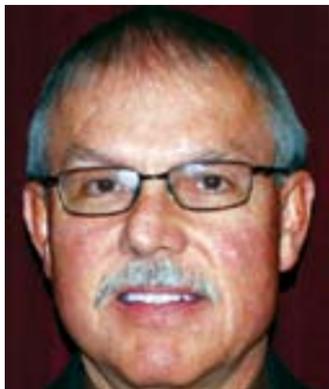


Bugs, Trees and the Co-op's Power Lines

The four stages of a bug infestation



Dan Hutt
dhutt@bhec.coop

American humorist, cartoonist, and author Kin Hubbard accurately observed, "No one can feel as helpless as the owner of a sick goldfish." The same could be said of the owner of a ponderosa pine tree in the Black Hills. Once mountain pine beetles bore into the golden bark of that grand, old monument in your yard, you can spray

insecticide, apply fertilizer, or sing lullabies twice a day, but you won't keep the needles from turning brown and falling to the ground. It's like the ending of the Walt Disney classic *Old Yeller*. If you don't want the plague to spread, you have to put your old friend down. I'm not insensitive. It's sad. I've had to cut down trees that are twice my age, and I cried big tears in 1957 when Travis had to shoot his dog. It still chokes me up.

The increasingly ubiquitous brown hillsides present some real, although less emotional, challenges to your cooperative. More than four million trees are within falling distance of BHEC lines. Many of them are dying. Almost every day Cooperative crews cut dead pine trees in an effort to prevent outages, expensive damages, and wildfires. We recognize four stages in the cycle of mountain pine beetle infestation: Stage One – green trees show pitch tubes on the trunk; Stage Two – needles turn red or brown; Stage Three – needles fall off; and Stage Four – trees fall.

Property owners need to take steps to contain the spread of the beetles before the summer of Stage One. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture has good information on preventing, controlling and treating beetle infestations at www.beatthebeetles.com. If you plan to cut trees that are in danger

of hitting cooperative lines, for your own safety and expense, call us. We will help fall the trees at no charge to you. You will be responsible for the trees after they are on the ground.

Once trees have reached Stages Two or Three, the cooperative will cut the trees identified during its inspections or when notified. After cutting danger trees, cooperative personnel will lop branches to a height of eighteen inches unless property owners prefer them left intact for their own treatment. BHEC will attempt to notify property owners prior to cutting the trees to determine which limb treatment option is preferred.

The increasingly ubiquitous brown hillsides present some real, although less emotional, challenges to your cooperative.

BHEC employees are not crazed, herbicidal maniacs or mindless Paul Bunyans craving the sight of giant trees crashing to the ground. It would be



just fine with all of us if we didn't have to cut another tree. BHEC employees are trained to identify hazardous trees and to fulfill the co-

operative's legal obligation to eliminate the danger by cutting the trees. Cooperative members can help keep their costs down by inspecting trees around power lines and by notifying the cooperative of trees that endanger the lines. When managing your own forest, please call before cutting trees that could strike cooperative lines. If the tree touches the line and you didn't call, you will get a bill. If you spark a fire, it could be a big one.

Being a property owner has its rewards and challenges. As Kin Hubbard said, "The fellow that owns his own home is always just coming out of a hardware store."

Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections

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Engineering

Alan Michalewicz – amich@bhec.coop

Manager of Marketing and

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Connections Editor

Mike Chase – mchase@bhec.coop

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Wind Estimated at 100 mph



March decided to go out like a lion as its 100-plus mile per hour winds shattered four transmission poles between Fairburn and Hermosa and left more than 3,000 members without power. Power to the Spring Creek and Hermosa Substations was restored within about 90 minutes but it took crews about five hours to get the Fairburn Sub back on. Two smaller outages near Johnson Siding and Rochford, kept about 300 members in the dark for about eight hours. The rapidly-moving storm started several lightning fires around the area.



Kainz Powerlines of Custer helped Black Hills Electric crews set two 60-foot, one 55-foot and one 50-foot transmission poles along South Highway 79 following a fast-moving storm. The poles shattered about 10-feet above the ground. No one was out more than a few hours.



Extreme Fire Danger



Black Hills Electric Cooperative has more than 2,300 miles of overhead power lines. Hundreds of miles of those lines pass through forested land. The U.S. Forest Service has issued an extreme fire danger warning for the Black Hills, in part because of a bug infestation that has killed hundreds of thousands of trees. On the plains surrounding the Hills, the fire danger is equally high. The co-op has two full-time right-of-way crews and other linemen who cut trees whenever possible. However, there are restrictions to the width of our rights-of-way and on what trees can be cut. In many cases, the co-op must pay stumpage fees to fall trees. If you see potential fire hazards along the co-op's power lines, please contact the office. A fire can be a great expense to the cooperative, no matter how many acres are involved.

Home Show Reflects Economy and Weather



John Eiring, in red shirt above center, customer serviceman at Black Hills Electric, visits with two members at the Black Hills Home Builders Home Show in Rapid City. Traffic was light during the three-day show, which included more than 100 home improvement vendors.

Please plan to attend BHEC's 67th Annual Meeting Friday, June 1, at the Mueller Center in Hot Springs.

What Your Meter is Telling You

As with any improvements in technology, there comes a learning curve.

BHEC's digital meters are no exception.

In the past when you looked at your meter, it could



Focus meter showing the "DA" display for off-peak demand.

only show you how many kilowatt-hours you had used since the last time you read the meter.

New digital meter technology now allows a meter to show as many as 12 functions related to serving your electrical needs. For those members with either the Itron meter or the Focus meter, BHEC uses four registers to obtain billing data.

On the Itron meter, display "A" is the off-peak demand; display "B" is morning peak; display "C" is afternoon peak; and display "kWh" is kilowatt-hour usage.

On the Focus meter, display "DA" is off peak demand; display "DB" is morning peak; display "DC" is afternoon peak; display "kWh" is kilowatt-hours; and display five is a display check that shows all eights.

BHEC's winter peaks are from 5-9 a.m. and 5-9 p.m. The summer peak will be from 2-9 p.m.

Members with mechanical meters will be able to see kilowatt-hours usage but not demand.

Please call the office if you have questions or need more information.

Broberg to D.C.

Jori Broberg, a daughter of Donovan and Julie Broberg, is the winner of Black Hills Electric's essay contest and earned a trip to Washington, D.C. in June.



Jori Broberg

She is a junior home school student living in the Johnson Siding area with her parents, sister, and two brothers.

Broberg enjoys basketball, working on her grandparent's ranch and attending church youth group. This will be her fourth summer working at Circle B Chuckwagon and Trail Rides. She hopes to study veterinary science in the future.

Broberg will join students from several other South Dakota cooperatives on a week-long trip to the nation's capitol. She will be among 14,000 other rural electric cooperative youth who will tour the Washington area, work with their legislators and make life-long friends.

Broberg will be awarded a \$1,000 college scholarship upon completion of high school courses.

The essay contest is open to all juniors who are dependents of BHEC members. Read each January's newsletter for information.

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG



Hendricks Wins BHEC Scholarship

William Hendricks, a son of Craig and Concepcion Hendricks, has been selected to receive Black Hills Electric's \$1,000 college scholarship. The 15-year-old will graduate from Stevens High School in Rapid City in May.

Hendricks has been active in symphonic band and jazz band, earning all-state honors in jazz band his freshman and junior years. He was elected drum major his senior year for the Raider marching band, a position he also held for the Rapid City Ranger band.

As a freshman, Hendricks was selected to play baseball with the Canyon Lake Little League All-Stars, helping the team to a first-ever appearance at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Penn. Hendricks opened one of the world series games by playing the National Anthem on his violin.

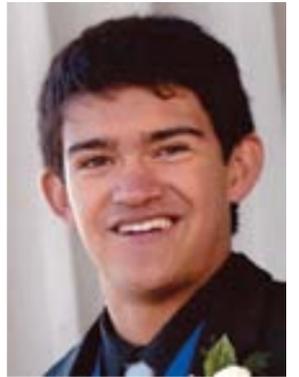
Hendricks currently serves as secretary of the parish council at his church and plays saxophone and violin for the residents at Meadowbrook Golden Living Center. He is also tutoring eight high schools students in math and physics. As part of his National Honor Society project, he volunteered to work at Storybook Island helping with winter maintenance.

During his junior year, Hendricks helped create a community project called Run for Shoes, a 5k run to raise money for elementary school children in need.

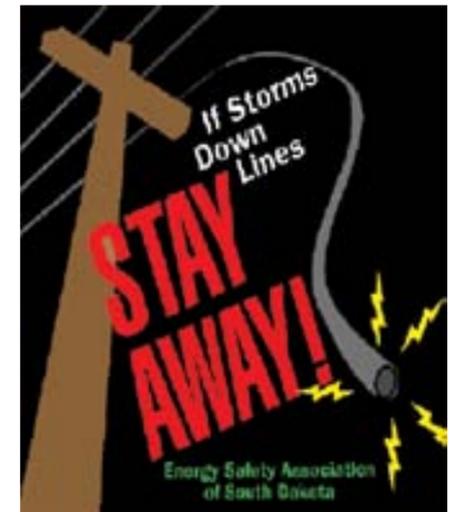
Hendricks has won many awards and honors during his school years, including first place at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology Science Fair, where he received the Herbert Hoover Young Engineer Award and the West River Mathematics Competition. He was selected for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership conference, served all four

years on the Stevens Student Council and wrote for and was editor of the school newspaper.

Hendricks plans to major in materials engineering in college with hopes of improving alternative energy sources.



William Hendricks



Pre-registering Saves Money

Preregistering for your annual meeting helps us keep costs low by purchasing only the meals that we need. We also save in set-up costs, registration materials and printing costs. Please preregister using the postcard in the annual report or e-mail us at bhec@bhec.coop. Preregistration deadline is Friday, May 25. In addition to saving the co-op money, you might win \$100 for registering early.