

# Black Hills Electric

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

May 2020 Vol. 21 No. 1

## Cooperative Connections

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# Keeping the lights on during Uncertain times



**Walker Witt**

CEO and General Manager  
wwitt@bhec.coop

**To help ensure employee and member safety, the decision was made on March 20 to close the office to public access.**

*Hope for the best and plan to keep the lights on during these uncertain times.*

I hope by the time you all read this that the worst is past us and our members are questioning whether our precautions were an overreaction. Your co-op has had an emergency response plan in place since Y2K. It sits on our shelf and we take it off a few times a year to dust it off and add a relevant provision or two. When I thumbed through it looking for resources to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, I found that it was wholly inadequate. Snowstorms, tornadoes, fires, and even terrorist activity is contemplated, but the closest thing to a virus that our plan addressed was a cyber-attack to disable our computer system.

Employee and member safety, and providing reliable electric service are the values that are held most high by your co-op. To help ensure employee and member safety, the decision was made on March 20 to close the office to public access. Members can continue to manage their accounts and make payments by mail, phone, our drop box, and on-line via SmartHub®. For those members that do make the trip to the co-op without realizing the office is closed to public access, a phone was installed in the vestibule that is a direct line to our member service representatives.

To help ensure that our crews remain healthy to keep your lights on, our front line operations employees operate in two shifts to help with social distancing during briefings and to minimize risk of the entire workforce being exposed in the event that one of our line workers contracts the virus. We now keep the same two-man crews working together each day instead of our historical rotation to minimize cross exposure.

Precautions taken in the office include separating management and having two work from home. We also have two member service representatives that are working from home in the same capacity as if they were at the office. The other two member service representatives are working in separate areas within our headquarters.

Each of these actions were taken to protect employees, protect members, and to ensure that we keep the lights on.

We also realize that more than ever, some of our members may be struggling due to loss of income. We understand and we ask you to contact us so that an arrangement can be made if you are having difficulty paying your bill.

This is usually the month that I put a big plug in for our annual meeting, which is currently scheduled for June 4. Although we are a very spry and young at heart bunch, I would guess that most of us that attend the meeting are at the age of what is being classified as higher risk. Your board is monitoring the situation and a decision will be made shortly regarding when and where the annual meeting will be. We will keep you updated on our webpage at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop) and on Facebook®.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

Walker

**TIPS TO HELP AVOID EXPOSURE**

- Wash your hands often with soap
- Dispose of any used materials
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth
- Stay home if you are sick



# Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections

(ISSN No. 1531-104X)

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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](http://www.bhec.coop).

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Subscription information: Black Hills Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Black Hills Electric Cooperative, 25191 Cooperative Way, Custer, S.D. 57730-0792, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Black Hills Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730-0792. Address all other correspondence to: *Cooperative Connections*, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730-0792; Telephone: (605) 673-4461; Fax: (605) 673-3147; e-mail: [bhec@bhec.coop](mailto:bhec@bhec.coop); website: [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop)

## Rochford Area Meeting postponed



Members from the Rockerville area enjoy five different soups during the Rockerville Area Meeting in February.

So far this year, Black Hills Electric Cooperative has been able to co-host five of its seven area meetings.

The Rochford meeting, that was scheduled in March, has been postponed to a date to be announced and the Pringle meeting is always in September.

Three-hundred and seventy people attended one of the five meetings in February, donating a total of \$1,747.20 to the organizations co-hosting the meals.

BHEC paid a total of \$1,790 for food, rent and cleanup to the organizations.

Hermosa's 131 members attending was the largest of the meetings. Those attending donated \$529.15 to the Battle Creek Fire District.

## Annual meeting changes

Black Hills Electric is currently planning to host its 75th annual meeting on Thursday, June 4 at the Ramkota Convention Center in Rapid City. With the uncertainty of the ability to hold large meetings, we may have to postpone the meeting or handle it in a very different way.

This year, we have a director election between two members vying for an open seat on the board. The election is the main order of business that needs to be transacted if the meeting is postponed or

Rockerville and Whispering Pines each had 67 people attend with the Whispering Pines Fire Department getting \$500 in donations. The Rockerville attendees donated \$131 to the Rockerville Community Center.

Sixty-four people were at the Johnson Siding meeting and they donated \$322.05 to the Rimrock Community Center, while 44 attended the Oelrichs meeting, donating \$265 to the Oelrichs Community Center.

These fundraisers for area non-profit organizations are a great way to enjoy a free meal and visit with friends and neighbors. Watch the January and February issues of *Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections* each year for a complete schedule of these community fundraisers.

becomes a limited access meeting. We will keep you informed if there is a change to the annual meeting date or agenda.

Please check our webpage at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop) or our Facebook® page to keep up to date on the annual meeting. Watch for your annual report to be mailed three weeks prior to the meeting.

Our Facebook page is at [www.facebook.com/blackhillelectriccoop](http://www.facebook.com/blackhillelectriccoop). You may also call 673-4461 or 1-800-742-0085 for annual meeting information.

## 10 Steps to Avoid Scams

There are thousands of new scams every year and you can't keep up with all of them (we know, we try!). But if you can just remember these 10 things, you can avoid most scams and help protect yourself and your family.

- 1) Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face.** Seriously, just don't ever do it. And really, really don't do it if they ask you to use wire transfer, a prepaid debit card or a gift card (those cannot be traced and are as good as cash).
- 2) Don't click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email.** Links can download malware onto your computer and/or steal your identity. Be cautious even with email that looks familiar; it could be fake.
- 3) Don't believe everything you see.** Scammers are great at mimicking official seals, fonts and other details. Just because a website or email looks official does not mean that it is. Even Caller ID can be faked.
- 4) Don't buy online unless the transaction is secure.** Make sure the website has "https" in the URL (the extra s is for "secure") and a small lock icon on the address bar. Even then, the site could be shady. Check out the company first at BBB.org. Read reviews about the quality of the merchandise and make sure you are not buying cheap and/or counterfeit goods.
- 5) Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you've met online.** Scammers use dating websites, Craigslist, social media and many other sites to reach potential targets. They can quickly feel like a friend or even a romantic partner, but that is part of the con to get you to trust them.
- 6) Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted you unsolicited, whether it's over the phone, by email, on social media, even at your front door.** This includes banking and credit card information, your birthdate and Social Security/Social Insurance numbers.
- 7) Don't be pressured to act immediately.** Scammers typically try to make you think something is scarce or a limited time offer. They want to push you into action before you have time to think or to discuss it with a family member, friend or financial advisor. High-pressure sales tactics are also used by some legitimate businesses, but it's never a good idea to make an important decision quickly.
- 8) Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes and debts.** Do not pay by wire transfer, prepaid money card, gift card or other non-traditional payment method. Say no to cash-only deals, high pressure sales tactics, high upfront payments, overpayments and handshake deals without a contract.
- 9) Whenever possible, work with local businesses that have proper identification, licensing and insurance, especially contractors who will be coming into your home or anyone dealing with your money or sensitive information.** Check them out at BBB.org to see what other consumers have experienced.
- 10) Be cautious about what you share on social media and consider only connecting with people you already know.** Be sure to use privacy settings on all social media and online accounts. Imposters often get information about their targets from their online interactions and can make themselves sound like a friend or family member because they know so much about you.

Source: [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)



**Utility service has never been more important.**

If you're planning landscaping or any other digging projects, contact 811 first – the kids telelearning and adults telecommuting will thank you.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state




Stay safe during social distancing by calling 811 before starting any new project, so you can stay connected to the internet and utility services you rely on.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Do not play around electrical boxes."**

Kayla Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Kayla is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, 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

## Chicken-Broccoli-Rice Casserole

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 lb. chicken tenders or boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips | 2 tsp. onion powder                     |
| 1 cup long grain rice  | 1-1/2 tsp. rosemary leaves, crushed     |
| 1-1/2 cups Kitchen Basics® Original Chicken Stock                                  | 1/2 tsp. pepper                         |
| 1 cup milk   | 1/2 tsp. salt                           |
| 2 tsp. garlic powder   | 2 cups fresh or frozen broccoli florets |
|  | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese           |

Spread chicken and rice in greased 2-quart baking dish. Mix stock, milk and seasonings in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slowly pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake at 400°F. for 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender. Makes 6 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 317, Total Fat 9g, Cholesterol 69mg, Sodium 492mg, Carbohydrates 31g, Fiber 1g, Protein 28g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Ham and Rye Casserole

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 cup chopped onion                                      | 1 (8 oz) pkg. American cheese, cubed |
| 1/2 cup chopped celery                                   | 2-1/2 cups milk                      |
| 1/4 cup butter   | 3 eggs                               |
| 4 cups cubed rye bread                                   | 1-1/2 tsp. prepared mustard          |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. ham, cut into strips or may use cubed ham | Salt and pepper, to taste            |

In a saucepan, saute onion and celery in butter until tender. In a 2-quart buttered baking dish, combine onion, celery, bread, ham and half the cheese. In a bowl, beat together milk, eggs, mustard, salt and pepper until well blended. Pour over all; top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour or until golden brown and puffed.

**Martha Mehlhaff, Aberdeen, SD**

## Corn Casserole

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 cup broken spaghetti, uncooked | 1/2 cup milk             |
| 1 can cream-style corn           | 1 can whole kernel corn  |
| 1 cup cubed processed cheese     | Diced onions, optional   |
|                                  | Salt and pepper to taste |

Combine all ingredients in a 1.5-quart casserole. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour, stirring after the first 30 minutes.

**Emily Luikens, Tea, SD**

## Cheesy Potato Beef Bake

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef                                      | 2 tsp. butter                 |
| 2 (4 oz. each) cans mushroom stems and pieces, drained | 1 tsp. salt                   |
| 2 (5-1/4 oz. each) pkgs. au gratin potatoes            | 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt        |
| 4 cups boiling water                                   | 1/2 tsp. pepper               |
| 1-1/3 cups milk  | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese |

In a skillet over medium heat, cook beef until no longer pink; drain. Place in a greased 9x13-inch baking pan. Top with mushrooms. Combine potatoes and contents of sauce mix packets, water, milk, butter, salt, seasoned salt and pepper. Pour over beef and mushrooms. Cover and bake at 400°F. for 30 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson, SD**

Please send your favorite dairy, dessert or vegetarian 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.

# Five Steps

## to a Clear Decision on New Windows



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

**Sometimes home improvement projects can grow into something bigger.**

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency.

For more information on choosing windows, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

**Dear Pat and Brad:** Thanks for answering my question last month about replacing older windows. Clearly there are benefits in addition to energy savings, so we've decided to go ahead with replacing our windows. Can you offer any tips on deciding which new windows to purchase? – Grace

**Dear Grace:** I'm glad to hear you're thinking this through. Here are five tips I'll offer as you think about the types of new windows you should purchase.

Think beyond windows. Sometimes home improvement projects can grow into something bigger. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. There are advantages to replacing windows and siding at the same time, for example. You could consider adding rigid foam insulation to the exterior wall before installing siding. You could also pump some additional insulation into the wall cavities. These measures will reduce heat loss through the wall and make your home more comfortable. Another advantage of replacing siding as you replace windows is to make it easier to install flashing around the window. Flashing is what prevents water from making its way into the wall from the outside.

- 1) **Are you replacing doors, too?** Maybe you'd like to reduce or increase the size of one or more windows. A larger window can let in more light and transform a room. A smaller window that lets in less sunshine can make a room less likely to overheat in the summer. Remember that high-efficiency windows are less efficient than a well-insulated wall, so increasing or decreasing window area can impact heating and cooling costs.
- 2) **What is your type?** Do you want fixed-pane units that don't open at all? Or casement windows that open with a crank? How about sliders or double-hung windows that open from the top and bottom? Maybe awning-style options that open out from the bottom? A bay window can add extra space and light. There are so many options that can fit many different situations. I recommend a thorough search online, or visit a local window store to see examples of these styles.
- 3) **Frame the issues.** If the number of styles wasn't bewildering enough, now you get to choose the frame and sash (the inner frame that holds the glass). Vinyl is the least expensive and most common option; it can also be quite energy efficient and does not require painting. Vinyl frames vary greatly in quality and the less expensive models may be susceptible to warping. Aluminum is an affordable option, but if the frames don't have a thermal break, they can lose heat and cause condensation. Wood windows offer high quality – but the biggest drawbacks are the price and maintenance requirements. There are wood options with vinyl cladding that never need painting. Fiberglass and composite windows are a newer option that fall between vinyl and wood in quality and price.

Also, you may be able to save money by not doing a full window replacement. If your existing frames and sills are free of rot and in good condition and you aren't looking to make any alterations to the walls around them, you could look into replacing the glass and keeping the existing frames.

- 4) **Glass assemblies.** Single-pane windows no longer meet building codes. Your two choices are double- and triple-pane. An add-on that is often well worth the price is a low-E coating that reflects heat back into the room. You can also boost energy efficiency with windows that have either Argon or CO<sub>2</sub> gas between the panes.
- 5) **Compare the numbers.** Fortunately, there's an easy way to compare the efficiency of windows. Almost all windows are independently tested and rated by the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC). The most important number on the NFRC label is the U-factor. The lower the U-factor, the more efficient the window is. It's best if the window has an ENERGY STAR® label, but the NFRC label will tell you which ENERGY STAR® window is more efficient.

I hope these tips help in the decision of choosing your new windows. Remember, you'll have to live with them for several years, so be sure to do your research and consider all options. And because new window installation is a complicated process, it's best to have them installed by a qualified professional with solid references.

# WITC receives 2020 Climate Leadership Award

The Wyoming Integrated Test Center (ITC) was awarded an 'Innovative Partnership Certificate' at the 2020 Climate Leadership Awards in Detroit, Mich., recognizing the pioneering initiative that has brought together private and public leaders to drive the next generation of clean energy technology in the heart of coal country.



Awardees are honored for exemplary corporate, organizational and individual leadership in reducing carbon pollution and addressing climate

change in their operations and strategies.

The ITC is located at Basin Electric's Dry Fork Station, a coal-based power plant located near Gillette. The plant processes sub-bituminous coal from the Western Fuels' Dry Fork Mine. The ITC provides space for researchers to test, in a real-life setting, carbon capture, utilization and sequestration technologies.

"Basin Electric supports the ITC because our cooperative believes in an all of the above energy generation strategy, utilizing multiple sources of fuel to serve our members. This critical research could help unlock a means to continue using an abundant and reliable fuel source while reducing our carbon footprint," said Paul Sukut, Basin Electric CEO and general manager. "It's exciting to see the ITC being recognized for their important research that will not only be a benefit to our members, but also the communities in which we live."

Another initiative that Basin Electric supports is CarbonSAFE in both North Dakota and Wyoming. These projects are focused on investigating the feasibility of practical, secure and permanent geologic storage of carbon dioxide emissions from coal-based electricity generation. Basin Electric provided letters of commitment for the Wyoming project, outlining up to \$1.5 million in cash and/or in-kind services to support that work.

More information about the Climate Leadership Award winners is available at <https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/awards/>

# Self-Care and Resilience Strategies

It is essential to take care of yourself. Just as you would tend to an acute physical injury by seeking support, alleviating symptoms of pain and taking steps to ensure recovery, the same is true for an emotional or psychological challenge or obstacle. And, just as the human body is often ingenious in the way it can mend itself, so too the mind and heart can be incredibly resilient.

## Building and Engaging Resilience

Below are some tips for taking care of yourself and engaging your resilience. Please feel free to use those ideas that you find most useful and continue to engage your own coping strategies.

### Physical self-care

- Get enough sleep
- Get regular physical activity
- Eat regular, well-balanced meals
- Reduce alcohol and caffeine consumption
- Release tension in healthy ways
- Take deep breaths
- Balance work, play and rest
- Limit or eliminate exposure to media

### Emotional self-care

- Know your vulnerabilities
- Get help early on if you are feeling overwhelmed
- Use relaxation skills that work best for you
- Listen to music that soothes you
- Re-establish a routine, if possible
- Engage socially to avoid feeling isolated
- Set limits, if necessary, when others are too demanding of your time or energy (Give yourself time to heal and renew.)

### Social self-care

- Be aware of withdrawal and isolation
- Get nurturance/care from loved ones
- Use friends and family and community for support
- See how work can offer support
- Seek out others for social activities
- Recognize that humor can be a useful respite
- Make an effort to have fun

### Spiritual self-care

- Use religious and/or spiritual resources and communities
- Read inspirational works
- Pray
- Practice gratitude
- Meditate
- Connect with nature
- Find creative ways to express yourself (i.e., drawing, painting, writing, etc.)

### Remember to:

- Recognize signs of stress and look after yourself
- Identify what you can and cannot change
- Accept your limitations
- Keep expectations realistic
- Make deliberate plans to care for yourself
- Allow others to give to you
- Find a reason to smile or laugh every day

## Checklist for Resilience:

### Ask Yourself These Questions

- What are my strengths?
- What has helped me endure previous difficult times?
- What healthy things can I do to soothe myself when I'm faced with uncertainty?
- Is there something I can do to influence what will happen next? If so, what?
- What are my resources to increase my resilience?
- How can I ask for what I need?

[https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/Strategies4Self-Care\\_Resilience.pdf](https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/Strategies4Self-Care_Resilience.pdf)





# A DEADLY MISTAKE

## Family Shares Grief to Teach Others

**Shayla Ebsen**

sebsen@eastriver.coop

June 7, 2016, is a day that will be forever imprinted in Greg McCann's mind. It began as a normal June day on his farm in southeastern South Dakota. The crops had been planted and, like every year in June, they were needing to be sprayed. Greg's 35-year-old son, Grant, helped out on the farm and planned to spray the fields that day.

"He went and got the sprayer filled and ready. After he got the sprayer ready and conditions were right, well, then, he went to spray," said Greg. "He called me to see if I could move an irrigator for him and that was the last time I talked to him. He entered the field and the driveway to the field went under a power line."

Unfortunately, Grant didn't drive far enough into the field. He stopped at an angle close to the power lines. As he began unfolding the 90-foot sprayer booms, they touched the energized power line, which instantly electrified the tractor.

"He tried to call Wayne, the young man who runs my farm, but he wasn't able to get through because there was so much static, so we don't know what happened after that," said Greg.

The sprayer was caught in a Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative distribution power line. Co-op Electrician Kevin Meyer was just a few miles away when he and his apprentice received an outage call.

"A radio call came across that another neighbor farmer was out of power as it started out as an individual outage," said Meyer. "We packed up our tools and stuff and left the yard. As we were leaving the yard, I received another call from a supervisor saying that we got a call that there's a



Thirty-five-year-old Grant McCann was involved in a fatal accident involving a sprayer and a power line in 2016.



sprayer that looks like it might have made contact with a line that's probably the first place to go and it's looking like we have more consumers out."

Meyer and his apprentice didn't know what they might discover but knew they had to move fast.

"As we're rolling up on scene, one neighbor was there sitting on the road on his four-wheeler and he just said someone is down in front of the tractor," said Meyer. "It was very tough to see other than you could see someone was there but didn't know who it was and at that particular time, I knew that it could be Greg, Grant or my cousin, Wayne. So, in all that, you're mentally preparing yourself for what you're about to discover."

What they would discover is that Grant made a mistake that would end his life. Rather than staying in the cab and waiting for help, he had stepped out of the sprayer.

"The consequences of that mistake took my only son," said Greg. "He was my friend, my partner, my confidant. Now every day I remember that terrible morning and I see Grant lying dead on the ground. There's no fix. There's no second chances."

No one can know what was going through Grant's head at the moment he left the cab. But Greg wants others to learn from that mistake, so it doesn't happen to anyone else.

"If Grant would've stayed in the tractor and not touched anything, I think he'd be here today. But he didn't," said Greg. "I don't want anyone to have to experience the sadness and the emptiness that I and Grant's family and friends are experiencing and will be experiencing for a long, long time."

## The consequences of that mistake took my only son.

Do you know what to do if a vehicle you're in contacts a power line? First, stay in the vehicle and call 911 for help. If you must exit the vehicle because of a fire, tuck your arms across your body and jump clear of any wires with your feet together, never touching the equipment and ground at the same time. Then shuffle or hop at least 40 feet away with your feet together. Stay away

from the equipment until the authorities tell you it is safe.

"People get in a hurry and they don't regard the risk as a risk and one mistake and it's too late," said Greg. "The consequences are so grim and terrible, that there's no good reason not to be really careful and be aware of where you're at and the machinery you're using and where it's located. Once it's done, there's no turning back."

With the spread of COVID-19 into our region as well as the pandemic's financial impacts, everyone has a lot on their mind this year. Letting distractions take your mind away from work in the fields significantly increases the likelihood of farming accidents. Minimize distractions and stay focused in the fields. If you notice your mind wandering at any point, bring it back to the task at hand.

As we enter this year's planting and spraying seasons, remain aware of where electrical equipment is located when you're working on the farm and remember the steps to take if your equipment contacts a power line. You could save your life, or the life of someone you love. Visit [poweringyoursafety.com](http://poweringyoursafety.com) to learn more.



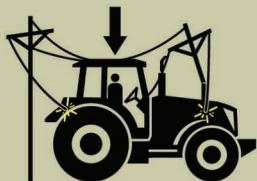
Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



# PoweringYourSafety.com

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU HIT A POWER LINE

## STAY PUT



If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside.  
**DO NOT EXIT. Call 911.**

## JUMP CLEAR



If you must exit due to a fire, jump from the equipment so that no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle with your feet together at least 40 feet away.

## STAY AWAY



When you are clear of the area, call for help and keep others away. **DO NOT** approach your vehicle again until utility crews and emergency responders tell you it is safe.

# BHEC members for 60 years

Mike Chase

mchase@bhec.coop

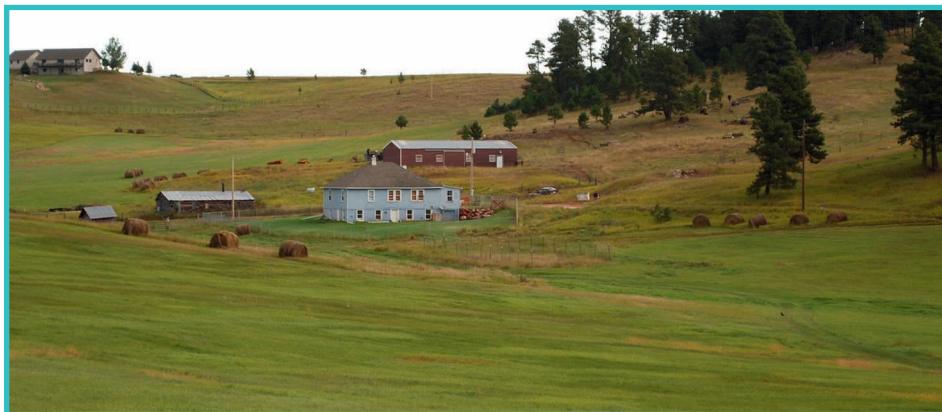
Ray and Rose Kieffer became members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative after they were married in 1959 and took up ranching on Ray's parents' homestead.

Ray's parents had bought their original homestead near Coyote Flats off Neck Yoke Road southwest of Rapid City in 1929 and raised cattle and seven children. The original home was a small granary that had been converted into a home for nine people.

Ray, who was born in 1936, attended school at the Pine Grove School, about a mile from his home. "We had kerosene lamps and a wood-burning stove for heat," he said. "Every morning when it was cold, we had to make a fire when we got to school

Ray remembers his mother cooking for the family on a wood-burning cook stove. "We had to pump water and carry it from the well to the house," he said. "All chores were done by hand."

The granary house burned down in 1947 and a new home was built that year. Ray and Rose lived in that home until 2011 when they built a new home about a mile south. The old home is still being used today by the Kieffer's granddaughter.



This is the original homestead that Ray Kieffer's parents purchased in 1929. During the Great Depression, Ray's father could not afford the payments and when he went to give it back to the bank, the bank president told him the no one else could afford it either and to go home and keep living there until he could afford to make payments. The house above was built in 1947 to replace the original granary house that was destroyed by fire that same year. The ranch has been in the Kieffer family for more than 90 years. Their son, Alan, currently runs the ranch.

Rose, who was born in 1939 and grew up in New Underwood, remembers getting electricity before World War II.

She remembers having to mix batters and make meals by hand. "We had no mixer, no vacuum or lights. We cooked on a wood cook stove and in the summer, we either moved the stove outside or we had another stove outside because it would get so hot in the house from cooking."

Later on, Rose's dad bought a small gas-powered light plant to run a few lights. They also had a gas-powered refrigerator. Rose said that they used a tractor to run a grinder and other equipment before electricity.

"We had a wringer washing machine run by a gasoline motor, talk about stinking up the house," she said. "Dad also rigged up a pump from the well to the house to bring water into the house."

Hot water for the washing machine had to be heated on the wood cook stove and dumped into the washer. "We had to hang clothes outside even when it was 10 below," she laughed. "They were like frozen sticks when you brought them in but once they thawed out, they were soft and smelled nice."

"I appreciated lights in the house and in the milking barn and the conveniences



Rose and Ray Kieffer have been BHEC members for 60 years, right after they got married and moved to Ray's parents' ranch southwest of Rapid City. electricity brought," Ray said. "I was amazed to be able to turn on a switch and get light."

Black Hills Electric had to wait until after World War II to begin building lines to people throughout the Black Hills. Electricity from the cooperative came to the Kieffer homestead in the late 1950s.

Now, sitting at the kitchen table in their modern, all-electric home built a few years ago a mile south of the original homestead and eating fresh baked chocolate cookies with a cup of hot coffee, the couple reminisce about their retirement from ranching last year and their family.

"We could travel but all of our family is here," Rose said, looking out the kitchen's large window at cattle grazing outside the fenced yard. "Why go anywhere when I have all of this right here?"

When asked what electricity did most for them, Ray says, "It is the convenience and the safety that electricity brings."

"You really realize how important electricity is when it goes out," Rose said. "It makes me think what it was like back then."



# 1952 BHEC annual meeting



Black Hills Electric Cooperative's 7th annual meeting of members took place in the gymnasium at Hot Springs High School in May of 1952. Even though it looks like a drive-in meeting or a car show, the cooperative was heavily promoting electric appliances and electric heat. The co-op's annual meetings are still in Hot Springs every other year at the Mueller Center.

## The association becomes a cooperative

A special meeting of members of Black Hills Electric Association was called on October 30, 1947, to vote on changing the association to a non-profit cooperative.

Three hundred and seventeen of the association's 666 members were present at the meeting.

BHEC had originally been incorporated under the Electric Companies Act. The conversion was made possible by the recently enacted Electric Cooperative Act passed in February of 1947, which was specifically designed to meet the needs of

South Dakota's non-profit membership cooperatives.

Of the 317 members present at the meeting, 201 voted in favor of becoming a cooperative and approved the articles of conversion presented at the meeting.

As a result of that meeting, Black Hills Electric Association, Inc., officially became Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. The address of the principal office of the cooperative was changed from Hill City to Custer.

The seven directors of the association were

approved to continue as the board of the cooperative until the 1948 annual meeting.

Those directors were: George Frink, Mystic; Oscar Johnson, Hermosa; Guy Kimball, Fairburn; Royce Davison, Smithwick; Dr. B.A. Dyar, Custer; Walter Phillips, Custer; and Jessie Sanders, Rapid City.

Sanders was the first woman to serve on the association's and co-op's boards having been elected at the May, 1946 annual meeting. She did not seek re-election at the May, 1950 annual meeting.



# 3M ABERDEEN PLAYING CRITICAL ROLE IN COVID-19 RESPONSE

Plant Is Producing Millions of N95 Respirators

**Ben Dunsmoor**

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Standing outside the 430,000-square-foot 3M plant in Aberdeen, S.D., you can hear the whirl of productivity. The Aberdeen plant makes N95 masks which have been one of the most crucial pieces of personal protective equipment for frontline personnel responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andrew Rehder, the manager of the 3M Aberdeen plant, told *Bloomberg Businessweek*, in a story published in March, that the Aberdeen plant has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since the end of January.

“I just think as we’ve continued to see things spread across the world, it’s put more responsibility on us to make sure that every day and every minute we’re making every mask we can,” Rehder told Bloomberg.

It has also put a responsibility on Northern Electric Cooperative to ensure the 3M plant has a consistent and reliable source of power. Northern Electric has served the plant with electricity since it was constructed in 1974.



N95 respirators are loaded onto a jet at the Aberdeen Regional Airport in April. The masks produced at the 3M Aberdeen plant are being shipped directly to areas of the country that need them the most. (Photo Courtesy: 3M Twitter account / [twitter.com/3M](https://twitter.com/3M))



“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic,” Northern Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Char Hager said. “Northern Electric also recognizes that our co-op plays a crucial role in supplying 3M with reliable electricity and we take that responsibility seriously.”

The masks being produced in Aberdeen are being shipped across the country just as fast as they are being manufactured. A jet has been sitting at the Aberdeen Regional Airport during April to transport N95 respirators from the Aberdeen plant directly to areas of the country that need them most.

3M CEO Mike Roman said in a blog post on the company’s website that 500,000 masks were shipped from the Aberdeen plant at the end of March to New York and Seattle. Both of those cities have recorded some of the largest number of COVID-19 cases in the country. 3M expects a total global output of 1.1 billion masks this year and they are planning investments in the next 60 to 90 days that will double that capacity to 2 billion masks globally within the next 12 months.

“We continue to act with urgency to address this crisis from every angle and do all we can to protect our heroic nurses,

doctors and first responders,” Roman said in a statement on the company’s website.

This isn’t the first time the Aberdeen plant has been called upon to increase production during an emergency. The plant has also played a critical role in making masks for the SARS, bird-flu and H1N1 outbreaks, as well as the Mount Saint Helens’ eruption, Hurricane Katrina and numerous forest fires.

**“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic.”**

– Char Hager, Northern Electric CEO/General Manager

Northern Electric Cooperative has been in contact with local and corporate 3M managers and executives to ensure the Aberdeen plant has the power supply it needs as the company responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have communicated our response plans to 3M officials and have assured them that our crews will be ready and


available to respond to any emergency or outage,” Hager said. “We have also been in contact with our wholesale power supplier, East River Electric Power Cooperative, and we have told 3M that supplying their plant in Aberdeen with reliable electricity is the top priority for our cooperatives.”

The Aberdeen 3M plant is the city’s second-largest employer with 650 employees. But, Rehder told *Bloomberg Businessweek* that the plant now has more than 700 employees who are working around the clock to make sure health care workers and first responders across the country have the masks they need to protect them from COVID-19.

“People are very proud to work in a place that is making respirators, especially with the need that is out there now,” Rehder said.

Hager said the increased production at the plant in Aberdeen and the hard work of 3M employees is a perfect example of rural America stepping up to help the country during this time of uncertainty.

“We are proud of the work they do at the plant and we are proud of our co-op employees who are dedicated to keeping the lights on for 3M and for all our co-op members,” Hager said.



Northern Electric Cooperative is the power supplier for the 3M plant in Aberdeen which has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since January in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.





# Understanding OPIOID ADDICTION

Jocelyn Romey

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One in four people who are prescribed opioids struggle with addiction. This is only one statistic from the South Dakota Department of Health that resonates how powerful and potentially dangerous opioids can be.

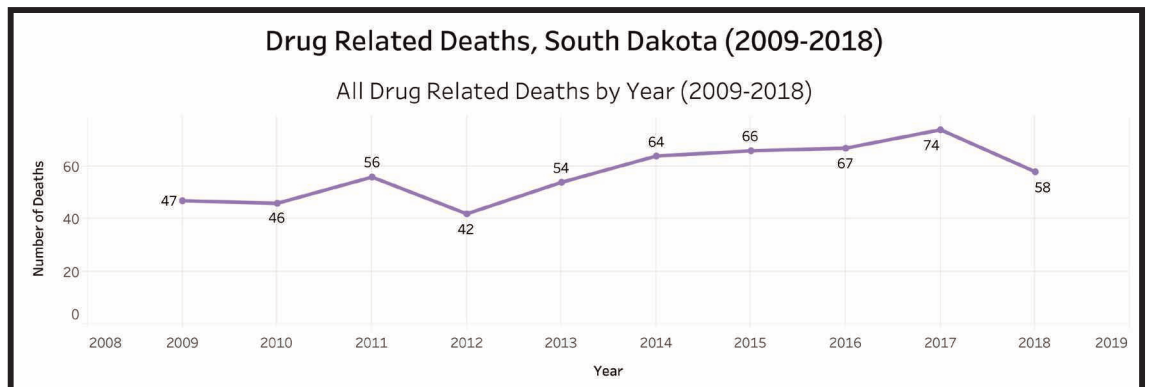
Opioids are a strong narcotic commonly prescribed for chronic pain after injury or surgery. Many know of the extreme addiction and destructive use of heroin – an unlawful opioid, but other opioid addictions may not be as visible if prescribed. A dependency can begin before anyone is aware of an addiction. Unintentional misuse or overdose of prescription opioids are also risks for anyone who takes them.

“My addiction started out very innocently. I had a back issue and so I was prescribed some Vicodin for it...and then I couldn’t stop, I couldn’t turn back. I felt hopeless,” said one woman from Pierre in an Avoid Opioid Prescription Addiction video. “Opioids deserve to be treated with respect. I think the seriousness of it isn’t always understood by people until it’s too late. People do recover and they can recover.”

An opioid addiction is actually considered a disorder and the National Institute on Drug Abuse has labeled drug addiction and opioid use disorder as a chronic disease characterized by drug use that is difficult to control despite harmful consequences. Many people mistakenly think that

## Prescription Opioid Side Effects

- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Dry mouth, itching and sweating
- Confusion
- Low energy and depression
- Low levels of testosterone which can result in lower sex drive





those who use drugs lack willpower or moral principles and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to. In reality, quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will.

Due to the harmful nature of these drugs, there are risks associated with taking opioids – addiction, long-term health problems, paralysis and death. In South Dakota, opioid-related deaths are lower than the national average, but the numbers have been on a steady rise since 2012.

Research shows that drug overdose deaths tend to overly impact rural communities despite having lower drug use rates than urban communities. In 2009, deaths from drug overdose surpassed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. Sixty percent of these drug overdose deaths in rural areas are due to injection-related HIV, hepatitis C and other bloodborne infections while using illicit prescription opioids and heroin.

More in-depth statistics on opioid vulnerability assessments by county are available through South Dakota’s Department of Health website or via <https://doh.sd.gov/statistics/VulnerabilityAssessment.aspx>.

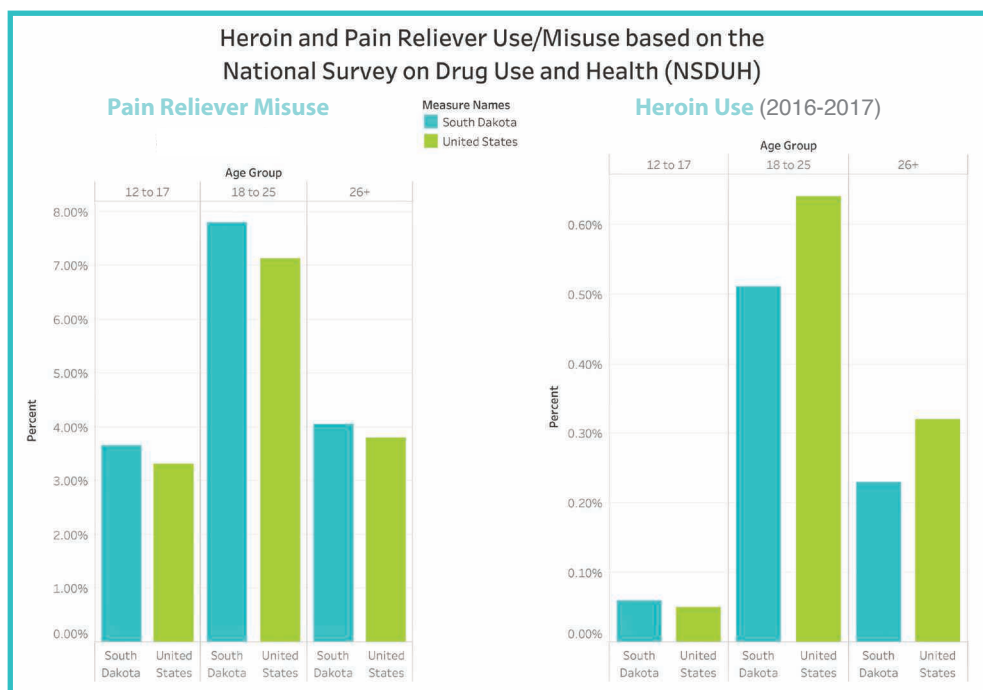
People who are addicted to opioids may seek and use them compulsively despite harmful consequences. The following are common warning signs of misuse, abuse or addiction to opioids given by South Dakota’s Department of Health.

- Neglecting responsibilities at work, school or home because of drug use.
- Using drugs under dangerous conditions or taking risks such as driving while on drugs.
- Drug use that results in legal trouble such as stealing to support a drug habit.
- Drug use that causes problems in relationships such as arguments with family members and loss of friends.
- People affected by drug addiction may stop participating in activities they once enjoyed and may use drugs even when they realize the drugs could be causing problems.

Source: South Dakota Department of Health

## Commonly Prescribed Opioids

- Actiq
- Astramorph
- Codeine
- Conzip
- Demerol
- DepoDur
- Dilaudid
- Duragesic
- Duramorph
- Endocet
- Exalgo
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- Hydromorphone
- Fentanyl
- Lorcet
- Lortab
- Meperidine
- Methadone
- Morphine
- MS-Contin
- Norco
- Oxycodone (Oxycontin/Oxecta)
- Percocet
- Roxicet
- Roxicodone
- Tramadol
- Ultram
- Ventura



### Resource Hotline

Call **1-800-920-4343**. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It's free and confidential.

Our trained specialists can connect you with **Opioid Care Coordination**, social support, counseling, treatment options, and services in your area.

Find out **what happens when you call the Resource Hotline**, and how we can help you or a loved one.

### Opioid Texting Support

Text **OPIOID** to **898211** to connect with local resources that best fit your needs. Answer a few questions and get help for yourself or a loved one who is struggling.



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

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### May 2-3

Quilt Guild Show, Brookings, SD, 605-690-3246

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### May 8-9

Craft Beer Fest: Hops and Hogs, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

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### May 9

Art Wine and Food Truck Festival, Spearfish, SD, 605-644-6585

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### May 15-17

Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

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### May 15-17

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

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### May 23-24

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

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### May 29-30

South Dakota Regional Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nick Brady at 605-978-6924

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### June 4-6

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

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### June 5-6

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD, Contact Brett Rauterhaus at 605-722-1430

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### June 5-7

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

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### June 5-7

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



**May 9:**  
Traditional Wacipi at the Dignity Statue, Chamberlain, SD, 605-234-5472

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### June 5-7

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

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### June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

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### June 6-7

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, Sioux Falls, SD, 866-489-9241

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### June 11, August 13 and October 8

Kids Mystery Dinner Theater, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

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### June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:  
■ Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

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### June 16-21

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

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### June 25-27

Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197  
[redpowerroundup2020.com](http://redpowerroundup2020.com)

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### June 26-27

Senior Games, Madison, SD, Contact Bernie Schuurmans at 605-270-3327

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### July 14

Rock Nobles Cattlemen 2020 Summer Beef Tour, Register Before June 1: \$20, After June 1: \$40, Worthington, MN, 507-967-2380, [www.mnsca.org](http://www.mnsca.org)

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### October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative Rural Communities Conference, Milbank, SD, <https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.