



Cooperative Connections

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Let Me Introduce Myself...



Jeff Birkeland, CEO

jeff.birkeland@wce.coop

As the new general manager at West Central Electric, I thought I'd take this opportunity to introduce myself and give you a little of my background information in this month's report.

One of the most telling things about me is that rural electric cooperatives have always been a part of my life. My father's first job out of college was as a secretary at Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake, S.D., where I spent the first 18 years of my life. Through the years, I watched my dad work his way up until he became the general manager. I don't know how many annual meetings I've attended, but they started before I was in kindergarten! I also remember that during severe outages, my dad left our home for work. One time in particular and during a blizzard, I remember a lineman coming to get him in a tracked Bombardier. As I watched him leave and go down the street, I remember thinking how neat that was. It wasn't until I was older, that I realized just how serious the situation was. Anytime we have members and livestock without power, it's all hands on deck until the lights are back on. I also suspect I was like a lot of young men who idolized their dad and wanted to be just like him. It was this desire that put me on a path to where I am today and I take great pride in knowing that I'm one step closer to being like my father.

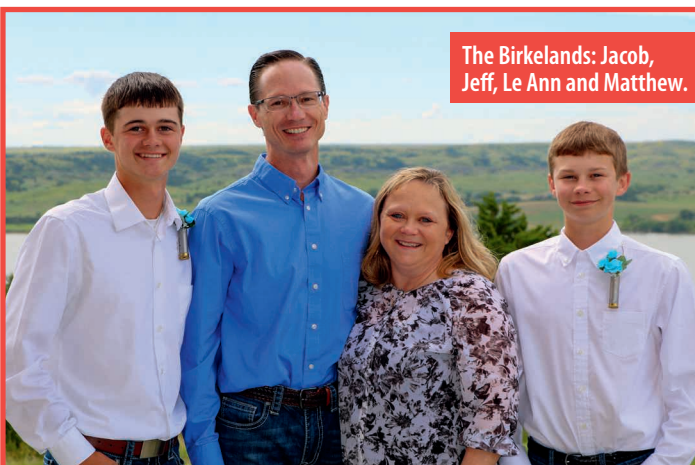
My parents were both raised in the rural Dupree, S.D., area which allowed me the opportunity to work on a farm during the summer. I think it's a fair statement that I learned what a hard day's work means while working for my grandpa. He once said, "Working 8-to-5 is for city people. We work when the sun shines and when it rains, we work on equipment." I learned many lessons here and I appreciate all that our farmers do for us in our communities. I will never forget the smell of a skunk going through my conditioner header on an open-cab swather. That will make a hot afternoon even more enjoyable.

After high school I spent the next four years at Northern State University where I graduated with a double major, one in business management and the other in marketing. Upon graduating, I was lucky enough to land a job at Spink Electric Cooperative in Redfield, S.D. I worked there almost two years as an accountant before Steve Reed hired me as a staff assistant at West Central Electric in Murdo. I've spent the last 25 years learning our cooperative and have greatly enjoyed living in a small town.

My wife, Le Ann, and I have two sons, Jacob and Matthew. Jacob is a freshman at Black Hills State University and Matthew is a freshman at Jones County High School. A few of my hobbies include hunting, fishing and doing my part to contribute to our community. I also volunteer as an archery instructor for the local 4-H shooting sports program, which takes place January through April every year. A funny thing about this is that up until 11 years ago, I had never shot a bow. Now I teach kids! That is how life goes when you are a parent in a small town. Our oldest son wanted to shoot BB gun in the 4-H shooting sports program which was fine, but he soon thought shooting a bow looked more exciting. So, he put the BB gun down and picked up a bow and as they say, "the rest is history." He loved shooting archery and they just happened to be short on instructors, so I stepped in and started learning and taking archery classes to help fill that void. Now I'll stand on my soap box and tell you that this has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. When a young child stands before

you and their eyes light up with excitement and anticipation of shooting archery, it is a contagious feeling. Soon thereafter we are doing high fives for their first arrow hitting the target, then it's their first bullseye and it keeps progressing as they get better. The kids just think they are simply shooting archery, but they are actually learning about focus, concentration, patience and setting goals. Before you know it, they are skilled enough and qualify for the state competition. When that happens and the kid comes to you, says thank you and gives you a big hug, there's not a better sense of accomplishment.

In summary, that's me in a nutshell. A small-town boy who followed his dreams and ended up in Murdo and doing what he loves! It is with great pride and excitement I take the helm as the new general manager of your electric co-op.



West Central Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-988)

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WHAT IS SMARTHUB?

SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to take control of all aspects of your utility account. Pay your bill, manage your use and contact us with service issues quickly and easily online or on your mobile device.



Manage Your
Account



View and Pay
Your Bill



Monitor Usage
24/7



Report Service
Issues



Receive Important
Updates

SMART COMMUNICATION

SmartHub goes beyond bill payments and usage tracking. This online and mobile app is also a powerful communication tool. Report service interruptions and route account inquiries on the go. Be in the know with alerts for service work, news promotions and events...all in the palm of your hand and online.

SMART ENVIRONMENT

Going paperless with SmartHub is easy. With convenient access to your bill anytime, anywhere, doing your part to save the environment is easy too.

SMART PAYMENTS

With SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and can pay securely online or in the app, anytime, anywhere. Sign up for auto payments, set up your secure preferred payment method and let account management go into auto pilot.

SMART USAGE

Saving money just got easier. Track your usage and take the guesswork out of your bill. Through detailed graphs, you'll be able to monitor usage 24/7 and track your consumption, finding ways to reduce and save.



**West Central
Electric's offices
will be closed
Nov. 28 and
Nov. 29 for
Thanksgiving.**

Electrical Safety Tips for the Holidays

The holiday season is here and Christmas is just weeks away. While it's certainly the best time of the year to spend time with family and friends before the New Year, it's also important that you think about keeping your friends and family safe around all the electricity you'll likely be using. Here are a few essential electrical safety tips for the holidays.

- Before you use any electrical decorations, you should inspect them for damage. Look for damaged sockets, cracked sockets, loose connections and bare or loose wires. All of these things could cause a fire or a serious shock.
- Once you've confirmed that all your electrical decorations aren't damaged, you should count how many outlets you have in your home and where they're located. You should plan out your displays based on the number of outlets and their location. When putting up the displays, be sure to follow the care and manufacturer's use instructions that came with the electrical decorations. Be sure to use the extension cords with the right amperage rating to match the amperage needs of your electrical products.
- When you're installing outdoor decorations, you should be very careful when you're decorating near any power lines. You and your equipment should be at least 10 feet from any power lines.
- Don't overload your home's electrical outlets. Every year, many homeowners end up overloading the electrical outlets in their home because they go overboard when it comes to decorating. Faulty wires and overloaded electrical outlets are the most common causes of fire during the holidays. You should only plug a single high-wattage appliance into every outlet. This will help you prevent overloading the outlets in your home.
- You should never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights. Connecting more than three strings can cause a fire or trip circuit breakers. You should think about buying LED lights, which are cooler than incandescent lights and use less energy. Be sure that the spotlights that you use to illuminate decorations are far from flammable items, protected from weather, and are well-ventilated. Make sure that you always unplug your decorations before you replace the fuses or bulbs. Turn off the outdoor and indoor electrical decorations before you go to sleep or leave home.
- Be sure that any electrical decorations and extension cords were made to be useable outdoors. Keep all light strings and extension cords away from water and snow. When decorating outdoors, you should use fiberglass or wooden ladders rather than metal ladders. You should plug outdoor decorations and electric lights into circuits protected by circuit interrupters. You should buy portable outdoor GFCIs if the circuits aren't GFCI protected.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to keep your family and friends safe during the holidays.

Source: www.protectamerica.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't drive on power lines."

Anna Engelbrecht, 9 years old

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

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

Holiday Favorites

Fanny Farmer Fudge

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 1 cup butter (use butter, not margarine) |
| 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk | 2 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1-1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional) |
| 2 cups milk chocolate chips | |

Mix sugar and milk together; bring to rolling boil. Boil for 6 minutes. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and butter. Beat with electric mixer until very creamy. Add vanilla and stir well. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan (glass works best) sprayed with cooking spray. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before cutting. Store in airtight container. Will keep for months in refrigerator and still be smooth and creamy.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre, SD

Andes Mint Cookies

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2-1/2 cups flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3/4 cup cocoa powder | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. peppermint extract |
| 2 sticks and 2 T. butter, softened | 1 cup chocolate chips |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 1 cup mint chips or chopped Andes mints |
| 1 cup brown sugar | |

Sift flour, cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl and set aside. Using a hand mixer, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and peppermint extracts, mixing well. Add dry mixture to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate and mint chips. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet and with 2 fingers, press down to about 1-inch thick. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 18 minutes or until no longer glossy.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Vanilla Pecan Pie

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 refrigerated pie crust | Vanilla Extract, divided |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 3 eggs, divided | 3 T. butter, melted |
| 3/4 cup sugar, divided | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Pure | 2 cups pecan pieces, toasted |

Prepare crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly on bottom of crust. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Beat remaining 2 eggs and sugar in large bowl with wire whisk until smooth. Add corn syrup, butter, remaining vanilla and salt; stir until well blended. Sprinkle pecans evenly over cream cheese layer. Slowly pour corn syrup mixture over nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set in center. Makes 10 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 506, Total Fat 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Cholesterol 96mg, Sodium 307mg, Carbohydrates 43g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Filled Graham Crackers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 lb. box honey graham crackers | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |

Line up 22 (unbroken) graham crackers on a sheet of waxed paper. Place remaining crackers in a zip-lock bag and crush fine with a rolling pin. Combine brown sugar, butter, milk and egg. Bring to a boil then cook an additional 7 minutes. Remove from heat; add crushed crackers and vanilla. When mixture has cooled a little, spread filling on 11 of the crackers and top with the other 11. Leave uncovered to keep them crisp or cover for softer crackers.

Mardelle Brown, Redfield, SD

Please send your favorite soup, brunch or 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 June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Bright Ideas for Smart Home Lighting



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time.

Dear Pat and Brad: I've heard a lot about smart lighting for the home. What is it and will it save energy? – Julian

Dear Julian: It seems like every device is getting smarter these days. Since smart-home lighting is so new, many of us could use a little introduction.

At its heart, smart lighting covers a range of bulbs, controls and lighting systems that are programmable through an app on a mobile device, computer or smart speaker. Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time. Some smart lighting systems can dim at various times. Some can be connected to a sensor or motion detector so that a light goes on when a door is opened or someone enters a room. Some smart lighting systems can change color so you can set up a holiday light show indoors or outdoors. It can also be practical, providing lighting that matches sunlight during the day and is more relaxing in the evening. You may even be able to play music directly from the bulb!

In most cases, you control smart lighting through your home Wi-Fi. You can communicate to individual smart bulbs or to a hub that, in turn, controls individual bulbs. In some cases, you can use Bluetooth® on your phone to control smart lighting, but you'll need to be within range of the bulb or hub. Smart lighting can also be used outdoors, but the range of your control device could limit this approach.

If the smart bulbs are the type that connect through a hub or connect directly to your Wi-Fi network, you should be able to control them via smart speakers like Google Home, Amazon Echo or Apple HomePod and remotely through the internet or smartphone. While a hub-based system is more expensive, it allows lights to be grouped by floor or room and also uses less bandwidth on your network than running many separate bulbs. Some hub kits also allow you to use regular bulbs instead of requiring more-expensive smart bulbs, which could save you money.

Will smart lighting save energy? That depends on how you light your home and control your lighting now and on how you would control the smart lighting you install in the future. If you use smart lighting to turn lights off when they aren't needed, like when rooms are empty or no one's home, or to reduce the wattage, you will save energy.

How much energy can you save? Lighting accounts for about 6 percent of electricity use in the average home, which means your total cost for all the lighting in your home might only be \$100 per year. If you have some high wattage bulbs that are on for long periods of time every day, your lighting use could be significantly higher than average.

Investments in smart lighting are not likely to pay back as quickly as some energy efficiency measures that control heating or air conditioning. Smart bulbs are more expensive than typical LED bulbs, ranging from \$15 to \$80, and a hub can cost of up to \$125, so it could take a long time to make your money back. Chances are, you're better off investing in smart lighting for the features than the energy savings.

One alternative to smart lighting is smart wall outlets or wall switches. For example, you can plug a lamp with a standard bulb into a smart wall outlet or you can have several lights wired to one smart switch. The downside to smart switches and outlets is that installation could be more challenging and you may not have as many options and features that come with smart lighting.

Another strategy for smart lighting that has been around for a long time and is reasonably priced is to use occupancy sensors, motion sensors or timers as control devices.

The wide number of options and costs makes it difficult to select the best smart lighting for your situation.



Photos, posters, memorabilia and vintage electric appliances are all part of the Power to the People exhibit.

Power to the People

Electrifying Rural South Dakota Exhibit Opens at Museum

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum in Brookings opened its “Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota” exhibit in October.

The exhibit explores how electricity changed life on the farm, especially for dairies and hatcheries. It displays how farms used wind turbines to produce electricity and the history of rural electric cooperatives. The museum’s farmhouse kitchen is open for the public to explore a 1949 kitchen. It also shows how electric washing machines changed how we do laundry.

“Today, our society is very dependent on electricity, but imagine turning on the lights for the very first time. Many people in South Dakota can remember that day because a vast number of farms did not have access to electricity until the 1950s. We hope visitors of all generations walk away with a better understanding that wind energy in South Dakota is not new and how much electricity not only brought new technology but better sanitary conditions for families and livestock,” stated Gwen McCausland, director of the Agricultural Heritage Museum.

This exhibit teaches the science of electricity with an interactive circuit board and a pedal-powered light meter sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D., East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D., Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, S.D., and H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, S.D.

This exhibit was sponsored in part by Coral Bonnemann, a long supporter of the Agricultural Heritage Museum along with Basin Electric, East River Electric, Sioux Valley Energy, and H-D Electric. This exhibit would not have been possible without the private collection of photographs and artifacts from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D., and William Lee of Colman, S.D.

Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota will be on display for 18 months.

Joseph J. Bonnemann and Coral (Coffey) Bonnemann are natives of Huron, S.D. Joe started college at South Dakota State University in Brookings and then spent time in the Army in the late 1940s, before returning to school. After earning a B.S. degree in agronomy (now plant science) in 1951, Joe was employed at the USDA-ARS experiment station near Newell, S.D. He returned to the SDSU campus in 1961 to supervise the Crop Performance Testing program. Joe retired in 1992. He also completed work for his M.S. in agronomy in 1964, a summer-school graduate of the first graduating class of “SDSU.” Joe passed away in 2014. Coral Ellen Coffey Bonnemann earned a B.S. degree in medical technology from SDSU in 1953. She served on the board of directors of the Brookings Hospital and Brookview Manor, 1972-89, including terms both as secretary and president. She was active in matters of hospital governance on the state and national levels for over 10 years during that time. The Bonnemanns have three children.

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum’s mission is to inspire a passion for the diverse history, culture and science of agriculture in South Dakota. It is the official state museum for preserving the history of agriculture and rural life of South Dakota. It is a department of South Dakota State University. It is located in the historic Stock Judging Pavilion on the SDSU campus at 977 11th Street, Brookings, S.D. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 605-688-6226 or visit www.agmuseum.com.





Riverview Christmas Tree Farm is located near Canton, S.D., near the Big Sioux River.

OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Cut-Your-Own Tree Opportunities

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Traditions can be an important part of the holidays and for many, nothing matches the aroma and feel of a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Many have taken advantage of the cut-your-own tradition at the Black Hills National Forest. But for those not wanting to trek across the Rushmore State to the Black Hills, Christmas tree farms closer to home have been part of holidays.

In eastern South Dakota, families have been cutting their own trees at the Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at Canton, S.D., since 1989.

The tree farm is a family business that was opened in 1989 by Bill and Darlene Keizer. The business is now operated by the Todd and Shari Gannon family.

Families search the acres of trees looking for the perfect tree for their family. Five tree varieties ranging in sizes from six to 10 feet provide families several options. The tree farm provides the saw for cutting the tree and a tractor/trailer brings the family and their tree back to the farm's lodge to enjoy hot drinks and holiday treats.

The farm is open four weekends in November and December. In 2019, the farm will be open Saturdays (Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15) from Noon to 5 p.m. as well as Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28 (2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and Black Friday, Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



Photo by SD Tourism

Visitors to the tree farm can enjoy the beautiful scenery, shopping for holiday crafts and Christmas wreaths. They can also pet the animals in the pen and see Santa!

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm Tree Varieties

- Fraser Fir
- Balsam Fir
- Canaan Fir
- White Pine
- Black Hills Spruce

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm features cut-your-own trees, ranging from six to nine feet tall, sell for \$9 to \$11 per foot, depending on the variety. Pre-cut trees, ranging from six to 10 feet tall sell for \$7 to \$8 per foot.

Learn more about Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at <http://www.riverviewtreefarm.com/>

Tips for Trees Cut at Black Hills National Forest

Cutting Guidelines

- The maximum tree height is 20 feet.
- Cut the stump within six inches of the ground.
- Cut and scatter the limbs and other unused parts of the tree so they lie within a foot of the ground.

Setting Up Your Tree

- Keep your tree as fresh as possible.
- Store your tree upright in a bucket of water in the garage or basement until you are ready to move it indoors.
- In the house, keep the tree well watered at all times.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, stoves or heating vents.

Kinds of trees available:

- **Ponderosa pine** is noted for its full shape and long graceful needles. It grows almost everywhere in the Black Hills.
- **Spruce** is very popular as a holiday tree. It grows at higher elevations and on wetter, north-facing slopes and drainage bottoms. Spruce has a classic tapered form and its short needles allow for easy stringing of lights and ornaments.
- **Juniper** is a shorter tree found at lower elevations in the southern and western parts of the Black Hills. Many people like its full shape and bluish-green coloring.

Cut Your Own Fresh Christmas Tree This Year From the Black Hills National Forest

Christmas tree tags will be available Nov. 12 to Dec. 24, 2019, at Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming.

The Black Hills National Forest will also continue the Fourth-Grade Free Christmas Tree Program again this holiday season.

Fourth-graders are eligible for a FREE Christmas tree permit through the Every Kid Outdoors initiative. Every Kid Outdoors is a nationwide call to action to build the next generation of conservationists. All fourth graders are eligible to receive a fourth-grade pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year.

In order for students to receive a free Christmas tree permit, they must present a valid fourth grade pass or paper voucher printed from the Every Kid Outdoors website: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>. To obtain the voucher, visit the website, click on the "Get your pass" button and follow the instructions. Print out the paper voucher and bring it with you to a district office or the supervisor's office on the Black Hills National Forest.

White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available and can be cut in many parts of the National Forest.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost \$10, up to a maximum of five permits are allowed per individual and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground.

The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the cutting area; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.

Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits. Please note that Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Dec. 24 is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices. Private vendors may sell tags until Dec. 24.

Tags are available by mail from the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, SD, 57730. Enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$10 for each tree permit, up to a maximum of five trees per individual as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Forest Service will mail tags and cutting instructions.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Capital credit checks were returned for the following individuals. Help us find them and get the money they are owed into their hands. Contact the office at 605-669-8100 with any information. Thank you for your assistance.

A W Cherry and Sons	Comp Bros	Foster, Kenneth	King, Clifford	Oliver, Will	Springs Gas Company
Abbott, Albert	Cooper, Tracy	Frame, Marie	Kirschenmann, Dean	Olson Ranch Inc	Stevahn, Reinhold L
Aby, Perry	Cross, Andrea	Garnos, Veran	Kirscher, Peter	Olson, Duane C	Stoeser, Alex
Amsden, Shirley	Currey, Allen	Gebur, Denise	Knecht, Marvin T	Opbroek, Eugene	Stricker, Carolyn
Andersen, Clarence D	Dakota Plains Prod Inc	Goodman, Ralph	Krumm, Karen W	Ostlien, John	Swan, Marvin E
Anderson, Amos	Dakota West Ltd	Goodwin, Esther	Langdeau, Rita D	Ott, Katharina	Tennyson, Jack M
Anderson, Ray F	Daschel, Bernard A	Grassrope, Jefferson	Laroche, Melvin D	Pan Am Agri Inc	Terca, J
Barber, Lesa	Dejong, Leo	Graves Construction	Leichtnam, Mark	Patton, Dorothy	Thompson, Brian
Barker, Cheryl D	Desersa, Clement	Greenfield, Donna	Lemon, Don	Pfeifle, Robert	Totton, Sandra
Barr, James	Dias, Harriet	Gregory, Marie	Lewis, Golda	Pickner, Kelly	Tusberg, Bruce E
Barthel, Gene	Donelan, Nancy	Grimes, James R	Loney Estate, A	Pier, J E	U.S. West Communications
Baylor, Karen L	Dorothy, Julia	Hale, Bernard	Loveday, Clifford N	Plumley, Robert L	Urban, James R
Bearheels, Stacey	Drabek, Anton	Hall, Lillian	Maas, Larry	Poper, Michael E	Valandra, David A
Beckwith, Leslie	Drabek, Gay M	Harris, Katherine	Martin, Kathi N	Northern Energy Propane	Vana W Construction
Belvidere Christian School	Driving, Hawk Ben	Hartley, Randy	Marvin, Shirley	Quilt, Dorcus	VFW Post 3653
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Boe, Raymond	Erikson, Norman	Hendricks, Timothy J	Miller, Vern	Sabolik, Sherri	West, John
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Brakke, Marc A	Farmers Home Admin	Hofmann, August	Moore, Shirley M	Schmidt, Robert	Whiteco Metrocom
Buchholz, Carl J	Farris, Alice	Hofmeister, L D	Morgan, Ola F	Schulte, Donald F	Whitney, Bradford
Buckles, Edna E	Fast Horse, Martha	Hofmeister, Lauren	Motorola Inc	Seachris, Teresa	Williams, Donald E
Buxcel, Shirley	Fennell, John T	Hovland, Wade	Mulcahy, Thilda	Seaton, Robert	Williams, R T
Byre, Rhonda	Ferguson, Roxanne	Hoyer, Bruce	Nebola, Deanna	Sechler, Hazel M	Williamson, Anita
Caldwell, Louis	Fishburn, Gene C	Hubbard, G A	Neeman, Arla	Sheriff, Glen	Yager, Eldon
Carr, Millard	Fitch, Edward	Hulm, Andrew D	Neiss, Lynda	Simmons, Douglas	Yazzi, Ronda
Chaplain, R M	Flesner, Carson	Illian, Marie K	Neumann, Marjorie	Smith, Delmar E	Yost, Ralph
Christensen, Ronald	Flute, Virgil	Ino, George	Newmann, Van	Sommer, Don	Young, Irwin H
Christensen, Steven W.	Folkerts, Rommert F	Jacoby, Joe	Noldner, Edyth	Sorensen, Merlyn	Zelenka, Sharon
Clifford, Helen	Forney, Paul E	Jennerjahn, Susan	Noteboom, Dick	Sparks, James W	
Coleman, Tracy	Fosness, Noel C	Jensen, Robert W	Obryan, Dale		
		Joyce, Viola E	Odom, Tommy Jr		

Save Money this Winter by Weatherizing your Home

Your electric cooperative is unique in that we are pretty much the only folks out there that will actively help you try to buy less of a product that we are selling. So far it seems like we are getting the cold weather a little early and the Almanac is foretelling a hard winter. With those two things in mind, I thought it would be a good time to bring up some easy things you can do to help weatherize your home and help save energy this season.

Check for drafts

Air leaks around windows and doors can be remedied by replacing the weather stripping/door sweep or by using a high-quality caulk on smaller gaps. Larger gaps may require an expanding foam (just make sure you get a “low pressure” type so it does not bow or bend framework). There are also indoor window insulation kits that can help. Finally, don't forget to check doors that lead to uninsulated spaces like a garage.

Air leaks can also happen where plumbing, telephone, electric or ducting comes through barriers like walls, floors and ceilings. These can be sealed up with the same methods as mentioned above. Remember to use fire-resistant materials on leaks around chimneys, furnace vents, etc.

Drafts found around outlets and switches can be sealed up by using inexpensive pre-cut foam gaskets.

HVAC tips

Replacing your air filter on a regular basis will allow your system to operate at peak efficiency. A monthly basis is best, but if you're like me and your filters cost \$25 to \$30 each, you can shoot for quarterly or at least semi-annually.

Check for duct leaks and clean the duct work. Usually duct cleaning will have to be completed by a professional, but duct leaks can normally be sealed yourself. It would be a good idea to have a professional come to make sure the system is operating to maximum efficiency by checking that your heat pump is properly charged or your

gas furnace is tuned properly.

Make sure your ceiling fans are set for the proper rotation. Reverse (clockwise) is used in the winter to help circulate the warm air from the ceiling down and out. During the summer the counterclockwise rotation is used to give a wind-chill effect that is not desirable during cold weather. Don't forget to turn off the fan when the room is not in use.

One easy upgrade is to convert to a programmable thermostat that allows you to set your system to automatically heat to a lower temperature while the home is unoccupied and warm up when you come home.

Insulate

For our part of the world it is currently recommended to have a minimum insulation rating of R-49 in the attic. This equates to roughly 16 inches to 18 inches of loose fill insulation. A lot of times you can just blow in more on top of the existing insulation. Your local hardware store will have a machine you can rent.

For walls and floors, adding insulation value is a bit tougher and usually must wait until you have the space opened up for another project. However, if your home has blown-in insulation in the walls it most likely has settled and it may be worthwhile to get in there to reinsulate.

Dollar for dollar, adding insulation is one of the most effective ways to cut energy costs.

If you have checked everything you can think of but still feel winter's chill, you can contact us. The Member Services Department would be more than happy to come out and do an energy audit of your home to help find other potential ways to save.

This article has covered three of the top areas that you can focus on to help save energy this winter, but that is just the tip of the iceberg! You can find these and other great tips on the web site (www.wce.coop), including the “101 Easy Ways to Save Energy and Money” published by Touchstone Energy®.



Kit Talich

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Dollar for dollar, adding insulation is one of the most effective ways to cut energy costs.

Keeping Good Cheer

Holiday Safety and Crime Protection

National Neighborhood Watch

<https://nnw.org/holiday-safety>

The jolly man in red is the only visitor that's supposed to be entering homes stealthily this Christmas, shimmying down chimneys and stealing bites of cookies washed down with gulps of milk.

But, for too many, St. Nick isn't the only unexpected holiday visitor. Porch pirates are stealing holiday joy and other criminals are itching to find untended digital portals into homes.

A 2017 study titled "Package Theft Report: Porch Pirates, Purchase Habits and privacy" by Schorr.com found that nearly 1 in 3 Americans say they have experienced package theft. A separate study by www.insurancequotes.com found that around 25.9 million Americans have had a package delivered during the holiday shopping season stolen, up from 23.5 million reported porch thefts in 2015.

General Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

Courtesy of the Knoxville, Tenn., Police Department

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters or under doormats.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.



Packages left on doorsteps can attract holiday thieves.

- Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
- Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
- Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

Strangers at Your Door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.

Avoid Porch Theft:

Five tips to Protect Your Packages

- Network with Neighbors
- Have Packages Delivered to Work
- Leave Specific Drop-off Instructions
- Use a Smart Lock
- Install Security Cameras

Keeping Your Devices Secure

- **Use Security Software.** Install anti-virus software, anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set your preference to update these protections often. Installing these types of programs will help protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files and passwords. These programs install security patches for your operating system and other software programs.
- **Avoid Phishing Emails.** Don't open files, click on links or download programs sent by strangers. Opening a file from someone you don't know could expose your system to a computer virus or spyware that captures your passwords or other information you type.
- **Be Wise about Wi-Fi.** Before you send personal information over your laptop or smartphone on a public wireless network in a coffee shop, library, airport, hotel or other public place, see if your information will be protected. If you use an encrypted website, it protects only the information you send to and from that site. If you use a secure wireless network, all the information you send on that network is protected.
- **Lock Up Your Laptop.** Keep financial information on your laptop only when necessary. Don't use an automatic login feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. That way, if your laptop is stolen, it will be harder for a thief to get at your personal information.
- **Read Privacy Policies.** Yes, they can be long and complex, but they tell you how the site maintains accuracy, access, security and control of the personal information it collects; how it uses the information and whether it provides information to third parties. If you don't see or understand a site's privacy policy, consider doing business elsewhere.



Outdoor decorations can also be targets of holiday grinch.

- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Leaving for the Holidays

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

After the Holidays

- Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.

What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate

- Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
- Know exactly what's in the missing box.
- If you see the thief, pay attention to

Six Ways to Grinch-Proof Your Holiday Light Displays

- **Shut down at night**
- **Set up surveillance**
- **Crime-proof your yard**
- **Consider bringing in valuable items at night**
- **Stay connected**
- **Report, report, report**

what his or her vehicle looks like and its license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.

- Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home.
- If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.

Source: National Neighborhood Watch, A Division of the National Sheriffs' Association



Wall Elementary students eat their lunch, complete with locally raised beef.

BEEF: IT'S FOR LUNCH

Beef to School Program Launched

Jocelyn Romey

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Local beef is on the lunchtime menu for Wall, S.D., students, thanks to the efforts – and donations – of local producers and businesses.

“We consider this a must-do for the kids and our community,” said Ken Charfauros, owner of Wall Meats Processing, who with others, spearheaded the Beef to School program in the school in January 2019.

The program has grown from that first 90-pounds of locally raised beef eaten by more than 200 students in the school. It is now a sustainable program in Wall and serves as an example to area schools that value the educational and financial benefits of serving up beef from local ranches. Other South Dakota schools currently in the pilot phase of implementing this program are in Custer, Edgemont, Faith, New Underwood and Philip.

In 2018, Wall Meats Processing partnered with the school, Wall FFA and the Ag Committee of Wall Economic Development Corporation to plan and implement the project. Three months later, ranchers began donating the beef and Wall Meat Processing contributed the cost of processing and delivering. This community partnership has grown more effective and continues to provide



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson joined Wall students for lunch to learn about the district's Beef to School program.

local beef to the school district.

Wall Economic Development believes that the purpose of this project is to provide an educational opportunity and help develop the local economy. Students receive an education on what they eat and where it comes from. They are also able to actively learn about beef nutrition through outreach conversations.

“This program is a good educational piece for FFA students and a good project for future farmers,” said Charfauros.

But it's not just the students who are learning. Charfauros said his staff and those involved in developing this program are also learning how to effectively cut healthy meat selections that fit every schools' requirements. The Wall School District requires meat that has a 90 percent lean to 10 percent fat ratio. However, other schools who are in the pilot phase of the program may require different ratios. How the meat is cut and delivered is determined by local schools as well as federal and state regulations.

Another purpose of this program is to benefit the community. Charfauros commented that the local economy profits when local people buy local things and



that money is saved when the school district does not have to pay federal fees for meat being delivered from out of state.

“The major thing about local food is that it helps your local economy. That money goes back to the community and gets spent several times,” said local rancher Josh Geigle, who participated in the Wall Beef to School program.

Due to the current success of the Beef to School program, South Dakota's leadership is taking notice. State Rep. Johnson

and Sens. Thune and Rounds along with the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development reached out to Charfauros to discuss the programs achievements. From Charfauros' outreach, more school districts are showing interest in adopting the program and promoting beef nutrition, student education and local economic development.

“This is an outreach program to our communities, our producers and our kids,” Charfauros said.



Members of the Wall FFA Chapter along with area beef producers, the Wall Economic Development Corporation and Wall Meats Processing partnered with the Wall School District to implement the Wall Beef to School program in 2018.

October 19-January 5

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

November 15-December 18

Black Hills Christmas Tree Permit Season, Custer, SD, 605-673-9200

November 22-23

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show, Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

November 22-January 5

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

November 23-24

Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-1557

November 26-December 26

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

November 29

Annual Holiday Open House, Cultural Heritage Center, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3458

November 29-30

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

November 30

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 6-7, 12-14, 19-21

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

December 7

Christmas in the Village Craft Fair, Community Center, Oacoma, SD, Contact Leslie at 605-730-1076

**December 14: Frontier Christmas,
Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474**

Photo courtesy: travelouthakota.com

December 7

Holidazzle Light Parade, Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

December 7

Rapid City Garden Club's 58th Annual Wreath & Centerpiece Sale, Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 7-8

Living Christmas Tree, Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-229-6349

**December 7-8, 14-15,
21-24 and 27-28**

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

December 14-15

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas, Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

December 15-March 31

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

December 31

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

January 7-9

Dakota Farm Show, Vermillion, SD, 800-873-1411

January 16-17

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

January 24-25

Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 25

31st Annual Living History Fair 2020, A trade fair with historic arts, crafts, displays, museums and clubs representing times of A.D. 1000 to A.D.1890, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown SD, 605-693-4589 or christy@cchsmuseum.org

January 31-February 9

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

March 14

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

March 20-21, 27-28

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

March 28

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

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