



# Cooperative Connections

United States®  
**Census  
2020**

**Census 2020:  
Be Counted.  
It Matters.**

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**Safety Shines  
at Stock Show**

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# FORT PIERRE TO HOST 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

The West Central Electric board of directors has set the location for the city of Fort Pierre to host the 71st annual meeting of the cooperative.

The 2020 annual meeting will be held in the Pat Duffy Community Center in Fort Pierre on Wednesday, Oct. 7, and will begin with business followed by a free annual meeting meal.

Plan to join your cooperative staff along with your neighbors and friends at West Central's 71st annual meeting on Oct. 7.

## Leutenegger Passes

Former West Central Electric Cooperative Director Joseph Carl "Joe" Leutenegger passed away Jan. 26, 2020, in Mitchell, S.D.

Funeral services were held Jan. 30 in Kadoka with interment at Black Hills National Cemetery on Jan. 31.

Joe was born Jan. 19, 1928, to Jacob and Martha (Pluta) Leutenegger in Belvidere, S.D. He attended Belvidere Elementary and graduated high school in May of 1946.

On Nov. 26, 1946, he enlisted with the U.S. Navy for four years. When he left home for the first time, he went to Omaha, Neb., and from there he boarded the train and headed to the Naval Training Center in San Diego, Calif. He went through 16 weeks of training and then 16 weeks of yeoman training. He was assigned to the U.S. Naval Station at Treasure Island at the electronics school where he was employed in the personnel office.

In the fall of 1950, Joe was transferred to the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard at Bremerton, Wash., and then headed to Japan, Korea and many other areas.

In October of 1951, he returned to Treasure Island and was honorably discharged there on Nov. 16, 1951.

At the age of 23, Joe returned to Belvidere and began working in the Belvidere Bank the following January. Joe was united in marriage to Kathleen Addison on Sept. 9, 1961.

Joe was employed at the Belvidere Bank, was manager at BankWest, and, at the age of 55, he decided to buy the People's Market. He was on the West Central Electric (REA) board from 1985-2016. Joe and Kathleen enjoyed many vacations and bus trips with the REA, Affiliated Foods and BankWest.

Joe's children and grandchildren have many great memories of the special trips he took them all on...especially to Disney World and a couple trips to Vegas! He was a member of Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Kadoka and Holy Family Catholic Church in Mitchell.

Survivors include his wife Kathleen of Mitchell; four daughters: September (Cory) Kirby of Brookings, Shawna (Richard) Bendt of Kadoka, Shanesa (Wade) Rhodes of Black Hawk and Starette (Brian) Nash of Mitchell; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; one sister, Mary Puls of Cleveland, Ohio; and a host of other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by one son, Shane, on May 4, 1992; his parents; and four siblings: Leo Konietzko, Sophie Konietzko, Glendy Rice and Frankie Rice.



# West Central Electric

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-988)

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**Our Mission is to Provide  
Safe, Reliable Service  
to our Member Owners.**

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Call 605-669-8100  
24-hour Dispatching**

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Twitter: @WCElectric; Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative](http://www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative)

Design assistance by SDREA

# Stay in the Know



**Jeff Birkeland, CEO**

[jeff.birkeland@wce.coop](mailto:jeff.birkeland@wce.coop)

At West Central Electric, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our consumer-members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through phone messages, text messages or email, if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if West Central Electric has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by West Central to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by either calling 669-8100 or by clicking the link on our website, [www.wce.coop/update-my-information](http://www.wce.coop/update-my-information). By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.

**Up-to-date  
contact  
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can potentially  
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power restoration  
process during  
an outage.**

# Extension Cord Safety Tips

Not enough cord for your lamp or radio to reach the nearest outlet? Just plowing through the junk drawer for an extension cord? This may not be a good idea. Extension cords can be very helpful in delivering power right where we need it. However, regardless of the gauge or rating of the cord, an extension cord is a temporary solution, and is not meant to be used as a long-term extension of your household's electrical system.

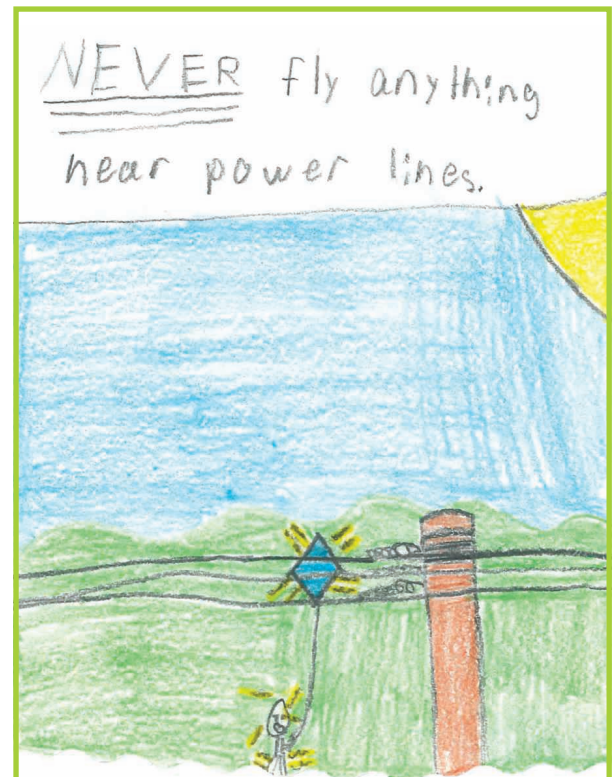
Using extension cords properly is critical to your safety. With continuous use over time, an extension cord can rapidly deteriorate, creating a potentially dangerous electric shock or fire hazard. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following tips for staying safe from electric shock and electrical fires:

- Do not overload extension cords or allow them to run through water or snow on the ground.
- Do not substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.
- Do not run through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.
- Do not use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed where you need them.
- Multiple plug outlets must be plugged directly into mounted electrical receptacles; they cannot be chained together.
- Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products to be plugged in and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- The appliance or tool that you are using the cord with will have a wattage rating on it. Match this up with your extension cord and do not use a cord that has a lower rating.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can give you an electric shock or burn.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots for the plug. Do not cut off the ground pin to force a fit. This defeats the purpose of a three-prong plug and could lead to an electrical shock. Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.
- Use extension cords with polarized and/or three-prong plugs.
- Buy only cords approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Intertek (ETL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Source: esfi.org



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Never fly anything near power lines."**

**Gage Cumbow, 12 years old**

Gage is the son of Ryan and Kyley Cumbow, Pierre, S.D. They are members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Blunt, 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.



# Seafood Sensations

## Hot Crab Dip

- |                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 tsp. ground mustard         |
| 1 cup mayonnaise                      | 1 lb. lump crabmeat             |
| 2 tsp. OLD BAY® Seasoning             | 1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese |

Mix cream cheese, mayonnaise, Old Bay Seasoning and ground mustard in medium bowl until well blended. Add crabmeat; toss gently. Spread in shallow 1-1/2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with Cheddar cheese and additional Old Bay Seasoning, if desired. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Serve with assorted crackers or sliced French bread. Makes 28 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 110, Total Fat 10g, Cholesterol 30mg, Sodium 181mg, Protein 5g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Seafood Casserole

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 (6 oz.) pkg. crab, tuna or salmon, drained | 4 eggs, beaten            |
| 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese                | 1 cup milk                |
| Onions, chopped                              | Salt and pepper, to taste |
|  | Paprika                   |

Spray an 8x8-inch pan or casserole dish. Combine seafood, cheese and onions. Put in pan. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Pour over casserole; sprinkle paprika on top. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes. Let stand a few minutes before serving.

**Velma Schmitz, Bonesteel, SD**

## Red Salmon Spread

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 (14 oz.) can red salmon, drained | 1 tsp. liquid smoke  |
| 6 oz. cream cheese, softened       | 1/2 tsp. garlic salt |
|                                    | Parsley flakes       |

Remove skin and bones from salmon; cut into small chunks. Combine cream cheese, liquid smoke and garlic salt. Add salmon. Shape into 2 or 3 balls. Sprinkle with parsley flakes. Refrigerate. Serve with assorted crackers.

**June Herke, Watertown, SD**

## Crab Lasagna

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1/4 cup chopped onion                | 12 oz. cottage cheese       |
| 1 stick butter                       | 1 egg                       |
| 1 quart half-and-half                | 1 T. parsley                |
| 1/2 tsp. minced garlic               | 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese     |
| 4 T. cream cheese                    | 12 uncooked lasagna noodles |
| 24 oz. pkg. imitation crab, shredded | 2 cups mozzarella cheese    |

Saute onions in butter. Add half-and-half, garlic and cream cheese. Prepare 9x13-inch pan. Assemble layers as follows: 1 cup sauce, top with lasagna noodles, 1/2 of cottage cheese mixture, 1/2 of crab, 1 cup sauce, lasagna noodles and 1 cup mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers. Cover with foil; refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour. Remove foil and bake an additional 20 minutes until bubbly and cheese starts to brown. Let set 10 minutes before serving.

**Jane Ham, Rapid City, SD**

## Crab or Shrimp Salad

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 (7-oz.) pkg. ring, shell or spiral pasta | 1 cup diced cucumber           |
| 1/2 cup diced celery                       | 1 cup Miracle Whip             |
| 1/4 cup diced onion                        | 1/2 cup Dorothy Lynch dressing |
| 1 (8 oz.) container mock crab or shrimp    | 1/2 tsp. salt                  |
|  | 1/2 tsp. pepper                |

Prepare pasta according to package directions. Toss together celery, onions, crab or shrimp and cucumbers. Add Miracle Whip, dressing, salt and pepper. Chill.

**Joyce Hermans, Milbank, SD**

Please send your favorite appetizer, beverage, casserole or dairy 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, phone number and co-op name.

# Energy Efficient Landscaping Tips



**Pat Keegan**

Collaborative Efficiency

**The decisions you make about your home's landscaping can help you stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.**

**Dear Pat and Brad:** A friend told us that if our landscaping is done right, it can help lower our home's monthly energy bill. What choices can we make that will reduce our home energy use? – Jason and Kit

**Dear Jason and Kit:** Your friend is right. The decisions you make about your home's landscaping can help you stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. With summer just around the corner, let's start by looking at how strategic planting can help cool your home.

Direct sunlight hitting windows is a major contributor to overheating your home during summer months. By planting trees that block sunlight, you can improve comfort and reduce your air conditioning energy use. If the trees eventually grow tall enough to shield your roof, that's even better.

The most important windows to shade are the ones facing west, followed by windows that face east. Morning and evening sunlight hits the home more directly than mid-day sunlight. Also, an eave on the south side of your home can help shade your windows during mid-day sun.

If you live in a colder climate, planting deciduous trees that lose their leaves in fall will shield your windows in summer and allow sunlight in during winter to help warm your home. A simple approach that can deliver some shade the first year is to plant a "living wall" of vines grown on a trellis next to your home.

One cooling strategy is to make sure your air conditioning compressor has some plants near it. Just make sure the plants aren't too close. The compressor should have a five-foot space above it and a two- to three-foot gap all the way around so that it gets enough air movement to do its job.

There are two other factors to consider that are important in some areas of the country:

- 1) Water is becoming more precious and more expensive. When you pay your water bill, much of that cost is for the energy required to pump water to your home or perhaps you have your own well. Either way, reducing water use saves you money and reduces energy use.
- 2) If you live in an area that has wildfires, you should definitely take that into consideration as you develop a landscaping plan. What and where you plant on your property can either increase or decrease the risk of fire reaching your home.

Now let's talk about how landscaping impacts your home's energy use and comfort in the winter.

If you live in a colder climate, a solid wind break can cut harsh winter winds. The best solution for this is a solid row of trees (preferably evergreen) on the windward side of the home, with shrubs underneath the trees to keep the wind from sneaking through. If you live in a warmer climate, you would not want a wind barrier as wind flow will help cool your home.

If you live in a cooler climate that isn't too humid, planting a row of shrubs a foot from your home can provide more efficiency. By stopping air movement, it can form a dead air space around the home that acts as "bonus" insulation. While you're at it, you could add some foundation insulation if you have a home with a basement or if it's built on a slab. In a humid climate, however, leave several feet of space between landscaping and the home as airflow is necessary to avoid moisture-related home damage.

These are just a few ideas to help you get started. I should also note that as with any landscaping projects that require digging, remember to dial 8-1-1 to ensure all underground utility lines are properly marked and flagged before you start the work. Happy planting!

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

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

# Calling All Teachers

Teachers in the region are eligible for a four-day seminar in North Dakota that results in academic credit in their profession. The Lignite Energy Council's Teachers Seminar will be held June 8-11, 2020, in Bismarck, N.D.

Approximately 130 elementary and secondary teachers from Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota will attend the seminar, which was totally revamped in 2009 and made into a two-credit class, which lasts for four days. Participants can receive credit from the University of North Dakota (teaching and learning), North Dakota State University (education) or Minot State University (science).

The seminar, which will be held at Bismarck State College, Bismarck, N.D., will provide teachers with the information and educational materials they need to teach their students about how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses in the Upper Midwest. In addition, the seminar covers lignite's economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry. Since 1986, more than 3,400 teachers have attended the Lignite Energy Council's teacher education seminar.

The teacher education seminar is sponsored by the Lignite Energy Council, in cooperation with Bismarck State College, The Center for Economic Education at the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University and Minot State University.

During the seminar, teachers hear presentations by educators, researchers and lignite industry representatives. One day is devoted to touring mining operations, reclamation sites and coal conversion facilities. Question-and-answer sessions in the classroom and on the tour give teachers the opportunity to find out what they need to know for their individual classroom needs.

Two graduate professional development credits are available through the Center for Economic Education at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.D., North Dakota State University, Fargo, N.D., or Minot State University, Minot, N.D. To receive the credits, teachers must attend all portions of the seminar and prepare lesson plans demonstrating how they will use the seminar information and materials in their classrooms.

Teachers attending the seminar will receive lecture outlines on each presentation, examples of lesson plans, classroom exercises, coal and ash samples, audiovisual materials and information on the facilities they tour. In addition, they also receive resource guides listing publications and audiovisual materials available for energy education.

Free lodging is provided in a Bismarck State College residence hall (two people per room). Meals will be provided. Also, transportation will be provided by the Lignite Energy Council for the tour of a mine and power plant.

Visit <https://lignite.com/events/teachers-seminar/> or contact Erin Huntimer at Basin Electric Power Cooperative at 701-223-0441 for more information.



# Governor's Ag Ambassador Nominations Sought

Gov. Kristi Noem is seeking nominations for the 2020 South Dakota Governor's Ag Ambassador Award.

Nominations should be for individuals or organizations who have continually worked to promote agriculture in South Dakota while demonstrating servant leadership, hard work, honesty, humility and respect for others.

## Key achievements of the Ag Ambassador:

- Provides visionary leadership to South Dakota's agricultural industry.
- Champions growth and prosperity of the state's number one industry.
- Advocates for agriculture and the responsible stewardship of livestock and land.
- Highlights the significance of South Dakota agriculture to our global food system.
- Influences decision makers to develop and implement sound agricultural policies.

Nominations are due to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture by May 1, 2020. The form can be found at <http://sdda.sd.gov> under the "Happening Now" section by clicking "2020 Governor's Ag Ambassador Nominations."

The award will be presented during the annual Governor's Agricultural Summit in Sioux Falls July 17-18.

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota's economy, generating \$32.5 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 132,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, and preserve South Dakota agriculture for today and tomorrow. Visit them online at [sdda.sd.gov](http://sdda.sd.gov) or find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



Self-responses to the 2020 census begin March 12 online, by phone or by paper.

# GET COUNTED

## Census 2020 Will Shape Region's Future

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

Census Day is coming April 1 and a push is being made in March to get people counted.

The census counts people where they are at on April 1, 2020.

The process opens March 12 when people can begin the online completion of the census. Most people will have received an invitation to respond to the census. The form will be mailed to USPS mailable addresses. Hand delivery will take place in cases where addresses are a rural/PO Box or non-USPS household unit. The card will have an address-specific code for responders to use, but they can still go online without the card.

“The goal on March 12 is to have as many people as possible go online and complete the census,” said Rob Timm, partnership specialist with the Dallas Regional Census Office/Field Division, Denver Region U.S. Census Bureau. Timm has been focusing on western South Dakota businesses and government agencies in preparation for Census 2020.

People can also complete the census by phone or complete a paper form.

On May 1, the labor-intensive process of sending enumera-

### The 2020 Census is accessible for everyone.

We're making sure that **however you choose to respond**—online, by phone, or by mail—that **the census is accessible**. You'll receive an invitation to respond **beginning in mid-March**. You choose how you want to respond.



You can respond **online** in English or in 12 additional languages. The online questionnaire is accessible, following the latest web accessibility guidelines. We'll also have a video in **American Sign Language** available to guide you through responding online.



You can respond by **phone** in English or in 12 additional languages. You can also respond in English by **TDD** at 844-467-2020.



By mid-April, we'll mail a **paper questionnaire** to every household that hasn't already responded. (Some households will receive a paper questionnaire along with the first invitation in March.)

We'll have **braille and large print guides** available online to assist you with completing the paper questionnaire.



If necessary, you can respond **in person** beginning in mid-May. Census takers will visit all households that have not yet responded.

We'll have census takers available who can communicate in **American Sign Language** and additional languages. When the census taker visits to help you respond, you can request that another census taker who communicates in American Sign Language returns, if you prefer.

If you prefer, you may also choose to have another member of your household interact with the census taker.

**Responding is important.** A complete count helps ensure that services like Medicare, Medicaid, social security, and public transportation can support those who need them.

**Responding is safe.** All of the information you share with us is protected by law and cannot be used against you.

**Responding is accessible.** We're doing everything we can to ensure the ways to respond are accessible for everyone.

Any questions? Please visit [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov). This website is 508 compliant and accessible to people of all abilities.

Shape your future  
START HERE >

United States  
Census  
2020



tors door-to-door to count people begins. An estimated 1,200 people will be serving as enumerators through July.

“We know there are tracts with low response areas,” said Timm. Census officials are working to improve those response rates.

Each year, the federal government distributes more than \$675 billion to states and communities based on U.S. Census Bureau data. According to the report, “Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds” by the GW Institute of Public Policy, South Dakota was allocated more than \$2.3 billion in 2016. This money represented the allocation of funds from 55 large federal spending programs guided by Census 2010 data. Of that \$2.3 billion, nearly one-quarter was for U.S. Department of Agriculture programs while one-third went to U.S. Health and Human Services programs.

## Census Key Dates

**March 12:**  
Self-response begins  
and continues  
through July 2020.

**April 1: Census Day**  
**Dec. 31: Census  
Counts Delivered  
to President**

The report, by Andrew Reamer, a research professor at The George Washington University, noted that census-derived datasets help define eligibility criteria for various programs, compute formulas that geographically allocate funds, rank project applications based on priorities and set interest rates for federal loan programs.

Officials in Sioux Falls estimated that the community missed out on nearly \$1,600 per person for every person missed in the 2010 census.

The value of the census goes beyond dollars.

In Minnesota, the fate of the state’s 8th Congressional District is at stake. The U.S. House of Representatives is based on population. Minnesota currently has eight seats while Nebraska has three and South Dakota and North Dakota have one seat each.

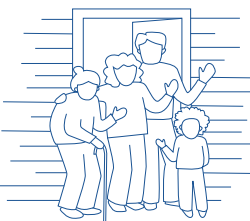
“It’s not going to take a ton of your time and it makes a difference for South Dakota,” said Jake Droge, partnership specialist with the Dallas Regional Census Office/Field Division, Denver Region U.S. Census Bureau. Droge has been working with government agencies and businesses in eastern South Dakota.

## CENSUS 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The 2020 Census is closer than you think!  
Here's a quick refresher of what it is and why it's essential that everyone is counted.

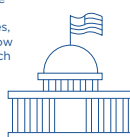
### Everyone counts.

The census counts every person living in the United States once, only once, and in the right place.



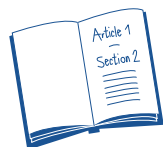
### It's about fair representation.

Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.



### It's in the Constitution.


The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. The first census was in 1790.



### It's about \$675 billion.

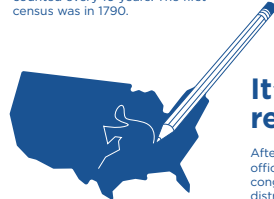
The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants, and support to states, counties, and communities are based on census data.

That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other vital programs.




### It's about redistricting.

After each decade's census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.



### Taking part is your civic duty.

Completing the census is mandatory: it's a way to participate in our democracy and say "I COUNT!"



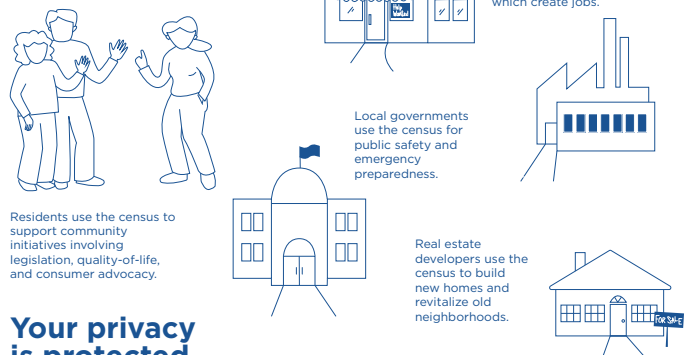
### Census data are being used all around you.

Residents use the census to support community initiatives involving legislation, quality-of-life, and consumer advocacy.

Local governments use the census for public safety and emergency preparedness.

Businesses use census data to decide where to build factories, offices, and stores, which create jobs.


Real estate developers use the census to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods.



### Your privacy is protected.

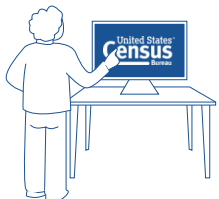
It's against the law for the Census Bureau to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or your household.

By law, your responses cannot be used against you and can only be used to produce statistics.




### 2020 will be easier than ever.


In 2020, you will be able to respond to the census online.




### You can help.

You are the expert—we need your ideas on the best way to make sure everyone in your community gets counted.





FIND OUT HOW TO HELP AT  
[2020CENSUS.GOV/PARTNERS](https://2020census.gov/partners)





Former West Central Electric General Manager/ CEO Steve Reed, VFD members Aaron Schindler, Shane Reis, Ryan Huffman and Bill Lengkeek, and current West Central CEO/General Manager Jeff Birkeland pose for a photo.

# RVFD GETS WCEC LOAN

Joni Moore

joni.moore@wce.coop

West Central Electric presented the Reliance Volunteer Fire Department with a check for \$40,000 for a Rural Economic Development Loan. The loan helped pay for a new addition to the existing facility.

The addition was needed because the existing building was not large enough to accommodate today's longer and taller tanker trucks. The building was built in the 1980s and was a three-stall garage-type building, with an addition added in the early 2000s. When the fire department was looking at buying a new tanker truck, they learned that the size of the existing building severely limited their selection of trucks.

"There are a lot of tankers out there, but there were only three in the whole country that would fit in our building," said Secretary/Treasurer Aaron Schindler.

Three firefighters also took Yellow Card training (training for structure fires) and learned that the personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be stored away from exhaust so that the very crucial and necessary equipment does not get compromised or deteriorate. The tight quarters in the existing building did not allow for this.

The new 48-foot by 50-foot addition includes three more stalls. There are 16-foot sidewalls and it's four feet taller than the existing building. Now, if they need to get bigger or longer equipment, the facility size will no longer be a concern or restrict their options. "The building will no longer be a limiting factor," added Schindler.

The building was paid for with a combination of a grant, the loan from West Central Electric and fundraising \$40,000, which they had been saving for a long time. Eventually, the Reliance Volunteer Fire Department wants to hold trainings and presentations for the community and other fire departments.

The Reliance Volunteer Fire Department territory is from the old town of Lyman to the Missouri River and from the reservation line near Lower Brule to Iona. They are also mutual aid for Presho,



Established in 1905, the Reliance Volunteer Fire Department territory extends from the old town of Lyman to the Missouri River and from the reservation line near Lower Brule to Iona.



The new addition features 16-foot sidewalls, allowing the Reliance Volunteer Fire Department more options when purchasing fire trucks.

Kennebec, Lower Brule and Chamberlain. There are about 25 volunteer firefighters and they are called to an average of 30 calls a year.

Everyone is invited to check out the addition and attend a wild game feed fundraiser on Saturday, March 28, starting at 6 p.m. It is come-and-go style and there will be fish, deer, pheasant, etc. as well as salads and desserts. There will be hot dogs for those who like their meat a little less wild. The fire hall is located at 101 S. Main Street.

# FOR SALE

West Central Electric has two service trucks that will be sold through Big Iron Online Auctions on March 25 at <https://www.bigiron.com/>.

Big Iron Auctions are no reserve and have no buyers' fees/premiums!

Regular maintenance performed and well taken care of. Both trucks will be **sold as-is** with service bins. Diesel engine is out in the 2008 F550 and it will be sold with the Altec AT37G articulating squirt boom lift.

For more truck information, please contact Seth Geigle at 669-8100.

For information about Big Iron Auctions and the exact listing information, contact Judge Jessop at 280-0127.

## Unit 35



Unit 35 is a 2013 Ford F350 with 107,956 miles.

## Unit 67



Unit 67 is a 2008 Ford F550 with 118,629 miles and an Altec AT37G articulating squirt boom. The engine is out.



Unit 35 is equipped with service bins that store all your ranch gear. Unit 35 is a 2013 Ford F350 with 107,956 miles.



Unit 67 is equipped with an Altec AT37G articulating squirt boom and service bins.

# Boots, Broncs and Safety

## Electric Safety Remains a Tradition at Black Hills Stock Show®

Courtney J. Deinert

courtneyd@centralec.coop

**“We’re just selling safety.”**

During the first week of February, people from across the region pull on their boots and gather in Rapid City, S.D., to celebrate the area’s deep history of cattle ranching at the Black Hills Stock Show.

The Black Hills Stock Show is the second largest event in the state, after the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

On the vendor floor, you can find anything a cowboy or cowgirl would dream of. Among the leather boots, hides, saddles and hats for sale, you can also find the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of South Dakota booth.

“We’re just selling safety,” said Todd Eliason, assistant general manager at Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative in Rapid City, S.D. “We’ve been doing this for more than 20 years.”

The booth features a tabletop safety demonstration, also known as “Neon Leon” or “Power Town.” The table demonstration features a model farmyard with a barn, house, overhead power lines, ground transformer and props such as tree branches, a ladder, backhoe and line down on a tractor.

With the step of a pedal, the operator can conduct electricity through the lines and produce a shock or arch with the props.



With the step of a pedal, Central Electric’s Pat Soukup illustrates the effects of electricity when contacting a power line.

The presentation is designed to educate elementary-aged children about the dangers of electricity, but all ages gather to see the demonstration.

As parents and grandparents pass by the booth, they’ll smile and nod, likely remembering the presentation from their earlier days. Parents with young cowboys and cowgirls along will nudge them towards the booth to hear about the importance of respecting electricity on the farm.

Eliason recalls working at the safety booth one year and a young boy pointed at him and yelled, “That’s him!”

Eliason admits that his first thought was, “Oh, no. What did I do?”

However, the mother approached him in tears, gave him a big hug and said, “My son hit a power line with a tractor, and



“Neon Leon” and “Lightning Liz” illustrate how electrocution can occur when approaching a tractor with a downed power line on it.



The demonstration is designed for elementary-aged children but draws crowds of all ages.

because he saw your presentation, he knew to stay in the tractor. He is here today because of you.”

Many cooperative representatives across the state can share similar stories where children, farm wives and equipment operators knew exactly what to do in a dangerous situation involving electricity because they saw one of the cooperative’s electric safety presentations.

“When watching the demonstration, the kids probably don’t understand everything right away,” says Patrick Soukup, manager of member services/marketing at Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell, S.D. “But it might get them asking questions about electricity and they’ll go look it up or bring it up in conversation.”

Kids rarely leave the booth empty-handed. Attendees can count on taking home a souvenir including pencils, rulers, band-aids, plastic hardhats, stickers and a variety of different hand-outs to remind them about the presentation.

Representatives from the electric cooperatives from across South Dakota take turns operating the demonstration at the booth.

During the Stock Show, the electric cooperatives also facilitate the high voltage

trailer demonstration held Thursday evening in conjunction with the sheep dog trials and mutton busting.

In addition to the Stock Show, the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of South Dakota provide energy efficiency and safety education at other events across the state, including the South Dakota State Fair and Dakotafest. You can also likely find them at your local home and farm shows, town festival, school

events and more.

To request a safety demonstration in your community, contact your local electric cooperative.



A young girl at the booth gets a closer look at overhead and underground conductor samples.



## Ranch Rodeo Events

One of the most popular events at the Black Hills Stock Show is the Ranch Rodeo. Teams from a five-state region compete for more than \$21,000 in cash and prizes.

Preliminary and final events represent real-life chores on the ranch and provide unique entertainment.

- **Steer Loadin’**  
Teams must sort and load a steer into the trailer and shut and latch the trailer.
- **Range Doctorin’**  
Teams must head and heel a cow, lay it on its rib cage, “doctor it” on the neck with medicine on a paint stick and remove the ropes.
- **Stray Gatherin’**  
Teams must head and heel a steer and tie any three legs.
- **Blake’s Trailer Loading**  
Teams will have trailers loaded with horses in the arena. They must unload their horses, rope two steers and load them into the trailer.
- **Rope, Mug and Tie**  
Teams must lay and tie down a designated steer.
- **Head, Heel and Brand**  
Teams must head and heel two steers, lay each on its side, and brand them.
- **Pendleton Ranch Bronc Ride**  
A team member must ride a bronc for 8-seconds and can hang on with both hands if desired.



East River Electric employees work the serving line at a previous feed. Pictured, from left, are Mike Jaspers, Business Development Director; Paul Lambert, radio, SCADA and LM foreman; Rory Johannsen, materials coordinator operator; Tom Boyko, CEO/General Manager and Kim Boyko.

# FEEDING FOR A CAUSE

## East River Electric to Hold 56th Annual Mountain Oyster Feed March 12

**Shayla Ebsen**

sebsen@eastriver.coop

Mountain oysters will be the center attraction at a fundraising event held by East River Electric Power Cooperative on March 12.

Serving for the 56th annual Mountain Oyster Feed begins at 5:30 p.m. at Nicky's on the west edge of Madison, S.D.

But for those not so interested in the prairie delicacy, the event's menu will also include pork sandwiches, baked beans, coleslaw and dessert. There will be a raffle, door prizes, silent auction and 50-50 tickets.

Proceeds from the event will once again benefit LifeScope, formerly Children's Care Hospital and School and SD Achieve, whose mission it is to empower children and adults with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. With more than \$275,000 contributed to LifeScope over the years, East River's Annual Mountain Oyster Feed has helped provide for the very best in medical care, therapy, education and other services for the children at LifeScope.

"LifeScope is so honored to benefit from this tremendous event each year. It is so fun and so



Marshall Area Foreman Colton Sanderson and Journeyman Radio and SCADA Technician Tyler Frost are all smiles as they work in the kitchen at a past feed.

unique, and it brings the community together in fellowship and food, but more importantly, it brings the community together in support of children with disabilities. The money raised over the years has made a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of Madison-area children and their families supported by LifeScape,” said Jessica Wells, LifeScape Foundation president. “This is a tradition we love and look forward to each year. We are so grateful for this event and for the people of this community that show their compassion and care by coming out in support of this each year.”

The partnership began about a dozen years after Children’s Care Hospital & School opened in 1952.

According to the history of the organization on LifeScape’s website, the school was a private, nonprofit organization started as a citizens’ grassroots effort to provide rehabilitation and education to children recovering from polio. Until then, children often never returned to school after recovering from the acute phase of their illness, as buildings were seldom accessible. As the polio threat waned, children with other disabilities were admitted, but the early mission of the organization was to serve children with physical disabilities only. More children were “mainstreamed” into public schools in the 1970s

and Crippled Children’s began serving children with more complex disabilities – the result of modern medicine’s ability to save sicker and more premature babies. Also in the 1970s, the organization began serving children in their own communities through the outreach program. The organization acquired an outpatient center in Rapid City in 1985 and was able to provide services throughout the state. The name changed to Children’s Care Hospital & School in 1994 and an outpatient rehabilitation center opened in Sioux Falls in 1999, serving children and adults. In 2012, Children’s Care celebrated its 60th anniversary.

“Every year, the East River Employees’ Committee seeks out donations of any kind and every year the community steps up in supporting our cause and making this event a success,” said Sam Anderson, East River Employees’ Committee chairperson. “East River takes pride in our community and is committed to benefiting non-profits in our area such as LifeScape.”

“The charity event was very successful and a direct tribute to our employees fulfilling

1964 2020

EAST RIVER ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE  
**MOUNTAIN OYSTER  
FUNDRAISER**  
SERVING LIFESCAPE

03.12.20 THURSDAY | NICKY'S RESTAURANT | 5:30 P.M. SERVING BEGINS

PROCEEDS BENEFIT LifeScape  
Creating Pathways, Inspiring Lives.

our Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives principle of Commitment to Community,” said East River General Manager Tom Boyko after the 2019 event, which saw the East River Employees Committee donate \$1,000, a total matched by East River Electric at \$1,000 and CoBank also contributed \$2,000. In total, the 2019 event raised more than \$25,000 for LifeScape.



Apprentice Substation Technician Tim Fuerst, Facilities Maintenance Technician Mark Even and Mechanic Terry Zingmark prep the mountain oysters for frying.

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**December 15-March 31**

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

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**February 21**

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

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**February 21-22**

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

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**February 22**

Cabin Fever Games, Yankton, SD, 605-665-8994

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**February 22-23**

48th Annual Farm, Home & Sports Show, Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD 605-224-1240

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**February 26**

The Harlem Globetrotters, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**February 27-29**

SD High School State Wrestling Tournament, All Classes, Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261

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**February 27-March 1**

35th Annual SD State Dart Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**March 12-14**

SD State B High School Girls Basketball Tournament, Donald E. Young Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-224-9261

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**March 13-15**

Hayes Play, Comedy *Regrets Only*, March 13-14 at 7 p.m. CT, March 15 at 2 p.m. CT, Hayes, SD, 605-567-3567

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**March 14**

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



**February 20-25: Black Hills Film Festival, Hill City, SD, 605-574-9454**

Photo courtesy: travelouthdakota.com

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**March 14-15**

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Gun Show, Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, 701-361-9215

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**March 18, June 11, August 13 and October 8**

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

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**March 19-21**

SD State A High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-224-9261

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**March 19-21**

SD State AA High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261

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**March 19-21**

SD State B High School Boys Basketball Tournament, Barnett Center, Aberdeen, SD, 605-224-9261

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**March 20-21, 27-28**

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

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**March 21-22**

Gun Show, Codington County Ag Building, Watertown, SD, 701-361-9215

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**March 28**

Wild Game Feed Fundraiser, 6 p.m., Come-and-go style, There will be fish, deer, pheasant, etc. as well as salads and desserts, There will be hot dogs for those who like their meat a little less wild, The fire hall is located at 101 S. Main Street, Reliance, SD

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**March 28**

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

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**March 28**

SD High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-224-9261

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**April 3-4**

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

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**April 11**

Eggstravaganza, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**April 17-19**

Archery Tournament, Yankton, SD, 605-260-9282

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**April 18**

Black Hills Gold & Treasure Show, Rapid City, SD

**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.**