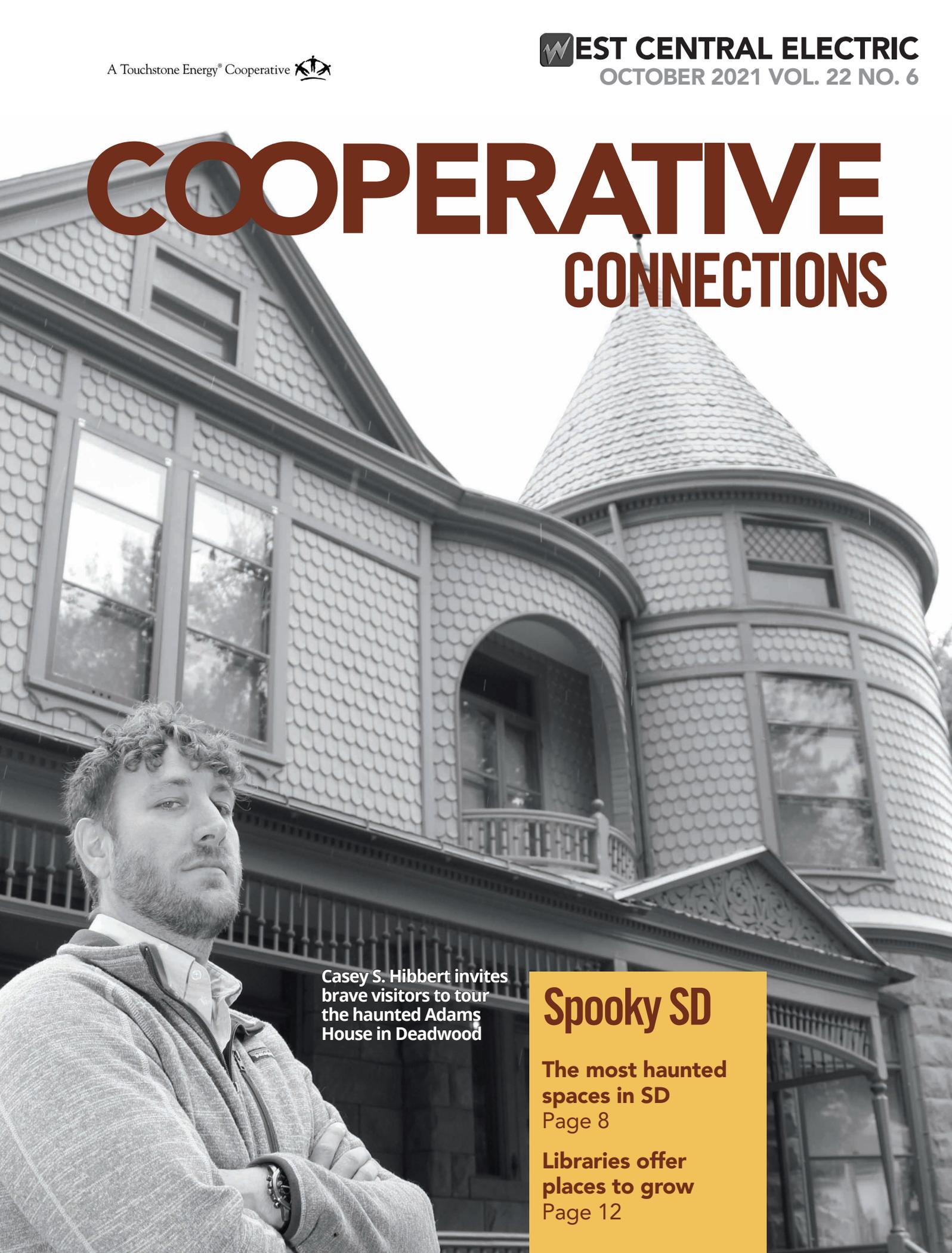


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Casey S. Hibbert invites
brave visitors to tour
the haunted Adams
House in Deadwood

Spooky SD

**The most haunted
spaces in SD**

Page 8

**Libraries offer
places to grow**

Page 12

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Members

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

October 7, 2020

The Annual Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at the Pat Duffy Community and Youth Involved Center, City of Fort Pierre, Stanley County, State of South Dakota, pursuant to due notice to the members, commencing at 5:00 o'clock PM, CDT on Wednesday, October 7, 2020.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike McQuiston who announced that a quorum was present. CEO Jeff Birkeland recognized all Veterans.

The National Anthem was played.

The CEO introduced the directors from the various zones. He then recognized past employees of West Central.

The business meeting commenced with the reading of the official notice of the meeting and the proof of mailing by CEO Birkeland.

President McQuiston announced that the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting were published in the Cooperative Connections and asked if the members wished to have them read, or was there a motion to approve the minutes as published. A motion was made, seconded and upon being placed before the membership, the motion was approved. Thereupon the president declared the motion carried and the minutes approved.

President McQuiston announced that the Financial Report, the President's Report and the CEO's Report were published in the Cooperative Connections and asked if the members wished to have them read, or was there a motion to approve the reports as published. A motion was made, seconded and upon being placed before the membership, the motion was approved. Thereupon the president declared the motion carried and the reports approved.

President McQuiston and CEO Birkeland gave brief reports.

CEO Birkeland then called upon the Legal Counsel for West Central, Mr. David Larson of Chamberlain, South Dakota. Mr. Larson reported on the legal status of West

Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., as follows:

From a legal point of view, the past year has been successful and relatively uneventful.

A review of the minutes indicates that all actions taken during the past year comply with the by-laws, articles of incorporation, South Dakota Law, and RUS regulations.

David Larson, Corporate Attorney, announced the results of the Director election process. The Directors were elected earlier through the zone meeting process as defined in the Cooperative's By-Laws. This year four Directors were elected, each to serve a three-year term, and they are as follows:

- Lyman County – Rural Director
 - Zone 1 – James Smith
- Jones County – Rural Director
 - Zone 2 – Paul Patterson
- Haakon County – Town Director
 - Zone 4 – Marty Hansen
- Stanley County – At-Large Director
 - Zone 5 – Mike McQuiston

President McQuiston then called for unfinished business followed by any new business.

There being no further business to come before the board, President McQuiston declared the meeting adjourned.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money.

Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy efficient model.

Source: energy.gov



**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**WEST CENTRAL
ELECTRIC**

(USPS No. 018-988)

President

Shad Riggle, Hayes

Vice President

Kenneth Miller, Draper

Secretary/Treasurer

Marty Hansen, Philip

Directors

Rich Bendt, Kadoka
Mike McQuiston, Fort Pierre
David J. Mertens, Kennebec
Kevin Neuhauser, Midland
Paul Patterson, Draper
Jim Smith, Vivian
Jim Willert, Belvidere
Attorney
David Larson, Chamberlain

CEO/Manager

Jeff Birkeland, Murdo

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

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

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

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Design assistance by SDREA

Official Notice

OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

The Annual Meeting of Members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at the Lyman Gardens Auditorium in the city of Presho, Lyman County, state of South Dakota, on Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 5:00 p.m., CDT, to take action on the following matters:

1. Report of officers and directors.
2. The announcement of three (3) directors of the cooperative.
3. Transact any and all other business, which may come before the meeting. In conjunction with the announcement of three (3) directors for three (3) year terms scheduled for this meeting, the following members have been nominated for directors as provided by the by-laws:
 - Kenneth Miller, Jones County, Zone Two (2), Town Director,
 - Jim Willert, Jackson County, Zone Three (3), Rural Director,
 - Shad Riggle, Stanley County, Zone Five (5), At-Large Director,

Marty Hanson – Secretary

Join Us!

Come join us Oct. 6 at the Lyman Gardens Auditorium in Presho, S.D., for West Central Electric's 72nd Annual Meeting!

All attendants will receive either a pair of West Central leather gloves or metal serving spoons. Cash drawings will be held throughout the meeting and a delicious meal served by the Lyman County EMTs will follow!



Annual Meeting Agenda

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021

Location: Lyman Gardens (Auditorium), Presho, S.D.

Time: Registration Opens at 4 p.m. (CDT)

Meeting Agenda:

Business Meeting Called to Order at 5 p.m. (CDT)

Introduction of Cooperative Directors

Notice of Annual Meeting

Proof of Mailing

Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting

President's Report

Manager's Report

Attorney's Report

Announcement of Directors

Unfinished Business

New Business

Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand, according to the National Fire Protection Association. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignite. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is absolutely necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

Smoke detectors. These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. The NFPA found that six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

Fire extinguishers. Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several fire extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

Install arc-fault interrupters. These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

Maintain it all. Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

Have a plan. What if the worst happens and those smoke detectors go off? Have a plan to get out fast. Make sure those on upper floors have a fire ladder that can get them safely to the ground. Designate a meeting place for all family members, and practice your safety plan at least once every six months.

Does all of this sound like overkill? It's not! Fire safety is imperative year-round for every home. Your home deserves to have the care required to keep it safe and sturdy, but more importantly, your family deserves the peace of mind that comes from knowing they are protected in an emergency.

WE'VE GOT SD COVERED



South Dakota's electric cooperatives deliver affordable, reliable power to our members in every corner of the state. But we do so much more!

Visit our Co-op Connections Plus YouTube channel and you'll see co-ops in action providing valuable consumer information at Dakotafest and the South Dakota State Fair. You'll see co-ops at local community events and youth leadership programs. We've got South Dakota covered!

Simply scan the QR code to the right and be sure to subscribe!



Call 811 before you dig!

Fletcher Nutt

Fletcher reminds readers of Cooperative Connections to be sure to call 811 before digging. Fletcher's parents are Donald Nutt and Amanda Larron of Sioux Falls.

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.

PERFECT PASTA PICKS

RATTLESNAKE PASTA

Ingredients:
 1/4 c buttery spread
 2 T all-purpose flour
 3/4 c dairy milk
 1/2 c vegetable broth
 1 T vegetable base
 1/2 c Parmesan cheese, shredded
 salt, to taste (optional)
 pepper, to taste (optional)
 1/4 c pickled jalapeno slices
 3 T minced garlic
 10 oz. cooked rotisserie chicken, shredded
 1 green bell pepper, sliced
 1 red bell pepper, sliced
 1 handful fresh cilantro, minced
 1 pound whole-wheat linguini, cooked

METHOD

In medium pot, melt buttery spread then add flour; mix well. Slowly add dairy milk and vegetable broth, stirring well. Add vegetable base and Parmesan cheese; heat slowly until thickened. Add salt and pepper, to taste, if desired. Add jalapenos, garlic, bell peppers and roasted chicken; heat thoroughly. Serve over cooked linguini.

Family Features

HERB BAKED CHICKEN AND PASTA

Ingredients:
 2 cups uncooked medium pasta, such as rotini, penne or ziti
 1 pound uncooked boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
 1 1/2 cups water
 1 package McCormick® Italian Herb Baked Chicken & Pasta Seasoning Mix
 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) petite diced tomatoes, undrained

METHOD

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place pasta, chicken and 1 cup of the cheese in 13x9-inch baking dish. Mix water, Seasoning Mix and tomatoes until well blended. Pour over pasta and chicken. Stir to coat well, making sure most of the pasta is covered with sauce. Cover with foil. Bake 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove foil and stir. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake, uncovered, 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand 5 minutes. (Sauce will continue to thicken upon standing.)
mccormick.com

SPAGHETTI PIE

Ingredients:
 6 oz. spaghetti
 2 T. butter
 2 well beaten eggs
 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese
 1 c. cottage cheese
 1 lb. ground beef
 1/4 c. chopped green pepper
 1/2 c. chopped onion
 2 c. chopped tomatoes
 1 tsp. sugar
 1 tsp. oregano
 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
 1/2 c. shredded mozzarella

METHOD

Cook spaghetti, drain. Stir in butter, Parmesan cheese and eggs. In buttered 10 inch pie plate, form the mixture into a crust. Spread the cottage cheese over crust. Cook beef until browned. Drain fat. Stir tomatoes, sugar, oregano and garlic salt into cooked beef. Put all in spaghetti crust. Bake 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Add mozzarella and cook five minutes more or until cheese is melted. Bulk sausage may replace ground beef.

Linda Sherry, Sioux Falls

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.

Expecting the Unexpected

West Central Electric Rises to the Challenge, Gets the Job Done in Chaotic 2021



Jeff Birkeland
CEO

If this past year taught us anything at West Central Electric Cooperative, it is to expect the unexpected. Clearly, unexpected events can set you back or set you up. It's all a matter of perspective.

Through a variety of the most unexpected twists and turns, your team at your local co-op learned that we must stop regarding unpleasant or unexpected things as interruptions of real life. In reality, those disruptions are real life. Or, as Oscar Wilde once wrote, "To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect."

The last year has been anything but normal on a variety of fronts. On Feb. 2, we experienced an event we all have read about, but never experienced. That event was "islanding." Islanding occurs when a local generation station provides power to an area but the external connection to the outside electrical grid is disconnected. WAPA, the Western Area Power Administration, encountered this situation when the hydro dam in Pierre was generating power while disconnected from the electrical grid. It caused a couple of outages for our members, but was quickly resolved.

Two weeks after the islanding event, we experienced a polar vortex on steroids. This polar vortex brought extreme winter weather from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. We experienced a week

of record-setting low temperatures in the Midwest, while as far away as Texas, they were pummeled by snow and ice. Since South Dakota winters and cold weather seem to go hand-in-hand, we didn't think much about it. That is, up to the point where it started affecting our electrical infrastructure. Prolonged cold is one thing, but the snow and ice down south iced up the wind turbines, which then couldn't produce electricity. Simultaneously, snow blanketed myriad solar panels and they couldn't generate electricity.

On top of that, gas generation down south is built outdoors to dissipate the heat. But, with the prolonged cold, the gas generation started freezing up and would not operate. The culmination of these events caused rolling black-outs. We received a call from WAPA on Feb. 16, stating it was going to shut down our Fort Thompson delivery within minutes to avoid a massive black-out. Never in West Central's history had this happened. As a result, about 40 percent of our members were without power for one hour and 15 minutes during the coldest part of the polar vortex. Make no mistake about it, this was absolutely no fault of West Central Electric. We simply had a large source of electricity that could be disconnected quickly to save the electrical grid from collapsing.

As Mother Nature likes to tell us every once in a while, she has the power, and March 14 was no different. That is the day a light mist started falling and turned

into ice. If that wasn't bad enough, the wind started accelerating and ice began to collect on our lines. Within hours, the lines were slapping together, resulting in faults and causing outages. At the height of the storm, West Central had 1,500 meters without power. We lost 19 poles and had numerous wire breaks and wire frays. We also lost the Belvidere substation transformer and metering equipment. Usually, storm damage is concentrated in one area. But in this instance, it was spread throughout the southern border of our system with the worst damage along the White River.

The next weather event we dealt with highlights what an abnormal year 2021 has been. Two weeks after the ice storm, we had a fire go through the central part of our



Above: Storm damage occurs to a pole.



Left: Lineman Rhett Bothwell holds a piece of wire covered in ice.

system. So, we go from trucks getting stuck in the mud to a fire in a two-week span. In fairness, we had a cold front pass through the area that brought an 81-mph wind gust recorded in the Rapid City area. When we have excessive wind like that, it doesn't take much for a fire to go racing across the prairie. The Dry Creek Fire burned 9,911 acres and only by the grace of God, local fire departments and our members did the fire get stopped. West Central lost 18 transmission poles and 16 distribution poles. We hired Keller Construction to assist with replacing the transmission line poles. They brought in a 17-man crew with four bucket trucks and two digger trucks and made quick work of restoring the transmission line.

Thirteen years ago, TransCanada approached West Central about providing electricity to power two pump stations. One pump site was located north of Philip in Haakon County and the second pump site was located northwest of Murdo in Jones County. It has been a long, drawn-out process with a series of ups and downs. But, as nearly everyone has learned, TransCanada has shut down the project. What does that mean for West Central Electric? It means the loss of \$12.5 million a year in revenue, along with the associated tax revenue to the schools, counties, cities and the state. But, it also brings some opportunities. TransCanada needs to sell the transmission line material they had purchased and we may be able to upgrade some of our old transmission line with that material at a discounted price. That is a long-term positive. There is a lot of work to be done before that decision is made, but it holds a potentially positive outcome.

Let's take a step back to March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic was center stage and the American people were getting fed gloom and doom. The South Dakota state basketball tournament was canceled midway through its run and businesses were shutting down. During this time, the government offered the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP as it's now commonly known. This program was initiated to save jobs so families could pay their bills. West Central applied and our application was approved. We received \$724,000 to help offset costs, which is a huge benefit to our membership. This money now belongs to our members and it will become equity on our balance sheet.

It also reduces our borrowing needs, which helps keep rates stable.

Among the other highlights of the past year, West Central Electric, along with other utilities across the state, applied for a grant to build EV charging stations along the interstate corridors. We were awarded the grant to install a 50kW charger in Murdo, but have since learned that other companies are planning to build bigger and faster EV charging stations in those areas. Additionally, Tesla is planning to allow other car manufacturers to use its chargers and we already have a supercharger station in Murdo. Consequently, with these new developments, we are unsure how the co-op will proceed with this project.

Rushmore Electric has ordered a solar trailer to use as a learning tool for the members and co-ops in western South Dakota. It will have a retractable solar array on the top of trailer with inverter and a battery back up inside. The new trailer will be demonstrated at public events throughout the western part of our state.

We would be remiss if we didn't salute West Central's retiring members of our team, as well as welcome those the co-op has recently hired. Our Operations Assistant Greg Arthur of Philip retired July 1 after 27 years of service, while Presho Foreman Lyle Linderman will retire at the end of the year after 37 years with West Central. And, in 2020 the co-op hired apprentice lineman

True Buchholz, who lives in Kadoka.

In June, we hired Jackson Volmer in the Murdo area after Jordan Jessop relocated to his hometown of Presho. Alec Schofield, a Philip native, has also accepted a full-time position in Midland.

Finally, while our team as dealt with the unexpected over the past year, our faithful members have come to expect us to dedicate ourselves to improving our system. West Central sold 132,157,250 kWhs to members with a peak of 30,750 kW. I'm pleased to report that 2020 was our second-best year on record in terms of kWh/energy sales.

In the midst of those bolstered sales, we completed 233 work orders, 74 job orders and 1,515 underground locates, while investing \$3,490,533 in those work orders. Your co-op also installed 20 miles of single-phase underground and 3.5 miles of three-phase underground, and completed a multi-year project we have been working on north of Midland. West Central retired dozens of miles of overhead lines, converting service to underground lines, provided new service to housing developments, campgrounds and other private businesses, and completed dozens of other projects which allow us to continue to provide our members with the most cost-efficient and reliable electric energy possible.

Because, that's what you would expect from West Central Electric Cooperative.



Keystone XL Pumpsite 19



SEARCHING FOR SPOOKS

Casey S. Hibbert peers out into the natural world through a window in the top floor of the haunted Adams House in Deadwood. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Paranormal enthusiasts search for signs of the hereafter in SD's haunted spaces

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Those eerie, creaky footsteps heard coming from the stairwell in Deadwood's historic Adams House could be the restless spirit of former owner W.E. Adams. Or they could simply be a figment of the imagination.

Maurice "Mo" Miller isn't going to try to convince you either way. He just wants to collect evidence that there was in fact an unexplained sound and let you draw your own conclusions.

Miller is founder and lead sleuth of the Black Hills Paranormal Investigations team. He and his six-member squad aren't out to bust ghosts or chase mischievous spirits away. They only want to make a friendly connection with inhabitants of the afterlife, maybe say hello and spend some quality time together.

For the past 10 years, Miller and his crew have been conducting their missions all across the Black Hills area and have logged scores of audio recordings and other evidence they offer as possible proof of the existence of the hereafter.

Every October, Miller invites fearless guests to accompany the investigators on their missions. But he often warns visitors beforehand: Don't come dressed in a Dracula costume or some silly getup - this is serious business.

"This isn't a dog-and-pony show," Miller said. "We never do investigations with the public on Halloween because people will come dressed up as a vampire or a witch and think it's the county fair. The shows on TV are for entertainment. We have fun, but we don't contrive things for entertainment value and promise we'll deliver a ghost in a jar or yank one out into the open with a hook."

Miller developed a passion for the paranormal when he had an unexplained experience as a youngster.

"I was in my bedroom and - I don't know how or why it happened - the closet door blew off the hinges and went flying across the room. My parents thought the door came down because I'd been swinging on it like a monkey. I was a little unnerved and slept on the couch for a month. But I started reading academic material on the subject to see if there was really something to this paranormal thing, and it's been my passion ever since."

The BHPI team has several black metal cases, or "spirit boxes" full of devices, contraptions and gizmos they use to detect the presence of wandering ghosts. There are electromagnetic field meters, binoptic cameras, infrared static cameras, digital audio recorders and more.

They've completed investigations of many haunted places in Deadwood and the surrounding area such as the Homestake Opera House, the Bullock Hotel, the Brothel Deadwood, the Lucky Nugget Casino and others.



Black Hills Paranormal Investigations team member LeAnn Harlan keeps an eye out for spirits during a recent visit to a private residence in Spearfish. Above/right, a device used by BHPI triggers when spirits are detected nearby.

As far as the fear factor goes, Miller said during late-night investigations he often finds himself keeping a close eye on BHPI Case Manager Mark Shadley, a retired police sergeant and seasoned law enforcement officer. If the former lawman starts showing

selling author Ann Charles, but there are many other famously haunted places and spaces around the state.

Author Chad Lewis has been researching paranormal activity in South Dakota, across the region, and around world for nearly 30 years and has written 25 books on the supernatural, including *The South Dakota Road Guide to Haunted Locations* as part of his “Unexplained” series. While Lewis has made many television appearances, he often speaks to local audiences and calls attention to some of the lesser known haunted sites such as Devil’s Gulch in Garretson and Spirit Mound State Historic Prairie near Vermillion.

“Spirit Mound’s legends date back as far as Lewis and Clark. In their journals, they wrote that once arriving upon Spirit Mound, their guides would go no further as they feared small creatures that looked like little people and were very good with poisonous arrows.”

He has explored many haunted sites in the Hills such as the Mount Moriah Cemetery and the Keystone Mount View Cemetery at the foot of Mount Rushmore. But Lewis has also studied spooky places in eastern South Dakota such as the Orpheum Theatre and Old Minnehaha Courthouse in Sioux Falls, Mount Marty College and Dakota

Visit these haunted sites if you dare

Here is our Top 10 list of the eeriest, scariest, most haunted places in South Dakota. Enter at your own risk:

- Bullock Hotel - Deadwood
- Adams House - Deadwood
- Old Minnehaha Courthouse Museum - Sioux Falls
- Dakota Theater - Yankton
- Hotel Alex Johnson - Rapid City
- Sioux San Hospital - Rapid City
- Lucky Nugget Casino - Deadwood
- Homestake Opera House - Lead
- Eastons Castle - Aberdeen
- Mount Marty College - Yankton



BHPI lead investigator Maurice “Mo” Miller discusses strategy with Deb Sutton and Kayleigh Johnson.

signs of fright or starts heading for the door, then it’s probably time to scam.

The Black Hills area is often considered a hotbed of paranormal activity of the kind depicted in local folklore and in the tales spun by best-

Theatre in Yankton, Eastons Castle in Aberdeen and others.

With Halloween coming up, Lewis encourages anyone interested in all things unexplained to get out and explore haunted sites and also to learn more about the history, lore and culture of different locations.

“I think people should venture out and see things for themselves and make their own determinations,” he said. “If you go out to Spirit Mound, make sure to leave an offering like a shiny rock or candy for the Little People. This will protect you from them getting followed home.”

Voting Authorization Necessary for Organizations

A number of questions seem to arise concerning voting at the Annual/Zone Meetings by non-individual members of the Cooperative, such as schools, municipalities, churches, organizations, and corporations. All of these members are entitled to representation and one vote, but the proper procedure must be followed to exercise this right. Each such member should see that a representative is designated in writing prior to the meeting. The representative must be a person who will not be voting another membership as no person shall be entitled to more than one vote on each matter submitted to a vote at the meeting. This written authorization must be in the following form and must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative prior to formal commencement of the meeting. To avoid errors, we urge you to get these in just as soon as possible for approval.

Authorization to Vote

This is to certify that the _____ of _____ in a duly assembled meeting, designated _____ who is a(n) _____ of said organization, to represent the _____ at the regular Annual/Zone Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., to be held October 6, 2021, and said person is authorized to cast such member's vote on all issues that may come before said meeting. The undersigned verifies that (s)he is the _____ of said organization and authorized to execute this instrument on behalf thereof.

 State of South Dakota)
)ss.
 County of _____)
 On this ____ day of _____, 2021 before me the undersigned Notary Public of the State of South Dakota, personally appeared _____ known to me to be the person named in the above foregoing instrument, who acknowledged that (s)he executed the same for the purpose therein specified, (s)he being authorized so to do.

 Notary Public, South Dakota
 My commission expires _____, 20____

2021 Attorney's Report



David Larson
 Attorney

Driving down the highway the other day, I was reminded of how big farm equipment has gotten to be. This was amplified by a recent incident in Ft. Pierre in which a grain auger struck the Western Area Power Administration overhead line, causing an outage.

Fortunately, the driver of the towing vehicle involved in the incident was not hurt. That was probably a matter of luck, as the electricity from the line struck by the auger put a sizeable dent in the roadway when it went to the ground.

When moving machinery, it is important to keep a lookout for overhead lines and make sure you can stay within standard clearances. Standard road crossing clearances for West Central's rural lines is 18.5'. While that is more than adequate for normal vehicle traffic, the increasing size of modern farm equipment demands that you pay attention to the equipment's height whenever taking it out on the road.

Similar safety issues are involved in the placement of grain bins. As the grain bins get taller and the augers to service them get taller to match, clearances around grain bins have become an increased concern. Underneath electrical lines is no place to put a grain bin. Although a general rule of thumb for grain bins is to multiply the height of the bin by three and adding 10', the best practice is simply to contract West Central before making a location decision so that West Central staff can assist you in meeting the proper clearances.

Another growing concern has been collisions with transformers, junction boxes and meter posts for underground lines. Even underground lines require surface equipment, which is often overlooked and damaged during equipment moves.

Finally, I would like to point out that given the right atmospheric conditions, you do not actually have to come into contact with an electrical line to have a problem. Simply getting too close can be an issue. Whenever working around an electrical line, it is essential to treat it with respect.

When treated with respect, electricity is one of the safest, most reliable and efficient energy sources available today. As society increasingly turns to electricity to power cars, trucks and even our farm equipment, the need to treat it with respect will become increasingly important.

When in doubt, don't just take a chance. Call on West Central. The staff of West Central is always willing to help and is dedicated to keeping you safe.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020

Operating Revenues	2020	2019
Farm and Residential	\$9,167,241	\$9,479,083
Small Commercial	1,994,805	2,001,984
Large Commercial	5,125,845	5,173,091
Irrigation	106,916	54,097
Street Lighting	296,163	294,034
Sales to Others	305,361	280,389
Miscellaneous Electric Revenue	918,861	542,635
Total Operating Revenue	17,915,192	17,825,313
Operating Expenses		
Cost of Power	8,948,870	9,194,505
Operation and Maintenance Expense	2,561,224	2,560,913
Consumer's Accounting and Collecting	289,485	321,405
Electric Sales and Promotion Expense	272,351	264,266
General and Administrative Expense	1,391,798	1,765,276
Property Insurance Expense	63,878	63,879
Maintenance of General Property	169,264	118,050
Taxes	249,058	249,718
Depreciation and Amortization Expenses	1,647,622	1,679,406
Interest on Long-term Debt	973,100	988,957
Total Operating Revenue Deductions	16,566,650	17,206,375
Net Operating Margins	1,348,542	618,938
Interest Income	209,846	247,930
Generation and Transmission Capital Credits	433,498	353,744
Other Nonoperating Income	75,631	83,029
Net Margins for the Year	\$2,067,517	\$1,303,641

Balance Sheet

DECEMBER 31, 2020

What We Own	2020	2019
Total Cost of Electrical System (After Depreciation)	34,538,528	34,471,108
Other Investments	9,397,207	9,515,481
Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,047,750	660,620
Temporary Cash Investments	3,954,999	2,003,545
Receivables Less Reserves	1,622,200	1,957,529
Notes Receivable – Current Maturities	33,100	48,700
Materials and Supplies on Hand	1,404,342	1,274,887
Advanced Payments on Insurance, Etc.	54,204	39,362
Deferred Debits	12,178	301,145
Total Assets	57,064,508	50,272,377
What We Owe		
Total Borrowed from RUS, CFC and FFB	44,262,712	42,209,712
Total Paid on Loans	15,621,492	14,284,842
Balance Owed RUS, CFC and FFB	28,641,220	27,924,870
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	8,683,483	3,495,595
Margins and Equities		
Patronage Capital	11,817,057	12,064,735
Margins for Current Year	2,067,517	1,303,641
Other Equities	5,855,231	5,483,536
Total Liabilities and Equity	57,064,508	50,272,377

The financial statements of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., were audited by Eide Bailly, LLP, Certified Public Accountants of Sioux Falls, S.D. A copy of the complete audit report is available for review at the cooperative headquarters.

A PLACE TO GROW

Public libraries across the state continue to serve the needs of their communities as places to go for a wide range of experiences.

South Dakota's public library system grows and adapts to an ever-changing cultural and technological landscape

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The state's public library system got its start even before there was a state.

In 1886, three years before South Dakota achieved statehood, the Howard Public Library was chartered and quickly became a point of pride for the people of present-day Miner County.

The contents of the library have long since been relocated to a modern facility in the town's Municipal Building, but the original structure can still be visited at Prairie Village in nearby Madison.

As the first of its kind in the state, the Howard Public Library is still a thriving entity and serves as a testament to the versatility and resiliency of the state's library system. Standing strong through world wars, recessions, depressions, funding pressures, political challenges and

changes in culture and contemporary lifestyles, South Dakota's libraries are still delivering the goods - and the books - in their respective communities.

Mary K. Schlim is the head librarian in Howard and says the community takes a lot of pride in being home to the state's first facility. She takes an optimistic view of the future of libraries...as long as they continue to adapt.

"I think libraries have a bright future," she said. "You just have to keep updating and modernizing and keeping up with the trends and the technology. We have the computers, but we're adding new books all the time. There will always be demand from people who want an actual, physical book to read. There will always be a need for libraries."

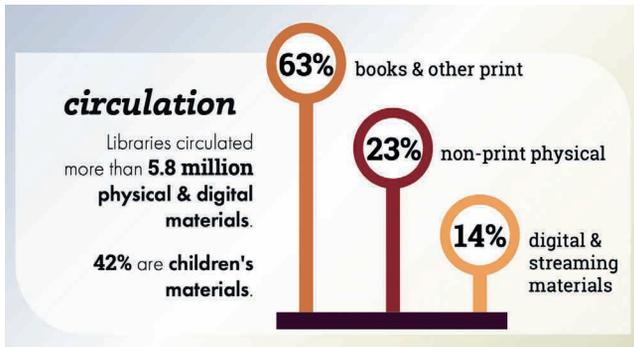
Schlim said her facility is open six days a week with more than 14,000 books on the shelves, five public

computers with internet access, 37 subscriptions to magazines and periodicals, and free WiFi access.

In the year prior to the pandemic, 3.7 million visits were made to the state's 107 public libraries while nearly half the state's residents held a library card. In 2019, more than 600 of the state's citizens were employed at a public library, and a collective 5.8 million digital and physical materials were circulated.

Brenda Hemmelman, access and development services director for the state library system, said libraries return \$4 in various programs and services for every \$1 invested. She describes libraries as a sound investment in communities large and small.

Hemmelman recently announced the distribution of nearly \$2 million in grant money disbursed to a total of 78 public, local school and academic libraries across the state. The grant money came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.



“This will help our libraries invest in infrastructure, technology and materials that will serve their patrons through modern, innovative facilities and practices well into the future,” Hemmelman said.

Grant-funded items include the following:

- Technology to replace old computer equipment
- Podcasting equipment
- Digitization equipment
- Books, audio books, e-books
- 3D printers and other makerspace equipment
- Furniture with embedded technology
- Library automation software
- SMART boards/Promethean boards for classroom teaching and displays.

The state system also purchased an additional \$76,000 worth of audiobooks and e-books for the South Dakota



Titles to Go (SDTTG) consortium with funds from IMLS through ARPA. Hemmelman said SDTTG program usage increased 18 percent from 2019 to 2020 as users checked out more than 400,000 titles.

Hemmelman said libraries face an ongoing challenge to remain relevant and useful in a rapidly changing technological

landscape. She said libraries were fortunate to receive the recent grant money after 96 percent of the state’s facilities closed temporarily during the pandemic.

She was quick to note, however, that 86 percent continued to provide public services even though the physical facility may have been closed. More than 80 percent provided outside or curbside checkout services and all of them increased access to digital materials.

For Hemmelman, those indicators point to a promising future for the state’s public library system.

STATE LIBRARY DIGITIZES 41 VOLUMES OF SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS



As the South Dakota State Historical Society celebrates its 120th year, the South Dakota State Library has digitized all 41 volumes of the South Dakota Historical Collections. From 1902 to 1982, this series was published biennially by the Department of History (now the South Dakota State Historical Society) as part of its mission to collect, preserve and make accessible the history of the state. All 41 volumes are now available via the Featured Collections section of the South Dakota State Library’s Digital Collections.

These volumes cover a wide array of topics and are a valuable resource for students, teachers, and scholarly researchers. Six editors presided over the South Dakota Historical Collections during its run, including Doane Robinson, Will G. Robinson and Dayton Canaday. Their different editing styles and interests are evident throughout the volumes. Taken as a whole, the series represents an evolution in perspectives on the state’s history, heritage and culture. In 1989, an index to the collection was compiled and published to aid researchers.

The South Dakota State Library serves as the state’s depository for current and historical state agency publications, some of which go back to territorial days.

The South Dakota State Library’s Digital Collections reflect the history and culture of South Dakota. Primarily of interest to librarians, researchers, and genealogists, the digital collections include newspaper articles, South Dakota library photographs, state government annual reports and research reports, South Dakota Codified Laws, Session Laws, House and Senate Journals and more. Access the collections at: sdsdl-montage.auto-graphics.com/.

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Jones County



Marty Hansen
Secretary/Treasurer
Zone 4
Haakon County



Rich Bendt
Zone 3
Jackson County



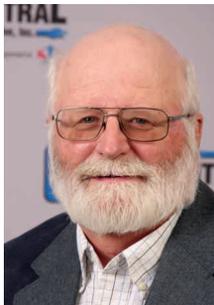
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Kevin Neuhauser
Zone 4
Haakon County



Paul Patterson
Zone 2
Jones County



Jim Smith
Zone 1
Lyman County



Jim Willert
Zone 3
Jackson County





**Pheasant Hunting Season
Opening Day
October 16, 2021**

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.

SEPTEMBER 25

Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival
526 Main Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 25-26

Menno Pioneer Power Show
Menno, SD, contact Daniel at mennopowershow@yahoo.com for more details

SEPTEMBER 25-26

Reza: Edge of Illusion
Oscar Larson Performing Arts Center, Brookings, SD, tickets on sale at <http://www.RezaLive.com>

**SEPTEMBER 30
7th Annual Taste of Sioux Falls**

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**SEPTEMBER 30 -
OCTOBER 3**

Festival of Books
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-688-6113

OCTOBER 1-2

Oktoberfest
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

OCTOBER 1-3

SiouxperCon
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit siouxpercon.com for more details and tickets

OCTOBER 2-3

Fort Pierre Horse Races
Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-2178

OCTOBER 7-10

Annual Great Scarecrow Festival
Campbell Park, Huron, SD, 605-354-0491

OCTOBER 8-9

Junkin' Market Days
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-941-4958

OCTOBER 8-10

Pumpkin Festival
Country Apple Orchard, Harrisburg, SD, 605-743-2424

OCTOBER 9-10

Sioux Falls Quilters' Guild Bi-annual Quilt Show - "Fall in Love with Quilting"
Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, for more info visit siouxfallsquiltersguild.com or send an email to sfqg2021show@gmail.com

OCTOBER 11

Native American Day Celebration
Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

OCTOBER 16-17

Heartland Quilter's Guild
Highland Conference Center, Mitchell SD, Contact Karen at 605-996-6726 for more info

OCTOBER 16-17

KELOLAND Living Arts & Crafts Show
Best Western Plus Exhibit Hall & Annex, Sioux Falls, SD, email events@keloland.com for more info

OCTOBER 22-23

Governor's South Dakota Showcase
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-773-3301

OCTOBER 29-30

Deadweird
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

OCTOBER 30

16th Holiday Shopping Extravaganza
Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, call Cindy at 605-999-8563 for more info

OCTOBER 30

Scare in the Square
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

OCTOBER 30

Yankton's Harvest Halloween
Downtown, Yankton, SD, email mandi@bostonsyankton.com for more info

NOVEMBER 13

Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Open House Extravaganza
Sisseton, SD, call Beverly at 605-698-7425 for more info

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