

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Crazy about Curling

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

Saddle making  
for the pros  
Pages 12-13

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

# Something Every Landlord (and Renter) Should Know



**Jeff Birkeland**  
CEO

When people contact our office requesting electrical service, one of the first requirements is that they sign a membership application.

Many times, we hear something like this: “We are only renting, shouldn’t the landlord or owner of the property sign the membership?” Or, “I own the property, but my tenants are responsible for the utilities; shouldn’t they sign the membership?”

Either way is correct. But, tenants and landlords need to be aware that the party who signs the membership application is the one who receives all the rights and privileges of membership, including the right to vote at the annual meetings and the earning of capital credits. However, that person is also ultimately responsible for payment of the electrical bill!

A landowner that keeps a service in his name when his renters move in may think he’s doing them a favor by saving them from having to pay a deposit. Or, perhaps he wants to retain the voting rights and all capital credits earnings. That is fine, but he/she may be liable for a large bill if this tenant is suddenly unable or willing to pay.

Tenants, who pay on an account in the landlord’s name and

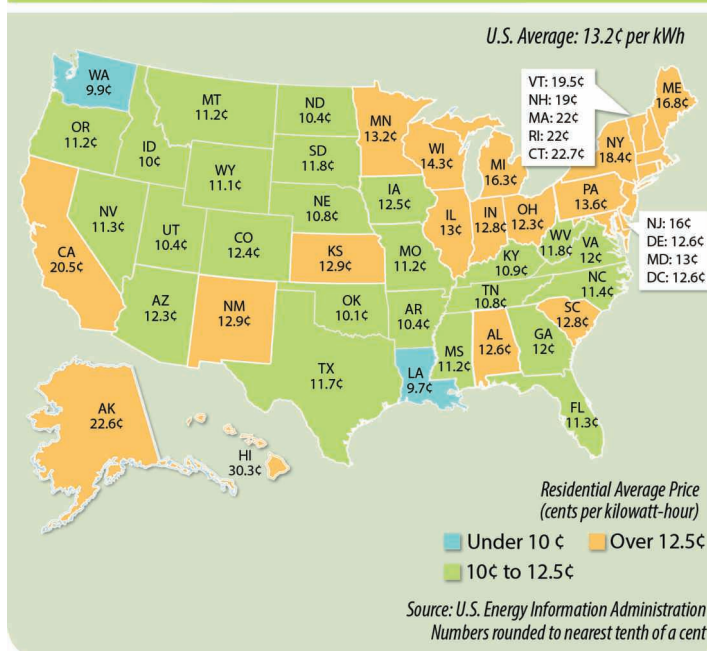
do not transfer the account by signing a membership, will not earn any capital credits or be able to vote, although they are paying the utility bill. Please note that adding someone’s name and address under yours (example: Joe Landlord, in care of Fred Renter) does not make that person a member.

Similarly, handing your monthly bill to another party does not terminate your membership. In other words, a membership recorded as in the above example means Fred Renter is not a member, cannot vote and will not receive capital credits. If Fred Renter decides to pull up stakes and move out without paying his electric bill, Joe Landlord will be responsible.

This issue is something a tenant and landowner should discuss and agree upon before contacting our office. If at any time you have a question on how your membership is officially recorded, please give us a call at 605-669-8100.

## Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2020 figures, in cents per kWh





## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC

(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**

WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559. Periodicals Postage Paid at Murdo, SD 57559 and at additional mailing offices. Electric cooperative members devote \$1 from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$18 annually. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: West Central Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559; telephone 605-669-8100; fax 605-669-2358; e-mail wcec@wce.coop; Web site: www.wce.coop; Twitter: @WCElectric; Facebook: www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative

Design assistance by SDREA



## WIN A TRIP TO D.C.

West Central Electric will once again sponsor high school juniors on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Each June, more than 1,800 high school juniors and seniors travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. During the week, they learn about Washington, D.C., government, cooperative philosophy and rural electrification. The students are selected and sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives. The South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) coordinates arrangements for the South Dakota students.

Some of the sites that toured are the Lincoln Memorial, National Cathedral, The White House, Air and Space Museum, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Ford's Theatre, The Kennedy Center, the Metro, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, The Smithsonian, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives, U.S Supreme Court and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Students will participate in a breakfast briefing with the South Dakota Congressional Delegation.

**Who is Eligible?** All area high school juniors whose parents are members of West Central Electric.

**What Does It Cost?** West Central Electric, along with the other local

electric cooperatives that participate in the weeklong event, funds the tour. The funding for the tour provides for each participant's transportation, room and board, entertainment and sightseeing events. Students are required to provide their spending money (snacks and souvenirs).

**When is it Held?** The weeklong trip will be held on June 18-24, 2022. Participants will meet for an orientation meeting on Saturday, June 18, in Sioux Falls. Then, the group will fly to D.C. on Sunday, June 19, and return to South Dakota on Friday, June 24. A commercial bus will be used for transportation while in D.C.

**How do I Qualify?** Each entrant must submit an essay, not to exceed 500 words, on the following topic: "If chosen as a youth tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of, and what would you have contributed?" All essays must be typed and include a cover sheet that states the title of the essay, the entrant's name and address, name of parent or guardian, and the name of your school.

Information may be picked up from your local school guidance counselor, at www.wce.coop, or from West Central Electric Cooperative, 204 Main Street, Murdo, SD 57559. West Central Electric must receive all essays on or before **Feb. 18, 2022.**

# Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

### TRUE OR FALSE?

*Power lines are insulated for contact.*

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

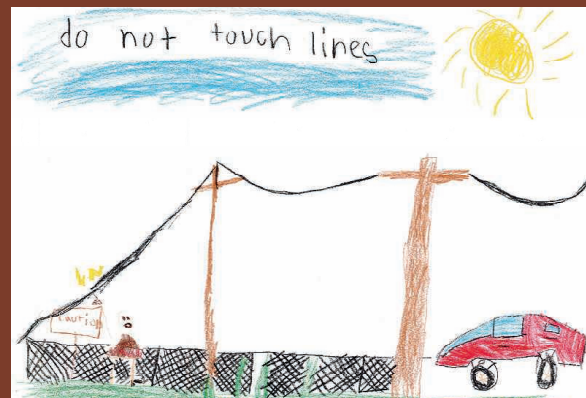


*I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.*

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

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

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



## Don't touch power lines

### Luke Walden

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

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





# BRUNCH TIME!

## CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

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

### METHOD

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

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

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

## BRUNCH EGG BAKE

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

### METHOD

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

Mary Jessen, Holabird

## COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

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

### METHOD

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

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

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

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

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

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

#### **ADD COZINESS TO YOUR HOME**

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

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

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

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

#### **CHECK YOUR WINDOWS**

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

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

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

#### **SEAL YOUR DOORS**

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

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

#### **CLOSE THE DAMPER**

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

#### **LAYER UP**

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

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



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group



## Swatek finds joy in helping others through art

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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







# STICKS AND STONES

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

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

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

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

Make curling mandatory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



## Curling club contacts

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

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

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

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

**MN Curling Association**  
www.mncurling.org



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Keystone XL materials getting sent down the road.

# 2022 PROJECTS



**Scott Kittelson**

Even though we are currently in the cold of winter, we are already looking forward to another busy construction season in 2022.

I am happy to say we are not presently doing any storm cleanup, and we are continuing with regular wintertime activity of maintenance and construction. I sure hope we have a mild spring with plenty of moisture.

With the mild winter to date, we have been able to continue installing new underground services. In addition to that, the crews have been working on OCR change-

outs, line patrol, meter readings, tree trimming, line maintenance, pole change outs, electric heat connects, service upgrades, pole testing, infrared testing and a few new overhead services. With the Keystone XL pipeline cancellation, West Central has also been assisting TC Energy in the reselling of the materials and equipment for 48 miles of 115 kV transmission line and two substations.

This year, we will be converting another 27 miles (detailed below) of the original overhead line built in the early 1950s to underground. Most of these lines were constructed with 30' class seven poles, long spans, and with #4 ACSR conductor.

- Replacing five miles of single-phase overhead line



Murdo crew prepping the Keystone XL substation transformers to be hauled away.

with underground four miles northwest of Murdo

- Replacing 10 miles of single-phase overhead line with underground four miles west of Fort Pierre along Highway 14/34.



## 2022 Projects, Cont.

- Replacing three miles of single-phase overhead line with underground one mile south of Kennebec.
- Replacing 1.5 miles of single-phase overhead line with underground eight miles southeast of Kennebec.
- Replacing 7.5 miles of three-phase overhead line with V-phase (two phases) underground 18 miles northwest of Philip along Hilland Road.

The line crews will be busy with the retirements from the



Infrared thermal imaging in the winter months can show potential problems by finding loose connections.

past construction season of our overhead line to underground conversions. These overhead line retirements consist of one mile of three-phase located two miles north of Philip, 2.5 miles of single-phase just southeast of Philip, 2.5 miles of three-phase approximately 15 miles north of Philip, five miles of single-phase only one mile west of Milesville, three miles of single-phase located 11 miles west of Billsburg, two miles of single-phase nearly four miles southeast of Murdo and seven miles of single-phase located 14 miles north of Presho.

Since 2013 we have been doing



Line crew installing a new service in Reliance.

our own “in-house” pole testing. Previously we used Osmose Utility Services Inc. out of Georgia for our annual pole testing. We have more than 100 pole replacements scheduled this Spring and Summer due to aging plant and weather-related pole damages. These poles are classified as a non-priority pole and can be changed out later. For priority poles (danger poles), we schedule them immediately for a replacement.

We have a SDDOT road project in the works for this year that would be for Highway 14 east of Philip.



Pole scheduled for replacement due to woodpecker damage.

Before they can start the road work, we will have to temporarily move approximately 17 poles. Then, once they are done with their work, we will move them back.

Another large project is that the Lower Brule Farm Corporation will be converting their diesel pivots to electric. With this conversion, West Central Electric will be building in 11 new services and adding two regulator sites.

One of our biggest challenges for this year will be the availability and lead times for materials. Listed below are just a few examples:

- Pad mount transformers can't be ordered until the beginning of 2023.
- Overhead transformers could still be ordered as of Nov. 1, but orders are downsized from what is ordered with no lead time available.
- Voltage regulators are out to 60 weeks.
- Schedule 80 PVC conduit is not available.
- Fiberglass transformer box pads are at a 35- to 45-week lead time.
- Fiberglass sectionalizing cabinets are at a 50-week lead time.

With our busy work schedule planned and material availability for this summer, please try to contact WCE well in advance for any new service requests or work you may want WCE to do. Please remember to call SD One-Call 48 hours before doing any digging, 1-800-781-7474, or dial 811.



# STILL IN THE SADDLE

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

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

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

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

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

performance saddles a year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

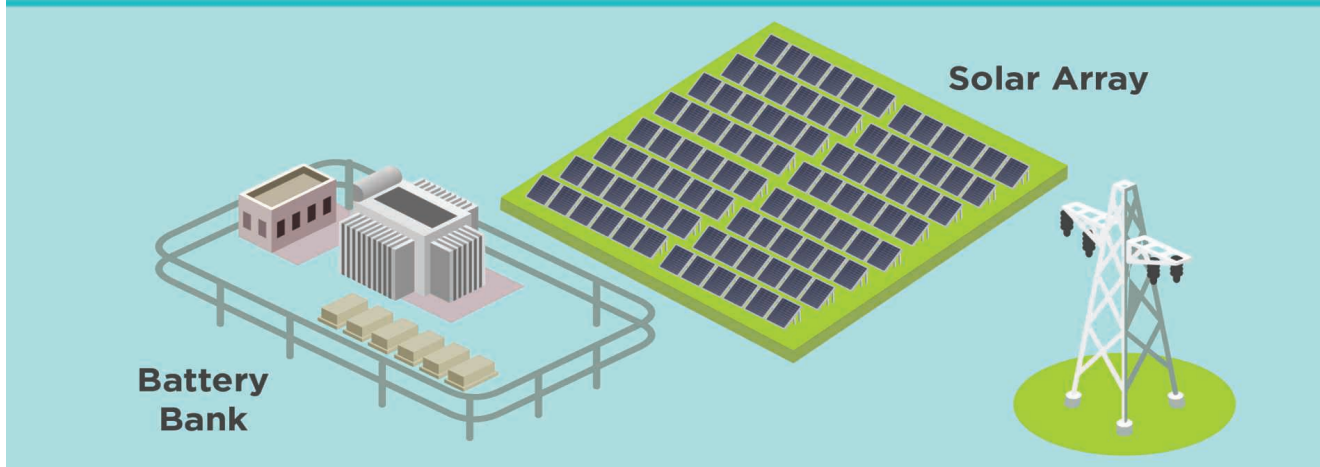
"It's just really a booming sport," he

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



### THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

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



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

Maria Kanevsky

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

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

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

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

A key feature of these batteries is their

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

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

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

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

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



## Electric co-ops hold discussions with lawmakers and community leaders

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

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

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

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

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

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

This kind of real-time information



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



**Valentine's Day  
February 14**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FEBRUARY 5**  
**Lake Hendricks  
Improvement Association  
Ice Fishing Derby**  
Hendricks, MN, contact Tim at  
507-828-2113 for registration  
and more information

**FEBRUARY 9-12**  
**Watertown Winter Farm  
Show**  
Codington County Extension  
Complex, Watertown, SD,  
605-886-5814

**FEBRUARY 11**  
**Calamity's Shindig**  
Homestake Adams Research  
& Cultural Center, Deadwood,  
SD, 605-722-4800

**FEBRUARY 11-12**  
**Bulls & Broncs**  
Expo Center at the W.H. Lyon  
Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD,  
605-367-7178

**FEBRUARY 11-13**  
**Black Hills Sports Show &  
Outdoor Expo**  
Monument Arena, Rapid City,  
SD, visit [bhsportsshow.com](http://bhsportsshow.com)  
for more information

**FEBRUARY 12**  
**Lakota Games on Ice**  
3200 Indian Village Road,  
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

**FEBRUARY 12-13**  
**DTGCA Sioux Falls Trophy  
Show (The Big One)**  
Sioux Falls Convention Center,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-280-2438

**FEBRUARY 18-28**  
**Black Hills Film Festival**  
Various Locations in Rapid  
City, Hot Springs, Hill City and  
Spearfish, SD, visit [www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org](http://www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org) for more  
information

**FEBRUARY 19**  
**Sioux Empire on Tap**  
Denny Sanford Premier  
Center, Sioux Falls, SD, visit  
[siouxempireontap.com](http://siouxempireontap.com) for  
more info and tickets

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

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

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

**MARCH 3-5**  
**The 39 Steps**  
Orpheum Theater Center,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 10-13**  
**Annual Sioux Empire  
Sportsmen's Show**  
Sioux Falls Arena &  
Convention Center, Sioux  
Falls, SD, visit [www.siouxfallssportsshow.com](http://www.siouxfallssportsshow.com) for more  
info and tickets

**MARCH 12**  
**28 Below Fatbike Race,  
Ride and Tour**  
Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,  
SD, visit [www.28below.com](http://www.28below.com)  
for more info and to register

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