A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS
JUNE 2026 VOL. 66 NO. 5

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

River Power Renewed

Fort Randall Renovations
Pages 8-9

Pick, Sloan & the Missouri
Pages 12-13

The Fort Randall Dam is retrofitted with new generating units.
Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Why Vegetation Management Matters

John Gors
Interim
General Manager

There's something timeless about trees. They ground us. They remind us of where we've been, and they stretch toward what's ahead. Here in our community, we take pride in the natural beauty that surrounds us—the shade on a summer afternoon, the colors that mark the changing seasons, the quiet strength of something that grows slowly but endures.

At the same time, we share another responsibility—one that's just as essential to our daily lives. The responsibility to keep the lights on, to power our homes and businesses, to make sure that when you flip a switch, the energy you depend on is there.

That's why Clay-Union Electric works every day to strike a careful balance between preserving the beauty we cherish and delivering the reliable electricity you expect.

One of the most important ways we do that is through regular tree trimming.

Nearly half of all power outages can be traced back to trees and vegetation coming into contact with electrical infrastructure.

Now, it may not always be obvious, but keeping lines clear of overgrown vegetation plays a major role in preventing power outages. We've all seen what can happen when severe weather rolls in—strong winds, heavy ice or sudden storms can bring down branches and, with them, power lines and poles. In fact, nearly half of all power outages can be traced back to trees and vegetation coming into contact with electrical infrastructure.

That's why you may notice crews from Clay-Union or our trusted contractors, Jacobsen Tree Experts, working in neighborhoods throughout the year. Our crews are highly trained and certified, following the latest industry standards to ensure the job is done safely and effectively. Their work might seem routine, but it's anything but—it's a proactive step that helps prevent problems before they start.

And it's not just good practice—it's required. Electric utilities across the country are obligated to manage vegetation near power lines. Scheduled trimming helps remove dead or weakened limbs and keeps fast-growing trees from becoming hazards. It's about staying one step ahead, especially as we prepare for the increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather events.

But beyond reliability and efficiency, there's another reason this work matters: safety.

Electricity is a powerful force, and when trees grow too close to power lines, that power can become dangerous. Branches that touch lines—or even come close—can carry electrical current. Children climbing trees in their own yards may not realize the risk. And during storms, fallen trees can create hazardous conditions not only for families but also for our lineworkers working to restore service.

There's also a financial reality we can't ignore. Preventative maintenance—like tree trimming—is far more cost-effective than repairing widespread damage after an outage. Left unchecked, overgrown vegetation can lead to more frequent disruptions and higher costs for everyone. A thoughtful, strategic vegetation management program helps keep those costs down for our members.

You can help, too. When planting new trees, consider their mature height and distance from nearby power lines. Trees that grow up to 40 feet should be planted at least 25 feet away from overhead lines. Larger trees—those that exceed 40 feet—should be planted at least 50 feet away. If you're landscaping near pad-mounted transformers, keep shrubs at least 10 feet from the front and 4 feet from the sides to allow safe access. (See page 10)

If your neighborhood has underground lines, don't forget to call 811 before digging. It's a simple step that can prevent serious accidents.

At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: a community that's safe, resilient and beautiful. At Clay-Union Electric, we're proud to be part of that effort. Our roots run deep here, just like the trees we work to care for.

Outage Reports

Cause	Date	Time	Township	Members
Contractor Dig In	4/16	4:30 p.m.	Glenwood	61
Hit & Run	4/16	8:30 p.m.	Star	1
Member Caused	4/24	9:20 a.m.	Star	1

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.
605-624-2673

POWER FAILURE – 24-hour service
In case of Power Failure Call:
1-800-696-2832 or 624-2673
CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS is published monthly by Clay-Union Electric Corporation, P.O. Box 317, 31321 SD Hwy. 19, Vermillion, SD 57069. Periodicals Postage Paid at Vermillion, S.D., and additional offices. Clay-Union Electric members devote approximately 50 cents a month from their electric payments for a subscription to this publication. Subscriptions for non-members are available for $12 annually.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Clay-Union Electric Sparks, PO Box 317, Vermillion, SD 57069;
Telephone (605) 624-2673, 1-800-696-2832
Fax (605) 624-5526.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Clay-Union Electric
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

STEVE TILTON NAMED GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Members,
Your Board of Directors is pleased to share that Steve Tilton has accepted the position of General Manager of Clay-Union Electric Cooperative. Steve is currently serving as General Manager of McCone Electric Cooperative in Circle, Montana, and is expected to begin with Clay-Union in early June.

Steve brings significant experience in cooperative leadership and operations. In his current role, he works directly with the board of directors and oversees all aspects of the cooperative, including financial management, operations, regulatory compliance, and member services. McCone Electric serves approximately 2,400 members across 3,825 miles of distribution and transmission lines, providing a strong operations background that translates well to Clay-Union.

His experience also includes prior roles with Missouri River Energy Services, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative, and Rosebud Electric Cooperative, along with a background in both management and field operations. This combination of leadership and hands-on experience provides a strong foundation as he steps into this role.

Please help extend a warm welcome to Steve and his wife Kim to Clay-Union Electric and our communities.

Sincerely,
Clay-Union Electric Cooperative
Board of Directors

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH: PLUG INTO WHAT MATTERS

Safety is a word that shows up in mission statements, meetings and job sites across every industry. At its best, it reflects preparation, awareness and responsibility.

That's where the difference shows.

Electricity doesn't leave room for shortcuts. It demands attention, consistency and respect every day. For your local cooperative, that responsibility is built into the work.

The job goes beyond delivering power. It protects the people who build and maintain the system and the communities who rely on it. Reliable and affordable electricity matters, and so does making sure every crew member goes home at the end of the day.

That outcome takes focus, repetition and a culture where doing things right matters more than doing them fast.

Built on the Right Habits

Linework is demanding and, at times, dangerous. It's also highly structured. Crews follow national standards designed for utility work. Protective equipment isn't optional. Procedures aren't suggestions.

Before a job begins, it's planned. Crews walk through the work, identify risks and make sure everyone is aligned. Communication stays constant.

What happens after the job matters just as much. Near-misses are tracked, reviewed and discussed to understand what happened and prevent it from happening again. Over time, those lessons build a stronger, more prepared workforce.

Everyone is expected to look out for each other. If something doesn't look right, it gets said. That accountability turns policies into habits.

Contractors working alongside cooperative crews are held to those same expectations.

Extending Beyond the Jobsite

The work doesn't stop at the edge of a right-of-way. Because crews live in the communities they serve, that responsibility carries beyond the job.

Your local cooperative shares electrical safety information through schools, events and outreach. It's simple advice that helps prevent accidents.

June is National Safety Month. Most electrical injuries are preventable, and small decisions matter.

Leave electrical work to qualified professionals. Don't overload outlets. Stay clear of downed power lines and report them. If something looks off, whether it's a damaged transformer or an open substation, say something.

Take the Extra Moment

Electricity is easy to take for granted. But the systems behind it, and the people maintaining them, depend on careful decisions.

When a task involves electricity, take a moment. Look twice. Think it through.

That pause can make all the difference.

"Be safe, lineman!"

Renn Ronning, age 8

Renn urges the line crew to stay safe on the job. Thank you for sharing your picture, Renn! Renn's parents are Justin and Katrina Ronning from Elk Point, 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.

Easy & Delicious FAMILY MEALS

Picture by Shutterstock.

TACO SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. hamburger, cooked and drained
1 28 oz. can red or Kidney beans
1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes
1 14 oz. can corn
1 pkg. taco seasoning

Method

Put all ingredients into bean pot. Microwave for 20 minutes. Serve with shredded cheese and corn chips. Do not drain liquids.

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

QUICK PORK CHOP DINNER

Ingredients:

4 pork chops
2 tsps. prepared mustard
2 tbsps. flour
1/2 tsp. salt or Mrs. Dash
Dash of pepper
2 tbsps. fat or oil
1 10 oz. can of chicken rice soup or chicken broth
1/2 cup water
Add onion, potatoes, carrots, garlic powder to taste

Method

Spread mustard over pork chops and sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper. Brown thoroughly in fat or oil in pressure cooker. Add chicken soup and water. Add vegetables and cover. Set control at 10 and cook 12 minutes or 35 minutes if you add vegetables. Cool pan for 5 minutes, then reduce pressure.

Ruth Konechne
Central Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
1/4 cup horseradish sauce, optional
12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you have 24 squares of cheese)

Sauce

1/2 cup butter
1/4 tsp. onion powder
2 tbsps. brown sugar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tsps. poppy seeds
1-1/2 tsps. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325˚. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese, replace roll tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. *These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald and Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

90th ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN WAKONDA

The 90th Annual Meeting of Clay-Union Electric was held at the Wakonda School on April 14, with 90 members registered and 11 high school seniors entered in a random drawing for three $500 scholarships.

The meeting also marked leadership transitions, with District 3 Director Mike Slattery concluding more than 18 years of service and General Manager Chris Larson conducting his final Annual Meeting.

The event included an invocation by Don Lyso, the National Anthem performed by Kris and Addison Larson, and a meal served by the Knights of Columbus.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO LOCAL STUDENTS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Lydia Anderson and Carter Barron were awarded with a $1,250 Basin Electric Scholarship. Pictured is GM Larson with Lydia, unfortunatley Carter was unable to attend.

Lydia is a student at Vermillion High School, and plans to attend Creighton University to Major in Nursing.

Carter is a student at Gayville-Volin, and plans to attend Mount Marty University to for Business Admin & Health and Fitness Management.

Clay-Union Electric's Random Draw Winners were:
Right: Carley Crist, Beresford High School and will be attending Lake Area Technical College.
Below: Bridget Logue, Irene-Wakonda School, and will be attending USD.

Right: Jordan Springer, Vermillion High School, was the winner of the Milo Gilbertson Family Random Draw Scholarship and will be attending USD.

The rotor is lifted out of the generator unit using two cranes. This component of the generator will be reused once other parts are replaced. Photo Submitted by USACE

RENEWING RIVER POWER

Fort Randall Dam Undergoes Multiyear Renovation

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

A 72-year old hydropower dam in southeast South Dakota is the first of the state's four mainstream Missouri River dams to undergo a substantial retrofit to improve the facility's efficiency and reliability.

Fort Randall Dam, which began operating in 1954, was built near Pickstown, South Dakota, through the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program. The program was included in the Flood Control Act of 1944 by Congress to dam the Missouri River at multiple points to improve the region's water management, irrigation, flood control and navigation while also generating much-needed hydropower. *(See Pages 12-13 for more on how the program came to be.)* A marvel at the time of its construction, the two-mile-long rolled-earth dam holds back 5.4 million acre-feet of water in Lake Francis Case. The dam's eight turbine generators have a maximum generating capacity of 320 megawatts – enough electricity to power about 245,000 homes.

Now, more than seven decades later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is looking to boost those numbers and revitalize the aging dam with state-of-the-art, 21st-century technology to ensure the facility keeps up with the region's modern energy demands.

Overseeing the multi-year project is Maintenance and Operations Manager Michael Schenkel, who's spent the last 14 years at the Fort Randall Project overseeing the facility's maintenance, operation and planning. Schenkel says while the dam's eight original 72-year-old generators and turbines have served reliably, a renewal will improve the project's operation.

"Like many aging public assets, it's time for reinvestment," Schenkel said. "The turbine-generator units were installed in the 1950s and are beyond their expected service life. We're replacing them to ensure long-term energy and infrastructure resilience."

He pointed out that the USACE got its money's worth with the original generators, saying how rare it is for a generator to last over 70 years without needing a rewind – referring to the process of replacing the stators, or the copper windings and insulation that help convert the turbine's rotation into electricity. Over time, heat, vibration and age can weaken that insulation and increase the risk of failure. Schenkel noted that Fort Randall is the only Missouri River dam in South Dakota that has retained its original stators up to this point.

The scale of the units pose a significant challenge – each unit is 40 feet tall and weighs more than 400 tons, necessitating piece-by-piece transport, assembly and installation. Voith Hydro North America, the company awarded the contract to manufacture and install the new turbine runners and generator stators, began the decommissioning and replacement of the first generator in July of 2025. USACE expects that generator to be offline until November 2026 after installation is complete and engineers can inspect it for any issues. Once the first unit is back online and clears inspection, engineers will give the contractor the green light to proceed.
To keep up with hydropower demand and allow adequate flow downstream, USACE's goal is to keep six units operating and two units offline for renovation at a time until the project is wrapped up in 2031.

Schenkel explained how the upgrade solves two problems at once: it replaces aging components in the dam and provides the opportunity to install new, highly efficient generators and turbines to produce more power with the same amount of water.

Fort Randall's original turbines generate hydropower most efficiently with 103 feet of head – the vertical distance between the water levels above and below the dam, determining the pressure at which water moves through the turbine. At 103 feet of head, each generator will produce about 31 megawatts of electricity.

However, due to the region's fluctuating power demands, water

management and other factors, operating in the efficient middle ground isn't always ideal. Schenkel says USACE often operates Fort Randall at 40 megawatts and 119 feet of head – about 4% below peak efficiency.

To solve this problem of lost efficiency, the new turbines being installed are highly-efficient, rated for 52 megawatts at 119 feet of head. This change raises the facility's total generating capacity from 320 megawatts to about 400 megawatts – enough electricity to power more than 300,000 homes.

"We expect to recover roughly 10% more energy output from the same water volume," Schenkel said. "Essentially free power beyond the capital investment once the upgrade is complete."

As part of the renovation, USACE also completed as-needed updates to the switch yard, which is the infrastructure that routes power to transmission lines for transport across the region.

Electricity generated at the Fort Randall Dam is managed, transported and sold by the Western Area Power Administration under the U.S. Department of Energy.

As a co-op member, part of your utility's energy mix is hydropower from the Missouri River dams, including Fort Randall, "so this work directly affects co-op members," Schenkel added.

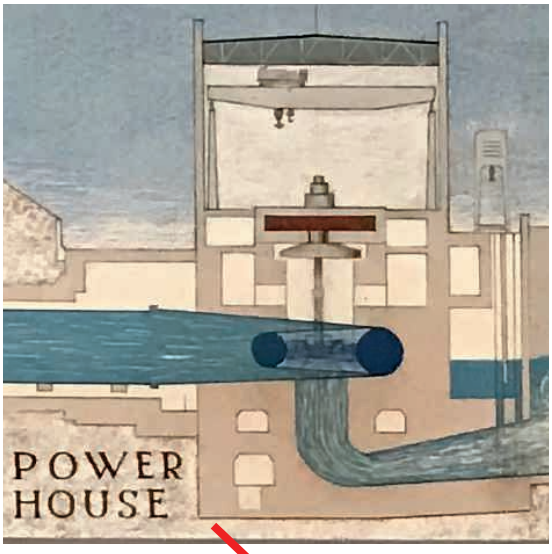
Looking at the dam's age and efficiency profile – and also being the only dam in South Dakota possessing its original stator windings – Schenkel said Fort Randall was the clear priority. The USACE has begun planning a similar renovation project for the Oahe Dam.

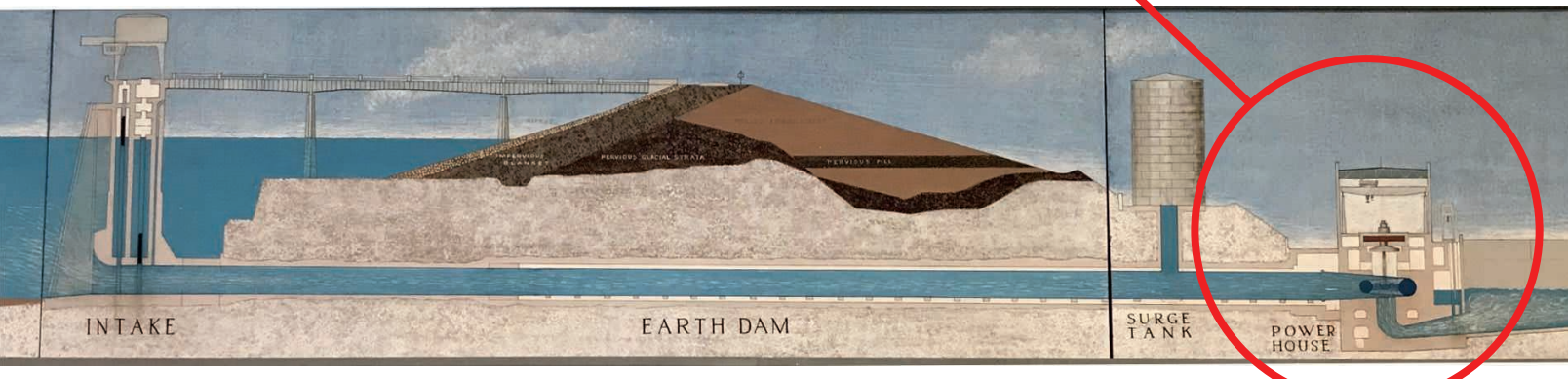
Work at the Fort Randall Project is scheduled to wrap up in 2031 once all eight generating units are replaced.

Above: The Fort Randall Dam is equipped with eight turbines. Unit 6 turbine is shown being removed for the first time since it went online in 1955.

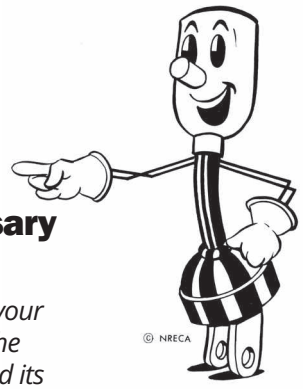
Below & Right: A visual of Fort Randall Dam. Water flows into the powerhouse via the intake tunnel. As the water passes through, it spins the turbine. The rotor, connected to the turbine, spins inside the stator. As the rotor spins inside the stator, its magnetic field passes through copper windings and produces electricity.

Photos Submitted by USACE





Happy Work Anniversary



Thank you for your dedication to the cooperative and its members!

Nick Buckman
Lead Lineman
27 years

We are proud to recognize the dedicated team members who help keep our system running safely and reliably. Our right-of-way professionals work year-round to maintain clear access to power lines, manage vegetation and ensure safe distances between trees and electrical equipment. Their work plays a critical role in preventing outages and protecting our community. Join us in thanking these behind-the-scenes heroes during Right-of-Way Professionals Week!

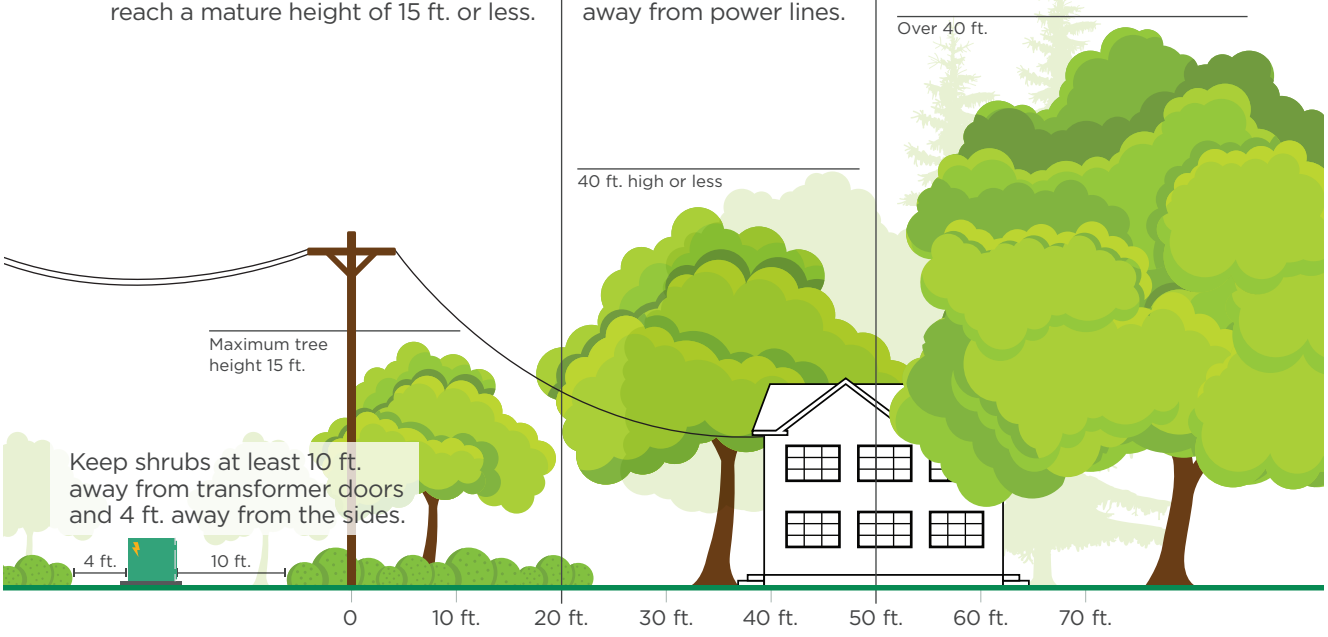
Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE
Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

MEDIUM TREE ZONE
Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE
Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.



Application Form

To apply for 2026 Youth Excursion, complete the form below and return it to Clay-Union Electric.
The deadline to apply is June 1, 2026. If you have any questions, please call 605-624-2673.

2026 Youth Excursion Application

Name:_____

Address:_____City:_____State:____Zip:_____

Phone#:_____Email:_____

School:_____2025-2026 Class/Year:_____

Gender:_____T-shirt Size:_____

Return this information by June 1, 2026 to:

Clay-Union Electric
31321 SD Hwy. 19, PO Box 317, Vermillion, SD 57069

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

	March 2026	Year To Date
Number of Consumers	3,557	3,558 Avg.
Total Revenue	$919,784	$2,969,808
Total Cost of Service	$931,431	$2,961,649
Operating Margins	$(11,647)	$8,159
Other Margins	$31,326	$40,089
Total Net Margins	$19,679	$48,248
kWh Purchased	7,672,275	25,049,369
Cost of Power	$550,533	$1,780,203
kWh Sales	7,469,560	24,192,684
Residential Average Usage	1,298	1,510
Residential Average Monthly Bill	$200	$221

Youth Excursion 2026 to Bismarck, ND

Calling all high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors! Is your parent or guardian an active member-owner of Clay-Union Electric? If so, you're eligible to apply for an unforgettable summer experience: Youth Excursion 2026!

If chosen, you will receive an **all-expenses-paid trip** to Bismarck, N.D., for a youth event unlike any other. From July 20-22, participants will stay on-campus at Bismarck State College. During this time, they will have the opportunity to sightsee, make friends from all across the state and gain a new understanding of where their electrical power comes from.

Once participants arrive on the campus, they can look forward to building friendships, taking in the sights of North Dakota's capital and learning "The Story Behind the Light Switch." During their stay, students will get to hear from power industry experts and participate in hands-on activities. Students will be given the opportunity to tour the Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant to see where South Dakota's power is generated.

There will also be plenty of time built in for recreation and socializing – students will play games, visit local attractions and much more. Participants can look forward to connecting with students from all across South Dakota, building strong friendships and learning from their peers.

To be eligible for Youth Excursion, students must be in high school and their parent or guardian must be an active member-owner of Clay-Union Electric.

THE PICK-SLOAN PLAN

Taming North America's Longest Waterway

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyok@sdrea.coop

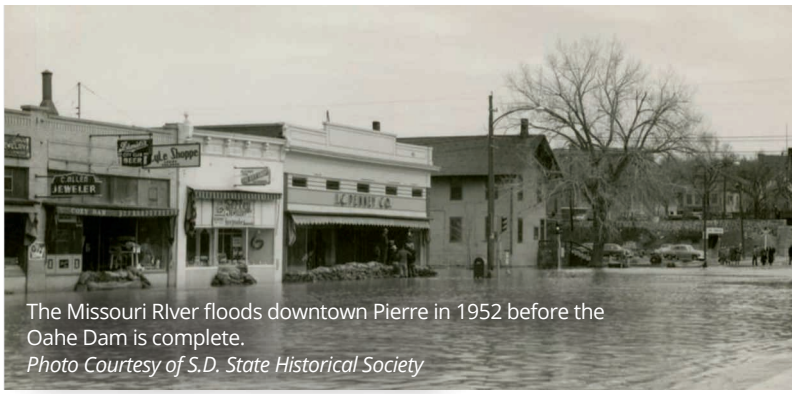
In the 1930s, both the upper Missouri River and its home in rural America looked notably different than they do today.

That was a period in which electricity was still a luxury enjoyed by townsfolk lucky enough to have a municipal or investor-owned utility serving the community. As rural neighbors founded electric cooperatives to serve their homes, the once-primitive prairie quickly began to light up. And with that step into the modern age came the growing need for more electricity.

At this same time, the 2,300-mile-long Missouri River passing through seven states in the region was proving to be an untamable, destructive force for the communities and agriculture producers on its banks.

The floods would wreak havoc on riverside cities like Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Mississippi River communities like Memphis and New Orleans during swells, disrupting economic activity and trade. During low-flow years and toward the end of summer, the low water levels made navigation extremely difficult for barge traffic.

These problems had been ongoing. All the way back in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal constructed the Fort Peck Dam near Glasgow, Mont. There, the nearly 4-mile-long and 250-foot high rolled-earth dam created Fort Peck Lake, stretching 134 miles across eastern Montana and generating up to 185 MW of electricity. Even so, the federal government understood more work was needed to fully rein in the power of the Missouri.



The Missouri RIver floods downtown Pierre in 1952 before the Oahe Dam is complete.
Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

Competing Visions: Pick vs. Sloan

Lewis A. Pick, an officer with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and William G. Sloan, an official with the Bureau of Reclamation, each had a vision for the future of the Missouri River Basin.

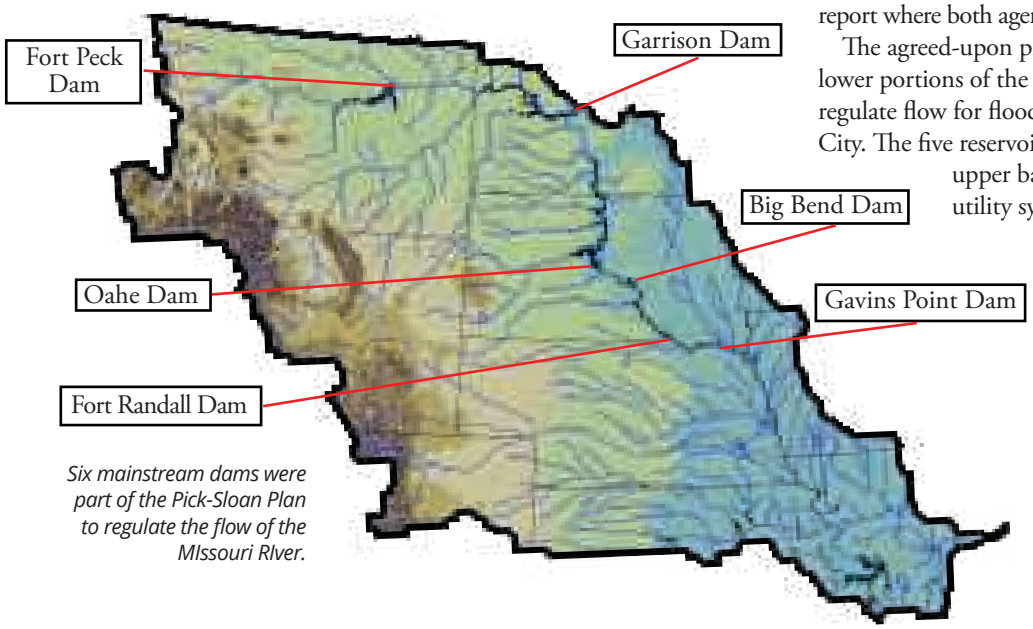
Pick envisioned large dams on the main channel of the Missouri River with a focus on flood control and navigation downstream in the lower Missouri River basin. His plan included five main-channel dams with levees from Sioux City, Iowa, to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sloan, on the other hand, wanted the projects to benefit the upper Missouri River basin, with a focus on water storage for irrigation and agricultural development. Sloan recommended dozens of smaller dams with hydro-electric power plants.

The battle between the USACE and DOR was contentious, but it became clear that no side could garner enough support on its own to pass a project with price tags of about $1 billion each.

Finally, in 1944, USACE and DOR released a joint engineering report where both agencies' goals for the basin were represented.

The agreed-upon plan would benefit both the upper and lower portions of the basin, with five hydro-power dams to regulate flow for flood control and navigation past Sioux City. The five reservoirs would store water for uses in the upper basin, including irrigation, recreation, utility systems and hydropower generation.



Six mainstream dams were part of the Pick-Sloan Plan to regulate the flow of the MIssouri RIver.

Oahe Dam during construction in 1958.
Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

Fort Randall Dam (1946-1954)

Location: Pickstown, S.D.
Length: 10,700 feet long – over 2 miles!
Height: 165 feet at highest point
Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 320 MW. (See pp. 8-9)

Completed in the 1950s, Fort Randall was the first of South Dakota's mainstream Missouri River dams to come online, generating hydropower for the region and changing the river from a threat into a resource. The Fort Randall Dam creates Lake Francis Case, named for South Dakota's US Senator and Pick-Sloan advocate Francis Higbee Case. The reservoir can store about 5.3 million acre-feet of water (enough water to flood 5.3 million acres at a depth of 1 foot).

Garrison Dam (1947-1955)

Location: Riverdale, N.D.
Length: 11,300 feet long – over 2 miles!
Height: 210 feet at highest point
Generating Capacity: 5 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 583 MW.

Garrison Dam creates lake Sakakawea, which stretches across western and central North Dakota. The reservoir is the largest on the Missouri River, holding more than 23.5 million acre-feet of water. The dam is named after the nearby town, Garrison. Controversially, the lake flooded the homes of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal nations.

Oahe Dam (1948-1963)

Location: Pierre/Fort Pierre, S.D.
Length: 9,360 feet long – about 1.8 miles!
Height: 245 feet at highest point
Generating Capacity: 7 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 786 MW.

Oahe Dam sits north of Pierre and Fort Pierre, forming Lake Oahe. The reservoir can hold about 23 million acre-feet of water. Oahe Dam has the highest generation capacity, producing enough electricity to power about 600,000 homes.

The dam and lake's name came from the Oahe Indian Mission established more than 70 years before. The mission's site, as well as other communities and tribal lands, were submerged beneath the resevoir.

Gavin's Point Dam (1952-1957)

Location: Yankton, S.D.
Length: 8,700 feet long – about 1.6 miles.
Height: 74 feet at highest point
Generating Capacity: 3 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 132 MW.

The farthest downriver dam on the Missouri, Gavin's Point is a dam essential for controlling the water levels for downstream barge traffic starting at Sioux City on the Missouri River and all the way down to New Orleans on the Mississippi River. The dam creates Lewis and Clark Lake on the South Dakota-Nebraska border, with a storage capacity of 492,000 acre-feet of water.

Big Bend Dam (1959-1966)

Location: Fort Thompson, S.D.
Length: 10,570 feet long – about 2 miles.
Height: 95 feet at highest point
Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 439 MW.

The final mainstream Pick-Sloan dam to be completed on the Missouri River, Big Bend Dam creates Lake Sharpe, holding about 1.7 million acre-feet of water.

The Good and the Bad

A lot of good came from the Pick-Sloan Plan: affordable hydropower for communities throughout the region and water storage to mitigate drought and reduce flooding.

However, a project of such magnitude will also naturally have downsides. University of South Dakota Professor David Swanson says the disruption of natural patterns has affected ecology for riverside habitats.

Cottonwood seedlings need wet, sandy soil to germinate – without spring floods, it's hard for new trees to establish. Today, there are fewer young cottonwoods growing.

In addition, birds like the least tern that nest on sand bars struggle to find suitable ground, affecting populations.

The reservoirs also flooded more than 1 million acres of land along the Missouri River, some held by private landowners and tribes, and displaced about 6,000 people from land where their families had lived for generations.

In South Dakota, several former communities lay beneath Lake Oahe, including parts of Polluck and Forest City.

Between Chamberlain and Oacoma, American Island was once a statewide destination for boy scouts, with its miles of forest, camp with cabins and bathhouse, racetrack. Today, it sits below dozens of feet of water in Lake Francis Case.

American Island's locally-famous animal statues were moved before Lake Francis Case flooded the island.
Photo Courtesy of the Cozard Memorial Library

Tribal leader George Gillette wipes tears as land is seized for the Garrison Dam.
Photo Courtesy of National Archives

Clay-Union Electric Corporation

Board Meeting Summary

MARCH 27, 2026 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on March 27, 2026, 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 Directors Tom Larsen, Chris Kinney, Mike Slattery, Sara Schulte and Attorney Dave Stuart. The board seat for District #5 is vacant. Attending staff members included Chris Larson, Beth Bottolfson, Alan Gauer and Jackie Williams. Retired Manager John Gors was in attendance.

Agenda (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the agenda as presented.
Visitors to Be Heard – Angi Kappenman, East River HR
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 2/27/2026.
Approval of Minutes from the February Executive Session (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the February executive session held on 2/27/26.
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 new members, refunds and credit deposits as presented.
Early Retirement of Capital Credits - None
Contracts (ACTION ITEM) – None
Policy Review (ACTION ITEM) – None
Work Order and Special Equipment Summary – None
REED Loan – None
Executive Session – The board went into Executive Session at 8:36 a.m. Executive Session was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. There was no action taken.
Resolutions –

- **2026-2 Appointing an Interim General Manager** - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adopt Resolution 2026-2 as presented.
- **2026-3 – Approval of Interim General Manager Compensation Structure and Benefit Plan Participation** - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adopt Resolution 2026-3 as presented.

Headquarters Access: A motion was made, seconded, and approved to grant the Board of Directors digital access to the Clay-Union Electric headquarters complex.
Management Reports:
A. Manager's Report - Manager Larson provided reports on the monthly activities:
April Board Meeting – The date of April 24, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.
East River REED/MAC - The REED Board met on March 3rd for the monthly meeting at the East River Headquarters. The MAC met on March 3rd immediately following the REED meeting in Madison.
Annual Meeting Date - The annual meeting will be on April 14th with a backup date of April 21st in Wakonda at the school.
NRECA Annual Meeting - The NRECA Annual meeting was from March 9th to the 11th in Nashville, TN with Director Schulte as delegate.
Apartment Buildings – Manager Larson presented two possible options to the Board for a territorial agreement with the City of Vermillion.
Clay-Yankton Irrigators Association - The annual meeting was held on March 10th at Toby's Lounge in Meckling.
Member Request - Manager Larson and Operations Manager Gauer reviewed a request from a USD professor asking to place equipment on Cooperative grounds for research of local wildlife.
Legislative Session – Manager Larson reviewed two pieces of legislation dealing with Wildfire Mitigation Plans and Eminent Domain issues.
SE Managers – Manager Larson hosted the SE Managers meeting on March 6th.
B. Administrative Report – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- February Billing Activities
- Idle Service, Good to Retire
- February 2026 Financials

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.
C. Operations Report – Operations Manager Gauer reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Monthly department work summary
- February Outage Report
- New Service
- Retired Services
- Outage Update
- 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 – None

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

Cyber Security – The February Cyber Security report from East River IT were 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 2026 calendar.

Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President **Sara Schulte, Secretary**

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 19-20
77th Annual Tabor Czech Days
Food, Dancing, Parade
Tabor, SD
taborczechdays.com

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.

JUNE 4-6
Black Hills Quilt Show
Thurs. 5-8 p.m.
Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Rushmore Hall
at the Monument
Rapid City, SD

JUNE 5
Northern Bull Riding Tour
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JUNE 6
Bulls 'n' Pulls
Antique Tractor Pull
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JUNE 10
BFest Concert Series & Farmers Market
Landree Wilson Performing
Museum Park
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JUNE 13
Journey Into Uncovering Historic Pickstown
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Pickstown, SD
605-487-7299

JUNE 13
Luce Pioneer Day
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Rope & Candle Making, Butter Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking
Lake Herman State Park
Madison, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 13
The Hay Country Jamboree
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

JUNE 18-21
Hartford Jamboree Days
City Park
Hartford, SD
605-941-0809
www.hartfordjamboreedays.com

JUNE 19-20
Estelline Rodeo Days
5:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin'
6 p.m. Rodeo (Both Days)
Estelline, SD
www.estellinerodeo.com

JUNE 19-20
Farley Fest
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
www.FarleyFest.com

JUNE 20
Grace's Gas Guzzlers
Car Show & Vendor Fair
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
202 Second St. SE
Watertown, SD
605-237-8005

JUNE 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JUNE 24-27
Crystal Springs Rodeo
Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
Britton, SD
605-880-5077

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration at Mount Rushmore
Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 11
40th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K
Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD
End: City Park, Spearfish, SD
Register: www.nhcasa.org

JULY 18
SD MCC Relief Sale
Helping Others 'Round the World
Museum: 10 a.m.
Food Court, Bake Sale: 11 a.m.
Pioneer Hall
Freeman, SD
605-925-7009
sdmccreliefsale.weebly.com

JULY 18
A Celebration of Johnny Cash
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

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.