

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pick of the Patch

**Pumpkin Patches Offer
Plenty of Reasons to Get
Outside this Fall**

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Lake Oahe**

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Why Are Electric Rates Increasing?



Steve Tilton,
General Manager

One of the most common questions we hear when electric rates increase is simple:

WHY? The answer is not one single expense. The cost of providing reliable electricity has increased across the board, while the amount of energy our members and the broader economy need continues to grow. At Clay-Union Electric, we must make the investments necessary to keep

pace with those changes while continuing to provide safe and reliable service.

First, the demand for electricity is growing. Electricity is becoming increasingly important across every sector—residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial. Members are using more electric equipment and technology, businesses are expanding their electrical needs, and new loads are placing additional demands on the power grid. Meeting that demand requires investment throughout the electric system, from generation and transmission to substations, lines, and distribution equipment.

Second, inflation has increased virtually every cost associated with operating the cooperative. The materials used to build and maintain power lines cost more. Labor, transportation, insurance, equipment, and construction costs have all increased. Clay-Union Electric experiences many of the same inflationary pressures our members experience in their own households and businesses.

There is also an important factor that is unique to the way we serve our members: the much lower density.

Clay-Union Electric maintains approximately 1,200 miles of electric line to serve roughly 3,900 meters. That means we have a significant amount of infrastructure to maintain for each member we serve. Compared with a municipal or investor-owned utility serving a more densely populated area, our cost per meter is considerably higher.

Many of our meters serve seasonal loads such as stock wells, grain sites, and irrigation systems. These services are important to our agricultural members and to the communities we serve, but they can require miles of line and associated equipment to serve a relatively short window of usage.

In other words, the ability to have elbow room between you and your neighbors comes at a cost. Rural electric service requires us to build, maintain, and eventually replace infrastructure across a large geographic area, even when there may be only a handful of meters along many miles of line.

Those costs have to be recovered across the members we serve.

Third, we have an aging electric system that requires ongoing investment. Infrastructure does not last forever. Poles, transformers, wire, substations, vehicles, and other equipment eventually need major maintenance or replacement. Waiting until equipment fails is not a responsible strategy for a utility whose members depend on electricity every minute of every day. Replacing aging equipment proactively helps reduce failures, improve reliability, and keep our crews and members safer.

Technology is another part of that equation. Some of the software used throughout Clay-Union Electric is approaching the end of its supported life. Aging software can create operational, cybersecurity, and compatibility risks. Upgrading these systems requires an investment, but modern technology is increasingly essential for efficiently managing an electric system and serving our members.

Our trucks and fleet are also aging. A line truck is a critical piece of equipment—not simply a vehicle. Our

employees depend on these trucks to maintain power lines, perform system upgrades, and respond to outages, often in difficult weather and challenging conditions. As vehicles age, maintenance costs increase, and the risk of equipment failure increases. Replacing vehicles and specialized equipment when necessary

is an investment in both reliability and employee safety.

So, why are rates increasing? Because the cost of the resources required to provide electricity has increased, demand for electricity is growing, our rural service territory requires more infrastructure per member, and Clay-Union Electric must continue investing in an aging system.

We recognize that rate increases affect our members. That is why we take these decisions seriously. We continually evaluate expenses, prioritize projects, and look for ways to operate efficiently and responsibly. Every investment must have a purpose and provide value to the cooperative and its members.

Above all else, reliability and safety are at the forefront of our operations. Our responsibility is to maintain an electric system that our members can count on—not only today, but for decades to come.

The investments being made are necessary to keep the system strong, replace equipment before it becomes a problem, modernize the technology behind our operations, and prepare for the increasing demand for electricity.

Compared with a municipal or investor-owned utility serving a more densely populated area, our cost per meter is considerably higher

Manager's column continued on page 3

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

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POWER FAILURE – 24-hour service In case of Power Failure Call: 1-800-696-2832 or 624-2673

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer



We may not always see the poles, transformers, software, trucks, and other infrastructure that make reliable electricity possible. But every day, those investments work together to keep the power flowing safely to the homes, farms, and businesses we serve.

At Clay-Union Electric, our goal isn't simply to provide electricity. It's to provide safe, reliable electricity to our members—wherever they call home.

Steve Tilton
General Manager

NOTICE: WATER HEATER LOAD MANAGEMENT RECEIVER REPLACEMENT

As the load management receivers installed over the past two decades reach the end of their expected service life, our electrical department has begun replacing them with updated equipment.

Joey, Josh, or Curt will be making calls in the near future to schedule appointments at a time that is convenient for both you and our staff.

If you know yours is an older receiver and would like to make arrangements during our business hours, please contact us at 605-624-2673. There is no charge to the member to replace the equipment and there is no service interruption during the change out.

Thank you for your cooperation as we complete these important updates.

CALLING AFTER HOURS? Please Have This Information Ready

Our after-hours call center is available to help when our office is closed; however, it is not located within our local service territory. Because the call center may not be familiar with local landmarks, members can help speed up the response process by having a few important details ready when calling in.

Before calling after hours, please be prepared to provide:

- Name on the account
- Address and/or Location #, (location/meter # for irrigation or grain bin sites that may not have a physical address)
- Best phone number to reach you
- Description of the issue or outage
- Whether nearby neighbors are also without power, if known
- Any visible damage, hazards, or other important details
- Confirmation that you have checked your breaker boxes, numbers showing on the meter, and checked the breaker on the meter box

Having this information ready helps ensure the correct location is identified and allows crews to respond as safely and efficiently as possible. Thank you for helping us serve you better after hours.

SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

Fall hunting is a core memory treasured by many in South Dakota. It's a family and friend tradition that should be kept safe. This is your caring reminder to stay safe and enjoy a great hunt this season.

Simple Safety Rules for All Hunters

- Watch for posted warning signs and stay clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land you hunt.
- Be careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be easy to see.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles; energized lines can shock or kill you.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment; they can block lines and create hazards for crews.

Pheasant hunting often takes place in open fields with hedgerows and grassy strips, while dove hunting centers on fast, aerial crossings across agricultural landscapes. In both scenarios, lines may be hidden by trees or tall grass, especially near field edges and canal banks. Staying alert in these transition zones reduces the risk of an accidental encounter with electrical infrastructure.

Practical Rules for Pheasant and Dove Hunts

- Plan ahead: Check maps or ask landowners where lines and equipment are located.
- Keep a safe distance: Stay away from overhead and buried lines near fields and edges.
- Hunt with a partner: A second person can help spot hazards.
- Speak up about hazards: If you see lines or equipment, treat it as a hazard and avoid the area.
- Follow rules: Respect any posted electrical safety warnings or access restrictions.
- Share safety: Tell fellow hunters and guests about these tips.

Why These Safety Tips Matter

Power lines conduct large amounts of electricity and contact with lines or equipment can cause serious injury or death. Maintaining distance, avoiding contact with poles or lines, and not placing gear on equipment are effective practices that protect you, your hunting partners, and the line workers who keep power on.

Your electric cooperative remains committed to safe hunting. We encourage members to stay informed about local electrical safety rules and to know line locations on the lands they hunt. If you encounter hazards, report them right away so they can be addressed. Sharing these safety practices help create a culture of safety that benefits everyone.



The poster features a green camouflage pattern at the top, followed by a yellow and black diagonal hazard stripe. Below this is a target icon with a crosshair. The title "Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters" is in large, bold, white text. Below the title, a paragraph encourages members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. A list of six safety tips follows in white text on a dark background.

Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.



The drawing is a simple line drawing on a light blue background. It shows a person standing on the ground, holding a string that goes up to a diamond-shaped kite. The kite is positioned near a horizontal line representing a power line. Above the power line, there is a yellow sun and some blue scribbles representing clouds. The text "Don't dig or fly kites by wires!" is written in the top left corner of the drawing.

"Don't dig or fly kites by wires!"

Seth Raak, age 7

Seth cautions readers to not dig or fly kites around power lines. That is great advice, Seth! Thank you! Seth's parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Let's Eat CAKE

SWEDISH PANCAKES

Ingredients:

1.5 cups flour, sifted
3 tbsps. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 tbsps. butter, melted

Method

Sift together flour, sugar and salt. Beat in 3 eggs until thick and piled softly. Beat in milk and butter until blended. Lightly grease griddle with butter. For each pancake, spoon about 1 tbsp. of batter on skillet. Cook over medium heat until lightly brown on each side.

Lois J. Larson
Clay-Union Electric

CREAM CHEESE CUPCAKES

Ingredients:

1 box chocolate cake mix, prepared
1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
Dash of salt
1 (6 oz.) package chocolate chips
1 can cream cheese frosting

Method

Mix cake mix according to package directions. Fill cupcake liners 1/2 full. mix the cream cheese with the sugar. Beat in egg and salt, then add chocolate chips. Drop a teaspoonful of cream cheese mixture into each cupcake. Bake as directed on package. Frost with cream cheese frosting when cool.

Elaine Rieck
Southeastern Electric

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tsps. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. espresso powder (optional)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup canola or vegetable oil
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar, packed
4 large eggs, room temperature
1/3 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt, room temperature
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups shredded zucchini (about 3 medium)
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Method

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease two 9x2 inch cake pans (make sure they're at least 2 inches high or one bundt pan). Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, espresso powder (if using) and salt together in a large bowl. In another large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer, beat the oil, granulated sugar, brown sugar, eggs, sour cream, vanilla and zucchini together until combined. Pour dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until completely combined. Beat in chocolate chips. Batter will be thick. Pour batter evenly into cake pans. Bake for around 25-32 minutes for round pans; 45 minutes for bundt pans or 9x13 pan; 18-22 minutes for cupcakes (24-30 cupcakes). To test doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of cake. If it comes out clean, it is done.

Ginny 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.

RECIPE CORRECTION THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsps. flour

Topping (makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups brown sugar
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder
3 cups oatmeal

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy



LOCAL VOICES SHAPE LOCAL SOLUTIONS

October is National Co-op Month

Jackie Williams

jwilliams@clayunionelectric.coop

When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Clay-Union Electric.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: they're led by the people they serve—and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Southeast Farmers Cooperative, SD Wheat Growers and Agtegra, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives—like Clay-Union Electric—provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built by their members, for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit—it's to provide value, meet unique local needs and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes Clay-Union Electric different.

Our story began in 1935 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve. That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money.

Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology or creating new opportunities for local students.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm. The employees answering your questions when you call. The team members volunteering at community events. The board members—your neighbors—who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference, because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's Clay-Union Electric, your local credit union or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible—and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: Dept. of Energy



**You're not a customer.
You're a member-owner.**

That's what it means to belong to a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative. It's about so much more than simply paying your monthly bill and having reliable power at your fingertips. As a member-owner, you have a real voice in how your co-op is run, helping to shape your community's energy future. You also share in the co-op's success through capital credits and local reinvestment right here at home. **That's the power of ownership.**



See what it means to be a member-owner at
YourCoopPower.com





PICK OF THE PATCH

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

South Dakota Pumpkin Patches Offer Plenty of Reasons to Get Outside this Fall

Cooler air, changing leaves and the search for the perfect pumpkin all mark the arrival of the autumn season. Across South Dakota, fall weekends bring families to farms and orchards for corn mazes, apple picking and hayrides.

But putting together a few weeks of fall fun takes months of work behind the scenes.

Pumpkin patches and orchards are preparing to welcome visitors for another season of pumpkins, games and family traditions.

Country Apple Orchard – Harrisburg, S.D.

By the time visitors arrive at Country Apple Orchard near Harrisburg, owner Greg Jones and his crew have already brought in three semi loads of straw bales and about 6,000 bushels of corn.

It's all part of preparing for a fall season

that lasts just a couple of months but requires work throughout the year.

"The property is kind of a full-time, year-round job," Jones said.

The orchard has been around for more than 30 years, and Jones is six years into owning the operation. Since taking over, he has expanded the pumpkin patches and added many of the attractions that now make up the orchard's fall festival.

The season opens Sept. 4 and runs through October, beginning with apple picking in September before pumpkins take center stage in October. Weekend festivities include zip lines, apple cannons, hay bale mazes, corn mazes, corn pits and, new this year, fresh-cut flowers.

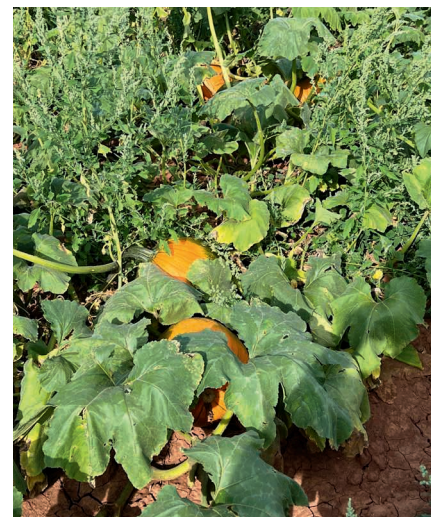
Country Apple Orchard is also a member of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, which helps power the operation through the busy fall season. Keeping everything running takes about

Lucas Hartshorn, owner of Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch, and his family opening the patch for last year's fall season.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

60 seasonal employees. Once the crowds disappear, that workforce drops to Jones and one other worker.

The effort appears to keep families coming back.

"They love coming out and they come out multiple times," Jones said, adding that some families with season passes



Pumpkins grow in the field at Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch near Rapid City.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

return nearly every weekend throughout the season.

Mazing Acres – Yankton, S.D.

What started as a small family project has grown into roughly 35 acres of fall festivities outside Yankton.

Scott and Molly Nedved opened Mazing Acres with their family in 2020. At the time, the idea was to create a small hobby farm that could teach their children the value of hard work while giving the community something new to enjoy.

“It’s grown more than we thought it would,” Molly laughed.

Today, Mazing Acres, a member of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, includes six acres of pumpkins, a five-acre corn maze, a flower patch and several attractions. Visitors can take a hayrack ride, watch pig races, play in the corn pit or try the apple cannons.

The corn maze, sponsored by First Dakota National Bank, changes design each year. For 2026, the design celebrates the nation’s 250th anniversary.

Although the festival lasts only several weekends, planning starts almost as soon as the previous season ends. The family reviews what worked, attends industry



A family poses for a photo in the giant pumpkin chair at Mazing Acres.

Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

conferences and selects the next year’s pumpkin varieties in late fall. By August, Scott said preparing the farm becomes “an all-day affair every day until we open.”

Visitors will notice a few changes this year. Saturday hours are being extended until 8 p.m., allowing families to experience the farm after dark, and a new tiny-town area will feature themed playhouses for younger children.

Mazing Acres opens Sept. 19 and runs through Halloween.

“We want to be something for every age,” Molly said. “Not just for the kids.”

Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch – Rapid City, S.D.

At Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch south of Rapid City, the Hartshorn family’s fall tradition started in 2013 with pumpkins planted by hand.

Since then, owner Lucas Hartshorn said the patch has grown to about 11 acres.

Hartshorn started the pumpkin patch with his parents, Lyle and Donna, after his father retired. The family wanted a way to keep farming while creating an event they could enjoy with their children.

“We were looking for something to do with the kids in the fall,” Hartshorn said.

At the time, pumpkin patches were harder to find around Rapid City. After

visiting one themselves, the family decided they could create a similar experience on their own farm.

Each year brought something new. Planting pumpkins by hand eventually gave way to a planter, while the patch grew to include a petting zoo, bounce houses, wagon rides, a sandbox and other activities.

Lil’ Harvester’s, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, also opens during the week for school field trips, where students get a closer look at agriculture. Hartshorn said demonstrations may focus on pumpkins or the differences between sweet corn, field corn and popcorn, including how each is grown. For Hartshorn, that mix of farming, education and family time remains at the heart of the patch.

“They get to come out to the farm and learn something,” Hartshorn said.

Across South Dakota, there are several more pumpkin patches and fall festivities similar to those put on by Country Apple Orchard, Mazing Acres and Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch. Whether it’s a small hobby farm or a dedicated agritourism operation, each one offers its own take on fall traditions that continue to draw families back year after year.



Visitors of all ages can find something to enjoy at Mazing Acres near Yankton, including the farm’s giant slides.

Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDIT CHECKS

The following list of people have capital credit checks that were undeliverable, (the first half appeared in last month's Sparks.)

If you know someone on this list, please have them contact us at 605-624-2673.

The checks were issued in October 2025 and represent capital credits allocated for the year 1996. Thank you for your assistance in locating these members. For the full list visit <https://clayunionelectric.coop/capital-credits>

MCELWEE, DAVID	MYRON, GORDON S	ORR, FLORENCE	POST, OREN
MCGUIRE, SHARON	MYRON, KEVIN	ORR, ROBERT D.	PRUSHA, JIM
MCHENRY, MARY	MYRTLE JACKSON	ORR, TOM/ANDREA	PUETZ, AMY
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MEIER, LARRY J	NELSON FERWERDA, MARY	OTTMAR, A D	QUAD STATE TOWERS & COMM.,
MELLEM, SHARON	NELSON, CHAD/BETH	OUELLETTE, LOREN	RADIGAN, TODD
MERKWAN, DARYL	NELSON, JEROME	OURS LAND, GEORGE	RAHN, MARGARET
MERKWAN, JENNIFER	NELSON, JILL	OURS LAND, JOHN	RAINBOW DAYCARE
MERRIGAN, RICHARD	NELSON, JOHN	OWENS, ROBERT A	RAINEY, BILL
MERRYMAN, STEVE	NELSON, PAUL/BARB	PACKARD, ROBERT A	RAMIREZ, TONY
MERSCH, FRED	NELSON, ROBERT K	PAMIDA INC. #03241	RAND, SCOTT
METHODIST CHURCH	NELSON, SCOTT/BETHA	PATTEN, PAMELA	RANNEY, WM
MIDCONTINENT BROADCASTING	NELSON-STOVER, CHERYL	PAULSON, ALBERT MRS	RARRAT, FRED
MIKELSON, JAMES/GARY	NESS, JAMES	PAULSON, ANTON	RASCHE, MIKE/ANN
MIKKELSON, DARLYENE	NEUHARTH, RANDY	PAULSON, BARB	RASMUSSEN, SCOTT
MILES, MICHELLE	NICHOL, DAVID	PEACOCK, SANDY	RATCLIFF, LYN
MILLER, CHARLES/BEVERLY	NICHOLLS, RON/NANCY	PEAKE, VICTOR L	RAY, ROBERT
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MODEREGGER, RANDY	NORWEST MORTGAGE #1532594	PETERSON FAMILY FARM	REPP, DONALD
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MOEN, TERRY/LEANN	NU HOME	PETERSON, GORDON	RESCH, JOHN/STACIA
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MONTAGNE, PETE	ODENS, ELERI	PETERSON, JOHN D	RICKETT, MATTHEW
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MORTENSON, DANIEL C/BECKY	OLSON, LINDA	PIERCE, MARK/MARILYN	ROSENBAUM, ARVIN
MOSBERGER, ROBERT/MARLENE	OLSON, MARVIN C.	PINKELMAN, REINOLD	ROSENSTEIN, DAVID
MOSER, VAN	OLSON, ROLF	PLAATJE, DUANE	ROSS, ANGELA
MOULTON, PAT/DARLYS	OLSON, STEVE	PLEASANT VALLEY HALL	ROSS, VIRGINIA
MULHERON, GARRY	O'MALLEY-SAFI, STAR	POKORNEY, JANICE	ROUGHT, TOM/LISA
MURPHY, SHANE/JILL	O'NEAL, STEPHANIE	POKORNEY, SUSAN	ROUPE, DAVID
MURRAY, GERALD J	OPDAHL, THOMAS	PORTILLO, MICHAEL	RUHAAK, WILLIAM

RUSSO, DOROTHY	SKIBA, HARRY/TERRY	SUDLOW, ADELE	WARNOCK, DAVID
RYKEN, GLADYS E	SKJONBERG, RENAE	SUHR, MIKE JR	WATERS, DARYL
SAGE, JULIE	SKONHOVD, MERRILL	SULLIVAN, SUZETTE	WATKINS, ROBERT
SAHLSTROM, KEVIN/BETSY	SKONHOVD, TONY/TERESA	SUMNER, JACK	WEATHER MASTER SYSTEMS
SAILORS, MATT	SMILSKY, DAVID/SHELLEY	SUPERCYNSKI, STEVE	WEBER, JED
SALAZAR, DIEGO	SMITH, LORI	SVANDA, GREG/JEANNE	WEGHER, A.J.
SALEM ACRES, INC	SMITH, MISTY	SWANSON, KERRY/CARMEN	WEILAND, PAM
SALO, MARILYN	SMITH, MISTY	SWANSON, LINDA/LANCE	WELCHEL, TOM
SAMPSON, JOSHUA	SMITH, RICHARD	SWENSEN, CHRISTINE	WERMES, MARTIN/NANCY
SANDS, NELLY	SNOW, KENNETH	SWENSEN, LA VONNE	WESTERN WIRELESS
SANGSTER, SCOT	SOLOMON, ROBERT L	SWIER, LEON	CORP.-VER.CEL
SANOW, PAUL	SONGSTAD, MARK	TAGGART, GLENN	WESTRE, NORMAN
SASSER, SUE LYNN	SOULEK, LARRY	TAGGART, WALLY	WEYANT, RICK/CHRISTINE
SASSMAN, MICHAEL/KATHLEEN	SOUTH DAKOTA MARINA	TALLMON-RECTOR, CHRISTINA	WEYGINT, TIFFANY
SATTLER, MIKE/CHELLE	SPADER, DEAN/FIX, VIKKI	TAYLOR, JULIE	WHALEY, MITCH
SAXEN, BARRY/JODIE	SPARKS, GEORGE	TAYLOR, TOM	WHEELER, CLAY
SCHAEFBAUER, SCOTT	SPARKS, LAWRENCE	TERRELL, MARY	WHEELER, SYLVIA
SCHEER, CHERYL	SPAUGH, KURT A	THIMMING, TISHA/ DUBOIS, GARY JR	WHERRY, DAVID
SCHIEDEL, DAN	SPECK, BILL	THOENE, NANCY	WHIRLWIND SOLIDER, TRAVIS
SCHMID, DEB	SPENCER, AL	THOMPSON, CHARLES R. II	WIEDENMEYER, JAKE
SCHMIDT, CHERYL	SPENCER, JULIAN/KRISTY	THOMPSON, MILDRED	WIEDOW, GALE A/HORTON, LAURA
SCHMIDT, EARL	SPENCER, MARK	TIELKE, LORI	WIESELER, ARSENIUS
SCHMIDT, ERNEST	SPENCER, WM	TORNBERG, RANDY	WILD BILL'S (HAY JUDES)
SCHMIDT, MERLE/HOLLI	SPINK CAFE	TREDWAY, STEVE	WILLIAMS, CHERYL
SCHMITT, BEVERLY	SPINK CAFE & STORE	TRI STATE RADIO	WILLIAMS, FLOYD/KARA
SCHNEIDER, JOHN P.	SPINK OIL	TRISLER, EARL/LINDA	WILLIAMS, MICHAEL
SCHNEIDER, TERRY	SPLITT, JUDY	TRUCK TOWNE CAFE	WILLIAMS, ROBERT
SCHRAM, PETER	STANLEY, PATRICIA	TUCKER, JIM	WILLIAMS, TODD/CAROL
SCHRODER, DOTTIE	STARK, GERALD	TURNER WEST	WINCKLER, JOE WAYNE
SCHUCHARDT, MARY	STARKEY, CRYSTAL	TURNER, LAURA MRS	WINCKLER, KENNETH
SCHULTES, JEREMY	STATLER, DARWIN/TERESA	TWO BULLS, MARTY	WINDER, ALAN
SCHULZ, LAYNE D	STEEVER, LISA	UHING, JEAN	WINEGAR, MARK
SCOTT, MICHELLE	STEFFEN, DANIEL/MELONIE	UNDERBERG, PATRICIA	WINSTEAD, DOUG/JENNY
SCOTT, SHIRLENE K	STEFFEN, JACKIE	US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY	WITHEM, RANDY
SEALEY, FRED	STEFFEN, JOSEPH	UTICA LUMBER CO.	WIXON, DANIEL
SEARLES, JEFF	STEINBERG, MARTY	VANECEK, DIANNE M	WIXON, DARIN
SEARS, DAVID	STEINMETZ, HAROLD	VENNARD, DELMER	WOLD, ERIC W.
SEINER, DON F/PATRICIA	STENSAAS, RICHARD	VENNARD, WILLARD	WORTMAN, BRIAN
SELWYN, STEPHANIE	STENSAAS, ROGER/GARY	VIROMENT ETHANOL & PROTEIN	WUBBENA, DAN
SENIOR CITIZENS OF WAKONDA	STEVENS, CLARENCE/BERNICE	VOGEL, THOMAS	YANKTON CABLE TV
SEVERIN, TERRY	STEWART APTS-GAYVILLE	VOIGT, DEBRA	YMKER, LARRY
SEVERSON, BEN	STEWART, GLORIA	VOLIN COMMUNITY CAFE	YONKER, ED
SEVERSON, MAURICE	STIEFEL, RICK/BETH	VOSS, SANDRA	YOUNG, RICHARD
SEWARD, JIM/CARI	STIMPSON, JAY	VOSS, SHANE	YUN, HARRIET
SEWELL, TRE/HAWLEY, SABRINA	STOLZ, KEVIN	WADE, WALTER	ZIMMERMAN GUNDERSON, JULIE
SHANKER, DONALD	STOPFER, CATHY	WAGNER, MARK	ZIMMERMAN, JAY
SHEDD, MIKE	STORM, R L	WAHL, EDDIE/JENNIFER	ZIMMERMAN, LARRY
SHELLENBERGER, SHARON	STORMO, ROSALYN W	WAHLERT, RANDY/HELEN	ZIMMERMAN, RONALD G
SHUTT, DAN	STRAATMEYER, LORI	WALKER, DAVID	ZURCHER, MYRON
SICARD, KAREN	STRATMAN, ED/ROSE	WALKER, JENNIFER	ZURN HATCHERY
SILVER DOLLAR SALOON	STRATTON, JEFF/KAYLA	WALLACE, STEPHANIE	
SIMMONS, JOHN	STREET, ERIC D	WALZ, DAVID	
SIMONSON, TRENT	STUCKY, KEN JR	WALZ, JEFF	
SIZEMORE, LEONE	STUCKY, ROBERT	WARDLOW, LEE/FREDA	
	STYLES, MARK		



LOST BENEATH OAHE

The Rise, Fall and Disappearance of a South Dakota Ghost Town

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Beneath the waves of Lake Oahe lies more than dead trees and walleye. Just below the surface near Akaska sit the remnants of LeBeau, an early 1900s railroad town once filled with immense promise and prosperity, whose story is worthy of its own Wild West feature film.

For years, Caroline Thorsen has collected the history of her great-grandfather, Antoine Le Beau, and the town that bore his name. Through Thorsen's collection and research by railroad historian Don Hofsommer in "A Promise Broken: LeBeau and the Railroad," we can dive beneath the waters of Lake Oahe and dredge up the story of LeBeau's dramatic rise and fall.

A French Fur Trader

The story of the ghost town of LeBeau begins with Antoine Le Beau Sr., a French fur trader whose journey in the mid-1800s took him from France to Quebec, Canada, then to St. Louis, Missouri and eventually up the Missouri River to what is now South Dakota.

"As I unfortunately did not know [Antoine], I hope he is remembered as being a brave gentleman who crossed the ocean from France to come to America and eventually become friends with the Native Americans, married in Native Tradition," said Thorsen, Le Beau's great-granddaughter.

The woman Antoine married was Mary Little Thunder, a member of the Two Kettle Band of Sioux. Antoine himself was later one of several Frenchmen adopted

into the Sioux Tribe at a Great Sioux Council, where he was given the name "Ogless," or "Red Shirt."

Le Beau worked with the American Fur Company before establishing a trading post along the Missouri River near present-day Akaska. The post became the foundation of a small town that would eventually bear his name and become a brief, yet bright, gateway to the West.

The Railroad

By the time the railroad arrived, Antoine Le Beau Sr. was gone, but the town was quickly gaining the reputation of a small metropolis. In 1907, the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M&StL) reached LeBeau, connecting the small Missouri River settlement to Watertown and markets farther east.

"As LeBeau prospered, so did the M&StL's westernmost extension; as LeBeau withered, so did its railroad," Hofsommer writes.

Cattle companies from Texas had taken notice of both LeBeau and the grasslands west of the Missouri. Once they learned cattle thrived west of the river, they began moving large herds into the region. Through its railroad, LeBeau offered those ranchers a new route to market.

The next trick was getting the cattle across the river. On the west side of the Missouri, large holding pens could accommodate as many as 3,500 animals. From there, cattle crossed the river aboard the Scotty Philip, a steam-powered ferry. Once across, they could be loaded directly onto eastbound rail cars.

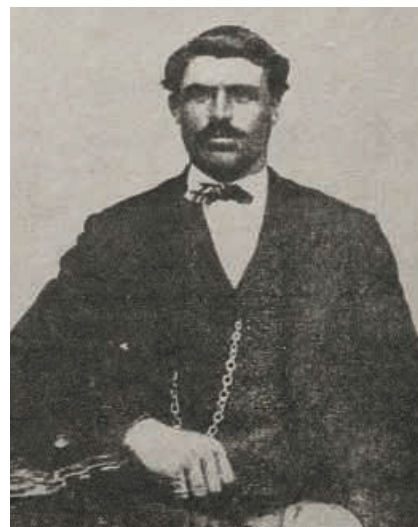
The mouth of Swan Creek on Lake Oahe where the ghost town of LeBeau resides under the waves. *Photo by Frank Turner*

In 1908, roughly 24,000 cattle passed through LeBeau on their way to and from the West River ranges, representing about \$1 million in livestock at the time. The feat helped cement the town's place as a major cattle-shipping point on the Missouri.

A Bustling Town

By the end of the season, LeBeau featured two banks, a newspaper, a drugstore, a general store and a local saloon. The growing town also boasted two lumberyards, a grain elevator and a livery, along with prominent businesses like the Idle Hour billiard and pool parlor, the Hotel LeBeau and Arcade Hotel. For entertainment, residents could even catch a show at Zimmer's Opera House.

As the town grew, M&StL officials planned to continue the rail line west of the



French fur trapper Antoine Le Beau Sr.
Photo submitted by Caroline Thorsen

Missouri by building a bridge across the Missouri, hinting at a long expansion all the way to the West Coast. The excitement only reinforced the idea that LeBeau was destined to become the gate to the west.

The buzz captured the attention of Murdo MacKenzie, general manager of the Matador Land and Cattle Company, and his wealthy son, Dode. Described as a likable and fine young man – while sober – Dode moved to LeBeau in his early 20s to oversee Matador's South Dakota operations.

A Questionable Killing

At the end of the 1909 shipping season, Dode MacKenzie began frequenting LeBeau's saloons. On Dec. 11, he was shot and killed by Bud Stephens, who was tending the bar that morning at Phil DuFran's saloon.

Local accounts of what happened that day – and of Dode MacKenzie's character – differ greatly. One local official described MacKenzie as a stand-up individual, while another local woman said he was known to shoot behind the heels of women in the town when "spirits took him."

Exactly what happened on Dec. 11 will never be known, but according to the version later presented by Stephens' defense at trial, MacKenzie became furious when Stephens failed to hear him order a drink. Rebuffed, MacKenzie crossed the street to purchase what he believed were



The paddle-wheeler Scotty Philip loads cattle at LeBeau, S.D., to be fattened on grasslands west of the Missouri River. For about three years, LeBeau was one of the Northwest's most important cattle-shipping towns.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society

.45-caliber shells, loaded his gun, walked back, pointed it at Stephens and pulled the trigger twice. As the story goes, MacKenzie had accidentally purchased .38-caliber shells, which failed to fire and instead plopped onto the floor. It was then that Stephens reached for his gun and began firing, killing the young MacKenzie.

A Dying Town

The trial resulted in Stephens' acquittal, drawing the ire of Dode MacKenzie's father and the Matador Cattle Company. The company effectively boycotted LeBeau, and no Matador cattle ever entered the town again.

Within months of the trial, a suspicious fire made matters worse. Although fires weren't uncommon in the Wild West, townsfolk discovered that the fire hose, telephone and telegraph lines had all been cut prior to the fire. No arsonist was ever caught.

The bad luck didn't stop there. A competing rail line to the north completed a bridge across the Missouri at Mobridge, undercutting LeBeau's stream of West River cattle. By 1924, M&StL abandoned the town, tearing out its segment of rail line. Within a year, the post office closed.

Beneath Lake Oahe

LeBeau had been a ghost town for decades when Lake Oahe came for what was left.

Construction of Oahe Dam near Pierre began in 1948 as part of a massive federal effort to control flooding and generate hydroelectric power along the Missouri River. In August 1958, the river was closed at the dam and the newly created reservoir began to fill.

As the water rose, it eventually covered the old LeBeau townsite near the mouth of Swan Creek. The empty foundations, cellar holes and remnants of the once-bustling railroad town disappeared beneath Lake Oahe. Unlike most ghost towns in South Dakota that faded away with time, LeBeau vanished beneath the Missouri.



A crowd gathers around a band near the railroad in LeBeau, S.D., with the depot and Missouri River visible in the distance. About a year after this photo was taken, the town installed 10-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Main Street.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society.

Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

JULY 2025 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on July 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, Sara Schulte and Glen Gilbertson. The board seat for District #5 is vacant. Dave Stuart, Attorney, and attending staff members included Steve Tilton, Beth Bottolfson, Alan Gauer and Jackie Williams.

ACTION TAKEN:

- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the agenda as presented.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the June Board Meeting held on 6/29/26, with the correction that the July Board Meeting date be changed from July 28 to July 27.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the June executive session held on 6/29/26.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve new members, refunds and credit deposits as presented.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Early Retirement of Capital Credits as presented.

Management Reports:

Manager's Report - Manager Tilton discussed the following activities:

- **August Board Meeting** – The date of August 21st, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.
 - **East River Manager's Meeting** – GM Tilton attended a meeting in Sioux Falls with discussions regarding:
 - Basin's Annual Meeting
 - Cooperative located in Nebraska wishes to leave Tri-State and become a member of Basin.
 - East River's wholesale power cost increase from Basin for 2027.
 - **In Office Visitors** –
 - VCDC, Jim Peterson
 - County Commissioner, Travis Mockler
 - Clay Rural Water, Manager, Steve Muilenburg
 - **Public Utilities Commission** – meeting by phone to discuss the City of Vermillion/Clay-Union service territory exchange.
 - **Fuel Tank Area** – The concrete is holding standing water and the resolutions to fix the issue.
 - **Basin Electric Annual Meeting (Action)** - A motion was made, seconded and approved to nominate Tom Larsen as the delegate and Steve Tilton as the alternate for the Basin Annual Meeting held in ND, August 11-13.
- Administrative Report** – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:
- Billing & Customer Service

- 2025 990 Form
- SD003 Executive Summary
- SD003 KRTA
- CoBank Documents (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and approved to remove John Gors, Interim Manager, and add Steven Tilton, General Manager, to online banking.
- Loan Fund Transfer Ratification – (ACTION ITEM) – A motion, seconded, and approved to ratify the transfer of \$500,000 from the Construction Fund to the General Funds account.
- Financials for June 2026

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

Operations Report – Operations Manager Gauer reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Monthly department work summary
- New Service
- Retired Services
- June Outage Report
- Damage to Clay-Union
- 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
- Irrigation Sales 2020-2026
- kWh Sales Report
- Large Power
- Line Loss
- Operating Statement
- Power Bill
- Summary of Purchased Power
- Wiring Income & Expense

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

Legal Report – David Stuart, Legal Counsel, attended a legal seminar on behalf of Clay-Union Electric and reported on the following subjects:

- Fire Mitigation
- SDSU Program pertaining to OSHA rules
- Capital Credit Bylaws

Strategic Planning – 2025 Strategic Plan Review

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

Cyber Security – The June 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 August 2026 calendar.

Executive Session – The board did not hold an executive session.

Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President

Sara Schulte, Secretary

DON'T GET OUT

If your machinery, vehicle or other equipment makes contact with a power line, guy wire or electrical box, **DO NOT** get out of your cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground.

To avoid becoming electrocuted:

- Call 9-1-1 and wait for us to arrive to cut the power.
- Wait to exit your cab until the power is de-energized.

In rare cases you may need to exit your cab due to smoke or fire. **If you must get out:**

- Make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle.
- Hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop away.

For more information visit SafeElectricity.org.



SafeElectricity.org

Outage Reports

Cause	Date	Time	Township	Members
Unknown	8/4/2026	9:30 a.m.	Fairview	6
Tree	8/6/2026	6:00 p.m.	Fairview	1
Animal	8/24/2026	12 p.m.	Gayville	41

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

	July 2026	Year To Date
Total Revenue	\$1,286,673	\$6,832,582
Wholesale Power Costs.....	\$682,382	\$3,978,452
Operating Expenses	\$196,433	\$1,397,312
Total Margins	\$213,632	\$172,628
KwH's Purchased.....	9,626,164	53,646,853
Members Billed		3,916
Miles of Line		1,195
Members per mile		3.28

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest and depreciation account for 79% of Total Cost of Service

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.

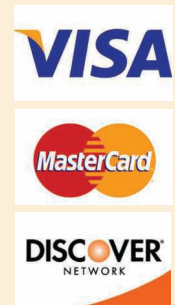
By Mail: Send check or money order with your payment slip.

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.





OCT. 31
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Yankton, SD
www.harvesthalloween.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.

OCT. 2-3
Public Ghost Investigation
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

OCT. 3
Fall Harvest Farmers Market
 9 a.m.
 Centennial Park
 Hot Springs, SD

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
 Sioux Falls, SD

OCT. 4
St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Swiss Steak 12-1:30 p.m.
 Hoven, SD

OCT. 4
Grace Lutheran Church & Little Brown Church Fundraiser
 Meal: 12-1:30 p.m. CDT
 Auction: 2 p.m. CDT
 Grace Lutheran Church
 Hayes, SD
 605-567-3559

OCT. 9-11
S.D. Showdown Truck Show
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Viborg, SD
 605-940-0087

OCT. 14
Soup & Pie Day & Country Store
 4 p.m.-7 p.m.
 First Baptist Church
 105 N. State St.
 Viborg, SD

OCT. 17
Faulkton Area Arts Council Craft Fair
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Faulkton School
 Faulkton, SD
 605-380-8444

OCT. 17
Fabricadabra
 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Dakota Prairie Quilt Guild
 NFAA Easton Yankton
 Archery Center
 Yankton, SD
 605-660-1612

OCT. 23
Monster Mash
 5-8 p.m.
 Box Elder Events Center
 Free Event
 Box Elder, SD
 605-390-9341

OCT. 23
A Night of Laughter & Music
 6 p.m.
 American Legion Post 15
 Sioux Falls, SD
 Tickets & Info: 605-336-3470

OCT. 24
Women of Today Craft Fair
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 West Central Becker Center
 Hartford, SD
 605-359-2049

OCT. 24
United Church of Christ's Annual Soup & Sweets Dinner
 4-7 p.m.
 105 N 2nd St.
 Hermosa, SD
 605-503-0843

OCT. 31
Treat Street
 Main Street
 Milbank, SD

NOV. 7
Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Dakota Christian School
 Corsica, SD

NOV. 14-15
Zonta Holiday Craft & Vendor Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Ramkota Hotel
 Pierre, 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.