

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

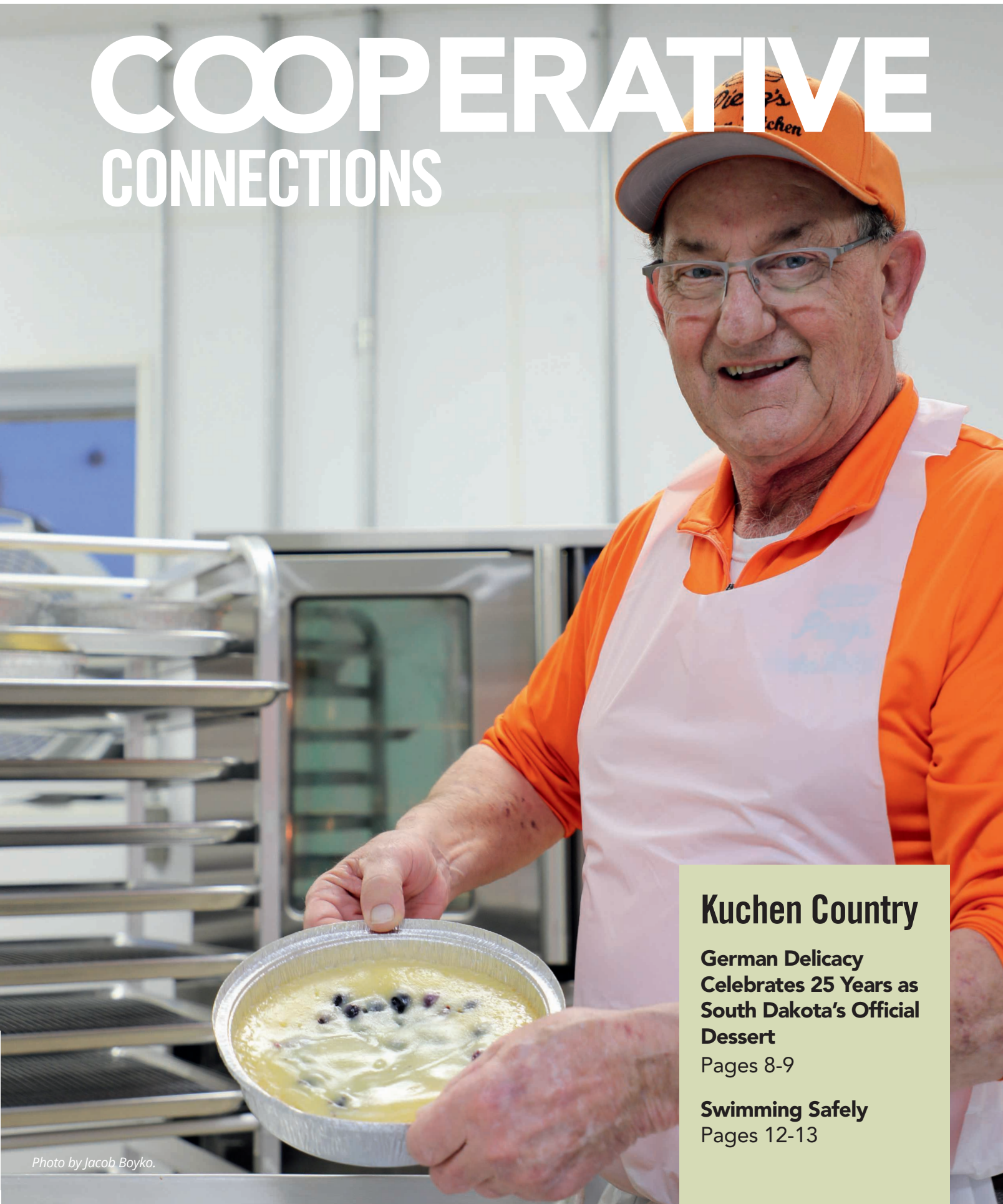


Photo by Jacob Boyko.

Kuchen Country

**German Delicacy
Celebrates 25 Years as
South Dakota's Official
Dessert**

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Swimming Safely
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Why is my monthly facility charge higher than my friend who lives in town?



Chris Larson,
General Manager

For consumers who rely on electric utilities to power their homes and businesses, facility charges - monthly minimums, can vary significantly depending on the type of utility provider. One question that often arises is why electric cooperatives tend to have higher monthly facility charges - monthly minimums compared to municipal electric utilities. To understand this, it's essential to explore the structural, operational, and financial aspects that differentiate these two types of providers.

THE ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Electric cooperatives like Clay-Union Electric are member-owned, not-for-profit entities that were established primarily to serve rural communities. Our goal is not to generate profits but to provide affordable and reliable electricity to areas that would otherwise be underserved by for-profit utilities. Each member of our co-op has a stake in the organization, and decisions are made democratically, with members voting on key issues and a democratically elected board of directors making decisions that affect them and the members they represent.

However, the rural nature of our service area creates unique challenges. Electric co-ops typically serve regions with lower population densities, which means fewer consumers are spread across larger geographical areas. This lack of concentrated demand increases infrastructure costs per customer, as the co-op must build and maintain extensive networks of power lines, transformers, and substations to reach all members - no matter where their home or farm might be located.

MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC UTILITIES: URBAN EFFICIENCY

In contrast, municipal electric utilities are owned and operated by local governments and primarily serve urban or suburban areas with higher population densities. These providers often benefit from economies of scale, as a concentrated customer base allows them to distribute their infrastructure and operational costs across a larger number of consumers. Municipal electrics are also frequently integrated within broader city services, enabling them to share resources and administrative functions with other municipal departments, thereby reducing overhead costs.

WHY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES FACE HIGHER FIXED COSTS

The higher fixed charges of electric cooperatives can be

attributed to several key factors:

1. GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

Electric cooperatives serve sparsely populated regions, which means they must invest more in infrastructure per customer. For example, a co-op might need to maintain miles of lines to serve a small number of households, whereas a municipal utility can serve thousands of customers within a few square miles. The cost of maintaining more infrastructure—along with the labor required—is spread across fewer consumers, resulting in higher fixed charges.

2. LIMITED REVENUE STREAMS

Because electric cooperatives operate as not-for-profit utilities, they rely heavily on monthly charges to cover their expenses. Unlike municipal utilities, which may receive additional funding from city budgets or other revenue-generating departments, co-ops are self-sustaining organizations. This means that fixed charges must cover not only infrastructure maintenance but also administrative costs, loan repayments, and emergency reserves.

3. LACK OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Municipal utilities benefit from high customer density, which reduces the per-customer cost of infrastructure and operations. Electric cooperatives, on the other hand, do not have the same advantage due to the dispersed nature of their service areas. This lack of economies of scale makes it more expensive for co-ops to provide the same level of service.

BALANCING AFFORDABILITY AND RELIABILITY

Despite their higher fixed charges, electric cooperatives strive to ensure that their rates are fair and reflect the actual cost of service. Boards composed of co-op members carefully review and set these charges to balance affordability with the need to maintain a reliable and sustainable electricity supply. Co-ops also reinvest surplus revenues into their systems, improving infrastructure, and enhancing service quality.

Municipal utilities, by contrast, may have more flexibility in setting rates due to supplementary funding sources and larger customer bases. These utilities can afford to keep fixed charges lower because they spread costs over a denser population and often generate additional revenue through city taxes or other municipal services.

INNOVATIONS AND THE PATH FORWARD

Both electric cooperatives and municipal utilities face challenges in adapting to a rapidly evolving energy landscape. From integrating renewable energy sources to modernizing grid infrastructure, both types of utilities are working to improve efficiency and resilience. For electric co-ops, these initiatives

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS

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ABOUT

Joey Nickles started on April 14th as the Electrician Foreman. Joey and fiancée Valerie lives in the Sioux Falls area along with their dog, Stevie Nicks and two cats, Gus and Winslow. Joey grew up in Yankton.

EXPERIENCE

- 13-year career at Thompson Electric
- 5-year apprenticeship
- Journeyman Electrician on large commercial and industrial projects
- Project Foreman on numerous projects with the largest being an \$800,000 school addition in Santee, NE
- Project Manager for 2 years
- Received his South Dakota Electrical Contractors License at the beginning of 2025.

WELCOME JOEY NICKLES ELECTRICIAN FOREMAN

HOBBIES

- Golfing
- Home Remodels
- Helping friends with projects so hopefully they help him when he needs a hand.

After more than a year without an electrical contractor on our staff, we are now able to offer quotes to our members for their electrical needs.

Please help us welcome Joey to the cooperative family.

Give Joey a
call at
605-624-2673



YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

	<u>March 2025</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>
Number of consumers BILLED	3,559	3,563
Electric & Other Revenue	\$808,998	\$2,717,372
Cost of Service	\$851,494	\$2,843,483
Operating Margins	\$(42,496)	\$(126,111)
Other Margins	\$35,472	\$47,853
Net Margins	\$(7,024)	\$(78,258)
KWH Purchased	7,533,851	25,990,518
Cost of Power	\$474,444	\$1,643,965
KWH Sales	7,297,153	25,107,762
Average kWhs used (residential)	1,302	1,644
Average Amount of Bill (residential)	\$176	\$205

Summer Safety

Mosquitoes and Ticks

Source: American Red Cross

Don't let mosquitoes and ticks ruin your carefree summer fun. As we spend more time outdoors for activities like camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking and barbecuing, there is a greater chance of getting bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. According to the American Mosquito Control Association there are 176 known species of mosquito in the U.S. – putting Americans at risk from coast to coast. And while mosquitoes may be the most obvious detractor from summer fun – ticks are silent but dangerous. Most active during warmer months (April to September), it is especially important to be vigilant of blacklegged ticks, more commonly known as deer ticks, especially if you live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, North-central or Northwest.

Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just itchy and annoying – if infected, these pests can pose a major health risk to people by possibly transmitting diseases. Follow these tips to prevent mosquito and tick bites this summer:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you are outdoors. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.
- Consider staying indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots.



Photo by Jimmy Chan

- Use a rubber band or tape to hold pants against socks so that nothing can get under clothing.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see tiny insects or ticks.
- When hiking in woods and fields, stay in the middle of trails. Avoid underbrush and tall grass.
- If you are outdoors for a long time, check yourself several times during the day. Especially check in hairy areas of the body like the back of the neck and the scalp line.
- Inspect yourself carefully for insects or ticks after being outdoors or have someone else do it.
- If you have pets that go outdoors, spray with repellent made for their breed/type. Apply the repellent according to the label and check your pet for ticks often.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying sources of standing water outside of the home, such as from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.



"Never Touch a Power Line!!"

Kashton Schecher, Age 7

Kashton cautions readers not to touch power lines. Thank you for your picture, Kashton! Kashton's parents are Brad and Brooke Schecher from Bison, S.D.

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.

SOUPS & SALADS

GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

Ingredients:

2 pork steaks
Water
1 diced onion
3 stalks celery
1 large carrot
Butter
6 diced potatoes
1 qt. sauerkraut
3 cups heavy cream
Salt and pepper (to taste)

Method

Gently simmer pork steaks in about three cups of water until done. (You can substitute other meat you have on hand – left over roasts or Polish sausage is nice). Dice meat. Sauté onion, celery and carrots in butter. In a Crock-Pot, add four cups of water, potatoes, sautéed veggies, diced meat and sauerkraut. Cook on low four to six hours until potatoes are tender. Add cream, salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish to share and enjoy!

Kari Bevers
Cotington-Clark Electric Member

BLACK BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

3 tbsps. lemon juice
1 clove garlic (minced)
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3/4 tsp. ground cumin
2 tbsps. olive oil
(2)15 oz. cans black beans (drained and rinsed)
1 pt. cherry tomatoes (halved)
4 scallions or green onions
1 yellow or green bell pepper (cut into thin strips)
3 tbsps. fresh cilantro or parsley (chopped)

Method

In a small bowl, stir together lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing mixture thickens. In a large bowl combine beans, tomatoes, scallions or onions, peppers and cilantro or parsley. Toss with dressing to coat. Let stand at least 15 minutes before serving. *Makes 6 servings.

Reta Eidem
Clay-Union Electric Member

LASAGNA SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. lean ground beef
1 cup chopped onion
1 can (28 oz.) petite diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
2 tbsp. garlic, herb and black pepper and sea salt all purpose seasoning
1 container (32 oz.) chicken stock, (4 cups)
8 oz. (about 10) lasagna noodles, broken into small pieces

Method

Brown ground beef in large saucepan on medium heat. Drain fat. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until softened.

Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, Seasoning and stock. Bring to boil. Add lasagna noodle pieces; cook 6 to 7 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, if desired.

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.

Manager's Column Continued from page 2

may require additional investment, potentially impacting fixed charges in the short term.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the higher fixed charges of electric cooperatives requires an appreciation of their unique mission and operational realities. Co-ops play a vital role in bringing electricity to rural and underserved areas, often at a higher cost per customer due to geographic and demographic constraints. While municipal utilities benefit from urban efficiencies and supplementary funding, co-ops must rely solely on their members to sustain their operations.

Though their fixed charges may be higher, electric cooperatives embody the spirit of community and service, ensuring that no region is left in the dark. As the energy sector continues to evolve, both co-ops and municipal utilities will need to innovate and collaborate to meet the growing demand for sustainable and affordable electricity.

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

Chris Larson

General Manager

clarson@clayunionelectric.coop

New Leadership in the Operations Department



At the end of April we said “See you around” to a long time co-worker, Mike Kruse, Operations Manager, who took the plunge into retirement.

It was now time for Alan Gauer, Crew Foreman, for the past 13 years to move from the position of Crew Foreman to Operations Manager, leaving his position open. After searching externally and internally, the position has now been filled.

Quinn Springer will take on his new role as Crew Foreman. Quinn has been a Journeyman Lineman with Clay-Union for the past 14 years and Lead Lineman for the past year.

As Crew Foreman, Quinn will have the responsibilities of providing safe and efficient leadership to the line crew in the tasks of line construction, operations and maintenance of Clay-Union's distribution line facilities. The position also initiates work plans, plans the daily work schedules, and works directly with cooperative members on service requirements and requests.

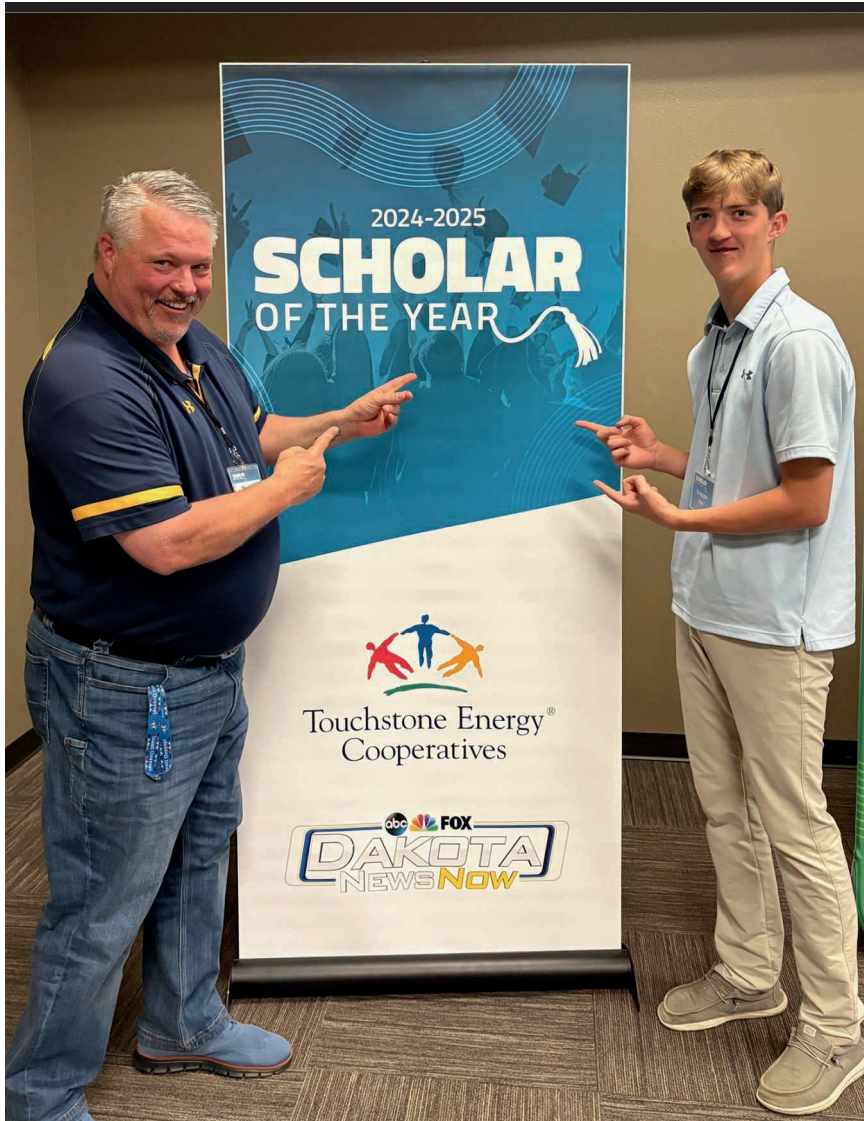
Congratulations Quinn on your promotion.

5 WAYS to Reduce Use During Extreme Heat

During periods of extreme heat, the demand for electricity can skyrocket, placing additional strain on the grid. By working together to lower our electricity use, we can reduce pressure on the grid.

Here are five effective ways to lower use at home.

1. **Raise your thermostat** setting a few degrees higher than usual. Every degree can reduce cooling energy consumption.
2. **Cook with smaller appliances** to save energy and reduce heat gain in the kitchen.
3. **Keep blinds, curtains and shades closed** during the hottest part of the day to block direct sunlight.
4. **Use fans** to circulate air, which can make you feel cooler without needing to lower the thermostat.
5. Shift activities that require a lot of energy consumption to **off-peak hours** when demand is lower.



Tom and Grayson Rice proudly pose for Grayson's winning scholarship. **Photo by Jackie Williams**

SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR BANQUET HELD IN WATERTOWN

Chelsey Bakken

cbakken@eastriver.coop

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota honored some of the area's most impressive high school seniors Saturday, May 3, during the 23rd Annual Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year Banquet and

recognition held at the Student Center on the campus of Lake Area Technical College.

The event honored the thirty-three high school students who were chosen each week throughout the school year as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. It is a program which recognizes students for academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, and

community service. The students are featured in weekly segments which air on Dakota News Now television and each student receive a \$250 scholarship for being chosen as the Scholar of the Week.

Presley Slaba, a senior at Wagner High School within Charles Mix Electric's service territory, was selected during the banquet as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year and received a \$1,000 award. Lauren Hofer a senior at Mitchell High School, within Central Electric's territory, and Grayson Rice a senior at Gayville-Volin High School, within Clay-Union Electric's territory, received \$500 scholarship awards. The winners' names were drawn from among those in attendance.

Lake Area Technical College President Tiffany Sanderson was the keynote speaker. Dakota News Now multimedia journalist Parker Brown served as the emcee.

Touchstone Energy is a network of over 720 electric cooperatives from around the country – including the electric cooperatives in our region – who are united in the four touchstone values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are local, active members of their communities, dedicated to building our communities, and improving our way of life. The cooperatives have sponsored the Scholar of the Week program since 2002. In that time Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to over six hundred students as part of the Scholar of the Week program.

East River Electric Power Cooperative, with a main campus located in Madison, S.D., is a wholesale electric power supply cooperative serving twenty-four rural electric cooperatives and one municipally owned electric system, which in turn serves more than 250,000 homes and businesses. The cooperative's 42,000 square mile service area covers the rural areas of 41 counties in eastern South Dakota and twenty-two counties in western Minnesota. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties employees Amanda Garcia and Myra Bachman with owners Lori and Roger Pietz.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

Jacob Boyko

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On a brisk spring morning, balls of dough rise hours before the sun. One at a time, they're placed onto a press and flattened before being positioned into tins. Carefully, Lori Pietz ladles custard overtop, sprinkles in fruit, and passes off a tray of the desserts to her husband, Roger, for baking. As Roger pulls open the door of the stainless steel commercial oven, a wave of heat emanates across the kitchen. He slides the tray of five desserts onto a shelf in the oven, then removes another tray and sets it aside to cool before they begin packaging.

Roger and Lori will repeat this process at least 100 more times this morning to keep up with their customers' orders.

In the town of Scotland, northwest of Yankton, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties is one business that has turned South Dakotans' love for kuchen – a

delectable unification of cake, custard and pie – into a thriving business.

Kuchen, the German word for cake, has been a staple at European kitchen tables for centuries. The delicacy has stood the test of time, continuing to serve as a tea-time – or any-time – favorite across cultures and continents, especially right here in South Dakota.

"I think it's because of the population, because the greatest proportion of immigrants (in South Dakota) are the Germans from Russia," co-owner Lori Pietz said of kuchen's popularity. "There are German areas, there are Czech areas, there are Norwegian areas — but there are a lot of Germans from Russia."

Roger comes from one of those German-Russian families where the tradition of baking homemade kuchen has been passed down for generations.

"I watched my mother make kuchen as a little kid," Roger remembered. "I'd stand a little ways from the oven and I'd watch

her make it and I loved it."

Staying true to his German-Russian roots, Roger's love for kuchen never faded. After marrying Lori, Roger remembers telling her that if he could ever recreate his mother's kuchen recipe, he could probably market it and sell it.

Owning a kuchen shop was always a retirement dream, the couple recalled. But after going through several farm accidents, the Pietzs' decided to pivot in 2008. Trading plows for whisks, Pietz's Kuchen became a reality.

The operation quickly outgrew their make-shift basement kitchen, so Roger and Lori opened up a storefront and commercial kitchen in the nearby town of Scotland in 2011.

Today, the store ships an estimated 2,500 kuchen monthly to grocery stores, butcher shops, and restaurants across South Dakota and the Midwest.

Roger and Lori's kuchen offerings range from Americanized options – blueberry, peach, strawberry – to the more traditional blends of 18th and 19th century Europe, including rhubarb,

prune and cottage cheese.

Lori explained that historically kuchen was made using ingredients that were readily available, making it the ideal comfort-food and cultural dish for immigrants building their lives on South Dakota farms.

“There are a lot of Germans from Russia who brought rhubarb over with them, so they made a lot of rhubarb kuchen,” Lori said. “Flour and sugar were available, and they all had chickens and cows, so that’s kind of how it kept going.”

Lori didn’t grow up eating much kuchen. Her mother, who was of Czech descent, favored fluffy pastries called kolaches – filled with jam, poppy seeds or cream cheese.

But once Lori joined the Pietz family, she saw an opportunity to bridge both traditions. Drawing on the popularity of poppy seed kolaches in the Czech community, she created a Czech-inspired twist: poppy seed kuchen.

“There’s a lot of Czech people out there that like poppy seed kolaches,” Roger said. “And when they hear there’s poppy seed kuchen, they’re buying it.”

Kuchen’s footprint in South Dakota extends far beyond Scotland. Annual events like the Kuchen Festival in Delmont and Schmeckfest in Freeman invite locals and visitors alike to sample a variety of recipes and baking styles.

In McPherson County, the town of Eureka also has a reputation for being a kuchen-tasting hot spot, with several local kitchens offering their own takes on the dish.

South Dakotans’ love for kuchen runs so deep that it’s been codified into law; In 2000, State Sen. James Lawler, whose district included Eureka, helped lead the charge in Pierre to designate kuchen as the official state dessert.

Lawler, who once served as a judge for a local kuchen contest in Eureka, said the bill was part of a broader push to support local industries and breathe new life into small towns.

“The town of Eureka really got behind me and supported that bill,” Lawler recalled. “Those women up there got together and made enough kuchen for the whole legislature, and we fed them all and got the bill passed.”

A framed commemorative print of that bill hangs on the wall by the checkout counter in Roger and Lori’s shop – a tribute to all of the kuchen fans who have made their business what it is today.

“If you asked me 15 years ago what our business was going to be...I’d have said we’d sell a few,” Roger laughed. “I thought if it flopped, my friends would buy some from me and they wouldn’t let me down. Never did I anticipate this. Never. It’s just unbelievable.”

The Germans From Russia

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian leaders made an appeal to German families to emigrate to Russia, promising land, religious freedom and military service exemptions.

According to the Prairie Public Broadcasting documentary, *The Germans From Russia: Children of the Steppe*, Children of the Prairie, the first wave of German immigrants arrived in 1764 during the reign of Catherine the Great. For Catherine, this was strategic; adding population to the sparser areas of her empire not only developed Russia’s agricultural economy, but also helped create a buffer against invaders from central Asia.

The settlements dotted the Volga River in Russia and the Black Sea in modern Ukraine and Crimea. The German villages closely resembled the communities they left behind as well as the ones they’d later build on the American prairie, with distinct churches and earth-brick houses.

While the Germans held onto their language, culture, and customs, Slavic influence gives the Germans from Russia a distinct identity. One notable difference is in their kuchen. While the traditional German dish resembles a yeast-based fruit cake, the eastern version is typically richer and made with custard.

Later in the 19th century, the special privileges German settlers had been granted were slowly being eroded. The Germans’ special status was lowered to that of common peasants, they could now be drafted into the Russian army, and were forced to assimilate to the Russian language and education system.

Many German settlers left their villages in Russia to start over once again in North America and South America, while those remaining in Russia would go on to suffer through civil and world wars and the man-made Holodomor famine during the 20th century.

The Germans who had settled the banks of the Volga River went on to populate large swaths of Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, while the Germans from the Black Sea region primarily settled the Dakota Territory and Canada – bringing kuchen with them.



Fruit is sprinkled over the dough, followed by a ladle of custard. Lori Pietz uses a scale to ensure nutrition labeling is precise.

Photo by Olivia Opland

A Diverse Fuel Mix is Essential for Reliable Power

Michael Leitman

Providing members with safe, reliable and affordable power is the mantra for electric cooperatives across the nation. Co-op members can see the work necessary to maintain reliable electricity at the local level, such as co-op lineworkers maintaining utility poles and wires and repairing them after major storms. At the regional and national levels, a diverse mix of power generation resources, transmission lines and pipeline infrastructure are essential cornerstones of maintaining reliable electricity.

The U.S. electric grid has undergone major changes over the last decade. The share of electricity generated from coal plants has declined significantly, while the share from natural gas and intermittent wind and solar generation has grown. Fuel diversity means that your electricity is supplied by a variety of generation technologies, each with their own characteristics and performance capabilities over different weather and seasonal conditions.

Dispatchable technologies can be turned on and off as needed. Large steam generation plants (most commonly using coal or nuclear fuels) are generally considered “baseload,” meaning that they are designed to run efficiently 24/7 to serve as the base of the electricity mix. However, steam plants are less capable of ramping output up or down to meet the various peaks and dips as grid conditions change.

Natural gas is the most versatile fuel, powering large combined-cycle plants that can operate as baseload but are also more flexible

ramping up and down. These capabilities are essential for meeting demand on the hottest and coldest days, and for balancing intermittent renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

Most hydroelectric power comes from generators inside large dams, like the Snake River Dams in the Pacific Northwest, which can be dispatched when needed – as long as there is enough water available.

Over the last decade, the share of electricity generated from wind and solar plants has increased dramatically. These beneficial, “no-fuel-required” plants can deliver low-cost electricity – but they only generate electricity when the wind blows and the sun shines. The production patterns of solar and wind technologies are complimentary to one another. Solar generates during the day and wind tends to generate more at night. Across seasons, wind output is typically higher during the colder months when there is less sunshine. Deployed together, wind and solar technologies can balance each other.

While battery energy storage technology is growing rapidly to allow some control of when renewable energy sources can be dispatched, natural gas plants remain the primary method for “firming” renewable generation resources.

Ultimately, our electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies is available. When conditions lead to lower generation from one type of source, others can help compensate. When there is an imbalance, such as a major winter storm when electricity use skyrockets, grid operators are forced to rely on purposefully reducing demand and occasionally plan rolling blackouts to keep the grid operating.

While there is variation across regions in what types of power plants can be built based on weather and infrastructure, America's electric cooperatives work diligently to ensure a diverse and reliable power supply for the communities they serve.



On April 8th the 89th Annual Meeting was held for the members of Clay-Union Electric at the Gayville-Volin School.

- 107 members registered.
- Over 195 people were in attendance.
- 13 High School seniors registered for the 3 - \$500 random draw scholarships.
- We said goodbye to District 5 Director, Jim Ryken, who held the seat for more than 36 years.
- Mike Kruse, Operations Manager, 41+ years, attended his last Annual Meeting.

A special thank you to: Pastor Riter, Invocation; Mayor Catalina Renteria, Welcome; Elena Andrews, National Anthem, and thank you to everyone who attended, we hope to see you at other upcoming events.



Jim Ryken, District 5, Retires



Basin Electric
Scholarship
Winner:
Kylie Mockler



Random Draw Scholarship Winners: Madelyn Oelmann, Kasey Kopejtko and Jaxon Ihnen

Line Crew serves up a delicious meal to the members



SWIMMING SAFELY

Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

The leading cause of death for American children under the age of five: drowning.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 4,000 fatal drownings occur each year in the U.S., with the number of deaths sharply increasing in May and reaching a peak in July.

And according to Consumer Affairs, that number has been on the rise since 2020, especially among young children.

Whether at a waterpark, lake, backyard pool, or even a hot tub, being safety-aware and educating others can prevent drownings and other pool accidents and save lives.

According to Holly Hardy, aquatics director for the Oahe Family YMCA in Pierre, safety begins with supervision.

“Somebody should always be observing the water when there are kids in a pool,”

Hardy said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s our (YMCA) pool, a backyard pool, or the river. There needs to be a person there that’s responsible for watching the kids.”

At the YMCA’s pool, lifeguards who aren’t sure about a child’s swimming skills can have them do a swim test, where the child has to either show they can swim the length of the pool or remain in the shallow end.

“At our (YMCA) pool, we have those big slides and kids want to go down them because their buddies are going down them, and they want to go down but they can’t swim,” Hardy explained. “That’s where we pull the most people out of the water – the slide or the diving board.”

The YMCA lifeguards also have a rule against seeing how long you can hold your breath – children can hyperventilate before submerging and faint, which is called a

hypoxic blackout. Hardy also stresses the importance of swimming lessons, since understanding basics like how to float, swim, exit water and feeling oriented and calm are critical for water safety. She recommends to begin swimming lessons as soon as possible – The YMCA offers swimming lessons for children as young as six months old.

But swimming lessons are not a substitute for properly securing a pool.

According to Consumer Affairs, 87% of fatal drownings for the 0-5 age range occur in backyard pools.

That’s why a sturdy fence and self-latching gate around the pool area are still essential for preventing accidents. Even temporary mesh fence options can work in some instances.

Additionally, submersion alarms and door alarms can audibly alert you when someone enters the pool or pool area.

By communicating the pool safety rules to children and guests, as well as taking preventive measures to prevent accidents in the first place, you may be saving lives.

Pool Safety Checklist

Is there supervision?

- All children should be under responsible adult supervision.
- Designate “water watchers” and minimize distractions.
- Keep a phone close by for calling 911.
- Always swim with a buddy – Never alone.
- Keep throwing equipment or reaching equipment nearby.
- Consider CPR training – it could save a life.

Can everybody in the pool swim?

- Ensure everyone in the pool can at least swim from one end of the pool and back.
- Weak or new swimmers should keep to shallow water and use flotation aids.
- Parents should stay close – preferably within arm’s reach – to weak or new swimmers.
- Sign up for swimming lessons – it’s a lifesaving skill.

Are there safety barriers?

- Install and maintain a proper fence and self-latching gate around the pool.
- Consider a door alarm and pool alarm for an audible alert when someone enters the pool or pool area.
- Hot tubs should have properly-latched covers.

Recognize hazards.

- Stay away from drains and water intake pipes, as body parts, hair, jewelry, and loose clothing can get pulled in. Drains should have anti-entanglement drain covers, and pumps should have accessible shut-offs.
- Ensure tiles, handrails, anti-slip pads, and ladders are properly installed and maintained.

- Electrical work should be done by a qualified electrician. Chargers, extension cords and other electronics should be kept away from the pool area.
- Check your pool water regularly to avoid illness from contaminants and chemical burns.
- Avoid slips and falls by picking up pool toys and other hazards. Do not run or roughhouse near the pool.
- If you’re not sober, don’t swim.
- Diving can result in serious injury. Make sure others know when a pool is not safe for diving.
- Store pool chemicals and additives somewhere inaccessible to children.
- Ensure proper lighting is installed around the pool area and never swim in the dark.
- Consider an animal escape ramp for pets and wild animals.

Remind your children and guests...

Establish pool-safe rules for your children and any guests at your home. Remind your children to...

- Never swim without permission and supervision. Other children are not supervisors.
- Don’t enter a pool area or go near water alone.
- Never roughhouse or run in the pool area.
- Never dive in shallow water.
- Stay away from chemicals and additives.
- Keep the pool area tidy and hazard-free.
- Keep electrical devices and cords away from the pool area.
- Never hyperventilate or try and see how long you can hold your breath underwater. Hyperventilating can induce fainting, called hypoxic blackouts and lead to drowning.

Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

MARCH 26, 2025 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on March 26, 2025, 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, Alan Gauer and Jackie Williams.

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

Visitors to Be Heard – Jeff May, East River IT, Video Call at 8:45 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from the February Board Meeting (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the February board minutes held on 2/28/25.

Approval of Minutes from the February Executive Session (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the February executive session minutes held on 2/28/25.

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 - None

Policy Review – The following policy updates were presented to the board:

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve updates to Policy 209, Depreciation Rates as presented.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve updates to the following Policies as presented:

Policy 402, Meter Reading and Collections

Policy 404, Budget Billing Program

Policy 407, Disputed Bills

Policy 409, Dishonored Payments

Policy 413, Minimum Requirements

Policy 416, Billing Fees and Charges

Policy 738, AI Tools Usage, was tabled.

Work Order and Special Equipment Summary – None

Management Reports:

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

April Board Meeting – The date of April 25th, 2025, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m. There will be an Open House for the retirement of Mike Kruse held at the headquarters from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

East River REED/MAC - The REED Board met on March 4th for the monthly meeting via a video call due to adverse weather. The MAC met immediately afterwards via a video call.

New Building - Manager Larson reviewed with the Board various warranties and other happenings that are being dealt with Puetz and other contractors.

2025 Annual Meeting Date - The dates of April 8th with a backup of April 15th are the dates for our Annual Meeting.

Irrigation Meeting - The Clay-Yankton Irrigators Association met in Meckling on March 11th with Manager Larson and Alan Gauer in attendance.

AMI Discussion – Staff had listened to IRBY give a presentation on their version of cellular AMR.

LM controlled Air Conditioning – Manager Larson reported on changes to the Load Management Program.

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 B-Y, Union and Clay-Union.

Distributed Generation – Manager Larson gave an update on current applications and the process for getting the NOVA portal up and running.

Crew Foreman - We have been advertising for a new Crew Foreman. The new deadline for applications was March 21st.

Electrician Foreman – Manager Larson reported that he has visited with and offered the position of Electrician Foreman to an individual.

Strategic Planning Summary – Manager Larson had posted a draft summary of the February 14th strategic planning meeting that was reviewed and agreed that it was an accurate summary of the meeting.

Basin End Use Survey – The End Use Survey from Basin was posted previously and reviewed with the Board. There were approximately 260 responses from CUE members.

Joint Services Discussion – Manager Larson and Union County Manager Matt Klein met to preliminarily discuss areas in which shared services could save the two Cooperatives money.

East River Electric April Board Meeting – A motion was made, seconded, and approved to authorize Chris Kinney to attend the April meeting. Chris will be appointed to the East River Board following Jim Ryken's retirement.

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

- February Billing Activity
- Treasury Direct Loan Advance
- February 2025 Financials
- Policy Updates

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
- New Service
- Retired Service
- February Outage Report
- Service Upgrades
- 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:

- Balance Sheet
- Interest Income
- kWh Sales Report
- Large Power
- Line Loss
- Operating Statement
- Power Bill
- Summary of Purchased Power

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

Legal Report – None

Strategic Planning – Manager Larson presented a summary from the February 14, 2025, meeting.

Safety Meeting Minutes – The Safety Meeting Minutes from March 11, were posted to the website for the board to review and were discussed during the meeting.

Cyber Security – The February 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 April 2025 calendar.

Executive Session – The board went into Executive Session at 11:07 a.m., Executive Session was adjourned at 12:01 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 12:02 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President

James Ryken, Secretary

Outage Reports

Date	Time	Township	Members	Cause
3/14	9:00 a.m.	Gayville	5	Planned
3/20	9:30 a.m.	Fairview	7	Planned
4/14	7:15 a.m.	Fairview	31	Wind/Tree
4/22	9:30 a.m.	Meckling	11	Planned
4/28	7:30 p.m.	Fairview	1	Equip. Failure
4/28	7:45 p.m.	Norway	12	Weather

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 by the first of the following month, a \$30 collection fee will be applied and a 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:

Online Billing:

www.clayunionelectric.coop
Set up your user profile to manage your account, pay your bill and receive billing notification emails.

Bank Draft: Have your payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the due date.

Recurring Credit/Debit Card: Have your payment automatically deducted from your card on the due date.

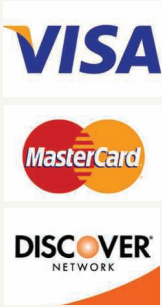
By Phone: Call in your credit/debit card payment.

In Office: We accept cash, check, money order or credit/debit card.

By Mail: Send check or money order with your payment slip.

Drop Box: Located on the right side of our main entrance at 31321 SD Hwy 19.

There are no additional fees to use any of the above payment methods.



Collection Fee	\$30
Trip Charge-Reconnect Fee	
During Business Hours.....	\$75
Dishonored Payment	\$40

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



JUNE 19-21
Czech Days
 Music, Dancing, Foods & Parades
 Tabor, SD

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.

MAY 24-SEPT. 13
Buggy Museum
 Free Buggy Rides + More
 Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Viborg, SD
danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 5, 7
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 6
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 6:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 6
Joy Fest
 John Mogen Piano Performance
 7 p.m. CDT
 Okaton, SD
cristenjoyphotography.com

JUNE 6-8
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Buffalo, Huron, Wall, Kadoka, SD
www.sdhsra.com

JUNE 7
Prairie Village Tractor Pull
 3 p.m.
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 7
Car Show & Kids Carnival
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
 202 2nd St. SE
 Watertown, SD

JUNE 13-15
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Dupree, Watertown,
 New Underwood, Winner, SD

JUNE 13-15
Ipswich Trail Days
 Ipswich, SD
ipswichtraildays.com
ipswichtraildays@gmail.com

JUNE 14
Roslyn Vinegar Festival
 Roslyn, SD
 320-808-8873

JUNE 14
A Celebration of Classic Country
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

JUNE 15, 29
1880 Train Old West Shootout
 5 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JUNE 17-21
SDHSRA State Finals Rodeo
 Fort Pierre, SD

JUNE 20
Dalesburg Midsummer Festival
 Celebration of Scandanavian
 & Rural Heritage
 Dalesburg Lutheran Church
 Dalesburg, SD
www.dalesburg.org

JUNE 21
Hobby Horse Relay
 McCrossan Boys Ranch
 1 p.m.
 Lake Lorraine
 Sioux Falls, SD

JUNE 25-28
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29
Leola Rhubarb Festival
 Leola, SD

JUNE 27-29
Bowdle Tower Days
 Bowdle, SD

JUNE 28
A Celebration of Tom Peterson & Bruce Preheim
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.