in Rural America and describe how you might address these issues as an engineer.

But, the majority of scholarship money available from the region's electric cooperatives are not tied to a specific program of study.

A study released this summer by WalletHub.com found that South Dakota has the highest rate of student loan debt of any state in the country while Minnesota finished sixth on the list.

The study, performed by consumer finance website WalletHub.com, had researchers analyze 12 different measures of indebtedness, including average student debt, number of students with debt, and unemployment rate.

South Dakota had the highest proportion of students with debt, and was fourth highest when it

came to percentage of student loan borrowers over age 50.

Some of the scholarships offered by electric cooperatives require that students be in high school, while other scholarships are designed for students that may be returning to school.

Additionally,

students selected to represent their local electric cooperative on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are eligible for a \$10,000 Glenn English Foundation Scholarship. Students can apply for the undergraduate scholarship once they have completed one semester of college or technical school.

Deadlines for local scholarships vary, so check with your local electric cooperative for details.

South Dakota led the nation in student loan debt, according to a national study.

Of the scholarships being offered by electric cooperatives, more than \$10,000 is dedicated to students seeking energy-related careers.



Line Construction in the 50s



Early lines were constructed with lots of manual labor. Holes were dug by hand using a 10-foot-long shovel called a banjo and a 9-foot-long shovel with a 90-degree bend at the head, called a spoon. A gin pole was used to lift the pole as linemen guided the pole into the hole. Dirt was shoveled into the hole as one person used a long tamping rod to pack the dirt as it was filling around the pole. After the poles were set, crews strung the wire on the ground beside the poles and linemen climbed the poles carrying the wire to attach it to the poles. Today, modern equipment makes line construction easier, but there is still a lot of pole climbing involved.



BHEA's original incorporator

George W. Frink is credited with helping Fred Root get Black Hills Electric Association organized.

Frink lived near Mystic, between Hill City and Rochford.

Born in 1891, Frink had lived without electricity for almost 50 years before learning about the movement to bring electricity to the Black Hills.

He was among 49 people who met in Hill City in January of 1940 and helped convince them that bringing electricity to the area was possible. After much



discussion, the group voted to form Black Hills Electric Association.

Frink served on the cooperative's board in 1941 and again from 1945 until his death in July of 1981—37 years as a director of his beloved co-op.

He was replaced by Joe Clinton in 1981.

Manager's Report

This column was written by Henry L. Barnes in August of 1960. We still use the map locations today. However, much to the delight of spouses, members no longer call line foremen at home to report an outage.

After many months of intensive work and research, both in the office and in the field, we have completed the mapping and member identification program.

A postal card, bearing the member's number, has been mailed to each member. This number can also be found on the meter pole, or in the lid cover of the breaker box.

In reporting outages, or in corresponding with your co-op office, and on your monthly remittance slips, please be sure and use this number. This is very important, because the number is coded and gives the co-op employee your location on the co-op map.

As an explanation of the coded number—the first digit represents the township, the second digit the range, the third digit or digits the section, and the last digit the member's number in his section.

Here is an example: Number N8-18-1 is Robert Dryden's ranch, just east of Oelrichs. The letter N represents the township, the figure 8 represents the range, the figure 18 represents the section in which he lives, and the figure 1 represents his number in the section. The last number indicates the number of members in a section.

OUTAGES – A new method of reporting outages has been developed. During office hours, report to the office, telephone number 258. After office hours, (This is very important.) ask the Custer telephone operator to call the line foreman on duty—either Joe McGeeney, telephone 37-JR, or Keith Chamley, telephone number 178-W1. Each week the line foreman will be rotated. Be sure and give your account number and other important information. Each line foreman's home is two-way radio equipped, which enables him to keep in contact with the crews on the line. Please do not call the manager, except in an extreme emergency.

BHEC returns \$2 million in Dec.

Black Hills Electric Cooperative belongs to you and the 8,000 other members/owners who receive electric service from the cooperative.

At Black Hills Electric, the price of obtaining services and energy is cost-based and kept as low as possible. Because we are owned by those we serve and operate on a not-for-profit basis, any profits, called margins in the co-op world, are returned to the member/owners in the form of capital credits.

Each month as you pay your electric bill, you are providing the capital for the cooperative to meet its monthly expenses. Your co-op needs sufficient working capital and a cushion of margins to remain viable.

Each year's margins are divided among each member who was in service for that year based on the amount of electricity they purchased. Members receive a yearly notice of the amount of capital credits they have in their capital credit account.

Capital credits are each member's equity in the co-op and are invested in the co-op's infrastructure to help keep rates lower. Each year, the board looks at the co-op's financial condition and decides if a portion of capital credits can be returned.

Capital credits may also be retired in estate settlements with proper documentation of death and relationship to the deceased member.

This year, the board voted to retire \$2,000,000 of allocated capital credits. Your share of that amount showed up in the upper right corner of the bill you received in December.

In order to continue to receive capital credit retirements, it is important to keep the cooperative updated on any address changes you may have.

Having ownership of your electric cooperative is another advantage of being a Black Hills Electric Cooperative member.

If you have capital credit questions or need to update your address, please contact us at 605-673-4461 or at www.bhec.coop.



Board members Jim Preston, Al Perry and Gary Kluthe serve soup at Rockerville's area meeting.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Neighborhood Gatherings Scheduled

February is a time many of us at Black Hills Electric Co-op look forward to – a chance to visit with many of our friends while enjoying a bowl of hot soup and lots of great desserts.

Directors, staff and employees of BHEC have been hosting soup suppers for 32 years and have enjoyed many different soups – from moose and elk chili to wild turkey and noodles.

The annual area meetings are a way for cooperative personnel to show the co-op's appreciation to its members.

Each year the co-op teams with local civic organizations to co-sponsor the free soup and chili suppers. The organizations provide the food and the cooperative pays a per person donation, serves the food and helps clean up afterward. A freewill donation is collected for the civic organization co-hosting the meal.

In 2019, 421 people attended one of the seven area meetings.

Over \$1,872 was donated by the members and \$1,500 was paid to the organizations for the food. Hermosa had 115 members attend followed by Whispering Pines who had 64 members attend. Pringle's members donated \$525.

There is no charge for the meal so please plan to bring your family and join your neighbors and friends and join us at one of the these meeting locations:

Oelrichs

Thursday Feb. 6, 6-7 p.m.

Oelrichs Community Hall
Co-sponsor: Oelrichs Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Service

Johnson Siding

Monday, Feb. 10, 6-7 p.m.

Rimrock Community Center
Co-sponsor: Rimrock Community Club

Hermosa

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 6-7 p.m.

Hermosa Elementary School Gym
Co-sponsor: Battle Creek Fire District

Whispering Pines

Monday, Feb. 17, 6-7 p.m.

Whispering Pines Fire Hall
Co-sponsor: Whispering Pines VFD
Fire District Annual Meeting Follows

Rockerville

Friday, Feb. 21, 6-7 p.m.

Rockerville Community Hall
Co-sponsor: Rockerville Community Club

Rochford

Friday, March 27, 6-7 p.m.

Rochford Community Hall
Co-sponsor: Rochford Community Club

We hope to see you at one of the meetings. Thank you for your support of the above organizations.

Technical Schools, Colleges Ready the Workforce

Variety of programs offered for in-demand careers

Brenda Kleinjan

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Each year, more than 10,000 people head to area technical schools and technical colleges to develop the skills employers in the region are seeking.

South Dakota's four technical schools – Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls and Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City – have been serving students in the region for the last century, with three of the schools starting in 1968 and the fourth starting in 1969. Neighboring states have similar offerings at schools within easy driving distance of South Dakota.

This fall, Lake Area's campus at Watertown, S.D., was at capacity with 2,228 students. The school notes that students have a 99 percent placement rate after graduation.

Nearly 1,200 students attend Mitchell Tech which notes that 99 percent of its graduates find employment or continue their education. The school also notes that 82 percent of its grads stay in the Rushmore State.

For Southeast Tech's 2017-2018 graduates, the school said that 95 percent are employed or continuing their education, with 95 percent of those employed were employed in a field related to their Southeast Tech program.

Western Dakota Tech is the only technical college serving the western half of the state. It notes that 96 percent of its most recent graduates are working, continuing their education or enlisting in the military.



Among the programs offered at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., is South Dakota's only power line program for training future line workers.

National Leaders

Technical colleges across the region have been recognized for excellence in their field.

The \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. With a singular focus on student success, the Prize highlights institutions with outstanding achievements in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high-levels of access and success for students of color and low-income students.

In November, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

Eleven schools based in Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota made the list:

Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Technical education needs in southwestern Minnesota have been served by the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College for more than 75 years.

The college has five campuses: Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone and Worthington in addition to centers in Luverne and Marshall.

The college offers a wide array of ever-changing programs and services, including career and transfer preparation, industry and customized training, community education, athletics, performing arts, student organizations, clubs, and personal enrichment. The school provides students opportunities to earn an associate degree, diploma or certificate in more than 60 disciplines, plus convenient campus locations throughout southwest Minnesota as well as online learning opportunities.

The school boasts of its small class sizes, personalized attention and focused, hands-on learning. Its technical programs provide students with the practical skills to begin successful careers in a variety of industries immediately upon graduation. Liberal arts programs at Minnesota West are a great starting point for careers or further study in numerous fields. Credits earned in our associate of arts and associate of science programs are designed for seamless transfer to other Minnesota State institutions.



Lake Area Tech in Watertown was nationally recognized as a top community college.

■ MINNESOTA

- Alexandria Technical and Community College
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Northland Community and Technical College
- Ridgewater College
- Saint Paul College

■ NEBRASKA

- Central Community College
- Northeast Community College

■ NORTH DAKOTA

- Bismarck State College
- North Dakota State College of Science

■ SOUTH DAKOTA

- Mitchell Technical Institute
- Southeast Technical Institute

Based on strong and improving student outcomes – including in learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity – 15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize. Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

The 150 community colleges named in November 2019 as eligible to compete for the 2021 Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas,

serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in

Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, S.D., was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

spring 2021.

Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, South Dakota, was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner. In the 2017-2018 school year, Minnesota West was one of 150 top community colleges nationwide competing for the Aspen Prize while MTI was a 2019 Top 10 finalist.



When the South Dakota Legislature convenes in January, it will transform several ideas into legislative bills, some of which will become state law.

WHERE DOES A BILL COME FROM

Legislative Research Council

<http://sdlegislature.gov>

When state legislators are in Pierre every year for the annual legislative session, the majority of their time is spent discussing ideas for changes in state law. Ideas vary from changing only a word or two of a current law, an entire section of law, getting rid of a current state law, or creating a new law.

All of the ideas, regardless of their size or scope, must be presented to the Legislature in the form of bills. Bills are simply the ideas recorded on paper in a prescribed format.

Only legislators and legislative committees may present or introduce bills to the Legislature. However, ideas for bills come from a multitude of sources. First, legislators have their own ideas for bills stemming from their expertise in certain fields, experiences they have had, or observations they have made. Special interest groups are another source of ideas. Members of these groups often ask legislators to sponsor bills promoting their interests.

Many ideas for bills come from government agencies. Each year several bills are introduced at the request of the Governor or on behalf of a department in state government. Those who work closely with state law are often able to

recommend ways to improve it.

Finally, ideas for bills come from those individuals represented by the legislators, the constituents who live in their districts. The next step is to put an idea into the form of a bill. Anyone can draft a bill, but the rules of the Legislature require that all bills be in the proper form and style.

A legislator wishing to introduce a bill generally brings the idea or a draft of the proposed bill to the Legislative Research Council, where staff members will either draft the bill or make final preparations on the bill drafted by others.

The legislator who begins to move the bill through the legislative process is known as the prime sponsor. The prime sponsor may introduce the bill independently or seek other legislators to act as co-sponsors of the bill. Senate bills have senators as prime sponsors, and House bills have house members as prime sponsors. However, members of either house may co-sponsor any bill.

Bills may not be introduced until the first day of a legislative session. However, those elected to serve in the upcoming Legislature may pre-file bills with the Legislative Research Council, up to 30 days in advance of the first legislative day. Interim committees may pre-file legislation under the names of individual legislators who served on the committee.

The rules require executive agencies to pre-file any legislation they wish to have considered. A bill in proper form consists of three main parts: the title, the enacting clause, and the body.

- The title gives the reader a brief summary of the subject of the bill. The SD Constitution dictates that bills embrace only one subject, and that subject must be expressed in the title.
- The enacting clause, “BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA,” is also required by the SD Constitution and indicates that everything listed below it is to become the law of the state.
- The body is the remainder of the bill, the part that will actually become law, if passed. It is divided into sections to make it easier to read and to reference.

In addition to the three main parts, a bill also includes a list of sponsors and a number. The name of the prime sponsor always appears first on the bill and then the co-sponsors are alphabetically listed. If a committee is sponsoring a bill, then only the name of the committee is listed. A number is assigned to the bill upon introduction and is used to identify the bill as it works its way through the process.

During session, legislators spend a majority of their time discussing bills, but bills are not the only proposals that come before the Legislature. Legislators may introduce commemorations and resolutions. Commemorations express legislative recognition and listed below are four types of resolutions that may be introduced:

- A simple resolution is unique in that it pertains to and is acted on by only one house. It is used primarily to express an opinion, gratitude, or condolences, or to make a request of the other house.
- A concurrent resolution expresses an opinion of the Legislature, but it has no force of law. Often it is used to persuade Congress to act in a certain way or to make a request of the Governor or a government agency.
- A joint resolution is, by law, used to propose changes to the SD Constitution and submit them to the voters at the next election. It is also used to ratify or propose amendments to the United States Constitution. Unlike the previous two types of resolutions, a joint resolution only contains matters of legislation.
- A resolution of disapproval allows the Legislature to disapprove of any reorganization of the executive branch done by the Governor during the preceding year. It is the newest type of resolution and used less frequently than the others.

How An Idea Becomes Law in South Dakota

Idea

- A bill is simply an idea that someone would like to see become law.
- It could be anything from the penalty for committing a crime to the amount of money that can be spent on a state program.
- The idea can come from anyone, but only a State Representative or State Senator can take the idea and guide it to final passage through the State Legislature.

Drafting

- The drafting of the idea into a bill is done by the Legislative Research Council, the permanent, non-partisan staff of the Legislature.
- A bill may be filed by any member of the House or Senate, and generally more than one legislator will sponsor a bill. The legislator whose name appears first on the bill is the “prime sponsor.”

Introduction

- A bill is given to the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate and is assigned a number. If the bill is sponsored by a Senator, it is a Senate Bill. If the bill is sponsored by a Representative, it is a House Bill.
- The bill is given a First Reading in the “House of Origin.” The “House of Origin” is the chamber that sponsored the bill.
- At a First Reading the bill’s number and title are read aloud.
- The Senate President Pro Tempore or Speaker of the House then assigns the bill to a committee.

Committee

- A committee’s responsibility is to examine a bill carefully, take testimony for and against the bill, and decide what to do with the bill.
- The committee has the following options:
 - Send the bill to the floor with a “Do Pass” recommendation,
 - Amend
 - “Table” the bill, which kills the bill, unless the full body orders the committee to send the bill to the floor (“Smoke-Out”), or
 - Defer the bill to the day after the last Legislative Day, which also kills the bill.

Debate

- If a bill reaches the floor, it is debated and voted on by the body.
- If it passes, the bill is sent to the other body, where it goes through the same introduction and committee processes.

Law

- If a bill passes both the House and Senate, it is sent to the Governor.
- If signed by the Governor, the bill becomes law.
- If vetoed by the Governor, the Legislature has an opportunity to decide whether to override or uphold the veto.
- If the Legislature succeeds in overriding the veto, the bill becomes law.

<http://sdlegislature.gov/docs/studentpage/idealaw.pdf>

October 19-January 5

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

November 22-January 5

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

November 26-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

December 19-21

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

December 21-24, 27-28

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

January 10

Taste of Sturgis, Sturgis City Auditorium, Sturgis, SD, 605-347-3233

January 12

Yoga on the Ice, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

January 14-15

Paw Patrol Live! Race to the Rescue, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

January 16-17

Media One Funkski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

January 24-25: Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

Photo courtesy: travelsouthdakota.com

January 17

Justin Moore & Tracy Lawrence, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

January 18

Lakota Games on Ice, Prehistoric Indian Village, Mitchell SD, 605-996-5473

January 18

Heroes Skate Day, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

January 31-February 2

12th Annual Winterfest of Wheels, Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100

January 31-February 2

Winterfest, Lead, SD, 605-584-1100

January 31-February 9

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

February 1

Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby, Hendricks, MN, 507-828-2113

February 1

Living History Fair, Brookings Renegades, Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown, SD, 605-693-4589, dhuebner@itctel.com

February 10-16

Frost Fest, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

February 14

Snow Ball, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

February 21

KORN and Breaking Benjamin, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

February 21-22

Mardi Gras Weekend, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

February 26

The Harlem Globetrotters, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

February 27-March 1

SD State Dart Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

March 3

RCCA presents Young Irelanders, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

March 14

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Lead, SD, 605-641-4963

March 20-21, 27-28

Annual Schmeckfest, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

March 28

Annual Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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.