

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



ATVs in SD

Summer fun on the
off-road trails
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Grain Bins: Harvesting Safely



Jeff Birkeland
CEO

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job – and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At West Central, safety is top priority for all – our employees and our members.

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it's easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are siloed spaces built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why West Central reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines.

Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

Safe clearance. The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. See the chart at right for further guidelines. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights

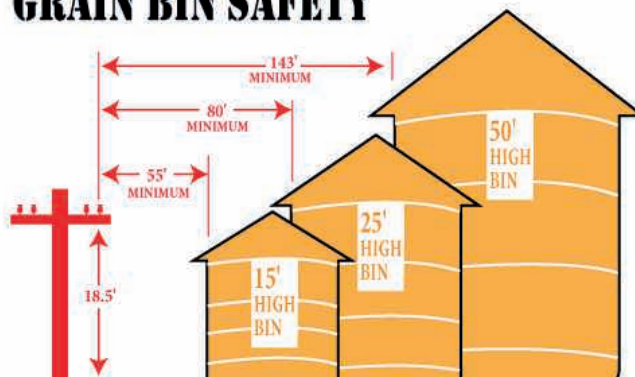
of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.

Filling grain bins. High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it's important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.

Moving equipment near grain bins. When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 15-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why West Central reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin's site, please contact West Central Electric at 605-669-8100 and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family.

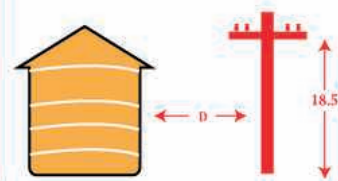
GRAIN BIN SAFETY



DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE!
FOLLOW FARM SAFETY RULES AROUND POWER LINES

Height of grain storage structure	D=Minimum distance from line to bin wall*
15 ft.	55 ft.
20 ft.	68 ft.
25 ft.	80 ft.
30 ft.	93 ft.
35 ft.	104 ft.
40 ft.	118 ft.
50 ft.	143 ft.
60 ft.	168 ft.
70 ft.	193 ft.
80 ft.	218 ft.

*Based on a typical power line having a vertical clearance of 18.5 feet above the ground and a supply line phase to ground voltage of more than 0V to 22KV; National Electrical Safety Code Rule 232.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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(USPS No. 018-988)

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Safe, Reliable Service
to our Member Owners.**

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Design assistance by SDREA

YOUTH CONNECT CON WINNER

West Central Electric announces our local area high school student that will represent the cooperative on the 2021 Youth Connect Con in Spearfish, S.D. As this year's winner, Jordan Zirpel of Kennebec, will travel with other South Dakota teens to Spearfish on July 26. While there they will spend time touring the Black Hills, learning of leadership qualities, cooperatives, rural electrification and much more. The students will return home on July 29.

MEET YOUR 2021 RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR WINNER!

My name is Jordan Zirpel and I am 17 years old. I live in Kennebec, S.D., with my parents Chris and Katie. I will be a senior at Lyman High School where I take part in many activities like volleyball, band, choir and student council. Some things I like to do in my spare time are reading, fishing, listening to my vinyl records, being outdoors and hanging out with my friends.



Handling food safely when grilling outdoors

One of America's favorite summer pastimes is grilling, and safe grilling starts with proper food handling. Here are a few simple guidelines for grilling food safely:

- Wash away harmful bacteria. Avoid providing a hotbed for bacteria. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood, and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.

- Keep perishable foods cold. If you'll be meeting up with friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables in an insulated cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs.

- Throw away any perishable leftovers that have been out of a refrigerator or cooler for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees.

- Keep coolers out of direct sunlight and avoid opening them frequently, to keep the cold air inside.

- Marinate safely. Marinated meats should be stored immediately in a refrigerator or cooler, not on the kitchen counter or outside next to the grill. As long as a marinade is stored in a cool environment, it can remain there safely for several hours or days.

- Do not use marinade from a raw meat/marinade mixture as a sauce on cooked meat, unless you first cook the

sauce to a boil for at least three minutes to kill harmful bacteria.

- Use grilling shortcuts.

Pre-cooking food partially indoors before putting it on a preheated grill will give you quick results when your friends are hungry or your grill is slow or small. Conversely, flame-grill meat for a smoky, charbroiled flavor, then bake in an oven until it's cooked properly.

- Cook thoroughly and use a meat thermometer. It's best to cook food to the safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. On the grill, meat and poultry will brown quickly, but the inside might only be cooked partially. To be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature, use a meat thermometer.

Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures:

- Chicken: 165 degrees
- Beef hamburgers: 160 degrees

- Beef, veal and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops): medium-rare 145 degrees, medium

- 160 degrees
- Pork: 165 degrees

With proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, your backyard barbecue will be a tasty success.



AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access

to the details they need to service your account.

- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.



Don't fly kites near trees and power lines

Annette Tschetter, 7 years old

Annette is the daughter of Elaine and Ryan Tschetter of Revillo. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric based in Milbank.

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.



SUMMERTIME DESSERTS

WHOOPIE PIES**Ingredients:**

1 box spice cake mix
1 1/2 cups apple butter
1/2 cup canola oil
2 eggs
8 ounces cream cheese
4 tablespoons butter
3 cups powdered sugar
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

METHOD

Heat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. In large bowl, whisk spice cake mix, apple butter, oil and eggs. With ice cream scoop or large tablespoon, spoon batter into rounded heaps, about 2-3 inches in diameter, onto parchment paper. Space spooned batter 2 inches apart. Bake 14 minutes. Let cool. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Add milk and vanilla; beat until blended. Frost flat sides of pie halves and place halves together. Refrigerate and store in sealed container.

Culinary.net

ROCKY ROAD ICE CREAM**Ingredients:**

1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 -14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
2 cup heavy cream
1 cup half & half
1 TBS vanilla
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup miniature marshmallows

METHOD

In a small saucepan put in cocoa and whisk in sweetened condensed milk until smooth. Cook over low heat, whisking constantly until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Transfer to a bowl and stir in both creams and vanilla. Pour mixture into ice cream maker and freeze. Stir in pecans and marshmallows halfway through freezing process. Transfer to airtight container and put in freezer to harden, about an hour. Makes 2 quarts.

Joan Antonen, Arlington, SD

PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH**Ingredients:**

1 21 oz. box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 cups)
2 cups pecans
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup margarine
1/2 tps baking soda

METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9"x13" pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir, microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in air tight container.

NANCY STENSON, FORT PIERRE

MAMA'S CARAMEL PUDDING**Ingredients:**

1 cup sugar - melt in skillet until golden brown
2 cups milk - stir until sugar is dissolved
4 tps. corn starch stirred into a little milk

METHOD

Cook until thickened. Serve with whipped cream.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, SD

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Dear Pat and Brad: We just purchased a home and noticed the previous owner installed an electric wall heater in the outdoor shed. How much will our electric bill go up if we use this heater next winter? Should we consider insulating the shed? – Lloyd



Pat Keegan
Collaborative
Efficiency

Good questions! An uninsulated outbuilding can be quite expensive to heat (or cool) depending on where you live. Even though we're currently experiencing July's warmer temperatures, I'll focus on heating since your shed includes the wall heater.

Years ago, I worked on a home energy contest that selected homes with the highest energy bills and helped the owners make efficiency improvements. One year, the home with the highest energy use had an uninsulated shed that was heated in order to keep several cans of leftover paint from freezing. The cost of heating the shed each winter was more than it would have cost to replace the paint.

The cost of heating and cooling an outbuilding can be much lower if the thermostat is carefully controlled.

The cost to heat or cool your outdoor shed depends on your climate, the size of the outbuilding and the price you pay for electricity. I conducted a quick calculation that showed heating an uninsulated 6 ft. by 8 ft. shed could cost twice as much as heating an insulated 900 sq. ft. home. Wow!

Some outbuildings are heated with wood, which is a sound choice if you have a free source of firewood. Another strategy often seen in workshops is a radiant heater directed at the work area, perhaps in front of a workbench. But if you're paying for your fuel and decide to keep an outbuilding heated, you should definitely insulate it.

An important consideration, unless you live in a desert-dry climate, is the effect moisture can have in an outbuilding. Moisture enables rot, insects and mold to wreak havoc on your structure, and rust to degrade tools and other metals. Heating and insulating an outbuilding, if done right, can reduce or eliminate a moisture problem. But insulation installed incorrectly can trap moisture and foster mold growth.

Moisture in an outbuilding is usually caused by three things: leaks where water can get through (typically through the roof, windows and doorway); seepage through floors and walls; or condensation when nighttime temperatures drop. To prevent moisture buildup, you need to eliminate moisture sources and prevent condensation.

As air cools, it cannot carry as much moisture, and condensation occurs, usually on the coolest object at hand. Insulating walls and ceilings can keep the interior wall or ceiling surface from getting cold enough for condensation to occur. Insulated wall or ceiling cavities need to be carefully air sealed so that condensation does not occur inside the cavity.

I should also note that the cost of heating and cooling an outbuilding can be much lower if the thermostat is carefully controlled.

Only you can decide if the value of heating and cooling your outbuilding is worth the cost and effort to properly insulate and seal. Even if your shed is not heated or insulated, it's worth keeping an eye out for mold and mildew.

We hope you enjoy your new home and your outdoor shed!

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.



Logan Storley of Roslyn, SD, lands a kick against opponent Yaroslav Amosov at Bellator MMA 252 last November. It was Storley's first Bellator loss against 11 wins. *Photo courtesy of BELLATOR MMA/Lucas Noonan*

LOGAN STORLEY

Former state champion wrestler seeks to make his mark in mixed martial arts

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

There are many who know what it's like to experience difficult emotional blows in life: broken relationships, medical afflictions, financial hardships and other misfortune. There are fewer who know what it's like to get physically punched in the face, choked, kicked in the jaw and thrown to the ground with violent force.

And still fewer who have experienced both. That's Logan Storley.

Folks around Webster know Storley as a six-time state high school wrestling champion and four-time all-American at the University of Minnesota. The 28-year-old is currently carving out a

career in mixed martial arts, fashioning a record of 11-1 as a competitor in the Bellator MMA program.

And while he's used to punching and being punched, Storley said he recruits the same mental and emotional fortitude to deal with any test of adversity whether it comes in the cage of combat or in the cage of life.

Storley suffered his first loss last November when he dropped a split decision to Yaroslav Amosov, a defeat that was difficult for him to bear. The post-fight video segment shows Storley ripping his hand away from the referee after the verdict was announced.

But the blows to the forehead and kicks to the ribs that rocked his body that evening paled in comparison to

the pain of watching his beloved uncle battle ALS for 10 years before finally succumbing to the dreaded disease in 2019.

"It really hurts to see someone you've love and cared about all your life being sick like that and withering away," Storley said. "But he did a great job keeping his spirits up. He never groaned about how unlucky he was or how unfair it was. He lived a great life, he had a lot of good people around him and I was fortunate to know him. Now he's in a much better place."

Storley said that while hardships in life and contrived combat in the confines of a cage may be different types of challenges, they require the same determined mindset to overcome and move beyond.

"When there's a death in the family, or a heartbreak or financial problems, you have to keep showing up no matter what life throws at you. You have to take the time to deal with it, control what you can control and then continue to go on with life."

As far as what it's like to get physically punched in the head and body during the heat of competition, Storley said it's important to first understand, as in real life, there is going to be some adversity and pain.

"You go into the cage expecting that you're going to get cracked. You know you're going to be in a fight," he said. "It's a shock to your system when you feel that thud, but you know you have to respond and keep on fighting. You realize you can get past it and fight on."

Storley's loss in November hasn't deterred him in the least. He stays focused on completing a task left undone when he failed to win a national title in college. His goal is to become the "best fighter in the world."

"It's important to me. My whole life has been wrestling and competing," he said. "I want to win a title, defend it a couple of times and then move on."



Summer fun awaits off the beaten path

Off-road enthusiasts from far and wide come to ride the Black Hills. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

From the Black Hills to Avon, off-road ATV trails attract outdoor enthusiasts

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Generations ago, folks flocked to the tiny hamlet of Nemo to search for gold buried deep in the nooks and crannies of the Black Hills region.

Today they come in search of family outdoor fun and adventure along the hundreds of miles of nature trails that course throughout the craggy terrain.

During most months of the year, Nemo is a quiet outpost with a

smattering of permanent residents who spend their days in unhurried leisure. But the warm summer months bring thousands of visitors seeking to explore the undulating wooded landscape on foot or on horseback, but most of all nestled in the seat of a side-by-side.

The Black Hills area is widely regarded as the state's top draw for all-terrain adventurers, and Nemo stands smack dab at the center of the action.

One of the town's busiest denizens during the summer crush is Dane Hilger, who runs D&K ATV

Rentals in Nemo. Hilger does a brisk business pairing up riders with fully licensed and permitted machines that allow visitors to free-range along the trails and take in the breathtaking vistas. His fleet of more than a dozen two-seaters and four-seaters gets snapped up quickly as the town is completely transformed during the summer season, which typically kicks off with the annual Black Hills ATV/UTV Rally held in mid-June.

"There are so many people in town it seems like it's hard to get around sometimes, but it's very family-oriented and everybody gets along and has a good time getting out and enjoying the great outdoors."

Vacationers and even day-trippers have access to everything they need during a visit to Nemo with the Brandin' Iron restaurant, camping sites, a general store and lodging.

Adam Rice, a native of Rapid City, owns and operates the Brandin' Iron in addition to another restaurant in Arizona. Soon after high school, he headed to Arizona for culinary school and later opened his business there. But two years ago, Rice was lured back to South Dakota and decided to resettle in Nemo.

"The town just has an aura about it. It's pristine and gorgeous. There's no better way to see the Black Hills. You can get to a lot of cool places through the trail system that goes literally thousands of miles and you never have to get on the road. You can get to Deadwood, you can get to Mount Rushmore, you can go to Sturgis. I go out into the woods just about every day. There's always something interesting to see."

Larry Kaiser owns the Nemo Merchantile store where visitors will find fuel, snacks, beverages, clothing and an assortment of dry goods.

He laments that during the summer he is often too busy to ride the trails, but he enjoys supplying the provisions visitors need.

"It's just a lot of fun. You meet the most interesting people and everybody's having a good time."



TOP ATV TRAILS IN SD

1. **Centennial Trail**
West of Rapid City
2. **Northern Black Hills**
West of Rapid City
3. **Southern Black Hills**
Southwest of Rapid City
4. **Buffalo Gap National Grassland**
Southeast of Farmingdale
5. **Bear Lodge Mountains**
North of Sundance
6. **Oahe Downstream OHV Area**
North of Pierre
7. **Talsmas ATV Trail Park**
South of Avon
8. **Reveheim Bay OHV Area**
Southeast of Mobridge

They bring their kids, the grand parents and the dog and they just relax, unwind and have fun."

While Nemo may be considered the mecca of ATV riders, there are several other prime spots in South Dakota open to the public.

In the southeastern region of the state near Avon, Jerry and Tina Talsma welcome ATV riders to their Trails End Ranch situated alongside the Missouri River.

The third-generation land owners opened Talsma's Trail Park in 2005 with several hundred acres open to the public and trails that range from novice to extreme.

There are climbing hills, creek crossings, deep brush, open prairie land, river bottom terrain and expansive scenic bluffs overlooking the Missouri. There are also several play areas for riders to kick up some mud.

There are different fees to enter the park depending on the mode of transportation and special discounts for groups of 10 or more machines



Many ATV trails across the state have access to fishing, scenic vistas and places to pull over for refreshments such as the Merchantile store in Nemo shown above.

as well as multi-day and seasonal passes. Camp sites are available at a rate of \$20 per night with electricity and \$10 without.

The Talsmas have big plans for the summer with a Customer Appreciation Day on Aug. 14, a fundraising event for Horse Haven on Sept. 11 and a Halloween Scare Ride on Oct. 9.

For more information on the private park, visit talsmastrailpark.com. For more information about riding in the Black Hills, visit blackhillsatvally.com and custersd.com where you'll find details about ATV activities in the Custer area.

We're Ready for Storm Season. Are You?



Jessie Tucker
Manager of
Member Services

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water, and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that West Central crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you also to practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies, including towelettes, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies, so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check West Central's Facebook page or website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings, and like our Facebook page today to stay abreast of power restoration efforts and other important co-op news and information.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At West Central, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

Happy Independence Day!

Our office will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of the holiday.
We will resume normal business hours the following day.
Have a safe and enjoyable holiday!

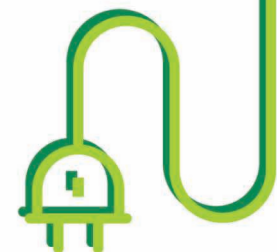
– West Central Electric



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler.

This will minimize indoor heat during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest.



ACHS/ CREDIT CARD AUTOPAY PROMOTION

What: West Central Electric is giving away eight \$50 bill credits that will be applied to the accounts of drawing winners.

Who: West Central Electric Members

- Four winners will be drawn from existing autopay accounts
- Four winners will be drawn from newly signed up autopay accounts

When: Drawing will take place on **Aug. 16**, so sign up today!

Contact our office at 669-8100 or use our SmartHub app to sign up today!





SENSIBLE SOLAR

South Dakota's electric cooperatives promote fair, sensible solar policies

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With summer in full swing, the sun is bearing down on South Dakotans. But that wasn't the case just five months ago when an unexpected polar vortex covered much of the country in a blanket of snow and ice.

As co-op members now reach for the sunscreen and a cold beverage, it's easy to forget that back in February the same solar panels that are streaming torrents of ions today were reduced to a trickle when a convergence of circumstances caused a series of rolling blackouts.

That historic event alerted policymakers from Texas to the Canadian border to hit the pause button and take another look at how renewable power fits into the national grid-based energy picture.

Across the country, the solar market is facing what can be described as growing pains. Those pains stem from the fact that the nascent stages of solar energy were heavily subsidized through taxpayer dollars, as early adopters benefited from an array of state, federal and municipal government tax credits, exemptions, incentives, rebates and subsidies designed to get the industry off the ground. Tapping into these programs, owners of solar installations have been able to deduct up to half of their costs.

But as more homeowners and businesses opt for solar and as the cost of solar has dropped 80 percent since 2010, those subsidies are shrinking and the industry is in the process of having to eventually stand on its own feet. At the federal level, for instance, the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) established in 2005

has allowed new residential and commercial solar owners to deduct 26 percent of their installation costs from their federal taxes. The ITC is set to be reduced to 23 percent in 2023 and eliminated for homeowners by 2024. The Biden Administration has proposed extending the program for another two years.

According to the Energy Information Administration, direct federal government subsidies for solar alone totaled \$34.4 billion between 2010 and 2019.

As solar subsidies decline, the true costs for ratepayers to have 24-hour access to both intermittent renewable power and more reliable traditional power at the same time are coming to bear.

In Nevada, for example, incentives for homeowners were phased out in 2016 after the state's largest energy company argued that its costs of creating and delivering power weren't being fully covered and the expenses of serving every home and business in the system were being shifted to those exercising their right not to have rooftop panels placed on their homes.

Predictably, once the incentives

Sensible Solutions for Our Energy Future



South Dakota's electric cooperatives support reasonable strategies for our energy future that make sense for our members:

- Renewable energy solutions that are both productive and practical
- Rate structures that take affordability into account
- Balanced strategies centered on the best interests of co-op consumers
- Technology-based policies that promote economic development

"WE RELY ON INTERMITTENT RENEWABLE SOURCES TO CURB EMISSIONS AND MORE RELIABLE FOSSIL FUELS TO DELIVER THE BASELOAD POWER OUR MEMBERS NEED."

ROBERT RAKER

West River Electric, characterized the state's electric cooperatives as being neither pro-renewable energy nor anti-renewable energy.

"We're pro-reliability and pro-affordability for our members," he explained. "We rely on intermittent renewable sources to curb emissions and more reliable fossil fuels to deliver the baseload power our members

to communicate with one another as each cooperative in the state has its own set of interconnection requirements and policies determined by their management.

"If one of our members wants to get involved in renewable energy, we need to know about it so we can work with the member to make sure the process goes as smoothly as possible," Raker said.

Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric, echoed Raker's comments and emphasized another important factor in open member-to-cooperative communication: safety.

"Just make sure to call your co-op. It's a safety issue. Improperly installed equipment could put the homeowner's property and co-op employees who work on the infrastructure at risk and that's what we want to prevent."

Studer said the state's cooperatives will continue to play an active role as the renewable market evolves.

"At this stage in the emergence of the distributed generation market, the fixed costs that electric utilities have invested in their infrastructure needs to be taken under consideration as more members bring localized solar installations into the system," he said.

"Other states have addressed this issue by establishing fixed charges for distributed generation owners in a way that was fair for everyone, while also setting up a system to streamline the resolution of any disputes that may arise. We'll continue to serve as an advocate for all co-op consumers."

were sun-setted and solar owners had to pay for maintaining the same grid that they depend on when their panels aren't producing power, demand decreased.

In South Dakota, where there are no state government subsidies, investor-owned Black Hills Energy has followed Nevada's lead by proposing that the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission institute tariffs on homeowners to compensate the power company for those fixed costs required to keep the system functioning for all ratepayers who use it.

Opponents argue that the tariffs could potentially obliterate the state's growing solar market, which saw 462 MW installed through the first quarter of 2021.

As for South Dakota's electric cooperatives, the system's leaders paid close attention to the polar vortex event and the lessons learned in the aftermath. Robert Raker, public relations manager at

need. It's like a parent trying to determine which is their favorite kid. We favor both of them because we need to help protect the planet but we also need to fulfill our obligation to serve our members whether it's day or night, hot or cold, sunny or cloudy, windy or calm."

Raker noted that co-ops have embraced the integration of renewable power into the state's fuel mix. Electric co-ops were leaders in introducing wind power, which now makes up roughly 25 percent of the supply while 17 percent comes from hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River. Co-ops are also involved in the construction of Wild Springs solar farm, which is expected to go on-line next year as the largest solar array in the western part of the state.

Without a clear and complete set of rules in place for distributed generation, Raker said it's paramount that members and their cooperatives work together

LET THE GAMES BEGIN



LET THE GAMES BEGIN

SDHSAA plans to resume normal activities with the fall semester begins

Billy Gibson

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Success on the field of play often hinges on putting together a solid playbook to prepare for the rigors of competition. Like many organizations, the South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA) didn't have a playbook designed to deal with the coronavirus pandemic that interrupted the slate of sporting events mid-stream in the spring of 2020.

But just as it teaches student athletes the merits of teamwork and perseverance, the association

executed a quick response by pulling together a premier task force with a variety of participants to determine an effective plan of attack against the global menace.

The A-team included officials from the state Department of Health, Department of Education, local school administrators, private medical practitioners, teachers, coaches and parents. After using the balance of the spring season to reset and regroup, members of the task force spent last summer pursuing their work without any preconceived notions of where their efforts would lead or how the future would look. All were in agreement, however,

that the primary goal would be to protect the health of the students, parents, coaches, referees and others involved in youth activities under the association's purview.

It was the responsibility of Executive Director Dan Swartos to serve as head coach of the campaign to draft and execute a game plan before the fall 2020 season commenced even as many restrictions were still in force. He credited all involved in the effort for recognizing the importance of "keeping kids active" while staying focused on the goal of returning to sports and extracurricular activities in a safe manner.

"There was never any pressure placed on anyone to decide to play sports or not to play sports. Our goal was to keep everyone safe as we dealt with the pandemic and determined the best way to respond and return to normal activities



Officials at the SDHSAA say they plan to resume a normal slate of events this fall. Photos by South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

as the pandemic ran its course,” he said. “We listened to those in the health profession for their recommendations based on what they were experiencing and balanced that with recommendations and observations that were coming from other quarters. The governor’s office trusted us and gave us the space we needed to make the best decisions.”

Swartos also gave high praise to leaders of the local school systems for being flexible as the chain of events unfolded. As an example, he referred to Lance Christianson, the 2019 state golf champion. Christianson was a student at Little Wound on the Pine Ridge Reservation when the school was forced to shut down due to the pandemic. Christianson was faced with the prospect of not being able to compete for another golf title in 2020.

Swartos explained that meetings were held and an agreement was hammered out to issue a waiver and allow Christianson to participate in the state tournament competition.

That kind of flexibility and adaptability was paramount, Swartos said, as the pandemic was impacting local schools in different ways in various parts of the state.

“The situation was different from east to west, rural and urban,

“SOMETIMES YOU DON’T FULLY APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL IT’S TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU.”

DR. DAN SWARTOS

school population sizes and other variables,” Swartos said. “Things were happening differently in Sioux Falls compared to Lemmon. It was breaking out in some parts of the state, but in Harding County they didn’t have any coronavirus cases until the fall. We had to look at things like some small schools having 500-seat arenas and others having 5,000-seat arenas. We decided not to place restrictions on attendance and leave it up to the systems to make those kinds of decisions. The way our members responded, it was extraordinary.”

Swartos said he looks forward

to a fall 2021 semester that will seem close to normal for students, parents, teachers and administrators.

“Our plan right now is to go full speed ahead as normal, but we’re continuing to meet and take assessments of how things are going and receive the recommendations of the task force,” Swartos said.

“One of the things we learned is how important our sports and activities are to the development of our students. Sometimes you don’t fully appreciate what you have until it’s taken away from you. It’s important physically, mentally and socially.”



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July 4
Independence Day



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JUNE 19-20
Aberdeen Arts in the Park
Melgaard Park, Aberdeen,
SD, 605-226-1557

JUNE 25-27
Annual Main Street Arts and Crafts Festival
N River Street, Hot Springs,
SD, 605-440-2738

JUNE 30-JULY 4
Annual Black Hills Roundup
300 Roundup Street, Belle
Fourche, SD, 605-723-2010

JULY 2-4
Custer's Old Time Country Fourth of July
Various Locations, Custer,
SD, 605-673-2244

JULY 2-4
Gold Camp Jubilee Days
Various Locations, Lead,
SD, 605-584-1100

JULY 2-4
Sitting Bull Stampede Rodeo
Rodeo Grounds, Mobridge,
SD, 605-845-2387

JULY 4
Fall River Fourth of July
Various Locations, Hot Springs,
SD, 605-745-4140

JULY 4
Fourth of July Celebration
703 Main Street, Deadwood,
SD, 800-344-8826

JULY 4
Fourth of July Parade
Kemp Avenue, Watertown,
SD, 605-886-5814

JULY 9-11, 16-18, 23-25
Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant
43379 Rose Lane, De Smet,
SD, 605-983-5251

JULY 9-11
Annual Hot Harley Nights
J&L Harley-Davidson, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-334-2721

JULY 10-11
50th Annual Brookings Summer Arts Festival
W Highway 14 and 1st
Avenue, Brookings,
SD, 605-692-2787

JULY 16-17
Storybook Land Festival
Wylie Park, Aberdeen,
SD, 605-626-7015

JULY 16-18
Gold Discovery Days
Various Locations, Custer,
SD, 605-673-2244

JULY 16-24
Senior Summer Tournaments
Rapid City, SD, Contact Lindsey
Meyers at 605-394-4175

JULY 23-25
Arlington Days
Various Locations, Arlington,
SD, 605-983-5251

JULY 27-31
Days of '76 Rodeo & Parades
Various Locations, Deadwood,
SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 31
Chislis Festival
Freeman's Prairie Arboretum,
Freeman, SD, 605-496-9946

AUGUST 5-14
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-367-7178

AUGUST 17-19
Dakotafest
2300 E Spruce Street, Mitchell,
SD, 877-611-8161

AUGUST 26-29
58th Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison,
SD, 605-256-3644

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