

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Let's Go Fly a Kite

**Brookings Kite Festival
Creates Excitement**

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Cooperative Metering

Pages 12-13

Photo Credit: Visit Brookings

What Are Power Surges and Blinks?



Jeff Birkeland
CEO

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade, or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts. This can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning, and damage to power lines and transformers.

West Central Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances: cows rubbing on guy wires, birds sitting on power lines or other small animals contacting an energized power line, or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters in the US, squirrels reign supreme. In our area, it's a toss-up between cows, birds, and raccoons.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breaks are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because they mean the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, West Central Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 1-800-242-9232 or 605-669-8100.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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Design assistance by SDREA

Fosheim Joins the Team

West Central Electric is proud to announce the hiring of apprentice lineman Colby Fosheim. He started his career with West Central on May 13, and will work out of the Kadoka outpost.

Colby, the son of Jared and Tracy Fosheim, was raised in Midland, S.D., along with one brother, Clayton, and two sisters, Kaitlyn and Kalli. After attending Philip High School, Colby graduated from the Powerline Construction Program at Mitchell Technical College in 2024.

Along the way, Colby has worked many different jobs, including farming/ranching and mechanic jobs. He worked as summer help for West Central both during his junior and senior years of high school.

Colby is looking forward to continuing to be in and near the area where he was raised. He is glad to be in a “small-town atmosphere, where everyone knows everyone.” When asked about what he likes about his job with West Central, Colby replied, “I like working outside and being able to learn something new every day while working with great coworkers and members.”

In his spare time, you can find Colby helping out with the Midland Volunteer Fire Department, working on derby cars, riding trails in the Black Hills, or spending time with his fiancé, Camrie Leimbach.

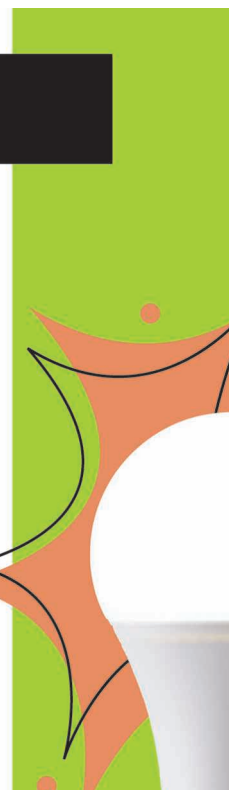
Congratulations, Colby, and welcome to West Central!



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.

Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.



Fireworks Safety

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals, and not to use any fireworks at home. They may be legal but they are not safe.

Every year, thousands of people are injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents, with many of the injuries to children and young adults. While the majority of these incidents are due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, home-made or other illegal fireworks or explosives, less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers can also cause significant injury.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 19,000 fires each year.

Fireworks Safety Tips: If You Choose to Use Legal Fireworks

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the fireworks show.

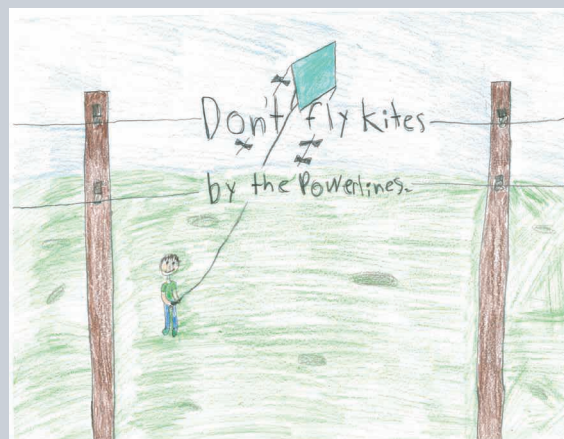
Sparklers Are Dangerous

Every year, young children can be found along parade routes and at festivals with sparklers in hand, but sparklers are a lot more dangerous than most people think.

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the National Fire Protection Association, sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries. For children under five years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries.

Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

Source: National Safety Council



"Let's Go Fly a Kite Up to the Highest Heights."

Eldon Femrite, Age 12

Eldon Femrite warns readers to not fly kites by power lines this summer. Eldon's parents are Jody and Rosemary Femrite, members of Codington-Clark Electric.

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.

DELICIOUS Desserts

NO CHURN ICE CREAM

Ingredients:

2 cups heavy cream
14 oz. sweetened condensed milk
Other mix-ins as desired

Method

In a mixing bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form.

Mix in sweetened condensed milk and any flavors/mix-ins you like (strawberries, Oreos, lemon, vanilla extract, etc.).

Pour into loaf pan and freeze until solid (2+ hours).

Kayla Beaner
Centerville, S.D.

CINNAMON PECAN PIE

Ingredients:

1 refrigerated pie crust, (from 14.1-oz. pkg.)
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
2 tbsps. butter, melted
1 tbsp. cinnamon extract
1 1/2 cups pecan pieces

Method

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare pie crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch pie plate.

Mix eggs, sugar, corn syrup, butter and cinnamon flavor in large bowl until well blended. Stir in pecans.

Pour into crust. Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until knife inserted halfway between center and edge comes out clean. Cool completely on wire rack.

McCormick.com

RHUBARB PIE

Ingredients:

Crust

1-2 cups flour
1/2 stick butter or margarine
1/4 cup water

Pie

3 tbsps. butter or margarine
1 cup sugar
3 eggs, separated
2 tbsps. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 1/2 cups cut rhubarb
Smucker's caramel sundae syrup

Method

Crust: Add ingredients and knead to complete pie crust. Amounts will vary due to humidity. Knead dough into pie pan and poke holes into the bottom as needed. You may make creative edges as you wish, however it is not necessary.

Pie: Soften butter or margarine and stir together with the sugar, egg yolks, flour, and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff. Add rhubarb and fold in the egg whites. Add the filling to the 8-inch, unbaked pie crust. You may add a drizzle of Smucker's sundae syrup for additional flavoring before baking. Bake in oven set at 400 until golden brown. You may also add more caramel syrup to pie after baking for ultimate effect.

Lisa Kummer Soukup
Tea, S.D.

Please send your favorite 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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Signs Your HVAC is in Trouble



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Q: How do I know if my HVAC system is malfunctioning?

A: Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is one of the most important and expensive systems in your home. Detecting issues early can help you plan for repairs or equipment replacement.

Equipment functionality issues can affect your electricity use, which may result in higher energy bills. The age of your equipment can be a major factor in function. The lifespan of a heating and cooling system ranges from 15 to 20 years.

Proper maintenance and lower use can increase the life of the equipment. To find out the age of your system, look for the manufactured date printed on the unit's nameplate. If you can't find it, search online using the model number or call the manufacturer.

Being thrifty by nature, I typically subscribe to the notion of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That said, I also believe in being prepared for the inevitable. If your system is approaching or past the 20-year mark, start saving for a new system and get replacement estimates.

There are a few warning signs to watch out for if your heating and cooling system needs to be repaired or replaced:

- Air conditioning is not as cool as usual. If the air from your air conditioner is warm or not as cool as it usually feels, the equipment has an issue. It could be a problem with the compressor or a refrigerant leak. Contact a professional to get the issue checked. Many refrigerants, especially the ones used in older systems, are harmful to the environment. Fix leaks before adding more refrigerant. Special certifications are required for handling refrigerants, so hire a professional to ensure the work is done properly.
- Low airflow. If you aren't getting good airflow, it could be an easy fix, such as filter replacement or opening closed dampers. If you've made these fixes and airflow is not at normal levels, contact

a professional. There could be a bigger problem with a motor, fan or something else.

- Bad odors. Heating and cooling systems sometimes smell when you first start them up for the season. Those smells should be minor and dissipate quickly. Any serious smells – such as burning metal, melting plastic or noxious odors – are a sign that your system is in trouble. If you smell those odors, turn your system off immediately and contact a professional.
- Strange noises. There is typically noise associated with the fans and motors in heating and cooling systems. Take note of any excessive or new noises. If your system is making any clunking, clanging or whistling noises, turn it off and check the filter. If that doesn't solve it, reach out to a pro.
- Running frequently. Your system needs to run more to keep up on extreme weather days, but there might be an issue if it runs too often. Short cycling is when a system cycles on and off before completing the heating or cooling process. Contact a professional to diagnose this issue.

Several factors come into play when deciding to fix existing equipment or invest in new equipment. Consider the severity of the issue, repair costs, the likelihood of additional repairs, equipment lifespan and your budget.

The efficiency of your existing system is also a consideration. Heating and cooling technology improvements have come a long way in the last 20 years. Lower operation costs can offset the cost of a new system over time.

Consider your options before you are in desperate need. I recommend getting estimates from at least three contractors. Ask the contractor, "If this was your home, what type of system would you install and why?" The best solution for your home might be a different type of equipment.

From East River to Missouri River

Tom Boyko's 2,400-Mile Canoe Journey

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

What's a former CEO of East River Power Cooperative to do after they retire? For Tom Boyko, retirement after 37 years in the electric industry and serving nine years as East River's chief executive officer meant an opportunity to embark on a well-earned canoe odyssey from the headwaters of the Missouri River in Three Forks, Mont., to St. Louis, Mo., with his son, Jacob Boyko, who accompanied his father for a portion of the journey.

According to Boyko, the 2,400-mile trip had been brewing in his mind for a long time, so when he retired at the end of August 2023, he wasted no time planning and executing his adventure, jumping from his cozy office chair to his canoe in just six months.

"I grew up on the Missouri in Stanton, N.D., so I've been wanting to do this trip forever," said Boyko. "It's just something I've always wanted to do."

Boyko continued, "At first, my family didn't think I would follow through. But through the winter, I built a tank so I could sit and practice paddling, day after day. Then they realized I was going to do it. My wife and daughter actually drove Jacob and I out to Montana. They weren't sure I was going to make it all the way, and they thought we might call it quits, but we didn't."

Having read the journals of Lewis and Clark, Boyko wanted to follow in the pioneering duo's footsteps along the Missouri River. However, instead of relying on the historic travelers' accommodations, Boyko took a more modern approach to his journey with modern provisions, including a canoe packed to the brim with packets of chicken and tuna, boxes of mac and cheese, a valuable cache of instant coffee, a tent, two propane stoves, and many other supplies.

"I got ahold of David Miller's book, *The Complete Paddler*, and he really went through, step-by-step, what he experienced when he went down the Missouri River," said Boyko. "He logged the locations of the campgrounds and included a lot of great information, so it was a great book to have with."

Armed with the knowledge to navigate hordes of flies and mosquitos, unpredictable summer storms, and the channels of the Missouri River, Boyko launched his expedition on May 16 with his son, who had just graduated college with a degree in Journalism from South Dakota State University. Jacob had also just won a Pulitzer fellowship for a writing project about the Matanza Riachuelo River in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a result, Jacob left the Missouri River expedition in Williston, N.D., to explore his own river-centric journey in Argentina. The rest of the trip, Tom tackled solo.

"When you get to be a dad like me, you just so appreciate the



Tom Boyko stands with his son, Jacob, at Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina, a campground in McKenzie County, N.D. Photo submitted by Tom Boyko.

opportunity to do something like this with your son," said Boyko. "He enjoyed it, and he plans to finish the trip at some point in his life. And the cool thing is that every guy my age I met on the trip said the same thing, 'I wish I could have done that with my son.' I was very fortunate, and I very much appreciate that he came with me."

Although Boyko tackled most of the trip by himself, he did have help along the way. Boyko received help from family, friends, and co-workers from the co-op industry when portaging his canoe over the many dams along the way.

"My brother portaged me around Garrison Dam," said Boyko. "Jordan Lamb, the general manager of Oahe Electric, helped me portage Oahe Dam. Russell Gall with Charles-Mix Electric and Ervin Fink, a former director of East River, helped me through Fort Randall. Stephanie Horst with Bon Homme Yankton paddled Lewis and Clark Lake with me. Even my family came down and to help me portage Gavin's Point. It was great to see friends and family along the way."

Even bolstered by the help of friends, the trip wasn't always smooth sailing. Over the course of his 98-day journey, Boyko traversed strong winds and high waves on Lake Oahe, which forced him to ground his canoe and camp along the beaches of the reservoir. He drifted through oppressive 114-degree heat in Missouri and navigated past large barge traffic. There was even a rowdy raccoon who helped himself to some mac and cheese – all part of the adventure.

"I started packing the canoe when it became evident that a raccoon had been in my canoe during the night and ate through one of my food dry bags leaving mac and cheese noodles and orange cheese throughout the boat," wrote Boyko in his travel journal. "What a mess."

But it wasn't all bad. Boyko said he met some great people and found some real gems along the way.

"I worked for the Western Area Power Association for many years, so I was very familiar with the river and the dams... but when you are actually canoeing it, you get a different appreciation," said Boyko. "It's a beautiful river."

KITE FESTIVAL



Photo Credit: Visit Brookings

Let's Go Fly a Kite

Shannon Marvel

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The sky becomes more of an art canvas during the Brookings Kite Festival. For the last 25 years, kite fliers from across the country gather to let their art take flight at the festival.

One of those artists is Mike Gee of North Dakota.

"We go down there to Brookings and really like the kite flying field there. It's just nice to come down and fly kites with friends who also enjoy flying kites," Gee said.

Gee flies what's called "show kites", which are big, inflatable kites that can span 20 feet across the sky.

There are other kites flown during the festival, including soft kites, stick kites and sport kites.

A sport kite is one that is attached to two or four lines. Often they'll be flown in teams and perform maneuvers in the sky.

"If you talk about crazy kites, there's a wide variety. There are so many different creative people building things in creative ways," Gee said. "It is definitely an art. It's what you put on the canvas that makes it special."

The kites are typically made with nylon, sail making cloth that doesn't stretch.

"You can't just go to the fabric store and buy tent fabric. We have a couple different weights of fabrics we use. And you need that tail on there to keep the kite stable," Gee said.



Photo Credit: Brookings Kite Festival



Photo Credit: Brookings Register

Sally Damm Norby, of the Brookings Optimists Club, said the festival got its start when Lynn Versher, former director of the South Dakota Art Museum, approached Optimist member Bill Flynn about creating a joint effort to bring big kites to Brookings.

"This volunteer organization aims to make a positive impact on the lives of youth and communities. The Brookings club's primary focus is on advancing the opportunities and programs for youth events that are encouraging with exceptional supportive outcomes. The Brookings Optimist Kite Festival offers a comprehensive learning experience that incorporates expressions of culture, science, creativity, civic involvement, and is

environmentally friendly," Norby said.

Youth are encouraged to come down and learn how to make a kite of their own, with professional guidance.

Gee said he encourages visitors to come up to kite fliers to ask questions or strike up a conversation.

"One thing I really like about kite flying is it seems like no matter who you talk to on the field, someone can relate to an experience of flying a kite," Gee said. "When we start flying kites, it brings back memories of when other folks were kids flying kites. It's kind of emotional for some people."

This year's event will take place on June 22-23 at the Fishback Soccer Park in Brookings.

Gee said this location is a safe spot to fly kites, and well away from any electrical line hazards.

"If you've flown kites long enough, you have a story about power lines. When you hit a line, you call the power company, and they advise you of what to do. The best thing to do is avoid those wires. I always think, 'If my line breaks, which way is my kite going to go and what's over there,'" Gee said.

Gee encourages visitors to come down to the Brookings Kite Festival with their lawn chairs and blankets and stay for more than just a half hour.

"The thing is when the wind changes direction or speed, the kites change. There's just so much going on throughout the day. You've really got to sit back and pay attention," Gee said.



Photo Credit: Visit Brookings

SUMMER SAFETY



Scott Kittelson

As I'm writing this, it is the end of May, and we were supposed to be enjoying a month of spring by now. I know the large moisture amounts have caused many problems for us and our members. With a little luck, we will dry out and get some work accomplished.

This article will be published in June, but I would like to point out that May was National Electrical Safety Month, and I thought safety would be worth discussing. Safety is important at work or at the farm, and it is just as important at home.

I was just reading an article that mentioned contact with overhead power lines is the leading cause of electrical fatalities for agricultural workers. With your busy summer, please refer to the Safety Photo and keep a few things in mind: know of your surrounding overhead power lines, keep at least 10' away from overhead powerlines and lower equipment when crossing underneath, and beware of overhead and possible underground power lines when fencing or digging.

For at home, please follow a few of these safety tips: if unsure, have all electrical work done by a qualified electrician; major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle and not an extension cord; test your AFCIs and GFCIs monthly; use proper-rated light bulbs for their intended purpose; and check electrical cords to ensure they are in good shape and not frayed or damaged.

Always call a qualified electrician if you ever have frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blown fuses, a tingling feeling when touching an electrical box or appliance, discolored or warm wall outlets, a burning smell coming from an appliance or electrical box, flickering or dimming lights, and any kind of sparks or arcing coming from an outlet.

Please call South Dakota One Call (811 or 1-800-781-7474) before digging. Have a Great and Safe Summer!



OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY

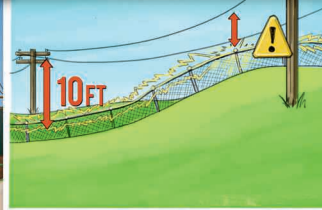


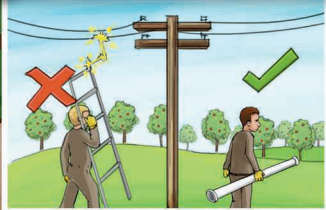

- 1
Locate all overhead power lines.


- 2
Keep self and equipment 10 feet away from all overhead power lines.


- 3
Do not touch anything that is in contact with the power line.


- 4
Beware of fencing near power lines.


- 5
Carry ladders and other equipment horizontally.


- 6
Lower equipment apparatus before driving.


- 7
Never spray near power lines with irrigation systems.


- 8
Stay at least 35 feet away from fallen power lines.



AG APPRECIATION EVENT AT THE CENTRAL STATES FAIR

Please come show your support in honoring these individuals for their dedication to the rural community.

An Ag Appreciation Meal and short program will be August 20th from 5-6:30pm at the Monument Health Community Stage inside the fairgrounds.

Enjoy a free meal, free fair entrance* and a night out at the rodeo*!

2024 RURAL NEIGHBOR NOMINEES



Roy Ireland

2024 Rural Neighbor Award

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Joy Falkenburg, M.D.

2024 Rural Health Care Neighbor Award

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In memory of

Jerry Cope

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COOPERATIVE METERING

Roger Lawien

More than 40 cooperative linemen and metering specialists gathered in Pierre for South Dakota Rural Electric's Meter School. This two-day gathering offers the opportunity to enhance skills, build a community of professionals, and learn the nuances of metering. As our need for more energy continues to grow, so does how we properly meter consumption.

Modern electric meters do much more than keep track of the electricity we consume. Correct electric metering is also essential for grid reliability and stability. Accurate measurements aid your cooperative in identifying and addressing issues such as voltage fluctuations or load imbalances promptly.

This proactive approach enhances the resilience of the electrical grid, reducing the likelihood of outages and ensuring a continuous and reliable power supply. At its core, accurate metering ensures fair and precise billing, preventing financial disputes and establishing trust between cooperatives and members.

From an economic standpoint, correct electric metering plays a pivotal role in resource allocation allowing member owned cooperatives to better understand consumption patterns, enabling them to optimize energy distribution and invest strategically in infrastructure development. This, in turn, leads to more efficient operations, cost savings, and improved overall service quality.

Precise metering supports energy conservation.

Members can sign into their account online, view consumption. Armed with accurate usage data they are empowered to make informed decisions about their energy consumption. This encourages responsible energy usage practices, reducing waste and lowering overall demand.

Metering guru and instructor John Pollard said it best. "These training schools are important. Metering is a craft handed down from generation to generation. With the advances of solid-state metering, these students are the supreme candidates to lead us into the future."

Your electric cooperative is your partner in getting it done!



2023 SDREA Meter School Instructors Photo by Roger Lawien

What is a Smart Meter?

A smart meter is a common term for Automated Metering Infrastructure, or AMI. These are connected devices that transmit information back to the electric utility's meter data management system and the information collected is used primarily for billing and outage response purposes. Smart meters started to be installed about 25 years ago. Individual utilities have different aged systems, but all electric cooperatives in South Dakota have two-way communication with every meter in the system.

What advantages do Smart Meters bring?

Before smart meters were installed, customers were required to read their own analog meter and report their monthly usage for billing purposes, or a utility employee would physically travel to every home, farm or business in their large service territories to read usage data. Smart Meters take the burden off customers and employees, saving time and money for all consumers. In some cases, the aggregated energy usage information from their home can be visible to the customer via the Internet or a phone application.

- Smart Meters can be used to pinpoint exact locations of power outages more quickly by transmitting an “out of power” notification, meaning a faster response time to outages.
- Smart Meters allow information to be shared with individual consumers about their energy usage – allowing them to find energy efficiency opportunities or potential problems in their home.
- Smart Meters improve electric service reliability and power quality. Information obtained from the automated meters often identifies problems that can be repaired before they cause an outage.
- Information can be used by engineers to more effectively and appropriately size lines and transformers, saving the cooperative and members money.

What information does a Smart Meter record?

Automated meters record an electronic kilowatt-hour (kWh) reading, the date and time of energy usage, the overall peak demand of the electric account, if the meter has been tampered with, and the number of times the meter has experienced a loss of power.

Security of information

Electric cooperatives do not sell or share consumer data. Cooperatives abide by all laws regarding the privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information. The meters and associated communications systems are equipped with security features to prevent unauthorized access.

Are there potential health impacts from a smart meter?

Research conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the Utilities Telecom Council (UTC) and other similar groups have shown no health impacts from automated meters. The radio frequencies emitted by digital meters are well below the maximum recommended in federal guidelines. A digital meter equipped to send and receive data has an RF density hundreds of times lower than the RF density of a cell phone, and the meters are installed on the outside of homes or buildings.



Paddling to the Arctic

The Legacy of Dick Davidson and the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association

Frank Turner

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GOALS

To travel from South Dakota to the Arctic by canoe in one season. This is obviously no small challenge. If the season is giving, the added goals of reaching Alaska and even reaching both the Arctic Ocean (Beaufort Sea) and the Pacific Ocean (Bering Sea) would be added as noted later in 'Trip Segments'.

PARTY

A party of one in a solo canoe (at this time and likely during the trip).

GEAR

All gear will be carried at the start of the trip and only replacement gear (hopefully none) will be purchased in route. The gear must and will serve in all conditions of the trip, including weather ranging from hot, sultry days to possible blizzard conditions, including canoeing circumstances like numerous whitewater ascents and great lakes travel.

FOOD

Most food will be purchased in route. Resupply points will range from modern to basic. The incidence of points, after Lake Winnipeg, will range from several days to three or four weeks.

SUPPORT

None.

These are the original notes of outdoor activist and local canoe legend Dick Davidson, detailing his ambitious 1988 journey from South Dakota to the Arctic Circle by canoe. Embarking from Big Stone Lake, the 58-year-old from Sioux Falls attempted to paddle and portage his canoe 4,300 miles over several months through Canadian rivers and streams. Unfortunately, fires and drought in Manitoba prevented him from seeing reaching his goal. Even still, the ambitious journey captured Davidson's commitment to living a life dedicated to outdoor expeditions.

Davidson passed away in Sioux Falls in 2009, but his legacy and passion for canoeing live on through what is now known as the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association, a nonprofit

outdoor recreation organization he founded in 1981. Unlike his solo adventures through the Canadian wilderness, Davidson established the association alongside several co-founders, canoe enthusiasts, and friends, including founding member Dave Greenlee of Sioux Falls.

Although the group participated in races, canoe building, and conservation activism, Greenlee noted that the group mainly gathered mostly “for the sheer fun of canoeing.”

But they weren’t just enthusiasts, this group of committed canoers were fanatics, appealing to all types of canoers from time-tested adventurers like Davidson to the casual outdoor enthusiast. Many of the founding members of the club would look for any opportunity to canoe, even taking to streams in near-freezing temperatures.

“Sometimes in the early spring season when the ice was still out, we would check the rain gauges after a quick rain to see if there was enough flow to enable a quick opening run for our canoes over the ice,” said Greenlee.

Another founding member, Tom Behrend, recalled crafting his own canoes and paddles from scratch, often gifting his creations to friends and enthusiasts for just the cost of the supplies.

“I would hold a class every year on how to build a canoe,” said Behrend. “A group of 10 to 15 of our members would meet every Thursday night in the winter time in somebody’s heated garage. We would build these beautiful canoes with caned seats and all the goodies and then raffle them off once they were finished. It was a great way to raise money for the nonprofit.”

For the less devout, the association offered events catered to amateurs, offering downstream floats and river-bound birdwatches. Greenlee recalled organizing an introductory canoeing instructional for blind individuals. The experience, he said, was incredibly rewarding, both the participants and the instructor had something to learn.

“I had been asked a couple of times to lead a canoeing instructional for the Girl Scouts,” said Greenlee. “Then somebody said, ‘We have a group of individuals who are visually impaired who want to learn what canoeing is like.’ I was used to teaching young kids who just want to get out on the water and flail around and paddle, but this group was actually interested in learning about the canoe.”

Greenlee continued, “I remember taking one of the individuals out onto the water and saying ‘I’m going to turn to the left here and now we are facing West.’ He said, ‘I know that.’ So, I asked, ‘How do you know that?’ And he said, ‘I know the direction because I can feel the sun on my face.’ How many times had I been in a canoe, looking at the shore and landmarks, but I never realized that I could close my eyes and tell which direction I was going by feeling the sun on my face... He was teaching me.”

Today, the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association is still the state’s premier paddling group, promoting safety,



A photo from an old article in the Argus Leader highlighting the preparations of Davidson’s attempted 4,300 mile trip to the Arctic Circle by canoe.
Photo by Mike Roemer, circa 1988. Courtesy of the Argus Leader.

education, conservation, and paddling outdoors. With roughly 100 members from across the state, the association centers around amateur paddling events, safety and outreach. Recent safety efforts include entry-level canoeing lessons and the association’s recent WEAR IT campaign, which successfully installed more than 50 safety signs along recreation areas of the Missouri River encouraging kayakers and canoers to wear lifejackets.

“We host educational pool sessions across the state in Watertown and Sioux Falls where we practice falling out of the kayak and canoe and getting back in,” said Pat Wellner, the association’s current president. “It’s all about encouraging safe practices while enjoying the outdoors.”

Wellner encouraged outdoor enthusiasts of all levels to join the association by visiting the association’s website at sdcka.org.

“Having the lakes and rivers of South Dakota is a great way to see the state from a different perspective that many don’t get to see,” said Wellner. “If anyone is interested in becoming a member, I would encourage them to check out the website, and when you are on the water, please wear a life jacket.”

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Aug. 24
2024 McCrossan Boys Ranch
Xtreme Event Rodeo
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus
Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

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.

JULY 1-4
Annual Black Hills Roundup
7 p.m.
Black Hills Roundup Grounds
Belle Fourche, SD
605-723-2010
blackhillsroundup.com

JULY 4
Philip Volunteer Fire Dept.
Annual Firework Display
Begins at dusk
Lake Waggoner
Philip, SD

JULY 5-7
Badlands Astronomy Festival
10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.
Ben Reifel Visitor Center
Interior, SD
605-433-5243

JULY 7-12
Deadwood 3 Wheeler Rally
All day
Deadwood Event Complex
Deadwood, SD
800-274-1876 ext 1103

JULY 13
Sanford Lab Neutrino Day
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sanford Lab Visitor Center
Lead, SD
605-722-8650

JULY 14-18
Dakota 600
8 -11 a.m.
Black Hills National Forest
Rapid City, SD
605-645-1756
dakota600.com

JULY 19
Gumbo Ridge Bronc Ride
Murdo, SD

JULY 20
Murdo Ranch Rodeo
Murdo, SD

JULY 19-21
Custer Piecemakers Quilt Show
9 a.m.- 4 p.m. each day
Custer School Armory
Custer, SD

JULY 19-20
Farley Fest
All day
Lake Farley Park
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656

JULY 26
Disability Resource Fair
11 a.m. -2 p.m.
Main Street Square
Rapid City, SD

JULY 26-28
Bruce Honey Days
5k walk/run, parade,
cookouts, craft show, 3-on-3
basketball tournament, street
dance and more.
Jay Street
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JULY 26-28
Meghan Newsam
Community Celebration
Murdo, SD

July 27
South Dakota Chislic Festival
10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Freeman Prairie Arboretum
Freeman, SD
605-496-9946

AUG. 6-8
IDEAg's Farmfest
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Redwood County, MN
651-316-4369

AUG. 10
Pioneer Auto Museum 70th Anniversary
Murdo, SD

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