

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Bringing the Light

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Manager's Column

As we near year-end and prepare for the holidays, Lake Region Electric is busy planning for next year. Every fall, a good amount of time is spent on the annual budget. During this process we delve deeply into the expenditures of the past year, and we do our best to accurately project the cost of operating your cooperative in the coming year.

The biggest expense for Lake Region Electric is the cost of purchasing the power that we need to provide reliable electricity to all of our members when they need it. In 2022 purchased power accounted for 71% of our total expenses, about 12 and a half million dollars. We know that our cost of power will increase in the coming years because our power providers, Basin Electric and East River Electric, are expected to have rate increases based on their budget projections due to the increased costs associated with power generation, the WAPA draught adder and EPA guidelines and restrictions.

Just as your groceries, phone bills and everything else are going up, so are the bills at Lake Region. We have a strong labor force with highly skilled employees. The employees of Lake Region are committed to serving our members and we need to take care of them so that they can continue to take care of you. As inflation increases and cost of living goes up, the amount Lake

Region pays to keep our work force goes up too. Every industry has been affected by the supply chain issues and shortages, material costs have increased ranging over 30% over the past few years, increasing the cost of repair and maintenance of our lines and equipment. I know when I fill up at the pump, my checkbook cries a little, so filling up the big trucks at Lake Region costs more every time we turn around. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cost of unleaded regular gasoline has increased over a dollar per gallon in the past 5 years: from \$2.87 per gallon in September 2018 to \$3.99 per gallon in September 2023, not to mention a high of \$5.06 per gallon in June 2022.

Other economic factors that contribute to the financial well-being of your cooperative are long term debt, tax expenses, insurance, and a long list of things necessary to keep things operating on a daily basis. One financial factor that affects the budget at Lake Region is our TIER (Times Interest Earned Ratio). A minimum ratio must be maintained to ensure Lake Region's ability to pay back debt. Margins (revenue less costs) are one of the pieces that affects TIER, therefore we must maintain an adequate margin level to meet our ratio. As a cooperative, these margins are returned to members in the future, when financial stability allows.

There is so much to take into consideration when we are planning our annual budget. The staff and directors are working diligently to control our expenses and keep your rates competitive so that your cooperative runs smoothly in a fiscally responsible manner.

Despite rising costs for pretty much everything, Lake Region has been able to maintain rates over the past 9 years; we have not had a rate increase since 2014! Following a Cost-of-Service study in 2019, we did have a mid-year rate adjustment which did not increase rates but helped us do some restructuring so that our members were assigned to the correct rate class and that the rates were spread fairly amongst the cooperative members.

Everything going on in the world affects our economy and impacts your electric cooperative. Eventually, those costs are going to affect our consumers. As we consider the budget and the direction the world is heading, a rate increase will be coming. We are proud that we've been able to keep rates flat for the past 9 years. We know that increases to your electric bill can affect your life and we take this into consideration when reviewing the cost of service and likely rate increases.

God Bless,
Tim McIntyre





Welcome to our new members!

Joseph & Nedezhda Henning
 Hangar 8 Spray Service
 Rasmussen Properties LLC
 Jason & Christina McComsey
 Mike & Robin Jaspers
 Marlene Kann

Landen Nelson & Desiree O'Farrell
 Bessler Farms
 Molly Erdmann
 Layne & Carmen Stewart
 Cullen Dagartz
 Todd Brown

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(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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Be Prepared for Winter Driving

Prepare Your Car for Winter

In addition to annual maintenance, here are some tips to winterize your car:

- Test your battery; battery power drops as the temperature drops
- Make sure the cooling system is in good working order
- Have winter tires with a deeper, more flexible tread put on your car
- If using all-season tires, check the tread and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch
- Check the tire pressure; tire pressure drops as the temperature drops
- Check your wiper blades and replace if needed
- Add wiper fluid rated for -30 degrees
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze

Remember to keep your car's emergency preparedness kit fully stocked, too.

Before You Start Out

- Clean your car's external camera lenses and side mirrors
- Remove dirt, ice and snow from sensors to allow the assistive-driving features, like automatic emergency braking, to work
- In frigid weather, you may want to warm up the car before you drive
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in your garage – even with the garage door up
- If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm; if you must travel, share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave

How to Avoid a Crash

AAA offers the following driving tips:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions
- Steer in the direction of a skid, so when your wheels regain traction, you don't have to overcorrect to stay in your lane
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds
- If possible, don't stop when going uphill

If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road to a safe place and do not drive until conditions improve.

Avoid pulling off onto the shoulder unless it is an absolute emergency. Limited visibility means other vehicles can't see yours on the shoulder.

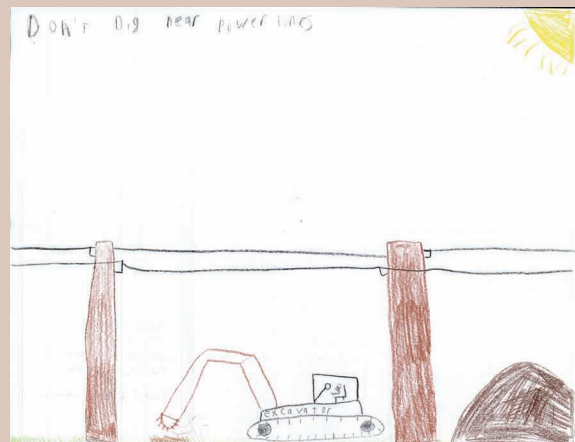
Know Your Car's Capabilities

My Car Does What? is a national campaign to help educate drivers about the safety features built into vehicles. Search for your car and find out what safety features are already built in.

Traction control is now standard on most new vehicles. This function helps your vehicle gain traction on snowy, icy or wet surfaces, particularly when accelerating from a stopped or slowed position, or when trying to make it up a slippery hill.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) helps you steer in emergencies by restoring traction to your tires and is standard on most new vehicles. ABS may vibrate or pulse when engaged. This is normal. Continue to press and hold pressure to the brake pedal.

Remember, you are your car's best safety feature. Take precautions to ensure you arrive safely at your destination. If you become stranded in an unfamiliar area, do not leave your car. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud or objects.



Don't Dig Near Power Lines

Hayes Schomp, Age 10

Hayes Schomp cautions people to be careful where they dig. Hayes is the son of Thad and Devan Schomp from Eklton, S.D., members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES

OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:

1 qt. medium/large oysters
1 medium onion (diced)
2 qts. half and half
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 lb. real butter (no cheating here)
3 tbsps. Worcestershire Sauce

Method

Before you know it, Christmas Eve will be here so get ready the traditional Oyster Stew. In a saucepan, saute onions and oysters with the butter. Simmer untill the oysters crinkle. In a crock pot, add half and half, cream of mushroom soup, and Worcestershire Sauce. Then, add the oysters, onion and butter. Season to taste with fresh ground black pepper and salt. Simmer for six hours on low heat (high heat will curdle the milk). Serve with oyster crackers.

Kari Larson- Reder
Warner, S.D.

BETTER THAN CANDY PIE

Ingredients:

1 nine in. chocolate ready crust
1 cup sliced bananas
1/4 cup chopped, dry roasted peanuts
1 small pkg. instant butterscotch pudding
2/3 cup dry milk
1 1/4 cups water
2 tbsps. peanut butter
3/4 cup whipped topping
2 chocolate graham crackers, chopped

Method

Mix together dry milk, pudding, and water with wire whisk. Add peanut butter. Cover bottom of pie crust with bananas. Spread pudding mixture over bananas. Spread whipped topping next. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and chopped graham crackers.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CHRISTMAS CRACK BARK

Ingredients:

1 sleeve saltine crackers, (about 35 crackers)
1 cup unsalted butter
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1/8 tsp. sea salt
1 1/2 tps. pure vanilla extract
1 pkg. (10 - 12 oz.) chocolate chips, semi-sweet, milk or dark chocolate

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Spray lightly with no-stick cooking spray. Arrange crackers on baking sheet in single layer so that the edges almost touch. Heat butter and brown sugar in two-quart saucepan on medium heat. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring frequently. Simmer two to three minutes. Remove from heat; stir in salt and vanilla. Pour caramel sauce over crackers and spread to evenly coat crackers. Bake six minutes. Remove pan from oven. Sprinkle chocolate chips over caramel layer. Let stand five minutes. Spread chocolate chips into an even layer on top of caramel. Refrigerate 2 hours or freeze 30 to 45 minutes or until firm. Break or cut into pieces to serve. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to one week.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



Scholar of the Week: Chayse Shoemaker

When Chayse Shoemaker was asked what made him choose to take the high road and rise above so many his age, he contemplated; trying to find a way to answer a question that he didn't really have an answer to. Chayse didn't consider it as making a choice; he was just being himself. Webster Area Superintendent, Jim Block, said "I can answer that! Chayse doesn't know any other way. He only knows how to take the high road and to be the best at everything he does."

Chayse has always been dedicated to his studies; making the honor roll all semesters of his high school career, earning his academic letter. He also participates in many activities: he is the vice-president of Webster National Honor Society, president of the Robotics club and a member of FFA. Chayse can be seen and heard at most athletic events, operating the Bearcats TV system and announcing some games. Outside of school, he is involved in 4-H and the Day County Trailblazers Club. You would think with all of the activities Chayse is involved in that he wouldn't have time for much else, but he's a very busy young man! Chayse started making crafts at a young age to raise money for charity. He

has elevated his crafting game to woodworking; most recently, he built three live-edge tables for a restaurant in Webster. If Chayse was to give advice to himself in 5th grade, he would tell young Chayse, "work hard in whatever you choose to pursue because you might be surprised where you'll end up." After high school Chayse plans on attending Lake Area Technical College then returning to help raise cattle on his family's farm west of Webster.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now and your local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors the region's accomplished high school students. Chayse received \$250 from Lake Region Electric and was featured on Dakota News Now during the second week of November. As a weekly winner, he is eligible to receive one of three scholarships that are given away at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.

Chayse is the son of Lake Region Electric member-owners Joel and Alyssa Shoemaker. He was nominated for this honor by Webster Area High School Counselor, Chelsea Larson.

Miss South Dakota

Shannon Marvel

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Six years ago, Miranda Orth O'Bryan had just finished her first year at South Dakota State University when she set her eyes on the Miss South Dakota crown.

Her good friend and reigning Miss SDSU at the time – Miranda Mack – had just been crowned Miss South Dakota 2017.

It inspired her to throw her own hat into the ring.

Soon after, O'Bryan realized it was so much more than a beauty pageant.

"The moment that I set foot on my first local competition stage I was hooked," O'Bryan said.

"I didn't even realize at that point what it would mean to be Miss South Dakota, and over the years I realized how impactful it is to have that platform."

O'Bryan was crowned Miss South Dakota 2023 last June.

According to the organization's website, the Miss America opportunity has evolved over the years to better serve the women involved in the program and the communities in which they live.

"Throughout the competition and in interviews, delegates have the opportunity to connect with the judges, showcase their community service initiatives, and demonstrate how they are uniquely qualified for the exciting 365-day opportunity of being Miss America," the website reads.

The 25-year-old Martin native knows a thing or two about community leadership and the importance of community service.

That's because she grew up in a rural co-op family.

Her grandpa is Wayne Sterkel, who served as general manager for Lacreek Electric Association, Inc. from 1982 through 2017.

Her membership with the cooperative began before she was even born.

According to O'Bryan, her mother's baby shower celebration was hosted right in the co-op's conference room.

Her parents, Mikaela and Chris O'Bryan, would gather at the co-op's headquarters in Martin for many special occasions

throughout the years.

"We'd go to the annual meeting every year. That's what built me up and gave me opportunity," O'Bryan said. "It's important. A lot of people may not understand. They say, 'Why they'd ever need to go to a rural electric cooperative meeting?' But that's your opportunity to connect with the people who keep your lights on and your community."

O'Bryan was also in the group of high school students who visited Washington, D.C. through the South Dakota Rural Electric Youth Tour. She also won a \$1,000 scholarship to attend South Dakota State University through the Lacreek Electric scholarship program.

"Without seeing that those opportunities were there, I would've never thought about pursuing greater ones down the road," O'Bryan said.

Growing up, O'Bryan was heavily supported by the community services within the small, rural community of Bennett County, especially the public library.

O'Bryan said her mother had her at a young age and during her childhood, money was tight.

She fondly recalls spending countless hours at the public library in Martin with her grandmother while her parents were at work.

The library became an invaluable resource for O'Bryan.

So as part of her community service initiative as Miss South Dakota, she's doing what she can to highlight, support and enhance reading resources so more children have access to the same opportunities as she did.

"Reading has always played a significant role in my life. Growing up with a single mom who was attending college, living on Medicaid, and in free/reduced housing meant I might not always get the new Barbie I wanted, but a book was never turned down," O'Bryan wrote in her blog.

"I spent my nights living in a crime-stricken neighborhood bonding with my



mom and adoptive dad over tales of far-off lands and grand adventures. As a young girl on the Pine Ridge Reservation, I spent my time reading in my mom's classroom and my grandma's library in Martin, engulfed in as many books as I could get my hands on."

She hit the ground running after winning the state crown, launching a successful reading initiative which put 10,000 books in school libraries statewide.

She's the published author of a children's book, *Jericho the Journalism Kitty*.

She founded Page Turners: Fall in Love with Reading, a program that encourages children to read.

Building a foundation for children to access literature regardless of their household income or location was the first step.

Now she's working with youth throughout the state and making visits to classrooms in an effort to spark a love of reading within their young minds.

O'Bryan shares with classrooms how reading influenced her success and showing just how powerful literacy is in personal development.

"I see it happening – people are finding that passion. Reading is a foundation for everything in life," O'Bryan said.

She firmly believes and serves as living proof that it's not where you started that determines your future successes.

"It's where you're going," she said.

And during the first week of January, O'Bryan is going to Orlando, Fla. To compete against 50 other women for the Miss America crown.

The Miss America Pageant is slated for Jan. 6-14 at the Walt Disney Theater in the Dr. Phillips Center for Performing Arts.



BRINGING THE LIGHT

Electric Cooperatives Spread Holiday Cheer

Frank Turner

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While Santa's elves are hard at work at the North Pole, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are working to bring their own magic to their local neighborhoods, illuminating local parades with festive lights. Black Hills Electric Cooperative is just one of many examples of how a co-op can not only bring light but also creativity to their community.

Every December, Black Hills Electric crafts an exceptional float for the annual Custer Parade of Lights. For Bill Brisk, the manager of operations at Black Hills Electric, the parade isn't merely an event – it's a cherished tradition for their co-op.

As the parade approaches, the Black Hills Electric workshop bustles with

activity, mirroring Santa's very own workshop. Guided by a design from Brisk, linemen and staff assemble their unique Christmas float – crafting, welding and fabricating many of their designs from scratch.

"Just a few nights before the parade, we host a family night where we bring out the families of our employees,"



said Brisk. “The co-op provides food and drinks and we all work together to finish the float.”

In just two weeks, the co-op repurposes discarded equipment and scrap parts into creative masterpieces. One year, the co-op created an oversized shopping cart from old pipe laying around the shop. The next, they used retired meter loop pipes, guy wires, and meter covers to create palm trees and coconuts for a beachside Santa scene. Even Willie Wirehand, the co-op’s safety mascot, has been outfitted for a festive float. Despite being fabricated from old parts, the end result is always something worthy of a debut at the North Pole.

“Most everything we do is built in our shop,” said Brisk. “We do all

of the fabrications ourselves, and we haven’t had a flop yet.”

Luckily, the co-op’s efforts haven’t gone unnoticed. Since 2015, they’ve clinched an award every year at the Custer Parade with the only exceptions being 2020 and 2021 when the pandemic halted festivities. Their trophy collection holds a wide range of awards, boasting awards like the Rudolph’s Choice Award, Best Light, Best Music and most recently, the Custer Fruit Cake Award.

Dawn Murray, the executive director of the Custer Chamber of Commerce, expressed her admiration. “They really go all out. Beyond the parade, they even participate in our scarecrow decorating contest. I remember one year they had a scarecrow up in a

bucket truck, which was really cool.”

Yet, for Black Hills Electric, Custer is just the beginning. The co-op has grand visions for a broader festive footprint. With a service area that stretches from just south of Terry Peak to Nebraska, Brisk sees even more opportunities to shower communities with holiday cheer.

“It’s a festive time of year and something that we want to extend out to different towns in our service territory,” said Brisk. “Seeing the kids’ eyes brighten when we light up our float for the first time really makes the whole thing worth it, and if we can spread that to more of our members, all the better.”



EPA proposal threatens electric reliability and rate stability

Laura London

Lake Region Electric

The energy industry is entering a new frontier, and the imposition of the EPA's Power Plant Rule threatens the reliability of the power we are more dependent on every day.

As a child watching Star Trek, I was in awe of the possibilities of new frontiers and what could be learned by exploring new worlds. I remember when Captain Kirk needed more power, he demanded it from the Starship Enterprise's chief engineer Scotty. In one classic episode, which has become quite popular in pop culture, Kirk cries out for "More power!" Scotty famously replied, "We're giving them all we've got!"

Typically, Scotty was able to just muster enough power to raise defense shields or boost thrusters to get the crew out of a sketchy situation by diverting power from one area of the ship to another. Conserving power in one area so that it can be used elsewhere is not fiction, it's a real practice that most of us don't even know takes place on a regular basis as we go about our daily lives.

Lake Region's transmission cooperative, East River does this on a smaller scale by using load control for water heaters and air conditioning units, and irrigation for members who sign up for the load control programs to receive rebates and discounts on their power bill. It happens on a much larger scale at power generation facilities like Basin and WAPA. While Captain Kirk and Scotty are fictional characters headed for "a new frontier," situations where we divert power are not out of this world.

It became clear in February of 2021 when winter storm Uri hit the United States that we may not have enough electricity to supply everyone with enough power. The Southwest Power

Pool (S.P.P.) ordered member electric utilities in 14 states to start rolling blackouts as the bitter cold had driven the demand for electricity so high that they were unable to sustain power to their customers.

In what S.P.P.'s Chief Operating Officer, Lanny Nickel called an "unprecedented event," controlled outages rolled through the Midwest in order to "safeguard the reliability of the

"One thing that must be made clear: we cannot sustain this level of growth load while at the same time reducing our dispatchable energy resources like coal and natural gas."

grid." During this cold weather event those of us up here in northeast South Dakota hunkered down and prepared for the cold while we heard news reports and read stories of people in some southern states, over 4.5 million people in Texas, losing power for up to four days, causing

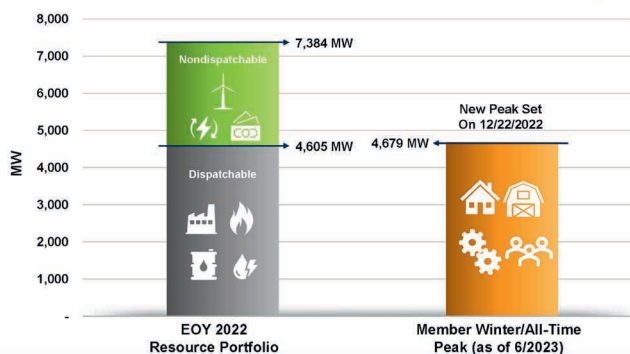
numerous deaths due to the cold.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) later said there were "numerous outages, derates or failures to start at electric generating plants scattered across the region. The Texas grid operator (ERCOT) ordered a total of 20,000 MW of rolling blackouts in an effort to prevent grid collapse."

The U.S. power grid once again experienced strain in December of 2022 due to winter storms and freezing temperatures across the country. December 23rd 2022, S.P.P. issued an emergency alert after another energy use record was broken as millions turned up thermostats and plugged in heaters to battle the bitter temperatures. Just this past August the S.P.P. teetered on emergency alert status as record heat prompted air conditioning to strain the grid.

We are demanding more power than ever before and so far, Lake Region's G&T, Basin Electric, has been able to keep up with the demands by adding renewable energy to our generation mix. Basin has been working hard to provide reliable power and is progressively innovative when it comes to environmental concerns.

Basin Electric Maintains Dispatchable Generation to Ensure Reliability



One thing that must be made clear: we cannot sustain this level of growth load while at the same time reducing our dispatchable energy resources like coal and natural gas. In addition to adding green energy, Basin has been working on reducing emissions for a long time.

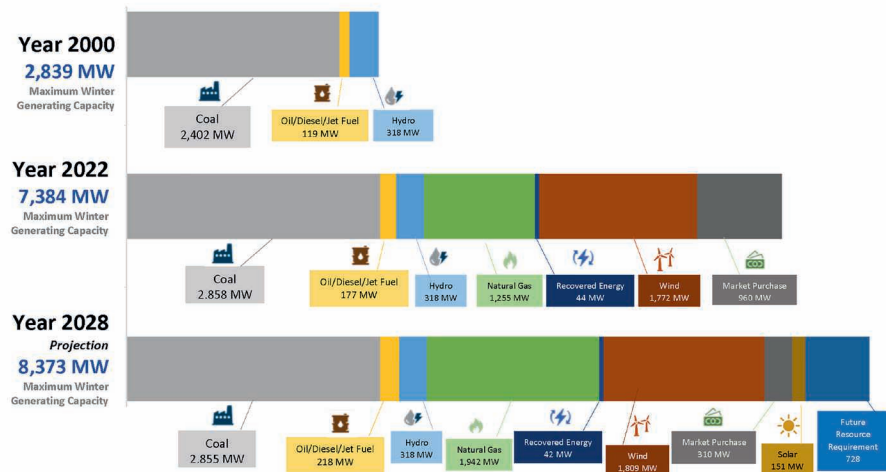
According to Basin Electric's Sustainability Report, "Basin Electric has been leading the way in carbon capture, utilization, and storage, and carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture and storage, for more than two decades." Through 2022, Basin Electric and its subsidiaries have invested more than \$2 billion of our members' capital in emissions control, technology, and more than \$180 million was spent in 2022 alone to operate and maintain those controls. Basin continues to grow load while lowering emissions intensity."

LREA Board President Kermit Pearson, who represents Lake Region on the East River board and is the Vice President of Basin Electric's Board of Directors, explains "Lake Region, East River and Basin have been hyper-focused on reliability for our members. Over the past several years, Lake Region and East River have invested millions of dollars in our area replacing infrastructure and constructing new lines to improve reliability for the members of Lake Region."

He further explains, "Basin has spent billions improving and increasing power generation to ensure reliable and affordable electricity to our members. That reliability is being threatened by the imposition of regulations that technology is not yet ready to meet."

The administration in Washington D.C. and the EPA continue to propose and pass regulations that are not feasible if we want affordable and reliable electricity. Almost exactly 6 months after

Basin Electric All-of-the-Above Generating Strategy



9 states experienced rolling blackouts, the EPA proposed new performance standards, commonly known as the "Power Plant Rule" revising performance standards for power plants and greenhouse gas emissions.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) opposes the EPA's proposed ruling. CEO Jim Matheson stated, "EPA's proposal is the wrong plan at a critical time for our nation's energy future," Matheson said. "It is unrealistic, unachievable, and will reduce key generating resources just as Americans are increasing their reliance on electricity. From deploying microgrids and renewables to launching demand response programs, electric cooperatives take an innovative and diverse approach as they work towards a responsible energy future. But expecting the industry to generate more electricity with fewer resources while adhering to unrealistic timelines is not a serious or practical approach."

Mathison wants people to understand "The energy future outlined by the EPA will result in more blackouts, higher costs, and greater uncertainty

for Americans. And it will magnify today's reliability challenges with grave consequences for an already stressed electric grid. When you find yourself in a hole, the first step is to stop digging. The EPA needs to put down their shovel."

Lake Region Electric is concerned about the environment; however, the EPA's power plant proposal is not right for our country and certainly not achievable if we want continued reliable and affordable electricity. Lake Region CEO, Tim McIntyre, says "An all-of-the-above generation mix is important but until technology catches up and renewable energy is able to keep up, we need those old reliable energy resources. If we get rid of coal and natural gas, we are going to be forced to have rolling blackouts. That is not something we want."

We need your help in contacting our legislators and educating them that we are working to do the right things and cooperatives across the country are exploring new frontiers in the energy industry with a diverse approach to keeping your power on when you need it, where you need it.



Garretson Childcare helpers are getting ready to help grow their daycare.

REED FUND

Powering Your Community

Shannon Marvel

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The community development financial institution powered by rural electric cooperatives in South Dakota is about to reach a major milestone.

The (Rural Electric Economic Development) Fund's total dollar amount in projects impacted is anticipated to reach \$1 billion by the end of 2023, according to Eric Fosheim, Economic Development Manager for REED.

REED also exceeded 10,000 in jobs impacted (created or retained) since its creation in 1996.

"Currently, we sit at just over \$998 million in total projects impacted," Fosheim said in October.

The REED Fund is a 501(c)3

corporation and operates as a revolving loan fund that provides financing for economic development projects in rural areas.

Those projects that receive REED Fund dollars must promote growth and be a catalyst in creating more business, wealth and job opportunities within the rural community. The projects are also expected to improve infrastructure and economic base in rural areas.

The REED Fund provides financing from the federal government and other lender, in addition to revolving interest payments collected over the years. The REED Fund does not use money generated by electric rate charges.

Fosheim said that as of September 30, REED has issued 401 loans for a total of \$125.26 million.

"This includes \$104,174,418 in loans made using REED dollars and \$21,082,793 from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program," Fosheim said.



Central Electric General Manager Ken Schlimgen, left, delivers REED funding to Mitchell Technical College.

Fosheim said it isn't entirely surprising that the \$1 billion was hit this year.

"REED has seen steady growth over the years, but typically sees higher than normal application volume in times of rising interest rates. In addition, costs are rising as well, so total project costs for each individual project have been higher as well.

Dakota Energy General Manager Chad Felderman has been on the REED Fund board since 2018.

He said the impact the REED Fund has on local communities is unique, noting that the businesses the fund helps aren't necessarily ones that Dakota Energy provides electricity to, but are ones that help our communities, "which in turn helps our members where they live," he said.

"It is gratifying to help our hospitals, fire departments, and schools purchase equipment so our small communities can provide those essential services," Felderman said.

One of those projects funded by REED is the Huron Regional Medical Center dialysis building.

"We are proud to support HRMC in sustaining and expanding local access to critical medical services right here in our community," Felderman said.

Douglas Electric Cooperative General Manager Jay Spaans echoed Felderman's sentiment, noting that the REED Fund is special because co-ops get to loan money to businesses that they don't always serve.

"For us, it is just about making

improvements in the community. Sure, we would like to serve the load, but even if the new load doesn't reside in our territory, we still will fund the loan," Spaans said.

"It is all about the greater good for our communities."

West River Electric CEO Dick Johnson also serves on the REED Fund board. He's one of the first board members to represent a co-op in the western part of the state. The REED Fund was originally set up by co-ops in eastern South Dakota. After two decades of successful growth and development, the REED Fund decided to allow co-ops in western South Dakota to join in 2017. Johnson said West River Electric was one of the first western co-ops to be accepted into the REED Fund.

"It was one of the best things we could ask for. We were struggling with our own revolving loan fund but we had primarily loaned to government entities, no businesses," Johnson said.

"When we became members of REED that gave us another tool in our toolbox to offer our members who were interested in our area or needed to expand their businesses or infrastructure."

West River Electric hasn't had many loans, but Johnson is still encouraged by what he's seen as a board member.

"Sitting on the Board and seeing the applications and the impact we are having on the economy of small towns all over South Dakota is phenomenal," Johnson said.

Johnson had high praise for the folks at the REED Fund office in Madison, calling

them a "class act" who really understand the region's rural areas.

"They work hard to say yes and somehow make it work. The fact that the local co-op board can help make the decision to move a project forward is unheard of – real boots on the ground who are in the communities we serve and understand what is needed to thrive," Johnson said. "It is a unique model just like the cooperative business model."

Did You Know

From 2018 to 2022, electric cooperatives in South Dakota spent \$5.7 Billion on capital investment, operations, and maintenance activities and retired \$102.8 Million in capital credits paid to consumer-members.

Through these expenditures, co-ops drive economic benefits in their local communities and throughout the state.

Over the five-year period, electric co-ops in South Dakota are responsible for:

STATEWIDE IMPACT

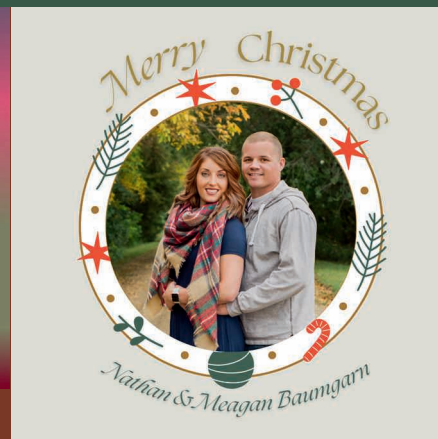
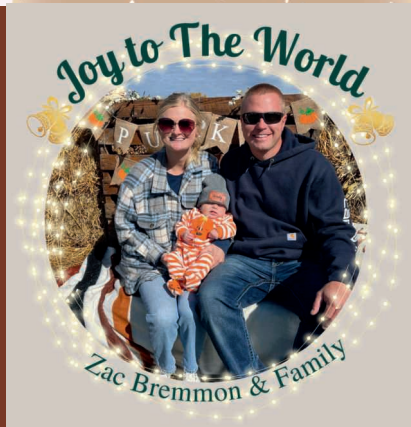
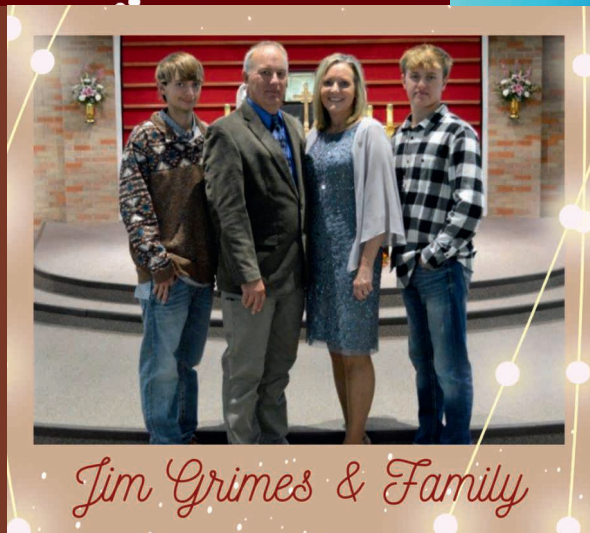
- \$4.2 Billion to South Dakota's Gross State Product (GSP)
- An average of 5,848 jobs in South Dakota each year
- \$2 Billion in labor income in South Dakota
- \$194.1 Million in federal taxes
- \$423 Million in state taxes
- \$418.4 Million in local taxes

All of these impacts occur in counties where electric cooperatives operate, showcasing the substantial local economic benefits that co-ops provide in the communities they serve.



Participants celebrate the groundbreaking for the National Music Museum in Vermillion.

Christmas Cards from the Co-op







Dec. 14-17
Christmas at the Cathedral
 521 N Duluth Avenue,
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-988-3765

DEC. 2
Tabor Parade of Lights
 Vendor Fair
 4 p.m.
 Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Ham Drawing
 7:30 p.m.
 Tabor, SD

DEC. 2
Julefest Scandinavian Christmas Festival and Bazaar
 8 a.m.
 Our Saviors Lutheran Church
 Spearfish, SD

DEC. 3
Hartford's Hometown Christmas
 7:30 a.m.
 Hartford, SD

DEC. 8-9
Alexandria's Winter Festival
 5 p.m.
 Alexandria, SD

DEC. 8-9
Junkin' Market Days
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 9
Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Wessington, SD

DEC. 10
Hill City Senior Saturday Breakfast
 Hill City Center
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 17
Christmas Cantata
 3 p.m.
 Hermosa United Church of Christ
 Hermosa, SD

NOV. 24
Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Dakota Avenue
 Huron, SD

NOV. 25
Mid-Winter Fair
 Gregory Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

NOV. 30
Christmas on the Prairie
 5 p.m.
 Miller, SD

NOV. 30-DEC. 3
Hatchery Holidays
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

DEC. 1-2
Christmas in the Hills
 Hot Springs, SD

DEC. 1-30
Trees and Trains Exhibit
 SD State Railroad Museum
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 1-30
Holiday Express and Holiday Express Spiked
 1880 Train
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 2
Rapid City Garden Club's 62nd Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale
 8 a.m.
 Central States Fairgrounds
 Rapid City, SD

DEC. 2
6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction
 4 p.m.
 Olive Grove Golf Course
 Groton, SD

DEC. 2
Parade of Lights
 6 p.m.
 Redfield, SD

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.

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