

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota 4-H Shooting

Shooters Prepare for
the State Competition

Pages 8-9

Wild Horses Roam at
Black Hills Sanctuary

Pages 12-13

Jackson Neprud, 4-H archer for Jones County, poses next to his target.

Change In The Air



Chris Larson,
General Manager

It might seem a little early but spring is almost on our doorstep and like many of you, I'm looking forward to more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy warmer weather.

Unfortunately, spring and summer can also create the perfect conditions for severe storms.

Clay-Union crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during 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, including 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 potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading 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 portable 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 for your protection and our linemen's.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it.

If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the

storm's effects.

Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings and follow us on Facebook for the latest power restoration updates. If you experience an outage, please don't report it on Facebook. Call our outage reporting number at 605-624-2673. We will post updates periodically to our Facebook page as time allows.

I hope we don't experience severe storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. We recommend that you make a plan today—because storm preparedness is always our best defense.

Thank you again, for allowing us to provide your electric service needs.

Chris Larson
General Manager
clarson@clayunionelectric.coop

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS

(USPS 116-800)

Office Hours
Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
31321 SD Hwy. 19, Vermillion, S.D.

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In case of Power Failure Call:
1-800-696-2832 or 624-2673

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TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS 

Be cautious of fraudulent websites pretending to be an electric utility. Scammers often create look-alike sites to steal your personal or payment information. Always type your utility's official web address directly into your browser instead of clicking email or text links. Watch for signs of a secure website, such as "https://" in the address bar and a padlock icon. If you're ever unsure, call your utility company using the official phone number listed on your bill to verify payment or account details. Stay vigilant to protect yourself from utility fraud.





Save the Date

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

89th Annual Meeting

April 8th, 2025

Gayville-Volin School

Registration & Dinner begins at 5:00 p.m.
6:30 p.m. Meeting Starts

Complete Annual Report and Agenda in the April Edition





Falls Are Preventable

March is Ladder Safety Month. Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed.
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment.
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job.
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment.
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather.
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended.
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open.
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder.
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface.
- A straight or extension ladder should be one foot away from the surface it rests on for every four feet of height and extend at least three feet over the top edge.
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top.
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom.
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use.



Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a weekend warrior or do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls.

Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall.

At home or at work, many of the same rules apply. When taking on a project, remember the following.

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips mentioned to the left.
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills.
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment.
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment.

Source: National Safety Council



"Don't cut trees near power lines."

Remington Welsh, Age 11

Remington warns readers to not cut trees around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Remington! Remington's parents are Ryan and Rachel Welsh, members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

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.

Hearty FAMILY MEALS

EASY CREAMY HAMBURGER PASTA

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground hamburger
1 lb. cooked pasta
5 oz. spinach
1/4 cup butter
2 cups heavy cream
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 cup grated parmesan cheese

Method

In a large pan, brown hamburger and minced garlic. Remove any excess grease. Turn heat to low and add the butter and heavy cream. Stir and simmer for a few minutes until the butter melts and it starts to boil. Stir in the spinach and cook for about three more minutes. Stir in the parmesan and cooked pasta. Enjoy!

Lyndell Todd
Rapid City, S.D.

MINI BBQ BACON CHEDDAR MEATLOAF

Ingredients:

2 lbs. ground beef
6 oz. chili sauce
4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
1 1/2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
2 large eggs
1 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. seasoned salt
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 tbsps. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. yellow mustard
1/2 cup BBQ sauce

Method

Preheat oven to 425°F. Cook and crumble bacon. In a mixing bowl, mix together all meatloaf ingredients except the BBQ sauce. Divide the mixture into eight round loaves. Press a small depression into the middle of the meatloaves. Brush BBQ sauce on top of the meatloaves. Bake for 25 minutes. Turn on broiler and brown the BBQ sauce for two to five minutes.

Kayla Beaner
Centerville, S.D.

SKILLET CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

1/4 cup butter
1 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup flour
2 cups chicken stock
1 cup milk
1/2 cup apple cider
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. whole thyme leaves
1/4 tsp. black pepper
2 cups cubed cooked chicken
1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)
1 cup frozen peas
1 can (7.5 oz.) refrigerated biscuits, (10 biscuits)

Method

Preheat oven to 450°F. Melt butter in large ovenproof nonstick skillet on medium-high heat. Add onion; cook and stir five minutes or until softened. Sprinkle with flour. Stir with whisk until mixture is well blended. Add stock, milk, apple cider, garlic powder, cinnamon, thyme and pepper; whisk until mixture is smooth.

Stir in chicken, sweet potatoes and peas. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook and stir 15 minutes or until sweet potatoes are tender.

Place biscuits on top of chicken mixture. Bake 10 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown.

McCormick.com

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Washington D.C. Youth Tour Participant - Elizabeth Wright



Elizabeth Wright will be joining other High School Juniors and Seniors from South Dakota along with 1,800 students from around the nation, as they travel to Washington D.C. the week of June 15-21 to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. During the week, they will visit national monuments and museums, our government in action and meet the states congressional delegation.

Congratulations Elizabeth on your winning essay. We look forward to hearing about your

trip this summer.

Elizabeth is the daughter of Melissa and Seth Wright, Burbank and attends school in Elk Point.

Clay-Union Electric sponsors the trip to support our local youth as tomorrow's leaders and community members.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

March is an ideal time to service your home cooling system, ensuring it runs efficiently when the heat of summer arrives. Routine maintenance, like cleaning or replacing filters, checking refrigerant levels and inspecting parts, can improve your system's energy efficiency and lower your energy bills. By addressing potential issues early, you can avoid costly emergency repairs and extend the lifespan of your unit. Scheduling service in the spring helps you beat the peak-season rush, giving you faster access to qualified technicians. A well-maintained cooling system can save energy and keep your home comfortable all summer long.



RANDOM DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

Clay-Union Electric will award two - \$500 academic scholarships to a high school senior who plans to pursue an academic degree or certification from an accredited university, college, junior college, technical school or other post-secondary educational institution.

Scholarship payments will be made directly to the college, university or school. The scholarships must be used for the 2025 school year. Funds may be used for tuition, books, room and board.

Eligibility requirements are: • Live full-time in a residence served by Clay-Union Electric.

• Be a graduating senior attending a

high school or an accredited home extended studies program within the counties served by Clay-Union Electric.

• Attend the annual meeting with a parent/legal guardian who is a member of Clay-Union Electric.

The scholarships will be awarded to the qualifying students the night of the annual meeting, April 8, 2025 at the Gayville-Volin School. In the event a student is unable to fulfill his/her enroll-

ment obligations under this program, the award will be forfeited.

Please apply when registering for the annual meeting at the front desk. Must be registered by 6:30 p.m. and be present to win.

Enter to Win
a
\$500
Scholarship

Current Status of Districts #4 and #5

YOUR DIRECTOR CURRENTLY REPRESENTING DISTRICT #4



Tom Larsen
President
District #4

Tom Larsen was nominated by petition as a candidate for Director from District #4 of the Clay-Union Electric Corporation. Tom has been representing District #4 for 26 years and currently serves as the Clay-Union Electric Board President.

Tom is a native of the Wakonda and Clay County area and graduated from Wakonda High School. Tom farms in the Wakonda area and also has been employed full-time for the past 22 years as a laser operator at Shur-co in Yankton.

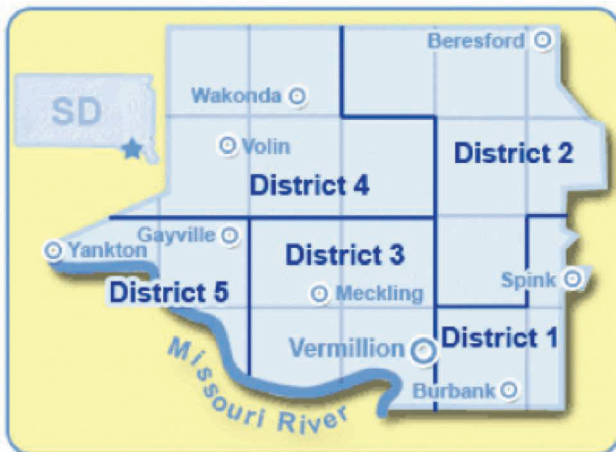
Tom served in the National Guard for nine years and attended South Dakota State University where he studied History.

Tom's hobbies include golfing, hunting and fishing and also enjoys camping with his family in the summer.

Tom is a director on the SDREA board and an active member of the Wakonda American Legion Post 13.

District #5 will become vacant due to the current director not seeking another term. No petitions were filed before or on the deadline of February 7, 2025.

In accordance with the Clay-Union Electric By-Laws the board of directors will appoint a new director for District #5 in the near future.



DISTRICT 4: The territory served by Clay-Union Electric beginning at a point on the Northeast corner of the territory at the junction of 458th Ave. and 297th St.; thence south on 458th Ave. to the intersection with 303rd St.; thence east on 303rd St. to the intersection with 464th Ave.; thence south on 464th Ave. to the intersection with 309th St.; thence west on 309th St. to the intersection with 446th Ave.; thence north on 446th Ave. to 297th St.; thence west on 297th St. to the intersection with 458th Ave., the point of beginning.

DISTRICT 5: The territory served by Clay-Union Electric beginning at a point on the Northeast corner of the territory at the junction of 452nd Ave. and 309th St.; thence south on 452nd Ave. to where a projection of 452nd Ave. meets the Missouri River; thence west along the South Dakota boundary of the Missouri River to a point that would be a projection south of 440th Ave.; thence north on 440th Ave. to the intersection with 308th St.; thence east on 308th St. to the intersection with 446th Ave.; the south on 446th Ave. to the intersection with 309th St.; thence east on 309th St. to the intersection with 452nd Ave., the point of beginning.

The Power of a Membership

Clay-Union Electric belongs to the members it serves. That means our members have a say in how our co-op is run. And with members in charge, you can feel confident that the decisions made are in your best interest and the best interest of your community. Doesn't that sound good?

Members know they can trust Clay-Union Electric because it was created not to make profits, but to deliver on this promise: providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity, now and into the future. Four values are the foundation of Clay-Union Electric's service to its members... innovation, commitment to community, accountability and integrity. These values represent the cooperative difference and how our co-op earns the trust of members, every day.

Members First. Every Day. That's the power of co-op membership.



West Central Electric CEO Jeff Birkeland, left, is the retired archery coach, and IT Coordinator Derek Wolf, right, is a first-year rifle coach for Jones County, South Dakota.

SOUTH DAKOTA 4-H SHOOTING

Shooters Prepare for the State Competition in April

Jocelyn Johnson
jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

Dedicated practice is the price each marksman pays to qualify and compete at the South Dakota 4-H Shooting Sports state event.



Sophie Wolf takes aim during a weekly practice.

This year, hundreds of shooters will compete on April 25-27 to showcase marksmanship. Their hard work will be on display as every shot will impact the final score. Among these competitors is a dedicated group from Jones County, South Dakota. For the past two decades, employees from West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, S.D., have dedicated their time to coaching various 4-H shooting disciplines.

“It’s the cooperative giving back to the community and promoting our youth,” said Jeff Birkeland, CEO of West Central Electric. “A few years ago, we took 41 kids to state, and we brought home 43 state trophies. I’m proud of our kids.”

Birkeland coached archery for 15 years and happily recounted the experience with his two boys during that time.

“Kids want to shoot. We have the best participation in shooting sports

than we have in anything else.”

Birkeland’s son, Jacob, competed for 10 years in shooting sports among other 4-H competitions.

“While I explored many aspects of 4-H, shooting sports became my primary focus,” Jacob said. “I began my journey in shooting sports with BB gun and was introduced to archery. Archery quickly became my main area of competition, and it has been an incredibly rewarding and impactful part of my 4-H experience.”

This experience offered him a competitive edge as well as bonding memories that Jacob vouches as life shaping.

“One of the greatest highlights of my time in 4-H has been the lasting friendships and memories I’ve built along the way,” Jacob said. “Whether it was constructing a trophy shelf with my grandpa, having archery competitions against my dad to see who had to do the chores or representing South Dakota at the national shooting sports event – each experience has contributed to my personal and professional growth. I would not be where I am today without it.”



Matthew Birkeland, left, stands with Hayzen Sealey, right, at the spring state competition.

Derek Wolf, IT coordinator for West Central Electric and first-year coach for Jones County 4-H, said, “We begin practicing once a week in January. We work on safety first – getting the kids comfortable with their firearms. Then, we step into practicing for competition.”

Each county competes in three matches leading up the state competition, and every participant must make a qualifying score in at least one match to qualify for state.

“We encourage every kid to enter and compete in all three matches,” Birkeland said. “It’s better to practice at it instead of getting to state and having the wheels fall off.”

The art of practicing perfectly is what brings these competitors to state. Birkeland noted that those who practice, will win. And those who overcome a disappointment may come home with the trophy.

“It teaches those kids a lot about life,” Birkeland said. “You practice and practice, you put the time in and then one thing happens – one flinch,

one mistake and it’s over. Emotionally, hopefully it strengthens them a bit. Instead of breaking down and crying, you better be able to handle it...Limit your problems. Don’t increase them with a mental meltdown.”

Wolf agreed with this sentiment and described how overcoming a bad shot and being mentally tough is sometimes more important than being a skilled shooter.

“There are a lot of kids who find success in this, so I find it rewarding to be involved as a coach,” he said.

Wolf’s daughter, Sophie, competes in .22 rifle and archery and remarked that the highlight of the competition was that it challenged her and made her a stronger competitor. She trains twice per week for several hours while preparing for the state competition.

“I feel excitement when I compete,” Sophie said. “I love the challenge.”

In 2024, more than 1,600 participants competed in various disciplines at the spring state shooting event. These disciplines

are pistol, archery, rifle, hunting and western heritage. An additional 270 participants competed in the fall state shooting event for shotgun and muzzleloading. Each year, the top five shooters win trophies and this year’s winners may be chosen to represent at the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships in Grand Island, Neb., on June 22-27. Last year, South Dakota tied for 2nd place with Missouri at the national event.

John Keimig, South Dakota State University Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist, emphasized that the shooting program is made great by the people who volunteer.

“One of the great things about small communities in South Dakota is people who give their time to volunteer,” said Keimig. “If it wasn’t for people who volunteer, we wouldn’t have this successful program – whether it be volunteers who work full-time for an electric cooperative or farmers and ranchers. They are the backbone of this program.”



Archers stand on the line at South Dakota’s spring state competition.

TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a hero in your local community who goes above and beyond.

They could win up to \$3,000!

Nominate your local hero at
WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM



2025 Youth Excursion

July 21-24, 2025
Bismarck, N.D.



TEENS:

Head to North Dakota This Summer for Free!

Clay-Union Electric will be sponsoring an all-expenses-paid excursion to North Dakota. Two area high school students will be randomly drawn to participate on the excursion. The South Dakota Rural Youth Excursion will give these students the opportunity to learn and see where and how electricity is generated.

The Youth Excursion Tour will be held July 21-24, 2025, and is headquartered in Bismarck, N.D. All area high school students whose parents or guardians are members of Clay-Union Electric are eligible to apply.

Young people attending this event will:

- Have the opportunity to sightsee and to meet new friends from other participating cooperatives.
- Learn about “The Story Behind the Switch” and see where South Dakota’s electricity generates.

- Tour the Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant.
- Spend their evenings swimming, shopping and cruising on the Lewis and Clark Riverboat.

Clay-Union Electric will provide transportation, lodging, meals, entertainment and sightseeing events. Students are required to supply their own personal/shopping money.

To Apply, please fill out the below registration and mail to Clay-Union Electric, PO Box 317, Vermillion, SD 57069



It’s Fun and Free!

Visit North Dakota and learn how you get your energy.

Meet new people and travel this summer!

Ask us how!

July 21-24, 2025

Deadline is May 9th, 2025

Clay-Union Electric Youth Excursion Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Students Phone Number: _____

Parent’s Name _____

Parent’s Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Name of School _____

T-Shirt Size: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____ XXXL _____



RUNNING FREE

Photos by Alvis Uptis

Wild Horses Roam at Black Hills Sanctuary

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

In the southern Black Hills, a watchful eye will catch a rare and breathtaking sight: a herd of wild mustangs galloping freely across thousands of acres of grassland in the Cheyenne River Valley.

For the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary staff and the hundreds of rescued horses they care for, it's just another day on the ranch.

The sanctuary operates like most working ranches, says Susan Watt, the president and CEO of the Institute of Range and the American Mustang. Staff regularly travel over 15 miles across the 10,000 acre ranch to fill water troughs and set out hay, mineral blocks and horse cake. It's a trek that takes them across picturesque grasslands, hills, bluffs and the muddy banks of the Cheyenne River. A bulwark against suburban sprawl, the land remains as nature intended.

"Wild horses have been part of North America since time immemorial," Watt explained. "We have a large population of American mustangs, Spanish mustangs, horses with blood lines that trace back to Spain and Portugal, and a small herd of Choctaw Indian ponies that were part of the Trail of Tears

– They are a very important part of American history we need to preserve."

The story of the sanctuary begins in the late 1930s with a young man named Dayton Hyde. At 13 years old, Hyde left his home in Michigan for his uncle's cattle ranch in Oregon after hearing captivating tales of the wild west's excitement and beauty.

Once he arrived, Hyde was completely enthralled by the western lifestyle. With each passing year, his connection to the land and the wildlife strengthened, shaping his identity as a cowboy, conservationist and writer.

Decades later in 1987, while on a trip to Nevada to purchase cattle, Hyde came across corrals of wild horses the federal government had rounded up using low-flying helicopters. Devastated by the idea of the free-roaming herds confined to pens, Hyde was inspired to create a refuge for wild horses where they could run free.

Hyde petitioned congress to allow him to take some of the captured horses and create a sanctuary. South Dakota Governor George Mickelson, who had learned of Hyde's ambitions and was supportive, invited Hyde to inspect a piece of land known as Chilson Canyon near Hot Springs, S.D.

For nearly 40 years now, that piece of land plus Hyde's hard work has given hundreds of wild horses another chance to roam wild. However, it's a luxury very few wild horses receive.

Since 2020, the Bureau of Land Management has reported

WILD HORSE SANCTUARY

rounding up over 40,000 wild horses to control herd populations, which can grow rapidly in the wild. Their fates vary; At government holding pens, they await auction where if sold they'll be rehomed with owners who agree not to sell them for slaughter outside of the U.S.

According to Watt and other wild horse advocacy groups, those assurances don't always matter.

"The horses are supposed to be protected from slaughter," she continued, "But unfortunately, you put them in a trailer and cross the border into Canada or Mexico and they don't always check to see what's in the trailer."

The horses that come to the sanctuary are generally in "emergency situations," Watt said, which means the horses are being sent to slaughter or their previous caretaker died or is unable to take care of the horses.

In addition to preserving the herds of wild horses, Hyde envisioned the sanctuary as a means to protect and preserve the land's natural beauty and rich historical legacy, which includes long-ago remnants of human activity.

"This particular tract of land was the location for ancient petroglyph writings that ancient man did on cliff walls," Watt explained. "And we're protecting the pioneer history of this land; Our buildings that we use are pioneer homesteads."

Though Dayton Hyde passed away in 2018, his legacy lives on. Today the sanctuary is home to several hundred wild horses, a herd of cattle, thousands of acres of pristine prairie

and the inextinguishable spirit of the wild west.

"He used to say every ache and pain he ever had was from a horse," Watt laughed. "What Dayton Hyde really wanted was to protect this land from subdivision, to let it be for wildlife and wild horses, and keep it safe and protected. I think South Dakota should be immensely proud of what Dayton Hyde has done."

For more information about the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary, visit www.wildmustangs.com.



(Above) Dayton Hyde, founder of the sanctuary.
(Below) The sanctuary encompasses more than 10,000 acres of land along the Cheyenne River near Hot Springs, S.D.
Photos by Alvis Uptis



BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

DECEMBER 20, 2024 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on December 20, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. by board President Tom Larsen. The meeting was held in the conference room at the Clay-Union Electric Headquarters.

In attendance were Tom Larsen, Chris Kinney, Jim Ryken, Mike Slattery and Sara Schulte. Attending staff members included Chris Larson, Beth Bottolfson, Mike Kruse and Jackie Williams.

Agenda (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the agenda as presented.

Visitors to Be Heard – None

Approval of Minutes from the November Board Meeting (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the November board minutes held on 11/21/24.

Approval of Minutes from the November Executive Session (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the November executive session minutes held on 11/21/24.

Check List & Electronic Funds Transfer – The board reviewed the EFT/ACH payments, and the monthly check list as presented.

New Members and Refunds (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the new members, refunds and credit deposits as presented.

Early Retirement of Capital Credits (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Early Retirement of Capital Credits as presented.

Contracts (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Electric Service Contracts as presented.

Policy Review – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve updates to the Insurance and Benefits Policy 726.

Work Order and Special Equipment Summary – None

Budget – Manager Larson, Operations Manager Kruse and Finance and Administration Manager Bottolfson presented the board with the following:

1. Manager Work Plan 2025
2. Administration Work Plan 2025
3. Operations Work Plan 2025
4. Capital Budget 2025
5. Operating Budget 2025

• **Capital Budget (Action)** - A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the Capital Budget as presented.

• **Operating Budget (Action)** - A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Operating Budget for 2025 as presented.

Management Reports:

A. Manager's Report - Manager Larson provided reports on the monthly activities:

January Board Meeting – The date of January 24th, 2025, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.

East River REED/MAC - The REED Board and the East River MAC met on December 3rd for the monthly meeting at East River in Madison, SD.

New Building - Manager Larson reviewed with the Board various warranty and other happenings that are being worked through with Puetz and other contractors.

SD Line Patrol - Virtual meetings have started in planning the SD Line Patrol poker run scheduled for September 2025. The event will be hosted by BY, Union and Clay-Union.

Legislative Forum - The legislative forum was on November 25th in Yankton at the Best Western Kelly Inn.

Distributed Generation - Manager Larson reported on the consultant from Star Energy that is helping organize our DG program and help form policies that will be fair to individuals who are installing generation but also protect all members from cost shifting.

SDREA Annual Meeting- Their Annual Meeting will be held January 16th and 17th in Pierre. Sara is the delegate and Chris K. is the alternate.

NRECA Annual Meeting (Action) - The NRECA Annual meeting is March 10th to the 12th in Atlanta, GA. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to authorize a staff member to attend.

CRC Delegate (Action) - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to nominate Beth Bottolfson, Manager of Finance and Administration, as the delegate for CRC.

NRTC Delegate (Action) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to elect Chris Larson as the delegate.

Nominating Petitions - The deadline for returning nominating petitions is February 7th, 2025.

Safety Day - A Safety Day is being planned with Union County and BY for a time in January or February.

Capital Credit Retirement – Capital Credit checks have been processed and mailed. Manager Larson made some hand deliveries.

Dakota Farm Show - The Dakota Farm Show will be January 7th, 8th, and 9th at the Dakota Dome.

Strategic Plan – The date of February 14, 2025, was selected for a Board of Directors strategic planning session with Chris Studer, East River, as the moderator.

SE Cooperative, Meckling – Manager Larson reported on developments and meetings regarding the proposed site near Meckling.

SDPUC – Manager Larson reported on a member inquiry with the SDPUC.

Energize Forum (Action) - The 2025 East River Electric Energize Forum will be held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on February 5th and 6th. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve attendance.

Audit (Action) - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to authorize Manager Larson to sign the engagement letter for 2025 audit services, 990 preparation and certain annual payroll reports with Eide Bailly.

RUS Loan approval – Manager Larson received correspondence from RUS that staff can start drawing loan funds on the new loan.

Touchstone Scholar of the Week - A student from Gayville was selected as the Touchstone Scholar of the week. Will Pirak received a \$250 check and will be featured Jan 6th and 7th on Dakota News Now.

B. Administrative Report – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Billing Activity
- November 2024 Financials
- FEMA
- **2024 Bad Debt Write-Off Report (ACTION ITEM)** - Af-

ter discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the write-offs as presented and send them to collections.

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.

C. Operations Report – Operations Manager Kruse reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Monthly department work summary
- FEMA
- New Service
- November Outage Report
- Wiring

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.

Financial Report – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Actual to Budget
- Balance Sheet
- Interest Income
- kWh Sales Report
- Large Power
- Line Loss
- Operating Statement
- Power Bill
- Summary of Purchased Power
- Wiring Income & Expense

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.

Legal Report – None

Strategic Planning – A date was set for the 2025 Meeting.

Safety Meeting Minutes – The Safety Meeting Minutes from November 26, 2024, was posted to the website for the board to review and was discussed during the meeting.

Cyber Security – The November Cyber Security report from East River IT was posted to the website for the board to review and was discussed during the meeting.

Video and/or Meeting Reports –

- East River Report
- East River Financials
- Basin Reports

Calendar – The board reviewed the January 2025 calendar.

Executive Session – The board went into Executive Session at 1:14 p.m., Executive Session was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. There was no action taken.

Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 2:01 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President

James Ryken, Secretary

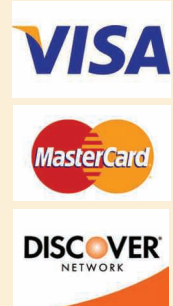
Outage Reports

Date	Time	Township	Members	Cause
1/14	1:15 p.m.	Mission Hill	45	Animal
1/20	10:00 p.m.	Star	5	Equip Failure
1/22	5:40 a.m.	Riverside	12	Floater

Office Hours and Due Dates

Our office hours are Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please remember your PAYMENT DUE DATE is the 20TH OF EACH MONTH. Your payment must ARRIVE in our office on the 20th to avoid any penalties. Please allow mailing time as we go by the received date, NOT the postmark. If the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due the following business day. If payment is still not received within 10 days by 8 a.m., a \$25 collection fee will be applied and a final disconnect notice will be mailed. If disconnection for nonpayment occurs, all past and current energy charges, a reconnect fee and sufficient credit deposit will be required before the meter can be reinstalled.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, WE ALSO ACCEPT THESE PAYMENT OPTIONS.



Bank Draft – Have your payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account. No fees apply for this service.

Recurring Debit/Credit Card

– You may call in your credit/debit card payment and ask for recurring, it will then bill to that card every month on the 20th (or next business day) of each month until you call to cancel. No fees apply for this service.

Pay by Phone – You may call in your credit/debit card payment each month. No fees apply for this service.

By Mail – Send check or money order with your payment slip. Please be sure to mail early so we receive it by the 20th, we do not go by postage date.

In Office – We accept cash, check and money order or we can take your credit/debit card in our office. No fees apply for this service.

On Line Billing – Pay your bill on line at www.clayunionelectric.coop No fees apply for this service.

Collection Fee	\$25
Standard Reconnect Fee	\$50
Reconnect Fee for Non-Payment.....	\$100
After Hours Reconnect Fee.....	\$150
Insufficient Funds Check Fee	\$30

Delinquent Accounts (gross rate)
10 percent on the first \$200 plus 2 percent on the balance.



MARCH 14-15
St. Patrick's Day
Weekened
Fri. 5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

*Photo courtesy of
 Travel South Dakota*

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.

FEB. 28-MARCH 1
Mardi Gras Weekend
 8 p.m. Fri.-10 p.m. Sat.
 Main Street
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

MARCH 6
SD Jazz Festival Concert
 Aberdeen Community Concert Association
 7:30 p.m.
 NSU Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD
 Tickets Available at Concert

MARCH 8-9
Philip Area Annual Gun Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 American Legion Hall
 Philip, SD
 605-859-2135

MARCH 8
Epiphany Sausage Sale
 10 a.m. until gone
 Parish Hall
 Epiphany, SD

MARCH 8
Minnehaha County
Pheasants Forever Banquet
 5 p.m.
 El Riad Shrine
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-376-8219

MARCH 14-15
Badlands Quilter Weekend
Getaway
 Fri. 5 p.m.
 Sat. 8 a.m.
 Community Center
 Wall, SD
 605-685-5718

MARCH 15
VFW Teener Baseball Bingo
Benefit
 5 p.m.
 Tyndall Auditorium
 Tyndall, SD

MARCH 22
Annual Banquet & Bash
 Britton Area Chamber of Commerce
 5:30 p.m.
 Britton, SD
 605-448-8130

MARCH 26
Hill City Garden Club
Trip to Central Asia
 1 p.m.
 Kathryn Cleveland
 Hill City Super 8
 Hill City, SD

MARCH 29
Ready. Set. Grow!
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Couteau Prairie Master Gardeners
 Codington CTY Extension Complex
 Watertown, SD
 605-838-7098

APRIL 4
Mitchell Technical College
2025 Alumni Gathering
Cornhole Tournament
 5 p.m. Social
 6:30 p.m. Tournament
 The World's Only Corn Palace
 Mitchell, SD
 605-995-7342

APRIL 4-5
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 748 S Main St.
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237

APRIL 4-6, 11-13
Women Playing Hamlet
 April 4-5, 11-12: 7:30 p.m.
 April 6, 13: 2:30 p.m.
 Mighty Corson Art Players
 Corson, SD
 www.mightycorson.com

APRIL 8
Clay-Union Electric
89th Annual Meeting
 Gayville-Volin School
 Gayville, SD

APRIL 11-12
Junkin' Market Days Spring
Market
 Fri. 4-7 p.m.
 Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
 Sioux Falls, SD
 www.junkinmarketdays.com

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