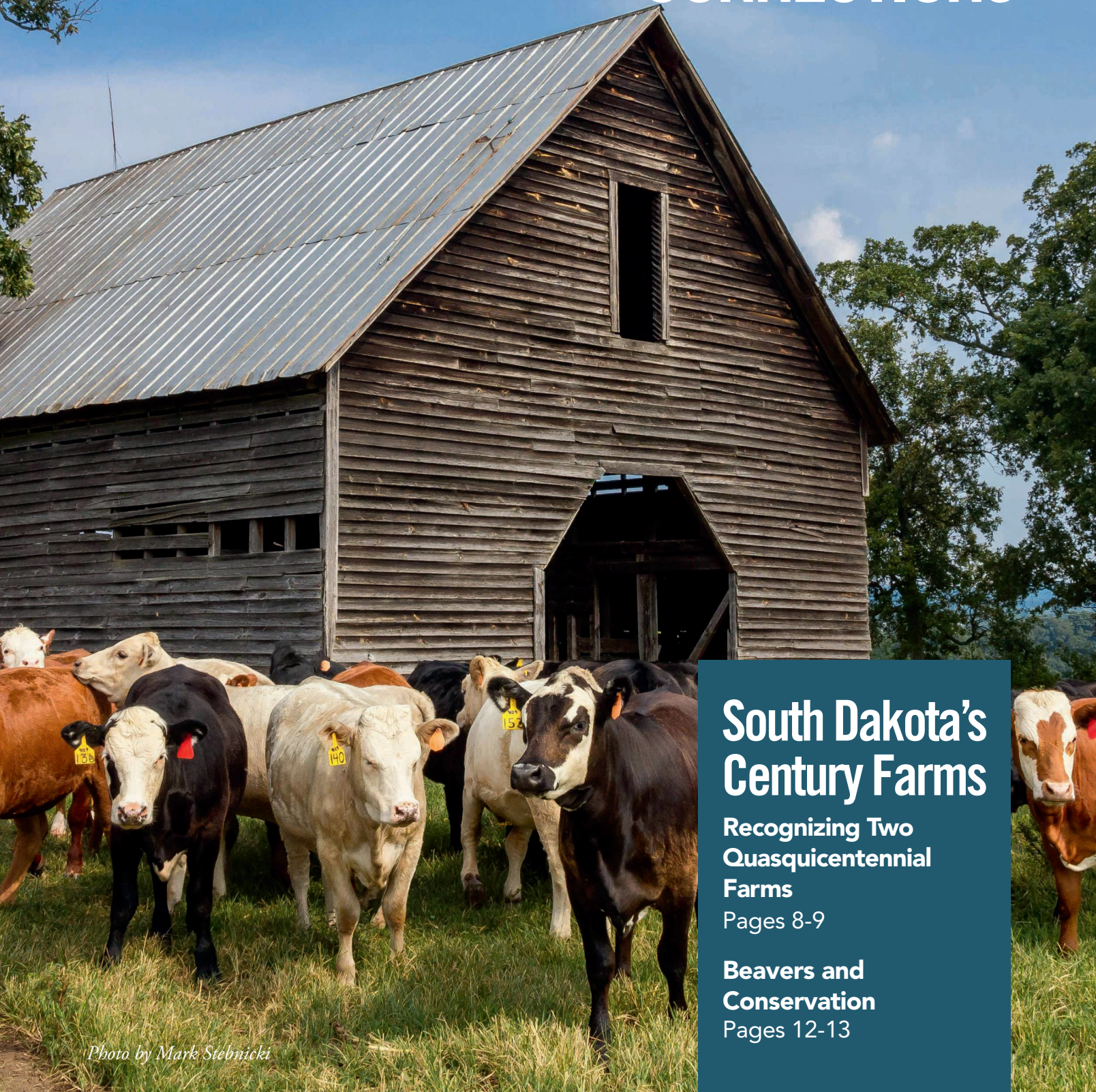


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## South Dakota's Century Farms

Recognizing Two  
Quasiquicentennial  
Farms

Pages 8-9

Beavers and  
Conservation

Pages 12-13

*Photo by Mark Stebnicki*



# ANNUAL MEETING INVITE



## Join Me at the Annual Meeting!

I would like to personally invite you to attend Lake Region Electric Association's 83rd Annual Meeting of Members. We will be getting together, face-to face, in Langford.

I truly look forward to this event every year! It is a wonderful time to join your fellow cooperative member-owners, board of directors and employees to catch up and talk about what is happening in our cooperative. We love hearing from you and would like to get together to visit

and address any questions or concerns you may have.

We have been planning like crazy, so come join us for a couple of hours. Pick up your annual meeting member gift and have some snacks. Back by popular demand is the meal voucher to your favorite local restaurants!

I look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting!

Thank you and God bless,

**Timothy McIntyre**



### Powering Possibilities

#### DESIGNATION OF REPRESENTATIVE

If you are a member corporation, cooperative, school, church, township or partnership of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. and want to be represented at the Annual Membership Meeting at Langford, SD on June 6, 2024, please complete this form and have it signed by an official of your organization. Your official representative will have to present this form at the Annual Meeting registration stop in order to take part in the business matters on behalf of the organization.

**This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ is authorized to represent**

(Print name of voting delegate)

**our organization \_\_\_\_\_**

(Print name of organization)

at the Annual Membership meeting of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. at Langford, SD on June 6, 2024, in any and all business, including voting that may be conducted at said meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of organization president

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**LAKE REGION ELECTRIC  
RIPPLES**

(USPS 018-904)

**Board of Directors**

Kermit Pearson, President  
Rodney Tobin, Vice President  
Thomas Steiner, Secretary  
Andrea Kilker, Treasurer

Amy Kuecker  
Cody Paszek  
Mark Wismer  
Danny Smeins, LREA Attorney  
**General Manager**

Tim McIntyre

**Staff**

Donna Sattler, Director of  
Finance/Office Services Manager  
Jim Grimes,  
Manager of Operations  
Brett Kwasniewski,  
Manager of Member Services  
Tim Gaiowski,  
Manager of Technology Services



Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Like us on Facebook:**  
**Lake Region Electric Association Inc.**

LAKE REGION RIPPLES COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc., PO Box 341, 1212 N Main St., Webster, SD 57274. Lake Region Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: As part of their membership, Lake Region Electric members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. (USPS 018-904) Periodicals Postage Paid at Webster, SD 57274 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Lake Region Ripples Cooperative Connections, PO Box 341, Webster, SD 57274. Telephone 605-345-3379; Toll Free 1-800-657-5869; Fax 605-345-4442 E-mail: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

24 hour Dispatching/Outage Line  
1-800-657-5869



**POWERING POSSIBILITIES**

**AGENDA  
LREA 83rd ANNUAL MEETING  
Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

- 6:00 PM Registration**  
Snacks and Member Gift distribution  
**No Meal Served: \$35.00 Meal Voucher to a participating, local restaurant will be distributed. One per membership, member must be present at the meeting.**
- 7:00 PM Registration closes**  
Business meeting opens  
Meeting called to order- Board Chairman ..... Kermit Pearson, President  
**The National Anthem**  
**Invocation**  
**Welcome**
- Certifications & Declaration of Quorum** ..... Thomas L. Steiner, Secretary  
**Notice of Meeting & Proof of Mailing**
- Minutes of 2023 Meeting** ..... Thomas L. Steiner, Secretary  
(motion to approve Minutes of 2023)
- President's Report** ..... President Pearson
- Election of Directors** ..... Attorney Dan Smeins  
Pick up Ballots
- Managers' Report** ..... Tim McIntyre, General Manager/CEO  
Basin /Lake Region Scholarship Award Recognition  
Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship ..... Tim McIntyre
- Election Report** ..... Attorney Dan Smeins  
(only if nomination made by floor and ballots are needed.)
- Other Business – Old and New** ..... President Pearson
- Draw for Door Prizes**
- Draw for \$50 Gift Card for Food Pantry Donation**
- Adjournment** ..... President Kermit Pearson

**Official Notice of Lake Region Electric Annual Membership Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Members of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc., will be held at the Langford High School Auditorium located at 206 Chestnut Street, Langford in South Dakota on Thursday, June 6, 2024. The meeting's registration will begin at 6:00 PM with the business meeting to commence at 7:00 PM.



## Prepare Your Family for Fire Emergencies

In only a matter of minutes, a small house fire can rage out of control, reaching temperatures of up to 1,500°F. In most cases, you have one to two minutes to get out safely.

We practice fire emergency drills at work and school, but don't forget to create and practice a home escape plan, as well. It is beneficial to keep your plan visible, like on the refrigerator, to help family and visitors remember what to do. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stresses that even children as young as three years old can understand an escape plan.

### Helpful Planning Tips:

- Plan for two ways to escape from each room.
- Pick a meeting location away from your home.
- Plan for everyone in your home, including babies and others who may need help to escape.
- Teach children not to hide during a fire; they must get out and stay out.



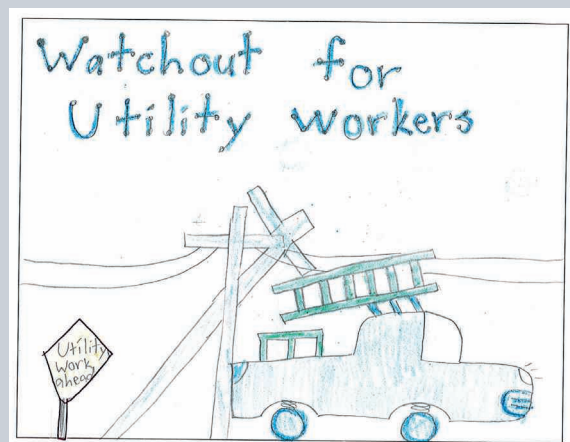
- Practice your escape drill with everyone in your family at least twice a year.

### Ways to Stay Safe:

- Clear toys, furniture and other clutter from exits.
- Check that windows open easily – fix any that stick.
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarms monthly.
- Be sure that security bars on doors and windows have a quick-release latch, and everyone knows how to open them.

### Special Considerations for Apartment Buildings:

- If you live in a multi-story apartment building, map out as many escape routes as possible to get to the stairways on your floor.
- If you live in a high-rise, plan to use the stairs – never the elevator – to escape a fire.
- A secondary route might be a window onto an adjacent roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper-story windows – purchase only collapsible ladders evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).



### Stay Away from Power Lines

#### Reese Rindels, Age 9

Reese Rindels cautions readers to watch out for utility workers. Reese's parents are Rochelle and Kyle Rindels, 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.



# DELICIOUS *Dairy*

## CHOCOLATE FUDGE FROSTING

### Ingredients:

2 1/4 cups confectioners' sugar  
 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
 1/4 tsp. cinnamon  
 6 oz. (3/4 package) cream cheese, softened  
 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened  
 8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly  
 1 tbsp. pure vanilla extract

### Method

Mix sugar, cocoa powder and cinnamon in medium bowl until well blended. Set aside. Beat cream cheese and butter in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Gradually beat in cocoa mixture on low speed until well blended. Gradually beat in melted chocolate then vanilla until well blended.

McCormick.com

## RED VELVET HOT CHOCOLATE

### Ingredients:

4 cups whole milk  
 1/4 cup sugar  
 10 oz. semi-sweet baking chocolate, coarsely chopped  
 2 tsps. red food color  
 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
**Vanilla Whipped Cream**  
 1/2 cup heavy cream  
 2 tbsps. confectioners' sugar  
 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

### Method

Place milk and granulated sugar in medium saucepan. While stirring, bring to simmer on medium heat. Remove from heat. Stir in chocolate with wire whisk until melted. Stir in food color and vanilla. Serve with marshmallows. For the vanilla whipped cream, beat heavy cream, confectioners' sugar and vanilla in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.

McCormick.com

## LEMON PUDDING DESSERT

### Ingredients:

1 cup COLD butter  
 1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
 1 8 oz. tub cool whip, divided  
 2 pkgs. (small) instant lemon pudding  
 2 cups flour  
 1 cup powdered sugar  
 3 cups COLD milk

### Method

In bowl, cut butter into flour until crumbly. Press into an ungreased 9 x 13 inch glass pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 18 to 22 minutes or until set. Cool on wire rack. In mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth. Fold in one cup cool whip. Spread over cooled crust. In bowl, beat milk and pudding mixes on low speed for 2 minutes. Carefully spread over cream cheese layer. Top with remaining cool whip. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or more. Yields 12 to 16 servings.

Mary Jessen  
 Holabird, S.D.

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



## 2023 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes Unapproved

Pursuant to notice having been duly given, the Annual Meeting was held June 8th, 2023, at 1203 3rd St, City of Britton, County of Marshall, and State of South Dakota.

The meeting was held at the Britton Event Center. Registration began at 6:00 PM. Lake Region Electric employees and staff assisted members with registration, as well as distributing snacks, an annual meeting gift and meal voucher for \$35.00 to be used at local, participating restaurants. East River Electric provided audio/video support.

Board President Kermit Pearson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The National Anthem was performed by Kate Wismer. Dr. Terrill Sorensen gave the invocation. Lindsey Kimber from Glacial Lakes Area Development gave a welcome speech that included events happening in the surrounding area. Lake Region Electric's Board President, Kermit Pearson welcomed all the guests in attendance. Pearson recognized several special guests in attendance including former employees and past board members. Other special guests in attendance were Chris Studer and Jeff May of East River, and Tom Jones of RUS.

Tom Steiner, LREA Board Secretary declared that there were enough registered members in attendance to constitute a quorum: 157 active members registered along with 65 guests for a total of 222 registered attendees. Secretary Steiner then provided proof of mailing of the June 2023 Cooperative Connections magazine, which contained the official meeting notice as well as the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting. A copy of proof of mailing is on file at the Lake Region office. Additional copies of the June issue were distributed in the guest bags that were handed out at registration. There were no changes or additions to the minutes as printed. There was a motion and a second to dispense of the reading of those minutes; the motion passed.

President Pearson delivered the President's Report. Pearson stated that Eide Bailly performed Lake Region's audit, and no deficiencies were noted. Pearson then reviewed Lake Region's system statistics, and 2022 finances as printed in the June Cooperative Connections. He noted the return over \$832,000.00 in Capital Credit

patronage to members in 2023, the ten-year total patronage, as well as a breakdown of patronage from East River and Basin over the past 5 years.

Pearson expressed the importance of reliability when he addressed the crowd gathered at the meeting. Lake Region has been upgrading existing infrastructure, adding infrastructure, and advancing technology. East River Electric has been making huge investments in our territory over the past few years to improve and maintain reliability for members of Lake Region Electric. Since 2013 East River has invested over \$32 million in LREA territory and plans to invest another \$8 million over the next three years.

Pearson then went on to talk about Basin Electric. Lake Region members saw a credit on their March bill that they received in April that reflected a credit pass through from Basin due to excess energy sales in the market and greater than normal performance by basin's subsidiary Dakota Gasification. Pearson continued the theme of reliability when talking about Basin Electric and their all-of-the-above generation strategy. Basin currently has a max generation capacity of more than two and a half times what they did in the year 2000. Pearson explained how Basin generates the power that we rely on. He shared that Basin created a Sustainability Report expressing that "We will focus on the affordability and reliability that our members expect. We will not set a goal that is outside of what technology can currently accomplish and our members can afford." He urged everyone to contact their representatives to express how the current direction of legislation and regulations are going to make having reliable power nearly unattainable and unaffordable for our members.

Pearson expressed a heartfelt thank you to his fellow directors, the staff and employees of Lake Region Electric for their dedication and work to keep your cooperative running smoothly.

Two Director Seats were up for election. Attorney Dan Smeins explained the Bylaws for the election process. He called for nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor and motions were made and approved to re-elect incumbent Mark Wismer for District 2 and Tom Steiner for District 4.

General Manager Tim McIntyre delivered the Manager's Report. He thanked everyone for coming, with special thanks to the City of Britton for welcoming Lake Region Electric's annual meeting to their community. McIntyre recognized LREA employees for their hard work to put together the annual meeting and their dedication all year long, in all sorts of weather and circumstance. McIntyre focused on the value of cooperative membership, how members benefit through patronage, bill credits, and on keeping power affordable. He mentioned that we are in a good place financially and have been able to maintain without a rate increase for quite some time. He shared that there is a potential rate increase coming due to uncontrollable increases.

McIntyre explained Lake Region's commitment to safety; we are continually working to make sure employees have everything they need to work in a safe environment. He also reminded members about the REC program, the REED Fund, and ways to stay in-touch with what is going on at Lake Region by visiting our Facebook, website and using SmartHub.

Scholarship awards were presented to Matthew Mork of Pierpont and Ashton Mills of Britton.

There was no old business or new business to act on.

All members in attendance were given an appreciation gift when they registered and were entered for door prizes that were drawn for at the end of the meeting. Randy Heitmann won the Grand Prize of \$500 cash. A drawing was held for an additional 20 door prizes. Lake Region put on a food drive for the local food pantry during the Annual Meeting. A total of 306 non-perishable food items were donated to the food pantry in Britton. Every non-perishable food item donated qualifies the member for a separate prize drawing. This year a \$50 Visa Gift Card was given away. Ice cream bars were distributed as the meeting adjourned.

Board President Pearson called for an adjournment of the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 P.M.

Kermit Pearson, Board President  
Thomas Steiner, Board Secretary




# Petitions Submitted for Director Election

As published in the April 2024 *Cooperative Connections*, the two director seats up for election represent Districts 1 and 7. District One is currently represented by Andrea Kilker. District Seven is currently represented by Amy Kuecker. Both incumbents are eligible for re-election and submitted petitions, in accordance with the bylaws. No other petitions were submitted. Any member wishing to make a nomination from the floor must call the office in advance of the annual meeting to pre-check the candidate for eligibility.

Serving on the Board

of Directors is a commitment that requires representatives to attend local meetings on a monthly basis as well as state and national meetings. Board members attend trainings and pursue educational opportunities so that they are well informed on regulations and industry trends in order to best serve the members of Lake Region Electric Association.

Qualifications and all other guidelines can be found in the Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. bylaws. A copy of the current approved bylaws can be obtained by calling the LREA office. A digital copy is also available for viewing or printing on the website: [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop).



**DIRECTOR BALLOT**  
83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting – June 6, 2024

**DISTRICT #1**  
LaBelle, Veblen, Dumarce, McKinley, Lake, and Red Iron Lake Townships








Mark the box next to candidate's name. You may only vote for ONE per district.

|                                                     |                                                            |                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Andrea Kilker<br>Lake City | <input type="checkbox"/> _____<br>(Floor Nominee write-in) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____<br>(Floor Nominee write-in) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

**DISTRICT #7**  
Webster, Scotland, Valley, Butler, Rusk, Morton, Oak Gulch, Troy, York, and Highland Townships

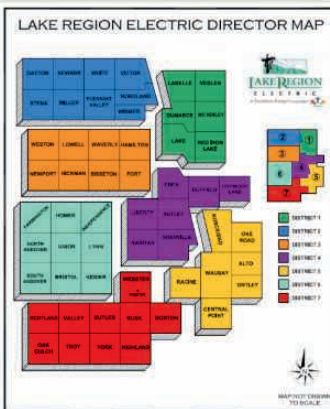
Mark the box next to candidate's name. You may only vote for ONE per district.

|                                                 |                                                            |                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amy Kuecker<br>Webster | <input type="checkbox"/> _____<br>(Floor Nominee write-in) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____<br>(Floor Nominee write-in) |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>TREASURER<br><b>Andrea Kilker</b><br>DISTRICT 1 | <br><b>Mark Wismer</b><br>DISTRICT 2                    | <br>PRESIDENT<br><b>Kermit Pearson</b><br>DISTRICT 3 | <br>SECRETARY<br><b>Thomas Steiner</b><br>DISTRICT 4 |
| <br><b>Cody Paszek</b><br>DISTRICT 5                | <br>VICE PRESIDENT<br><b>Rodney Tobin</b><br>DISTRICT 6 | <br><b>Amy Kuecker</b><br>DISTRICT 7                 |                                                                                                                                         |

**VOTING DISTRICTS**

District 1: LaBelle, Dumarce, Lake, Red Iron Lake, McKinley and Veblen.  
 District 2: White, Victor, Pleasant Valley, Nordland, Miller, Wismer, Newark, Stena and Dayton.  
 District 3: Weston, Newport, Lowell, Waverly, Hamilton, Hickman, Sisseton and Fort.  
 District 4: Eden, Buffalo, Drywood Lake, Nutley, Grenville, Raritan, and Liberty.  
 District 5: Kosciusko, One Road, Waubay, Alto, Ortley, Racine and Central Point.  
 District 6: Farmington, North Andover, South Andover, Homer, Union, Independence, Kidder, Lynn, and Bristol  
 District 7: Scotland, Oak Gulch, Valley, Troy, Butler, York, Webster, Rusk, Highland, and Morton.







# South Dakota's Century Farms

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

## Soukup Homestead: Raising families and farmers for over 125 years

Nestled in the heart of southcentral South Dakota lies a cherished piece of land with a name that's been long-established in Charles Mix County – the Soukup Homestead.

Almost anyone with Wagner ties knows a Soukup.

There are even a few members of the Soukup family who are also part of South Dakota's rural electric cooperative family, including Charles Mix Electric District 1 Director Denise Soukup.

But it all had to start somewhere, and good things take time.

That was the case for the Soukup's Century Farm and the Gronseth/Fiegel/Nelson/Evans homestead, a farm located near Britton that's served by Lake Region Electric.

Really, it's a common theme for Century Farm families to be located within rural electric cooperative service areas.

The South Dakota Farm Bureau and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources began the Century Farm Program in 1984 to recognize farm and ranch families who have kept the farm in the family for 100 years or more.

Farms reaching the milestone of 125 years, known as

Quasiquintennial Farms, and the venerable Sesquicentennial Farms, marking an impressive 150 years, are also given their due recognition.

With over 3,000 families honored to date, the program continues to shine a light on the enduring legacy of South Dakota's agricultural heritage. To qualify for these prestigious honors, farms must encompass at least 80 acres and provide documented proof of their original purchase date. That means a family member must have always had ownership of the land over the last 100 years, including during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl.

The annual award presentation is a cherished tradition held at the South Dakota State Fair.

After migrating with family from what is now known today as the Czech Republic in the late 1800s, Joseph and Mary Soukup



Tom Soukup stands beside his Farmall Red International Harvester 460 tractor. *Photo courtesy of Linda Soukup*

came to the Dakota Territory at a time when most of the land open for settlement had already been settled.

While living in Tabor with family, Joseph Soukup applied for a homestead on reservation land that was now open for settlement at the U.S. Land Office in town of Mitchell on Jan. 30, 1896.

“In the following five years he built a frame house 13 feet by 18 feet in order to establish a residence, then a grainery, a corn crib, and he also fenced in 80 acres,” said Linda Soukup, the wife of Tom Soukup. Her husband is Joseph and Mary’s grandson.

Joseph and Mary raised ten children on the very homestead that Tom and Linda raised their kids.

“There’s a lot of pride in the heritage and the legacy of, you know, having it passed down,” Linda said. A new house was built on the site of Joseph and Mary’s original home’s structure in 1952.

That’s where Tom and Linda lived and became the third generation to live on the homestead.

“When we lived here and Tom’s parents and their brothers and sisters used to all come here,” Linda said, as she started walking towards one of the farm buildings on the property referred to as “the shed.”

“And they would butcher hogs and cattle and we would process them down there. We had a meat cooler in the basement. And then one of the families owned the meat saw and one owned the sausage stuffer,” she recalled. “That was always kind of what we did until, well, families got bigger, and you couldn’t. You just couldn’t keep up, you know? We could have had a critter in there all the time,” she said.

Tom and Linda raised their children – Becky, David, Kathy and Mary – in the house as well.

Their son David works as a project engineer for Phillips Petroleum in Texas. Two of their daughters live in different towns but remain relatively close to the homestead.

Kathy Jaeger lives in Tyndall and Mary Ringling lives in Platte. In 1996, their daughter Becky and her husband, Mike

Brunsing were living in Montana when Tom and Linda decided to move into town, so in 1998 the Brunings moved back to South Dakota and began helping Tom on the farm while living in the house.

Becky raised three children of her own in the house she grew up in herself.

Becky and Mike still live on the homestead but in a more recently built home.

Now her son Dylan, 28, is raising his own family in the 1952 farmhouse.

In doing so, he became the fifth generation on the homestead.

Dylan and his wife, Keely, have two sons – a 20-month-old and an infant born in late March.

### **After 126 years, Torger Gronseth’s homestead continues to bring family together.**

It’s hard for Carol Evans to put into words how she feels when she reflects on the 126 years of history of her family’s farm in Marshall County.

“It’s so important to us,” Evans said. Then she takes pause.

“I’m sorry, it’s emotional for me,” she says, before telling her family’s – and the farm’s – origin story.

In 1872, her great grandfather, Torger Gronseth, immigrated to America from Norway at only 14 years old.

He made the trip to join his eldest brother in Minnesota. He officially “staked his claim” and homesteaded in the Pleasant Valley Township of Marshall County in 1901.

Over the next two decades, Torger and his wife, Berthe Lea, amassed over 960 acres of undeveloped land in the Coteau de Prairie of northeastern South Dakota.

To each of their six children, Torger bequeathed a quarter of land.

The pioneering couple sold a quarter to their daughter, Louise, upon her marriage to George Fiegel for \$1.

While they were building the house that Carol and Frank Evans now call home, the Fiegels welcomed their first child.

“All of them were born in that house built in 1920. The first born was born on

the actual homestead. The house was being built when my first aunt was born,” Evans said.

Louise and George owned the house and quarter of land until 1972, at which point ownership was passed onto their daughter Joyce and her husband Orvin Nelson.

“We bought the house in 2011. Last year after my mom passed, we were able to buy the entire quarter,” she recalled.

Carol and Frank then got to work refurbishing the 800-square-foot house.

The Evans live in Arizona in the fall, winter, and spring months, but spent years renovating the farmhouse over the course of several summers.

“We go back in May every year, and we’ve renovated the house from the chimney to the basement,” Evans said.

Their summer stay at the farm begins with the help of Lake Region Electric Association.

“The first thing we do when we get there is turn the power on. Then we turn the water on and then we mow,” she said.

The week over the Fourth of July holiday is especially meaningful to Carol. That’s when her grandchildren make their pilgrimage back to the Gronseth/Fiegel/Nelson/Evans homestead.

“They’re always here around Fort Sisseton Days,” Evans said.

The traditional agenda for the kiddos also includes picnics at Roy Lake, routine farm work, and touching up the paint on an American Flag pallet display located at the base of Torger Gronseth’s tombstone.

“Every one of the kids has learned how to drive when they’re back in South Dakota – because it’s safe,” Evans said.

Evans ensures the next generation knows their family history.

“They know their great grandpa was only 14 years old when he left Norway. The strength of the person to do that – the longevity of our genetic background, the struggle, and the fact that we’re so fortunate – are something they’ll understand,” Evans said.

“And that it’s home. It’s never going to the farm. It’s going home.”



# LREA FINANCIALS

## Assets (What We Own)

| Current Assets and Deferred Charges    | 2023                | 2022                |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cash & Working Funds                   | \$564,403           | \$155,250           |
| Accounts Receivable (less collectible) | \$1,743,139         | \$1,459,068         |
| Materials & Supplies                   | \$1,507,976         | \$1,162,352         |
| Prepayments                            | \$11,072            | \$13,967            |
| Deferred Debits                        | \$204,961           | \$208,143           |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>            | <b>\$4,031,551</b>  | <b>\$2,998,780</b>  |
| Electric Plant                         |                     |                     |
| In Service                             | \$44,218,860        | \$41,396,850        |
| Under Construction                     | \$108,659           | \$354,970           |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation          | (\$12,271,256)      | (\$11,545,744)      |
| <b>TOTAL ELECTRIC PLANT</b>            | <b>\$32,056,263</b> | <b>\$30,206,076</b> |
| Other Property and Investments         |                     |                     |
| Investments-Associated Organizations   | \$11,878,761        | \$11,013,249        |
| Other Investments – Notes Receivable   | \$820,130           | \$918,391           |
| Other Special Funds – Revenue Deferral | \$1,200,000         | \$1,775,000         |
| <b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>               | <b>\$13,898,891</b> | <b>\$13,706,640</b> |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                    | <b>\$49,986,705</b> | <b>\$46,911,496</b> |

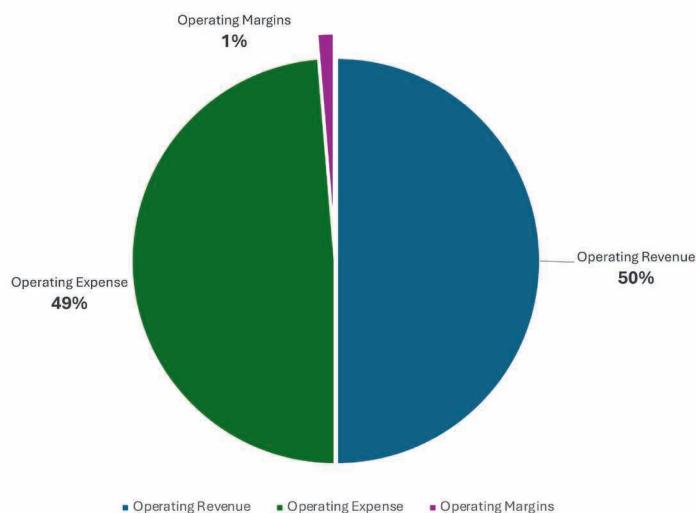
## LIABILITIES (What We Owe)

| Current Liabilities                          | 2023                | 2022                |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Current Maturities Long-Term Debt            | \$1,263,000         | \$1,177,466         |
| Accounts Payable                             | \$1,168,595         | \$1,009,442         |
| Other Current & Accrued Liabilities          | \$244,852           | \$225,177           |
| Customer Deposits                            | \$36,867            | \$37,317            |
| Accrued Taxes                                | \$389,069           | \$394,537           |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES</b> | <b>\$3,102,383</b>  | <b>\$2,843,939</b>  |
| Patronage Capital                            | \$16,405,717        | \$15,639,910        |
| Other Equity                                 | \$3,054,963         | \$2,950,283         |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                          | <b>\$19,460,680</b> | <b>\$18,590,193</b> |
| Deferred Credits                             | \$1,353,106         | \$1,875,131         |
| Long-term debt less Current Maturities       | \$26,070,536        | \$23,602,233        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>                     | <b>\$49,986,705</b> | <b>\$46,911,496</b> |

## STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE

| OPERATING REVENUE                      | 2023                | 2022                |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Electric and Other Revenue             | \$18,652,502        | \$18,271,316        |
| <b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>              | <b>2023</b>         | <b>2022</b>         |
| Purchased Power                        | \$12,977,779        | \$12,556,610        |
| Operations Expense                     | \$931,169           | \$980,727           |
| Maintenance Expense                    | \$449,854           | \$607,962           |
| Consumer Accounting & Collections      | \$96,279            | \$59,269            |
| Consumer Info., Sales & Service        | \$297,392           | \$243,765           |
| Administration & General Expense       | \$1,151,148         | \$1,059,001         |
| Depreciation                           | \$1,193,549         | \$1,206,903         |
| Tax Expense                            | \$319,262           | \$325,604           |
| Interest Expense                       | \$735,365           | \$705,301           |
| Miscellaneous                          | \$13,137            | \$18,643            |
| <b>Total Operating Expenses</b>        | <b>\$18,164,934</b> | <b>\$17,763,785</b> |
| Operating Margins                      | \$487,568           | \$507,531           |
| G & T Capital Credits                  | \$1,051,496         | \$1,448,311         |
| <b>NON-OPERATING MARGIN</b>            |                     |                     |
| Interest Income                        | \$111,558           | \$47,565            |
| Merchandising/Other                    | \$62,677            | \$23,178            |
| <b>Net Margins</b>                     | <b>\$1,713,299</b>  | <b>\$2,026,585</b>  |
| Patronage Capital (Beginning of Year)  | \$15,639,910        | \$14,572,188        |
| Capital Credit Retirement              | (\$876,749)         | (\$804,707)         |
| Other Equity Allocations               | (\$70,743)          | (\$154,156)         |
| <b>Patronage Capital (end of year)</b> | <b>\$16,405,717</b> | <b>\$15,639,910</b> |

# 2023 Operating Totals

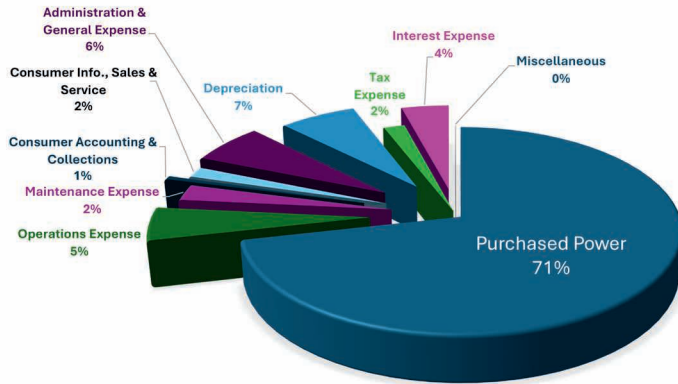


|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Operating Revenue        | \$18,652,502       |
| Operating Expense        | \$18,164,934       |
| <b>Operating Margins</b> | <b>\$487,568</b>   |
| G&T Capital Credits      | \$1,051,496        |
| Non-Operating Revenue    | \$174,235          |
| <b>Net Margins</b>       | <b>\$1,713,299</b> |

# 2023 Expenses

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC 2023 EXPENSES

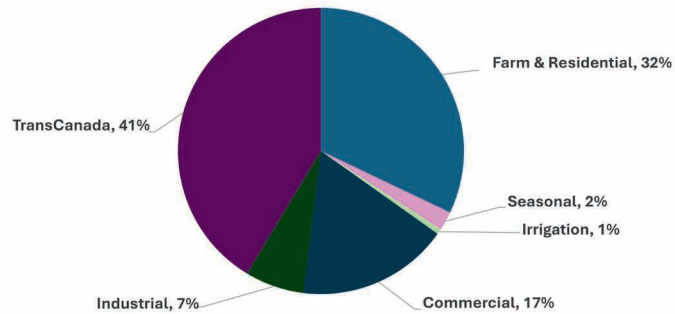
|                                   |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Purchased Power                   | \$12,977,779        |
| Operations Expense                | \$ 931,169          |
| Maintenance Expense               | \$449,854           |
| Consumer Accounting & Collections | \$96,279            |
| Consumer Info., Sales & Service   | \$297,392           |
| Administration & General Expense  | \$1,151,148         |
| Depreciation                      | \$1,193,549         |
| Tax Expense                       | \$ 319,262          |
| Interest Expense                  | \$ 735,365          |
| Miscellaneous                     | \$13,137            |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>             | <b>\$18,164,934</b> |



# 2023 Revenues

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC 2023 REVENUES

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Farm & Residential   | \$5,885,993         |
| Seasonal             | \$396,065           |
| Irrigation           | \$109,336           |
| Commercial           | \$3,144,402         |
| Industrial           | \$1,225,638         |
| Trans-Canada         | \$7,591,754         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b> | <b>\$18,353,188</b> |



# 2023 System Stats

## 2023 System Statistics



**3,442 Meters**



**2,596 Members**



**2,894 Residential**



**530 Small Commercial**



**7 Large Commercial**



**33 Irrigation**



**1653 Miles Energized Line**



**870 Miles Overhead Line**



**783 Miles Underground Line**

LREA Annual Meeting 2024  
Powering Possibilities





# REBUILDING HABITATS

Beavers provide many environmental benefits including drought resilience, flood control and wildlife habitat. *Photo Credit: Richard Hamilton Smith.*

## BEAVER-INSPIRED STREAM RESTORATION

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Centuries ago, the arrival of European traders in North America marked the beginning of a multi-century hunt for furs. The pelt of the North American beaver was at the forefront of this fur trade, prized for its use in crafting felt hats. These stylish hats fueled an ever-increasing demand for beaver furs that persisted for centuries, leading to a severe decline in beaver populations. By the early 1900s, beavers had become critically endangered, nearly vanishing from the expansive wetlands across the continent.

As the beavers dwindled, so did their dams. Lazy streams and rivers, once

tamed by beaver dams, began to flow more rapidly. The disappearance of the dams caused waterways to narrow and floodplains essential to willow trees and cottonwoods to vanish. The loss of these beaver-engineered habitats set the stage for the significant erosion of precious prairie lands.

In 2020, The Nature Conservancy set out to combat these issues by launching a project in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Dakota State University and local conservation agencies to restore stream health in western South Dakota.

“Our West River streams make up a small percentage of the total landscape – just under two percent of our total acreage is stream and valley

bottom,” said Lori Brown, riparian health program manager with The Nature Conservancy. “Yet, nearly everything in the prairie depends on these streams, including us in our rural communities.”

Prior to launching the project, The Nature Conservancy engaged local landowners in discussions to best understand their challenges and needs. During the discussions, several landowners faced similar issues: streams were eroding the land, fence lines were being washed away, and the water table was too low. Despite having effective tools for managing grasslands, landowners lacked the means to best maintain healthy streams.

“We needed to explore options

that any landowner could implement – strategies that didn't require a hydrologist to implement or an engineer to design," Brown said. "Our ranchers and landowners are some of the best stewards of the land. A lot of them are hungry for information and tools that can help them help the land."

The solution was simple, inspired by the ingenious works of an aquatic rodent: an artificial beaver dam. After all, if a beaver can engineer a dam, why can't a landowner?

Known as beaver analog devices, these simple speedbump-like structures quickly became integral to a broader strategy known as process-based restoration, a method that uses nature to help nature. Composed of locally sourced sticks, rocks and mud, beaver analog devices replicate a key natural process once performed naturally by beavers centuries ago. When established correctly, they filter water,

slow fast-flowing streams, and even recreate floodplains.

After settling on a solution, The Nature Conservancy set out to implement the idea in the real world, working with 10 landowners to help build and record the effects of the simulated beaver dams.

"Every day that I go out to one of these sites and I see that the beaver dams that we have built aren't totally washed out, it absolutely amazes me," Brown said. "I've read the manuals and I know how it's supposed to work, but I'm always in awe at what we are able to accomplish with the right building blocks in place."

After four years of the project, Brown said there is a lot to be excited about as the benefits of the project are evident. Signs of stream restoration are well underway. Sediment is accumulating rather than eroding, and revitalized floodplains are sprouting new willow trees.

"Without any planting on our part, woody species are now returning to these stream channels," Brown said. "The next step will be to lean into the success of this project. We want to act as a support for our conservation partners and other interested landowners that want to see their stream condition improve on their properties."

Others have been inspired by demonstrations led by The Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations in the state to take action to slow down and hold water.

"We are just starting to see some of the effects from our outreach and education side of this project," said Brown. "The most rewarding part of this effort has been hearing the stories from local ranchers and landowners and hearing them get excited about the project."



A rock structure installed to help prevent headcuts from eroding upstream reaches. *Photo Credit: Joe Dickie, Generation Photography, Inc.*



# Year in Review

**Construction** has progressed nicely over the past year. We continue to upgrade our aging infrastructure and we converted 34 miles of line from overhead to underground.

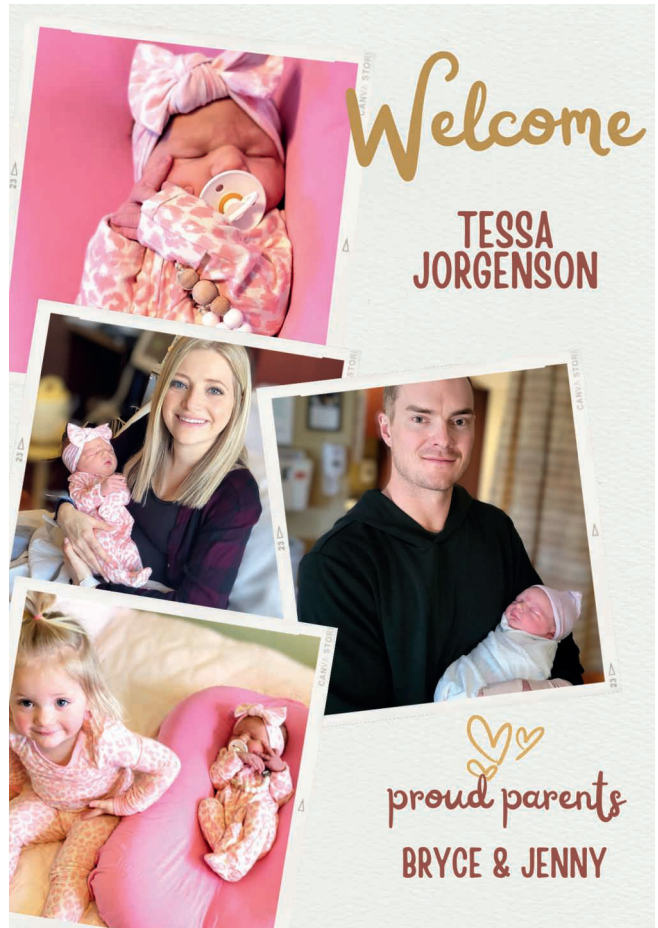


**Frost and Ice** still caused a little trouble, despite the rather mild winter we had.



**Families at Lake Region** have grown over the last year! Bryce Jorgenson, Journeyman Lineman, and his wife Jenny welcomed their daughter Tessa to their family in April. Cody Paszek, Director, and his wife Amanda welcomed twins in April. Justin McClurg, Accountant, and his wife Tarah welcomed Etta to their family last July.

**Basin Members Tour:** Thirty members took a bus to Bismarck to tour Basin Electric facilities and learn more about where our electricity comes from.





## Year in Review, Continued

### Committed to Education and Community

#### LREA sponsored educational trips for five area students:

Four students from Lake Region territory joined students from across the state for an all-expenses paid, fun and educational trip to tour nation's capital. One LREA student joined the Youth Excursion trip to Bismarck.



#### Scholarships Awarded:

- **Carter Williams** was awarded \$1,000 from Basin Electric Power Cooperative.
- **Emma Kraft** from Britton was awarded \$1,000 from Lake Region/Basin Electric Scholarship.
- **Ella Hegg** of Webster was awarded \$1,000 from Lake Region for the Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship.
- **Megan Gustafson, Caleb Weyh, and Chase Shoemaker** were recognized as Touchstone Energy Scholar of The Week, and each received \$250.

#### Concern for Community

- Lake Region partnered with Co-bank to give \$20,000 to help programs in our communities.
- 65 cases of water donated to local schools labeled with the school mascot and a safety message.
- Lake Region hosted High Voltage demonstrations for area first responders, and other groups.
- Safety training and demonstrations were held at area schools and fairs.

## Lake Region Electric Employees

### Powering Possibilities

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| General Manager |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |  |  |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |  |
| Office Services |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |  |  | Information Technologies |    |                                                                                       |  |
| Member Services |                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |  |  |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |  |
| Operations      |         |  |  |  |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |  |



**JUNE 12-JULY 20, 2024**  
**Prairie Repertory Theatre**  
**Summer Season**  
Oscar Larson Performing  
Arts Center  
Brookings, SD  
605-688-6045



To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

**MAY 31-JUNE 2**  
**Fort Sisseton Historical Festival**  
11907 434th Ave.  
Lake City, SD  
605-910-4465

**JUNE 1**  
**LaFramboise Island Bike Race**  
10:30 a.m.  
S. Poplar Ave.  
Pierre, SD  
605-222-0338

**JUNE 1**  
**Annual Casey Tibbs Match of Champions**  
Stanley County Fairgrounds  
Fort Pierre, SD  
605-494-1094

**JUNE 1-2**  
**We Love Locals Weekend**  
10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Keystone, SD

**JUNE 6-9**  
**Wheel Jam**  
South Dakota State Fairgrounds  
Huron, SD  
605-353-7340

**JUNE 7-9**  
**Family Fun Weekend**  
Wylie Park  
Aberdeen, SD  
605-626-7015

**JUNE 8**  
**Marshall County Relay for Life**  
2-10 p.m.  
Britton Event Center  
Britton, SD

**JUNE 8**  
**Grace's Gas-Guzzlers Car Show, Carnival & Silent Auction**  
Grace Lutheran Church  
Watertown, SD

**JUNE 9**  
**Brookings Car Show**  
11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Pioneer Park  
Brookings, SD

**JUNE 12-13**  
**Rangeland & Soil Days Contest**  
Codington County Extension Building  
Watertown, SD

**JUNE 20**  
**Prairie Partners Master Gardeners Garden Walk**  
Aberdeen, SD

**JUNE 22-23**  
**"Our Place: 15 Years of Onaka" Photography Exhibit**  
11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sat.  
12-4p.m. Sunday  
Onaka Community Hall  
Onaka, SD

**JUNE 28-29**  
**Buckhorn Rodeo**  
7 p.m. each night  
8 miles east of Britton  
Britton, SD

**JULY 13**  
**9th Annual Auto Value Car Show**  
11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Hav-A-Rest Campground  
Redfield, SD

**JULY 14**  
**Lion's Club Summer Fest/ Car Show**  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Groton City Park  
Groton, SD

**JULY 25**  
**Groton Summer Downtown Sip & Shop**  
5-8 p.m.  
Groton, SD

**JULY 26-28**  
**Clear Lake Days**  
ClearLakeDays.com  
Clear Lake, SD

**JULY 28**  
**Langford Car Show**  
Park of the Pines  
Langford, SD

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