

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**
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Photo by Frank Turner

Who Owns What?



Chris Larson,
General Manager

As July rolls in with longer days and rising temperatures, it also brings the increased potential for severe weather. Summer storms can arrive quickly and hit hard, sometimes causing significant damage to essential electric equipment throughout our community.

Clay-Union is always prepared to respond swiftly to outages and restore power safely, but

it is also important for homeowners to understand which parts of the electric system are their responsibility and which are maintained by us at the co-op. Understanding these key differences can help speed up repairs and ensure everyone stays safe when the weather turns rough.

Clay-Union is responsible for maintaining and repairing the equipment and lines that run to your electric service meter, including utility poles, distribution power lines, electric meters and pad-mounted transformers.

Clay-Union members are responsible for the equipment located between the electric meter and your home or business, including any underground service lines that lead into the structure and the service panel. Members are also responsible for the weatherhead and service mast located outside the home.

If any equipment that you are responsible for is damaged, please call a licensed electrician to conduct the repairs. A professional has the experience and know-how to assess and manage these types of repairs.

When severe weather damages electrical equipment,

it's important to note that any necessary repairs to the homeowner's equipment must be conducted before Clay-Union crews can restore power to your home or business. By understanding the equipment you are responsible for, the repair and restoration process will be smoother and faster.

Our community takes great pride in the beautiful trees and landscaping that contribute to the natural beauty where we live, however, regular trimming is essential to ensure reliable electric service and minimize damage from severe weather. Clay-Union regularly trims trees throughout our service territory to improve service reliability. If you spot a tree limb that is obstructing a

distribution power line outside your home, please call Clay-Union so we can trim those limbs and maintain those lines.

Any overgrown limbs or vegetation around the service line between the electric meter & your home or business is the members responsibility, and in these cases, please call a professional

tree trimming service to assist.

By working together to understand the essential equipment that powers daily life, we can all be better prepared to start the repair and restoration process if severe weather impacts our community.

If you have any questions about your electrical equipment, we're here to help. Please contact Clay-Union at 605-624-2673.

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

Chris Larson
General Manager
clarson@clayunionelectric.coop

Understanding these key differences can help speed up repairs and ensure everyone stays safe.



Our office will be closed Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Wishing all our members a safe and happy Fourth of July!

For an emergency, please call 605-624-2673, and our 24/7 on-call service will dispatch our lineman if necessary.

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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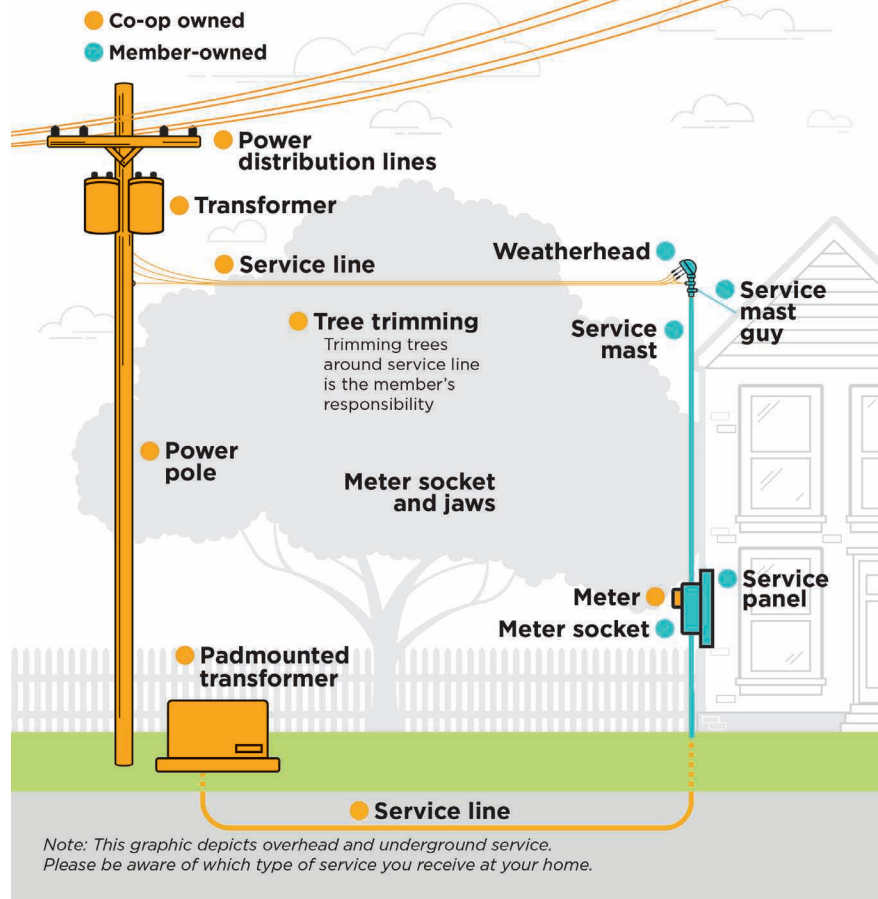
YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

| | April 2025 | Year To Date |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| Number of consumers BILLED | 3,577 | 3,567 |
| Electric & Other Revenue | \$725,213 | \$3,442,586 |
| Cost of Service | \$828,135 | \$3,671,619 |
| Operating Margins | \$(102,922) | \$(229,033) |
| Other Margins | \$3,378 | \$51,230 |
| Net Margins | \$(99,544) | \$(177,803) |
| KWH Purchased | 6,800,594 | 32,791,112 |
| Cost of Power | \$418,248 | \$2,062,213 |
| KWH Sales | 6,458,056 | 31,565,818 |
| Average kWhs used (residential) | 997 | 1,482 |
| Average Amount of Bill (residential) | \$149 | \$191 |

Who Owns What?

Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

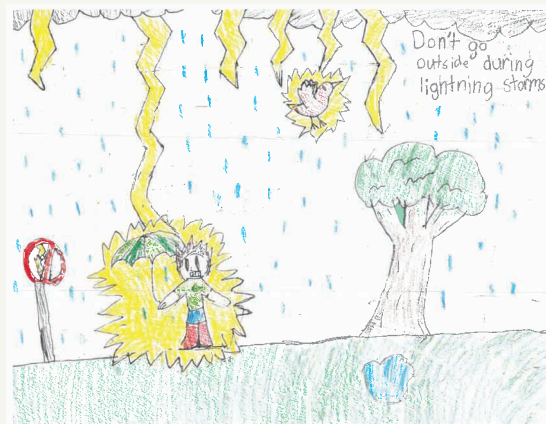
Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child’s bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



"Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, 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.

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

McCormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 tbsps. fat or oil
1/4 cup water
2 tbsps. cornstarch
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
3 tbsps. soy sauce
3/4 cup green pepper strips
1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
1/3 cup butter or margarine
1/3 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
1/2 cup milk
2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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.



Travis Schroeder, Loss Control Professional, SDREA, instructs Clayton Sorensen, Apprentice Lineman on protocol before climbing to rescue a simulated injured person. (Right Photo) Linemen listen to procedures for proper rescue. Photos by Jackie Williams

STAYING SHARP, STAYING SAFE

Jackie Williams

jwilliams@clayunionelectric.coop

While you might not think linemen still climb poles every day, there are still situations where it's necessary — and being able to do it safely is a must. That's why climbing skills remain a critical part of the job.

Pole top rescue isn't just a drill — it's a lifesaving skill. In an emergency, every second matters. Regular practice and readiness can make all the difference when it counts most.

In May, our linemen completed certification for pole top rescue, bucket rescue, and climbing. These skills go hand in hand and can mean the difference between life and death

in the field. Staying trained and confident in their techniques ensures our crews are ready for whatever the job throws at them.

Safety is part of our culture. Every month, our crews, office staff, and management come together for a safety meeting. We talk about near misses and close calls — whether on the job or in our personal lives — so we can all stay aware and learn from each other's experiences. We also stay up to date with annual CPR training and first aid certification every other year, so we're prepared for emergencies if or when they should occur.

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staff for our
members
electrical needs

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YOU GOTTA HAVE A FIDDLE IN THE BAND

Keeping Old-Time Music Alive One Jam at a Time

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdea.coop

“If you’re gonna play in Texas, you gotta have a fiddle in the band,” the classic Alabama song goes — and South Dakota is no exception. The Fiddlers of South Dakota, a group of traveling fiddle enthusiasts and musicians, carry that spirit, bringing the joys of acoustic music and an old-time charm to parades, festivals and hometown celebrations across the state through the summer months.

One of these traveling musicians, Ken Nelson of South Shore who joined the group in 2010, describes the group as a “loose-knit group of people who like to get together and jam.” In total, the group has more than 30 members from eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. And it’s not just fiddlers — the ensemble includes other acoustic instruments, including mandolin, bass, banjo and harmonica.

According to Nelson, the group’s repertoire draws from old-time traditions — breakdowns, waltzes, reels and jigs — the kind of music once played on porches, at barn dances and around campfires.

The Fiddlers of South Dakota
playing old-time tunes at
Newton Hills State Park.
Photo submitted by Ken Nelson

“You could call it old-time music,” Nelson said. “It’s not really bluegrass or folk music. It’s hard to describe it until you hear it.”

Whether the song is an Irish jig or a Croatian polka, Nelson said the music never fails to connect with the audience.

Nelson said that connection is what drives these musicians to travel hundreds of miles to gigs across the state — from Fort Sisseton’s Historic Festival to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet, to Prairie Village’s Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree in Madison. It’s not a living, he said, but more of a passion — a way to stay connected to music, to community, and to his fellow fiddlers.

“We play everywhere we can,” he said. “And everybody enjoys it. We usually only make enough money to pay for the gas but that’s all we really care about.”

“Once We played for Potato Days over in Clark,” Nelson laughed. “We were set up right next to the potato wrestling pit. We had to make sure we were sitting far enough back so that when mashed potato started flying, we didn’t get splashed.”

The Fiddlers of South Dakota expect to perform next at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet in July. Nelson said the public is not only welcome to attend the show, but acoustic string players of all ages are encouraged to join the organization’s jam sessions and informal performances such as at Luce Cabin at Lake Herman State Park or after their performance in Fort Sisseton.

“We’re always trying to incorporate new players into the group,” he said. “Sometimes young students come and play with us, and they’re always welcome. It’s fun and humbling to have young players, sometimes as young as 10 or 11, join in, because, if you don’t include the young people, it’s not going to last.”



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

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Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”

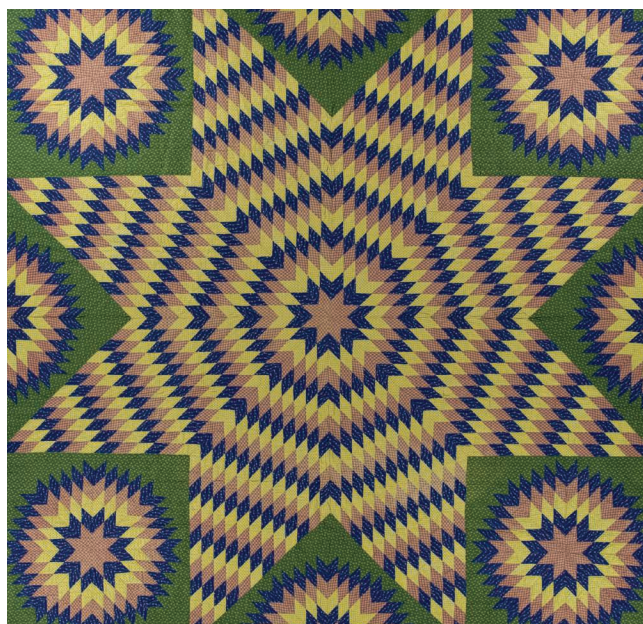


Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."

Powering the Digital Frontier

Allison Hamilton

Data centers are the backbone of the internet. They store and manage everything from social media to cloud computing, AI and our favorite streaming services. As more people and businesses go digital, the number of data centers is quickly growing. While many of these centers were once built near large cities, more are now being sited in rural areas.

Electric cooperatives are receiving regular requests from companies that seek to build large data centers in their service territories. These requests bring both big opportunities and major challenges.

Why are data centers coming to rural areas?

There are several reasons why companies are choosing rural locations for their data centers:

- More land. Rural areas have plenty of space for large buildings.
- Resource diversity. Electric cooperatives own and operate reliable sources of energy.
- Lower costs. Land and labor are usually less expensive outside of cities.
- Tax breaks. Local and state governments may offer tax benefits to attract these businesses.

Data centers can be huge, sometimes requiring more electricity than all the co-op's members combined. This increased demand for electricity brings several new opportunities for electric cooperatives.

- New jobs and growth. Data centers can bring jobs and revenue to small communities. In Virginia, for example, the data center industry supports around 74,000 jobs and adds billions to the state's economy, according to a 2024 report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC).
- Stable revenue. These centers require a lot of power and usually sign long-term contracts. This provides the co-op with steady income, which can help pay for system upgrades and keep rates lower for other members in the community.
- Improved infrastructure. To serve a large data center, the co-op might need to build new power lines or substations. While this is expensive, it can also improve service for all

co-op members by making the electric system stronger and more reliable.

While data centers create significant opportunities for electric co-ops by driving demand and investment, they also present new challenges in meeting increased electricity needs while maintaining reliable and resilient power delivery.

- High upfront costs. Building the new infrastructure to power a data center can cost millions, which is why co-ops work diligently with data center customers to ensure upfront costs are covered.
- Risk of losing a big customer. If the data center moves away or shuts down, the co-op could be left with expensive equipment it no longer needs. This could negatively impact the co-op's finances.
- Permitting and siting. Acquiring permission to build new power lines and substations takes time. There may be zoning rules, environmental reviews and public meetings that slow things down.

Planning for the future

To manage both the risks and rewards that data centers bring, electric co-op leaders are taking a careful, informed approach. They are working closely with their generation and transmission provider (G&T), economic development offices and financial experts to plan these projects.

Co-ops are also ensuring contracts with data center operators include protections for the co-op. For example, if the data center leaves early, they may be liable for paying part of the infrastructure costs. Forecasting tools are also aiding co-ops in understanding how the new load will impact the local system.

Serving large data centers could be a gamechanger for many electric cooperatives. These projects can bring jobs, revenue and new technology to co-op communities. But they also come with financial risks and planning challenges. By asking the right questions and building smart partnerships, electric cooperatives are poised to make decisions that serve their members well – now and in the future.



GENERATE SAFELY

Scott Flood
NRECA

Don't generate problems with your backup generator.

The wind howls outside your windows as a major storm system blows through the area in the late evening. Your lights flicker for a moment or two before you're plunged into darkness. The social media feed on your phone is packed with reports of damage and power outages, and the storm shows no sign of letting up for hours.

Fortunately, you had the foresight to buy a backup generator big enough to handle your refrigerator, freezer and other key needs. Flashlight in hand, you attach extension cords. Within minutes, you hear the quiet humming that tells you they're working again.

South Dakota's electric cooperatives understand power outages are a major inconvenience, and we do our best to prevent them. But when severe weather rolls through, outages can sometimes stretch into several hours or even days after a major storm. Lineworkers may have to check many miles of power lines to pinpoint the problems before they can begin their work to restore service. That's why many co-op members consider buying backup generators to provide for their family's needs while waiting for service to resume.

Backup generators fall into one of two categories. Standby generators are permanently wired into the home's electrical system by a qualified electrician. They come in a variety of sizes, so homeowners can match the generator to their home's power needs. Portable generators, as the name implies, can be moved to wherever

they are needed. Because they're small enough to move, they generally provide less power than standby models. Most use gasoline or diesel fuel, and when they're operated correctly, both types provide a safe source of backup power.

Some homeowners make the mistake of plugging their backup generators directly into a wall outlet or connect them to their home's electrical panel. Beyond the significant risk of electrocution and fire that can create, plugging generators directly into your outlets can send the voltage your generator creates into the power lines connecting your home to the electric grid. That creates a dangerous condition called "backfeed," which can seriously injure the lineworkers who are working so hard to restore your electricity, as well as anyone who accidentally comes in contact with power lines. Backfeed can also damage the generator.

That's why permanently installed backup generators are required to have what's known as a transfer switch, which should be installed by a qualified electrician. The transfer switch creates a barrier between your home's electrical system and the outside wires, so backfeed cannot occur. When the transfer switch senses that power has been restored, it switches the power from the generator back to the outside lines.

The biggest danger associated with backup generators is one that's both invisible and deadly. Because backup generators burn fossil fuels, they generate a variety of gases, most notably carbon monoxide. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, one portable generator can produce as much CO as hundreds of cars.

The agency reports that nearly 100 Americans lose their lives each year because of CO poisoning from backup generators. That's why generators should only be used in dry, well-ventilated areas away from your home and garage.

CO gas is not only invisible, but it's also odorless. The National Institutes of Health warns that CO has the potential to kill in as little as five minutes. People exposed to CO typically become dizzy, feel nauseated and experience headaches. Often, they lose consciousness before noticing any symptoms. Anyone exposed to CO should be moved to fresh air immediately.

If you purchase a portable backup generator, protect your home and family by taking the time to read the manufacturer's instructions. Don't use portable generators in rainy or wet conditions unless you keep them shielded from moisture and well-ventilated.

When starting a portable generator, make sure nothing is plugged into it. In addition, you can reduce the potential for damage to your appliances and lighting by turning them off or unplugging them from the wall. After the generator starts, plug them in and turn them on one at a time to make sure you aren't overloading your generator's capacity. Unplug them from the generator before turning it off. Unless the manufacturer recommends otherwise, always turn the generator off and allow it to cool before adding fuel.

Finally, as with many home appliances, regular maintenance is the key to ensuring your portable generator operates safely for years to come. When storing it, drain the fuel from the tank. In addition, check the oil and fuel level, filters and other components once a season so you know it will be ready to run safely and efficiently the next time a big storm blows through.



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.

"I figured it would be something myself and my children would be up to, and ever since then,

I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

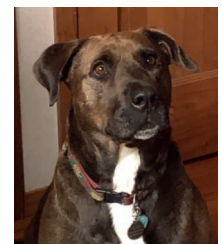
"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

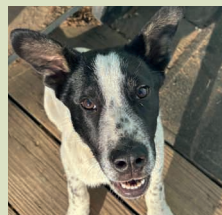
| | |
|--|----------------|
| Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge)..... | (605) 850-8430 |
| Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre)..... | (605) 223-2287 |
| Sioux Falls Area Humane Society..... | (605) 338-4441 |
| Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City).... | (605) 394-4170 |
| Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs).... | (605) 745-7283 |
| Beadle County Humane Society (Huron)..... | (605) 352-8955 |
| Aberdeen Area Humane Society..... | (605) 226-1200 |
| Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown)..... | (605) 882-2247 |
| Brookings Regional Humane Society..... | (605) 697-7387 |
| Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish)..... | (605) 642-1576 |
| Heartland Humane Society (Yankton)..... | (605) 664-4244 |
| Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City)..... | (712) 252-2614 |
| Mitchell Animal Rescue..... | (605) 770-2170 |
| Oglala Pet Project (Kyle)..... | (605) 455-1518 |
| Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte)..... | (605) 964-7387 |
| Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank)..... | (605) 432-4505 |
| Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton)..... | (605) 742-0219 |

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.

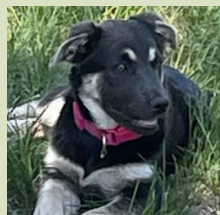


Looking for a new home...

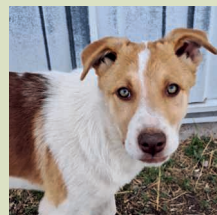
(plus many more)



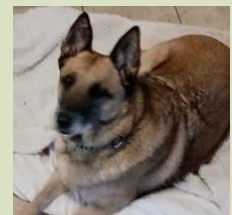
Buddy



Margot



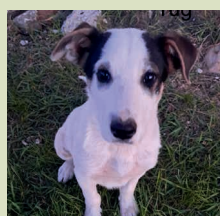
Chopper



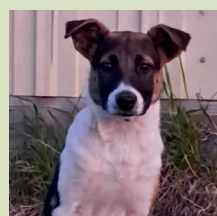
Eliza



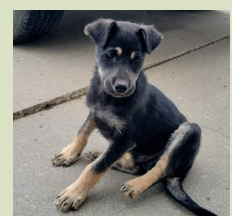
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo

Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

APRIL 25, 2025 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on April 25, 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, Mike Slattery and Sara Schulte. The Board seat for District #5 is vacant. 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 – Derrick Larson, Eide Bailly, via Teams; and Tara Olson

Approval of Minutes from the March Board Meeting (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the March board minutes held on 3/26/25.

Approval of Minutes from the March Executive Session (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the March executive session minutes held on 3/26/25.

Approval of Minutes from the Re-organizational Meeting (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 4/8/25 re-organizational minutes.

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 – A motion was made, seconded and approved to approve the electrical contracts as presented.

Policy Review – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve Policy 738, AI Tools Usage, as presented.

Work Order and Special Equipment Summary – None
Management Reports:

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

May Board Meeting – The date of May 23, 2025, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.

East River REED/MAC - The REED Board met on April 1st for the monthly meeting via a video call due to adverse weather.

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 - The Annual Meeting was held on April 8th in Gayville, SD with 107 members registering and approximately 195 attending. Thirteen students registered for the random draw scholarships.

Audit Report - Derrick Larson, Eide Bailly partner, presented the audit report via Teams platform. A motion was made seconded and approved to accept the audit report as presented.

• Eide Bailly offered a clean opinion on the audit of Clay-Union records.

Margin Allocation (Action) - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to declare total margins of \$805,682 with \$650,000 to be allocated to members and to retain \$155,682 as permanent equity.

MTI Donation – A motion was made, seconded, and approved to donate to the Mitchell Tech College Foundation for the construction of an Energy Training Underground Lab. It is an investment for our future employees. It will be used for SDREA Underground training schools.

AMR Discussion – Manager Larson reported on meetings with various vendors for a future new generation of Automated Meter Reading equipment.

LM controlled Air Conditioning – Manager Larson reported that a larger number of coops are looking at moving away from controlling air conditioning.

SD Line Patrol - Virtual meetings have started in planning the SD Line Patrol poker run scheduled for September 2025. B-Y, Union and Clay-Union will host the event.

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. We will be doing interviews on May 1st and 2nd.

Electrician Foreman - Joey Nickles started on April 14th. We have him working with Josh to get familiar with our business.

Joint Services Discussion - A meeting is scheduled for the Boards to meet on May 19th @ 8:30 am at the Lewis and Clark Headquarters.

NRECA Director - There are at least two candidates for the NRECA Director position.

SDREA legislative committee – Steve Barnett provided a written summary from the recent SDREA legislative committee meeting.

B. Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- March Billing Activity
- 1st Quarter Water Heater Activity
- Financial Audit
- March 2025 Financials
- IXP Software Upgrades

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
- March 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 – Manager Larson reported on discussions with legal counsel on assorted topics.

Strategic Planning – None

Safety Meeting Minutes – None

Cyber Security – The March 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 May 2025 calendar.

Executive Session – The board went into Executive Session at 12:20 p.m., Executive Session was adjourned at 1:02 p.m. There was no action taken.

Director Position Opening - After interviewing a candidate and discussing their qualifications a motion was made, seconded and carried to appoint Tara Olson as the new director for District #5. Olson will advise the Board of Directors on her decision to accept the appointment by May 1st.

Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 1:19 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President

Sara Schulte, Secretary

Outage Reports

| Date | Time | Township | Members | Cause |
|------|------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|
| 5/1 | 12:35 a.m. | Fairview | 1 | Animal |
| 5/10 | 9:00 p.m. | Fairview | 1 | Member Fire |
| 5/14 | 5:45 p.m. | Marindahl | 1 | Contractor |
| 5/22 | 8:30 p.m. | Fairview | 57 | URD Primary Fault |
| 5/27 | 9:30 a.m. | Pleasant Valley | 7 | Animal |

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.

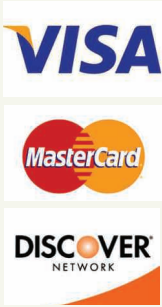
By Phone: Call in your credit/debit card payment.

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.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, 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.

JUNE 20-21

Czech Days

Fun, Music, Entertainment,
Dancing, Czech Food
Tabor, SD
www.taborczechdays.com

JUNE 20-21

Volunteer Fire Dept. Car Show

Fri. Cruise Night, Sat. Car Show
Marion, SD
Brad Schardin
605-413-5653

JUNE 28

A Celebration of Tom Peterson & Bruce Preheim

7 p.m.
Gayville Music Hall
Gayville, SD
605-760-5799

JULY 1-5

106th Annual Black Hills Roundup

Rodeo, Parades, Concerts & Fun
Belle Fourche, SD

JULY 9-12

Aberdeen Senior Games

605-626-7015

JULY 11-12

Frontier Days

White River, SD

JULY 12

39th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K

7 a.m.
Spearfish, SD
605-722-4558

JULY 12

Friendship Days Vendor Market

BBQ Cook Off, Prize Raffle
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
White Lake, SD

JULY 12

Fedora Fire Department Annual Appreciation Day

5 p.m.
Meal, Pie Auction & Bingo
Fedora, SD

JULY 17-20

Danish Days

Daneville Heritage Museum
Viborg, SD
danevilleheritage.com

JULY 19

6th Annual Wakonda

American Legion Tractor Pull

3 p.m. Start
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull
Wakonda, SD

JULY 19-21

Burke Stampede Rodeo

Stampede Arena
Burke, SD
605-840-0824

JULY 25-27

Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape

Tripp Co. Fairgrounds
Winner, SD
605-842-5830

JULY 25-27

Clear Lake Days

Clear Lake, SD
ClearLakeDays.com

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 26

South Dakota Chislic Festival

10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Freeman, SD
www.sdchislicfestival.com

JULY 26

Richmond Lake Association's Annual Pontoon Poker Run

Aberdeen, SD
605-225-0609

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.