

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Crazy about Curling

Win or lose, there's
no bad curling
Pages 8-9

Saddle making
for the pros
Pages 12-13

Many curling enthusiasts contend the world would be a more peaceful place if everyone "threw the stone."

Reflections and Optimism



Walker Witt - CEO
wwitt@bhec.coop

The year 2021 began with the retirement of the long-time Manager of Member Services Mike Chase and the promotion of Michelle Fischer to that role. We miss Mike's smiling face and "appropriate jokes." We are thankful for Michelle's unwavering enthusiasm and commitment to continuing and building upon our mission of being member-focused and providing great service.

Unfortunately, all of our winter area meetings were canceled in 2021 due to the pandemic. We are kicking off this new year with six area meetings beginning in Oelrichs on February 9th, Rockerville on February 11th, Hermosa on February 15th, Johnson Siding on February 17th, Whispering Pines on February 21st, and finishing with Rochford on April 1st. I encourage you to attend one or several of the meetings for a good meal, great fellowship, and a very brief cooperative update. You will also get a chance to win valuable prizes!

The 2021 Annual Meeting was a successful in-person meeting. Our 2022 Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 2nd in Hot Springs at the Mueller Center.

During the June Board Meeting, your directors elected Dennis Quivey to the position of President. Alan Bishop has been President for the past three years, and your board has a policy limiting officer positions to a maximum term of three consecutive years. Alan did an excellent job keeping us on track and focused on our mission. Dennis is continuing to follow that trend.

This past year, we began the installation of a new metering system. This 3.8 million dollar project began with installing specialized transformers and communication equipment in all eleven distribution substations. The installation work was completed in most distribution substations in May. The Hermosa substation is not fully converted yet. Currently, meters are being installed for all services served off of those completed substations. We are projecting to have the bulk of this project completed by the end of March 2022. The new metering system will replace our old

system that is deemed end-of-life by the vendor. The TWACS (Two-Way Automatic Communication System) meters will provide your co-op with more tools to track down outages and provide you and the co-op more information about your daily use. When the new system is fully deployed, all members will be on the same system instead of different technologies.

Reliability is always a primary focus, and 2021 brought system upgrades to over half of our system in the form of line rebuilds, single-phase to three-phase conversion projects, tie lines, and overhead to underground line conversions. Rights-of-way inspection and maintenance continues to be a top priority of your co-op. Operations crews patrolled 100% of the system this past year, and our pole inspection contractor tested over 4,000 power poles for structural integrity.

At the November Board Meeting, your directors approved a 22 million dollar budget for 2022. The new budget projects no rate increase in 2022! Your board also approved a two million dollar capital credit retirement during that board meeting. During the past six years, your board has retired and returned more than eight million dollars of your capital credits, which is more than ever in the history of your cooperative.

Your co-op ended 2021 in a strong financial position. One of the main reasons for this is that we have great members who pay their bills. Last year, your cooperative billed the membership over 22.6 million dollars. Each December, the previous year's bad debt is written off by the board. The total amount of bad debt in 2021 was \$3,371. That is a bad debt write-off of only .015% of the total revenue. After capital credits are applied, the total bad debt impact to the co-op will be just \$479. That is incredibly good. We are only as strong as our members, and our members are strong! Thank you.

The employees, board, and all of you embraced the challenges and opportunities presented in 2021 for a remarkably successful year, and we are looking forward to an even better 2022!

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

BLACK HILLS ELECTRIC

(ISSN No. 1531-104X)

Board President: Dennis Quivey

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Dave Lindblom - Asst. Secretary
Gary Kluthe - Treasurer
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Alan Bishop

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wwitt@bhec.coop

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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. 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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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; website: www.bhec.coop.

SCHOLARSHIP & YOUTH TOUR

Time is running out to apply for the \$1,000 scholarship that is provided to BHEC by Basin Electric Cooperative, BHEC's generation cooperative located in Bismarck, N.D. 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. All scholarship entries are confidential and will only be viewed by the selection committee appointed by BHEC. Applications can be found on our website at www.bhec.coop.

Please mail all supporting documentation to BHEC c/o Michelle Fischer PO Box 792, Custer, SD 57730 prior to Friday, February 4th. For more information, contact Mrs. Fischer by phone at 800-742-0085, or send an email to michellef@bhec.coop.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DUE DATE: FEBRUARY 4TH

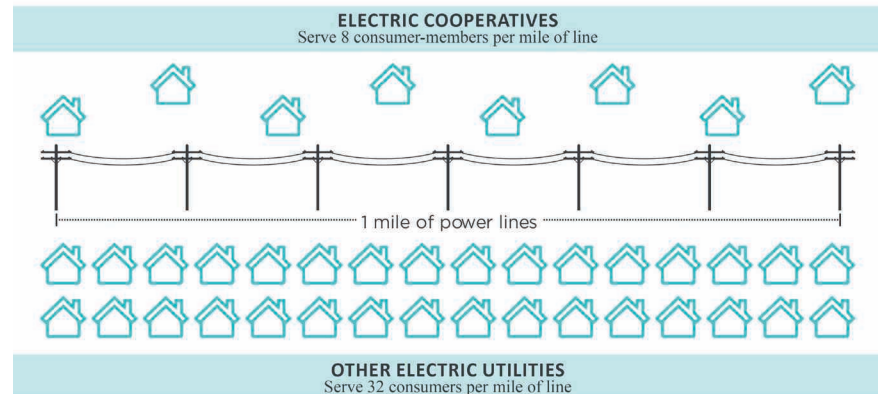
One lucky dependent of a Black Hills Electric Cooperative member can win a FREE trip to Washington D.C. June 18-24. Participating in the NRECA Youth Tour is a great way to learn about our nation, develop leadership skills, and gain a better understanding of the importance of electric cooperatives.

Applicants must submit a 500 word essay on this topic: What does the first cooperative principle (Open and Voluntary Membership) mean to you and your community? You must also submit page 2 of the Youth Tour Application that can be found on our website at www.bhec.coop. Students must be at least 16 years of age at the time of the tour.

Please submit entries to michellef@bhec.coop or mail documents to BHEC c/o Michelle Fischer PO Box 792, Custer, SD 57730 by Friday, March 11th.

YOUTH TOUR APPLICATION DUE DATE: MARCH 11TH

GOING THE EXTRA MILE | Did you know electric co-ops power fewer consumers per mile of line compared to other utilities?



Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

Though they may make for a pretty seasonal backdrop, snow and ice can complicate even modest travel plans. It's unsafe to drive when visibility is vastly reduced or when you can't fully control your car. According to AAA, wintry weather and its byproduct - hazardous road conditions - are a factor in nearly a half-million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths each year. With those figures in mind, here are some tips to minimize the risk to yourself and other motorists during winter weather.

Don't drive unless you must. It really isn't worth the risk to your safety and that of others to venture out onto potentially unsafe roads for any circumstance that isn't urgent. Pay attention to weather reports so you can run any time-sensitive errands and stock up on supplies before adverse conditions arrive. If you must drive to work, that's one thing. But don't tempt fate if you can help it.

If you have to drive, eliminate distractions. Keep your phone out of reach or set it to airplane mode - a good practice year-round but especially important when roads are dicey.

Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, including water, nonperishable food, warm clothing, a flashlight, glass scraper, blankets and medications.

Before you set out, alert others to your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

Make sure your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent a frozen fuel line, which could leave you stranded.

Don't use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface.

Drive slowly. Lower your speed to counteract the reduced traction that accompanies snow and ice. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly can help avoid skids. Since it takes longer to slow down on icy roads, take your time to slow down for a stop sign or light.

A final note for winter driving: Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area such as a garage. Exercise caution and good judgment to stay safe as you negotiate whatever conditions winter brings this year.

POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE?

Power lines are insulated for contact.

False. While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

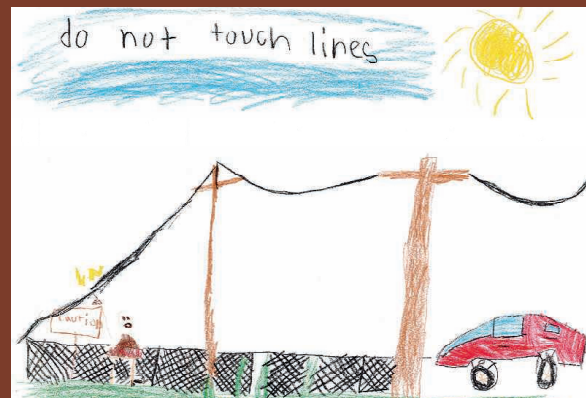


I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

True. You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is space. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

True. Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space - and lots of it - is the best insulator.



Don't touch power lines

Luke Walden

Luke Walden reminds co-op members that it's important to never touch power lines under any conditions. Luke is from Brandon, where he and his parents Blake and Jennifer are all members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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



BRUNCH TIME!

CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

Ingredients:
 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
 6 eggs
 1 cup milk
 1 tablespoon McCormick® Oregano Leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Coarse Ground Black Pepper
 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
 1 tablespoon oil
 1 package (20 oz) refrigerated shredded hash browns
 3 tbsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

METHOD

Cook and stir sausage in large skillet on medium heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add onion and bell pepper; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Set aside. Beat eggs in large bowl with wire whisk. Add milk, oregano, salt and pepper; mix well. Add sausage mixture, cheeses and tomatoes; mix well. Set aside. Pour oil into same skillet, swirling to coat the pan. Spread hash browns in bottom and up sides of pan. Pour egg mixture over potatoes. Cover. Cook on medium heat 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

BRUNCH EGG BAKE

Ingredients:
 12 slices, bread, crusts removed
 2 cups diced ham or bacon, crisp and chopped
 1 - 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
 1 green pepper, chopped
 1 onion, chopped
 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
 5 eggs
 2-1/2 cups milk
 salt and pepper
 paprika

METHOD

Butter six slices of bread and put face down in 9 x 13 inch pan, lightly sprayed with cooking spray. Cover the bread with the ham, mushrooms, green pepper, onion and cheese. Dice the remaining bread and spread over the top. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper and pour over the top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:
 1 cup quick oats
 1 cup old fashioned oats
 1/2 cup raisins
 1/3 cup brown sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
 2 cup milk

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and let sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold. May add walnuts and apples or other fresh berries when serving, if desired.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

Q: I don't have a big budget for energy-efficiency upgrades. Can you share any budget-friendly, energy-saving tips?

A: You don't need a lot of money to save on your energy bills. I have some suggestions that are low-cost, simple adjustments you can make in your home, whether you rent or own.

We all want to afford being comfortable in our homes. If you're having trouble paying your energy bills, you are not alone. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports one in three households face challenges meeting their energy needs.

Decreasing monthly bills and being more efficient at home is something we all should practice. Here are some budget-friendly energy efficiency tips targeting one of the biggest energy users in the home: the heating system. Heating and cooling account for nearly half of a U.S. home's energy consumption.

ADD COZINESS TO YOUR HOME

One way you can feel warmer in your home without turning up the thermostat is by making your home cozy.

The way our bodies perceive the temperature of a room is based more on the surfaces in the room than the air temperature. In general, harder surfaces feel colder. For example, your tile floor will feel cooler than your fabric sofa.

Cold floors in a room make us feel colder. Adding an area rug to a hard-surface floor can make us feel warmer, even with the same setting on the thermostat.

Same goes for windows. Windows are typically the least-insulated surface in a room and can feel cold in winter. Adding or closing curtains can help the room feel warmer.

CHECK YOUR WINDOWS

Make sure windows are closed and locked. This pulls the sashes tighter together, reducing gaps that allow air to flow through and cause drafts. If your sash locks don't form a tight fit, adjust them or add weatherstripping.

There's a variety of window weatherstripping products available for less than \$20. Most are simple to install and only require tools you most likely already have around the house, such as scissors and a tape measure.

Some are more permanent solutions, and some are intended to be used for one heating season and then removed. Temporary solutions such as caulk strips, putty, pull-and-peel caulking or window insulation films can be used if you rent your home and can't make permanent changes.

SEAL YOUR DOORS

Weatherstripping doors is an easy DIY project. Make sure your doors seal tightly and don't allow drafts to pass around the edges or under the door. Make sure any doors leading to an unheated space - outside or into a garage - are sealed tightly. If you can see light around the edges or beneath the door, or feel air movement when the door is closed, you are losing energy.

Because doors need to open and close easily, expect to do a bit of adjusting after installing weatherstripping. Making it too loose defeats the purpose. You need to get it just right.

CLOSE THE DAMPER

If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is completely closed when not in use. Leaving the damper open is like leaving a window open - it's just harder to see. The air you paid to heat your home will go right out the chimney. The only exception is some gas fireplaces need to remain open for gas fumes to exit. Check the owner's manual for information on the damper position.

LAYER UP

Dressing for the season prevents going overboard on your energy use. It can be tempting to adjust the thermostat to increase your comfort. Putting on a sweater or comfy sweatshirt can have the same comfort impact without increasing your energy use. Slippers can be a big help, too, especially when your feet touch a cold floor.

The next time you consider turning up the thermostat a few degrees, try these tips first.



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Swatek finds joy in helping others through art

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Art has always held a special spot in Johnny Swatek's soul. But when he discovered how much his work meant to others, he began developing an even deeper understanding of his passion for connecting with people through canvas.

Swatek recalls the time he received an urgent request for a portrait. The client was friends with a married couple and she wanted to commission a painting of the two...but it had to be soon because the husband was stricken with brain cancer and didn't have long to live.

"She came to my studio with a photo on Thursday, I stayed up all night and the next day doing the portrait, she gave it to them on Saturday, and he passed away Monday," Swatek recalled.



Since then, Swatek has made a conscious effort to put more of himself into every piece. For instance, many random requests come from those who have an emotional attachment to their farms and ranches that can reach back many generations. They'll ask for paintings of old barns and tractors or broken down cars or other images they associate with their homestead.

"It's very rewarding to help people capture their memories," he said. "Frankly, I didn't pay enough attention to the details before and I might take shortcuts, but now I realize every blade

of grass is important. I spend much more time getting those details right."

Swatek considers himself on a lifelong quest to improve his craft. Largely self-taught, the 58-year-old identifies a certain skill to hone every year. For example, in 2021 he focused on texture, in 2020 he concentrated on contrast, in 2019 he emphasized composition.

Born in Wyoming into a military family, Swatek grew up in Garden Grove, Calif., where he started learning to airbrush t-shirts on the carnival circuit. He showed up at Citizen Band jamborees where the radio buffs would line up to have their CB handles air-brushed onto their vests. It was all an education for Swatek as he perfected his artistic skills but also learned the art of working with people.

In 1992, he made his way back to his father's native town of Wagner and later settled in Avon where he lives with his wife and business partner, Jennifer. The two travel to art shows and festivals around the region, including Winterfest in Aberdeen and the "granddaddy" Augustana Art Show in Sioux Falls.

Taking much of his inspiration and influence from the 15th century Baroque stylist Caravaggio, Swatek's studio work is done in an old two-story bank building. Along with portraits, he does wildlife paintings, landscapes and other subjects that reflect his interpretation of the rural Upper Midwestern lifestyle. Scenes range from boats in a harbor in Nova Scotia to horses running wild across the plains.

While Swatek enjoys his quiet time in the studio, he looks forward to the next art show where he can rub elbows with his fellow artists.

"The shows are so much fun. There's so much camaraderie," he said. "You get to see people you may not get to see often, and when you sell a piece everybody's happy. There's no arrogance or conceit, and everybody encourages each other to succeed."





STICKS AND STONES

Members of the Aberdeen Curling Club hold a public instructional session to teach both the young and old the finer points of their sport.

Curling clubs seek to educate the public and spread the word about the joy of throwing stones

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Looking for a sure-fire way to achieve permanent world peace and lasting harmony?

Make curling mandatory.

At least Bryan Rau thinks that's just the ticket to putting an end to international animosity. Rau serves on the board of the Aberdeen Curling Club and describes being hooked the moment he threw his first stone in competition eight years ago.

"When I touched that first stone it was like 10,000 volts going through me. I kicked out the hack and threw that stone down the ice and it was just incredible," he said. "I think if everybody curled, the whole world would be different. Everybody would get along. There's no bad curling. No matter where you play, whether you win or lose, it's all good curling. It's a game that's played with honor and pride. You don't have to be a jock or a talented athlete. It's a sport that's

made for everyone. I've seen people play from 8 to 85."

Bryan and his fellow board member, Steve Gascoigne, spent a recent afternoon in Gascoigne's garage taking in a documentary called "Sticks and Stones: Battle for the Soul of Curling." When they're not playing the game, they enjoy talking about it.

As for his role as the club's ice master, Gascoigne can wax eloquently about how to prepare the perfect sheet of competition ice. He describes the tedious and exacting process that involves various measures of zammung, scraping, mopping, pebbling (twice), watering and nipping.

And if you can't control your stone after Gascoigne and his crew have spent 45 minutes working their magic, more practice may be in order.

The job of a stone hitting its target largely falls on the shoulders of the skip. A typical four-member team includes the lead, second, vice skip and skip. Each player throws two 44-pound stones and the vice skip



Aberdeen Curling Club members Danny Wolfgram, John Hilton, Alex Wolfgram and John Peterson recently completed an "eight ender," which is often compared to a perfect game in baseball.

Curling club contacts

Sioux Falls Curling Club
605-271-7539
www.scheelsiceplex.com

Aberdeen Curling Club
605-228-1717
www.curlaberdeen.com

Rushmore Curling Club
605-484-4477
www.rushmorecurling.org

Yankton Curling Club
(605) 665-0229
www.yanktonice.org

MN Curling Association
www.mncurling.org



Many curling clubs have two common goals: dedicated ice and a desire to teach others the rules and techniques of their sport.

stands in when it's the skip's turn to throw. The direction of the stone's path can be altered by sweepers who brush the surface in a way that can make the stone lose speed, gain speed or curl left or right.

The last stone is called the hammer and can be used to earn points with a favorable position near "the button" or knock the opponent's stone out of the target area.

But beyond the technical aspects of the sport or tallying wins or losses, each of the four most active clubs across the state share the same goal of educating the public about the sport and getting younger folks hooked on curling.

Rau, for instance, is a long-time Scout master and is working with his local troop to get the kids involved. He and Gascoigne and other members of the club visit the Boys and Girls club, school groups and others to

teach youngsters how to play the sport, share their positive experiences and answer their questions.

The same spirit of advocacy is also found at the Yankton Curling Club, which was started last winter by Mike and Julianna Ford along with a small group of other enthusiasts.

Julianna serves as president of the group and fell in love with the sport when she was a high school student in her native Alberta. She describes failing to make the roster of the volleyball and basketball teams but eventually finding a home with the curling squad.

"Our gym class went to the local ice rink and I loved it," she recalled. "It was a lot more strategic than physical and it was something I could compete in."

She later moved to Sioux Falls, married Mike, and the two helped create the existing club in that city.

Several years later they moved to Yankton for Mike's work and soon started another club. The Yankton group lists about 45 members and is also heavily involved in growing the sport in their community.

"We're reaching out to schools, clubs and nursing homes," Julianna said. "There are handicapped leagues and elderly people can play by using a stick to throw the stone. It's a sport that's literally for everyone."

The Fords don't often find themselves on different sides of the ice, but when they do they try to keep the competitive fires closer to an ember than a raging flame.

So, bottom line...who's better?

"No comment," Julianna said, before commenting with a chuckle, "but I'm the one who went to Arena Nationals."

FIVE WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY WHEN WORKING FROM HOME

Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day. If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are five easy ways to save energy when working from home.

1. Use a smart power strip. Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.

2. Unplug your least-used equipment. If your home office includes equipment like printers and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices, since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.

3. Choose ENERGY STAR®-certified office equipment. If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the ENERGY STAR® label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.

4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead. It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun. When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in--and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use!

5. Lower the thermostat. Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay

focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so all the more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

Source: Dept. of Energy





Meal will be served from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. at all meetings.

AREA MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	CO-SPONSOR
Oelrichs	February 9th	Oelrichs Community Hall	Oelrichs Rodeo Association
Rockerville	February 11th	Rockerville Community Hall	Rockerville Community Club
Hermosa	February 15th	Hermosa Elementary School	Battle Creek Fire District
Johnson Siding	February 17th	Rimrock Community Center	Rimrock Community Club
Whispering Pines	February 21st	Whispering Pines VFD	Whispering Pines VFD
Rochford	April 1st	Rochford Community Hall	Rochford Community Club

DIRECTOR NOMINATING PROCEDURES

BHEC's 77th Annual Meeting will be Thursday, June 2, at the Mueller Center in Hot Springs. Two directors will be elected at the meeting—one from the Meade, Pennington & Lawrence Counties geographical area, where incumbent Dave Lindblom is seeking re-election, and one from the Custer & Oglala Lakota Counties geographical area, where incumbent Jim Preston is seeking re-election. The qualifications of a director and nominating procedures, as set forth by Article IV, Sections 3 and 4 of the bylaws, are:

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative who has been employed by this or any other electric cooperative during the previous five years, or who is a close relative of an incumbent Director or of an employee of the Cooperative, or who has been convicted of a felony in any court of law in the United States of America, or who is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative and receiving service therefrom at his or her primary residential abode.

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or electric utility, or a business selling electric energy to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling distributed generation equipment such as wind turbines, solar systems, or fuel cells to, among others, the members of the Cooperative.

Upon establishment of the fact that a nominee for Director lacks eligibility under this Section or as may be provided elsewhere in these Bylaws, it shall be the duty of the Chairman presiding at the

meeting at which such a nominee would otherwise be voted upon to disqualify such nominee. Upon the establishment of the fact that any person being considered for, or already holding, a Directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this Section, it shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to withhold such position from such person, or to cause him to be removed therefrom, as the case may be. Nothing contained in this Section shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board of Directors, unless such

action is taken with respect to a matter which is affected by the provisions of this Section and in which one or more of the Directors have an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint not less than forty-five days or more than one hundred eighty days before the date of the meeting of the members at which Directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five nor more than eleven members who shall be selected from different sections so as to ensure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on such committee. The committee, keeping in mind the principle of geographical representation, shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least thirty days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors which may include a greater number of candidates than are to be elected. Any fifty or more members acting together may make other nominations by petition not more than one hundred twenty days nor less than thirty days prior to the meeting, and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where

the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The Secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting or separately, but at least ten days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates, specifying separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations and also the nominations made by petition if any.

An individual on the board of directors can expect to serve a number of days in a given year. An example of service would be as follows:

Applications are available at www.bhec.coop

BOARD MEETINGS

A minimum of twelve regular board meetings per year. These meetings are typically held at the headquarters office in Custer on the first Tuesday after the third Monday of each month. Meetings start at 8:30 a.m. and are usually over by 4:00 p.m.

TRAINING, SEMINARS, & CONFERENCES

Involvement in Cooperative training courses, seminars, and conferences for a total of between 5 and 15 days per year. These meetings normally last from two to four days each and are held at various locations throughout the year.

ANNUAL MEETING & AREA MEETINGS

Attendance at the Annual Meeting of members, and from time to time, local area meetings.

Applications must be returned by Friday, February 11, 2022

Strong Cooperatives need active members.



STILL IN THE SADDLE

At age 77, Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre is nearing the completion of his 2,000th saddle and has no plans to slow down anytime soon. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Saddle-maker Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre delights in helping bronc riders bring home championship buckles and purses

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Dave Dahl will probably never win a hand model contest. Dahl's digits are gnarled, bent and puffy after nearly a half-century of hard labor producing bronc saddles for dozens of rodeo champions.

Dahl is quick to point out, however, that looks can be very deceiving: his mitts are as strong and dependable and productive as they've ever been, seasoned with decades of experience. At the age of 77, Dahl is still going strong creating saddles out of his shop in downtown Fort Pierre. Incredibly, he's still keeping his customary pace of hand-crafting nearly 60 high-

performance saddles a year.

"Somebody once said if your hands aren't moving, you ain't making money," Dahl chuckled.

During the last week of December, Dahl was busy dashing out his 56th saddle of 2021. That saddle, commissioned by a Canadian bronc riding champion, was No. 1,924 of Dahl's career. Yes, Dahl does keep count, stamping every saddle that leaves the shop. He's already anticipating reaching the 2,000 mark.

He's considering loaning that milestone saddle to Fort Pierre's Casey Tibbs Museum so that visitors can see the brand that's catapulted dozens of rodeo competitors to the top.

"There's actually two that are marked 1,000," Dahl said. Turns out that Glen

O'Neill ended up with the first one, but then Dahl's daughter Darcy Harper also received a commemorative version for roping events. Incidentally, No. 1,800 is displayed in the North Dakota Rodeo Hall of Fame where Dahl was inducted in 2017 for both his riding and his other contributions to the sport.

The list of riders who have won titles from the swells of a Dahl saddle is endless and includes champions from Alberta to Aberdeen to Australia: CoBurn Bradshaw, Cody DeMoss, Clay Elliott, Chuck Schmidt, Jake Watson, Tom Reeves, Jeff Willert, Taos Muncy, Zeke Thurston, Cort Scheer, Wade Sundell, Kyle Whitaker and so many more that Dahl can hardly keep up. Eight Dahl saddles were at the 2021 PRCA Nationals in Las Vegas.

Pro riders enjoy collecting purses and Dahl delights in helping them reach their goals. He knows how hard it is not only to stay on a spirited bucking bronc

for a few seconds but also how difficult it is to make a dollar at it.

Dahl recalls his own limited days as a card-carrying professional when he won several buckles on the PRCA circuit before taking his saddle-making business full-time in the summer of 1974.

Bronc riding set a fire in Dahl's soul at an early age, growing up on the family farm in Keene, N.D., as one of 11 children. He competed for New Town High School and later went on to claim a national collegiate title as team captain for Black Hills State in 1967. A year after graduating with a bachelor's degree, Dahl also won the South Dakota Rodeo Association's saddle bronc title.

While he taught school for three years, Dahl eventually decided to make saddle-crafting his life's work. Dahl's friend and fellow rider Dick Jones got him interested in the craft and the two set up shop in an old abandoned drug store building next to the bank in Fort Pierre. In 1986, the bank decided to open a drive-through lane so the business moved across the street to its present location where Dahl runs Diamond D Saddle Shop and also manages a western clothing store adjacent to the shop.

Dahl plans on keeping his hands hard at work with no end in sight. He stays



Dahl's phone number is on the speed-dial list of collegiate rodeo coaches in several states across the country. At left, Dahl applies his trademark stamp to one of his saddles.

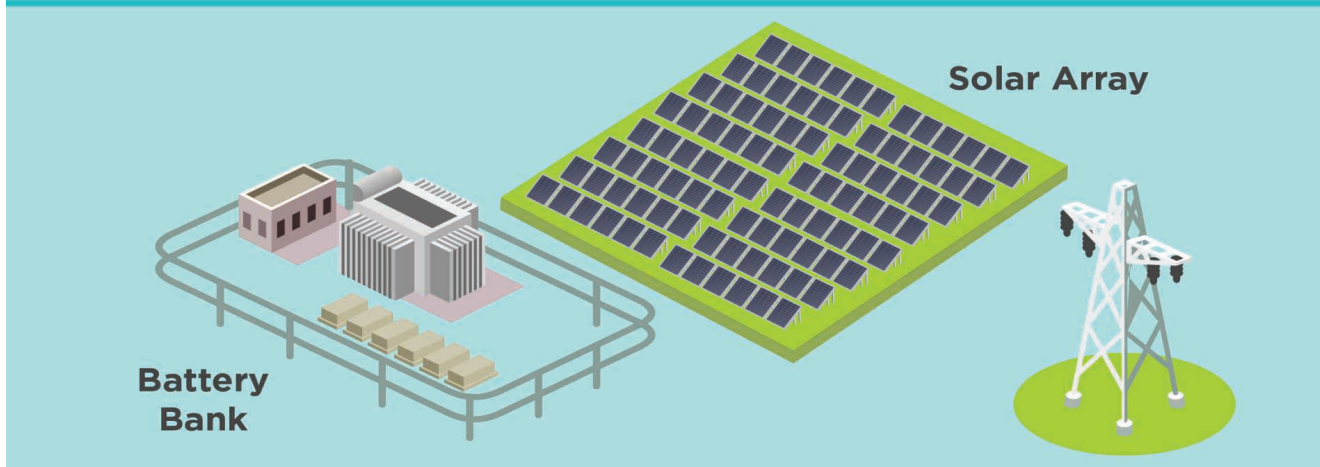
as busy as ever while participation in rodeo continues on an upward growth trajectory. College rodeo coaches in Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other states have Dahl on their speed-dial lists. He said he recently received a call from someone wanting him to fit a saddle for her 11-year-old child.

"It's just really a booming sport," he

said. "The training is better, there are better horses, there's better TV coverage of the sport and there's more money out there to be made. There are still a lot of ranch kids who grew up on horses and know how to ride. And they like to compete to see who's the best. There's so much work and I still enjoy it, so I don't plan on jumping out of the saddle anytime soon."

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

A new form of battery storage technology, known as the iron-air battery, could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours. Long-duration energy storage will be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the electric grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when needed.



New Tech Alert: Iron-Air batteries hold the promise of providing long-term energy storage capability

Maria Kanevsky

As the electric grid continues to evolve, new technologies are being developed to help advance the grid of the future. One of these technologies is a new form of battery storage technology called the iron-air battery, which could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours.

Current battery technologies can only offer storage for tens of hours, meaning the innovative iron-air battery could provide energy for roughly 10 times longer than existing grid-scale batteries. This new technology could help ensure grid reliability even with extreme weather, such as hurricanes or powerful thunderstorms. Long-duration energy storage will also be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be

available when we need it. New iron-air batteries could provide the missing link by storing excess energy to be used when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

The battery technology itself is made up of thousands of small iron pellets that develop rust when exposed to oxygen. This process discharges the battery. When the oxygen is removed, the pellets revert back to iron, which then charges the battery. According to Form Energy, the startup company developing this new technology, this process is known as the principle of "reversible rusting." Since the battery technology mainly uses the abundant and cheap resources of water, air and iron, the technology is relatively low-cost. These resources also make the technology relatively safe since there are no heavy metals, and also make the batteries simpler to recycle.

A key feature of these batteries is their

low cost, with Form Energy promising a price of less than \$20 per kWh. That price is about one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion battery technology, which is currently the cheapest battery technology on the market.

Individual iron-air batteries are about the size of a washing machine, making it easy to group many batteries together into a larger, scalable system. The size of the battery module group can vary, depending on the storage needed at a specific site. This means the batteries can be placed in a variety of areas, from rural to urban, to meet energy needs.

While this technology may be a solution for long-duration energy storage, the battery is not yet ready at the commercial level - although it is close. Form Energy estimates the battery should be ready by 2025.

Given the importance of long-duration energy storage for future of the grid, other start-ups are also looking to develop long-duration battery storage technology.

In the meantime, electric utilities can start to understand where this technology may potentially fit within their own systems to make the grid more resilient.

Electric co-ops hold discussions with lawmakers and community leaders

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session, electric cooperative leaders from across the state held several local forums to engage in wide-ranging discussions with elected officials.

Representatives from Basin Electric, East River, Rushmore Electric, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and many distribution cooperatives invited lawmakers and community leaders to engage in a dialogue focusing on the latest developments in the electric utility industry.

Electric cooperatives will continue to participate in meetings and forums throughout the Legislative Session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 10.

Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric in Mitchell, served as host of the last of the pre-session forums. Schlimgen welcomed the local lawmakers in attendance and went over some of the programs the co-op is pursuing to provide better service to its members.

Schlimgen showed a slide of the cooperative's small solar array constructed outside the headquarters office. He said the array allows the cooperative to offer members a first-hand look at how solar energy works. Members are also shown statistical data on how much electricity the array is producing at any given time.

This kind of real-time information



Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric based in Mitchell, describes how the cooperative is investing in an electric all-terrain vehicle to educate members about how EVs work and their potential for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

is important for members to understand how renewable resources such as solar and wind produce clean power, Schlimgen said. It's also important for members to understand the limitations of these sources.

"We discovered the first year we had this array that it performed at about 20 percent below the projections that were given by the manufacturer," he said.

Schlimgen also shared photos of the cooperative's Polaris Electric Ranger XP Kinetic UTV. He said the vehicle is rated at 110 horsepower and has a towing capacity of 2,500 lbs.: "This is something we can use on a practical level and also show members when they request more information about electric-powered vehicles."

House Majority Leader Kent Peterson was in attendance and noted lawmakers have considered presenting a bill regarding the licensing of electric UTVs.

"Given the rapid growth of the EV industry, this is something we'll have to consider at some point. It's great to have an opportunity like this to talk with the co-ops directly and get the useful information we need to make the right decisions," Peterson said.

Trevor Jones, general manager of SDREA, previewed some of the legislative issues that could be addressed during the 2022 session, including

issues surrounding the expansion of a network of electric vehicle charging stations and tax exemptions for data centers that consume large amounts of electrical power.

Chris Studer of East River Electric provided an overview of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Credit program. Participating consumers can sign up to receive credits or Green Tags for using renewable energy that comes from several wind farms that supply energy to the cooperative. Studer said the cost of participating in the program can vary among distribution co-ops.

Sen. Josh Klumb of Dist. 20 expressed his thanks to the co-op for organizing and hosting the forum.

"The application of these new technologies is something that will have a direct impact on our citizens for generations to come. In terms of doing our jobs as legislators, there's simply no substitute for this kind of interaction."



Chris Studer of East River Electric details the cooperative's REC Program.



**Valentine's Day
February 14**

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

JANUARY 22
Reba McEntire
Denny Sanford Premier Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

JANUARY 28-29
Deadwood Pro Snocross Races
Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JANUARY 28-29
27th Annual Dinner Theater
Reliance Legion Hall, Reliance,
SD, call 605-730-0553 for
more info and tickets

JANUARY 28-31
Lead Winterfest
Various Locations, Lead, SD,
call 605-584-1100

**JANUARY 28-
FEBRUARY 6**
**Black Hills Stock Show &
Rodeo**
Central States Fairgrounds &
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center,
Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

JANUARY 29-30
DTGCA Gun Show
National Field Archery Building,
Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

FEBRUARY 4-6
Fiddler on the Roof
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

FEBRUARY 9
BHEC Oelrichs Area Meeting
Oelrichs Community Hall,
Oelrichs, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

FEBRUARY 10
**Minnekahta Quilt Guild
Annual Open House**
Hot Springs, SD, Doors open
at 6 p.m., 605-877-2630

FEBRUARY 11
**BHEC Rockerville Area
Meeting**
Rockerville Community Hall,
Rockerville, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

FEBRUARY 11-13
**Black Hills Sports Show &
Outdoor Expo**
Monument Arena, Rapid City,
SD, visit bhssportsshow.com
for more information

FEBRUARY 12, 26
Live On Stage
High Country Guest Ranch, Hill
City, SD, 605-574-2810

FEBRUARY 15
BHEC Hermosa Area Meeting
Hermosa Elementary School,
Hermosa, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

FEBRUARY 17
**BHEC Johnson Siding Area
Meeting**
Rimrock Community Center,
Rapid City, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

FEBRUARY 18
Soup-n-Pie Fundraiser
American Legion Auxiliary Unit
303, Hermosa, SD, event runs
from 4:30-6:30 p.m., bingo
starts at 7 p.m., 605-255-5977

FEBRUARY 21
**BHEC Whispering Pines
Area Meeting**
Whispering Pines VFD,
Rapid City, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

**FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5**
Making God Laugh
Grand Opera House, Pierre,
SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
The Music of John Williams
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 12
**28 Below Fatbike Race,
Ride and Tour**
Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
SD, visit www.28below.com
for more info and to register

MARCH 12, 26
Live On Stage
High Country Guest Ranch, Hill
City, SD, 605-574-2810

APRIL 1
BHEC Rochford Area Meeting
Rochford Community Hall,
Rochford, SD, meal will be
served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
605-673-4461

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