

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The success of the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally requires many megawatts of power provided by member-owned electric cooperatives, including lighting the main stage at the Buffalo Chip
Photo by Travel South Dakota

The Rally

Keeping the Sturgis Rally juiced up
Pages 8-9

High-flying fun at Catfish Bay
Pages 12-13

Worth fighting for



Tim McIntyre
General Manager

It is hard to believe that summer is half gone. I'm pretty sure that I was still wearing a heavy coat to shovel snow just a few days ago! Boy, how time flies, and it just seems to go faster these days! Speaking of time flying by, Lake Region Electric just held our 82nd Annual Meeting of Members! While we still have some members who remember what it was like before electricity was brought to the area, many of us will never know the struggles. I've said it before and I will say it again, we all take for granted that the light and the coffee pot are just going to turn on in the morning when we flip the switch.

Lake Region Electric Association started 82 years ago, but the cooperative model was set up and rural electrification started before that. Farmers in this area had to wait even longer, after our cooperative was formed, before the power came to their homes and farms. Through all of the setbacks and waiting, they fought for this cooperative, themselves, and their neighbors. They worked hard and look at what they created: a wonderful cooperative that continually supports our members and our communities!

These pioneers of electricity faced many battles in order to bring us the power that we just come to expect from our electric co-op, but they had a plan that succeeded because they worked together. They knew that this was something worth fighting for. Our forefathers got together and set up core values that are important for every cooperative to

be accountable and successful. These values came to be known as The Seven Cooperative Principles. These guiding principles are just as important today as they were back in the early days of rural electrification.

We at Lake Region Electric realize what sort of sacrifices were made to bring us the reliable power we have today.

While some electric providers have been swayed by money or distracted by shiny objects, we at Lake Region Electric realize what sort of sacrifices were made to bring us the reliable power we have today. We understand the importance of sticking together to make sure our member-owned cooperative remains viable and reliable now and well into the future. We know it's imperative that we keep our money here supporting the communities we serve.

We bear in mind the work that our forefathers put in to bring power to our rural farms and homes, and we intend to continue to stick with the cooperative model, guided by the 7 Cooperative Principles that were laid out for all areas of the country to succeed.

Enjoy the rest of your summer. I sure hope you have a little time to slow down and relax.

Thank you & God bless,
Timothy McIntyre

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Ryan & Laura Siefkes
Morgan Johnson
Chris Heminger

Ronald & Karen Erdmann
Chad & Stephanie Sjurson
Mike Keller

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

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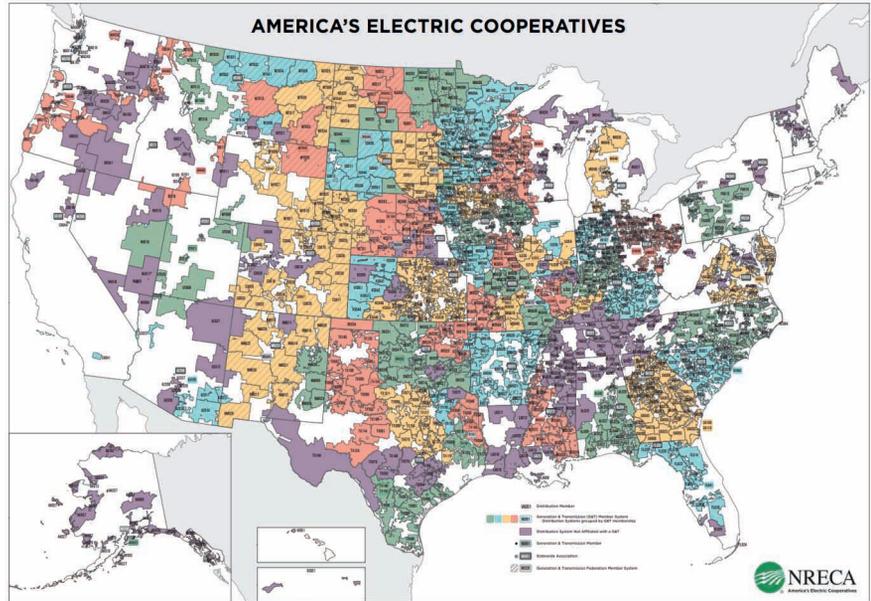
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LAKE REGION RIPPLES COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc., PO Box 341, 1212 N Main St., Webster, SD 57274. Lake Region Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable,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

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7 CO-OP PRINCIPLES

Community
 Independence
 Democratic
 Membership
 Education
 Cooperation
 Economics



CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY
 While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.



AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE
 Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.



DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL
 Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.



VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP
 Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.



EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION
 Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.



COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES
 Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.



MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
 Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

Electrical safety basics for children

The back-to-school season is a time when parents and school children fall back into the familiar routine of getting up early, getting dressed, grabbing breakfast, preparing lunch and shuffling out the door each day.

It's a time when students return to a learning mindset, ready to take on new ideas, knowledge and information.

Parents should seize the opportunity to teach school-age children a valuable and potentially lifesaving lesson: Respect electricity.

Here are several electrical safety basics every child should know:

- Mixing water and electricity can be deadly. Teach children not to use electric toys or other devices near water or in the rain.
- Plugging multiple devices into a single outlet or power strip can create sparks and even cause a fire if that outlet can't handle the load. Teach kids to plug into surge-protected power strips or to use one device at a time and unplug the rest.

When they unplug those devices, they should grab them by the plug, not the cord. Yanking a cord out of an electrical outlet can damage the appliance, the outlet or the plug.

- Electrical cords can be strangling hazards and might cause electrical burns if they are misused. Make sure youngsters keep cords away from their mouths and necks. It's best to hide cords so they aren't a temptation.

- Electrical outlets are receptacles for electrical plugs only. Children should know from an early age that it's a no-no to put foreign objects or fingers into power plugs. Sticking any other items into an electrical socket can lead to electric shock or death. Use childproofing outlet covers.

- Flying kites and climbing trees are never safe activities near power lines. If a tree has a power line running through it - or if it's even within reach of the line - it's not a safe place to play. If a kite gets caught in a power line, the child should not tug on it to get it loose. The string could conduct electricity and seriously hurt the child.

- Electrical substations are fenced off to keep children and animals out of the area. If a toy or small pet gets inside the fence, the child should inform a parent or teacher, who can call a trained worker to come and retrieve it.

COOPERATIVES HELP OUR MEMBERS SOLVE PROBLEMS



Electric co-op member services personnel focus their attention on making sure co-op members get the power they need when they need it. They help homeowners and businesses solve problems and find solutions to operate more efficiently. A group of co-op representatives recently took a guided tour of the Riverview Dairy near Watertown to learn how the dairy functions and how the local co-op can provide better service to the facility.

You can find out more about the many ways our electric cooperatives serve our members by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



Swim safely

Alayna Smith

Alayna, age 10, alerts both the young and old alike to refrain from swimming when any thunderstorms are around. Alayna is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith and they are members of H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake.

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.

TASTY SUMMER SALADS

SHELL MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

1 7-oz. box of shell macaroni, cooked, rinsed and cooled
2-3 fresh tomatoes, chopped
1/3 green pepper, chopped
3 celery ribs, sliced thinly
1/4 c. chopped onion
1 cucumber, seeded & chopped

Toss ingredients together; set aside.

Dressing

1/2 c. canola oil
3/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. vinegar
3/4 c. catsup
Dash of lemon juice

METHOD

Mix dressing ingredients well with wire whip and add to veggies and macaroni.

Joan Antonen, Arlington

TUNA AND EGG SALAD

Ingredients:

3 6-oz. cans tuna packed in water
3 eggs hard boiled, peeled and chopped
2 small dill pickles diced
1 large celery rib diced
1/4 cup red onion minced
1 tbsp. lemon juice or red wine vinegar
2 tsp. garlic powder, optional
1/4 tsp. salt, to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2%+ fat
2 tbsp. mayo

METHOD

Drain cans with tuna well by pressing hard on the lid while draining. Transfer to a large bowl and separate into flakes with a fork. Add chopped and peeled hard boiled eggs, pickles, celery, red onion, lemon juice, garlic powder (if using), salt, pepper, yogurt and mayo. Stir well with a fork and refrigerate. Serve cold in a sandwich or over salad greens.

ifoodreal.com

GARDEN VEGGIES 'N ROTINI

Ingredients:

3/4 c. oil
3/4 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. white sugar
1 tsp. garlic salt
2 tbsp. onion flakes
1 tbsp. mustard
Bring the above ingredients to a boil and remove from heat.
Cook 4 cups colored rotini noodles. Rinse and chill.
Cut up the following in chunky pieces:
1 tomato
1 cucumber
assorted peppers
1/2 red onion

METHOD

Stir veggies together with the rotini and dressing. Chill before serving.

Ginny Jensen, Volga

NANCY'S MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

Dice:

1 onion
1 green pepper
1-2 carrots
1 cup celery
2 cups Velveeta Cheese

Add:

1 can peas
1 - 16 oz. pkg. macaroni cooked and drained

Dressing:

1 cup sugar
1 pint mayo
1 cup white vinegar
1 - 14 oz. can evaporated milk

METHOD

Mix together gently and refrigerate, best overnight. Add any type of meat, boiled eggs etc., as desired.

Nancy Nelson, Mission Hill

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Unclaimed capital credits: Help us get our member's money to them



One thing that sets Lake Region Electric Association apart from other electric companies is that we are a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative. LREA allocates any excess margins to our consumers after paying all the bills, reinvesting in infrastructure, and meeting our financial obligations. Lake Region tracks the allocations and refunds the money to our member-owners, as cash positions allow. The Lake Region Board of Directors approved more than \$710,000 this year. Active Members saw their refund as a credit on their bill that was sent out at the beginning of May. Inactive members were mailed a check in June.

Here's where you can help your fellow cooperative members: a number of checks were returned to Lake Region as undeliverable by the post office. We are asking for your help getting these payments to previous account holders. If you know the current address or phone number of anyone listed here, please notify them to contact us, or contact Lake Region Electric Association by calling 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869 or by sending an email to lakeregion@lakeregion.coop. Thank you for your help!

Unclaimed capital credits

| FIRST NAME | LAST NAME | CITY/STATE |
|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| Paul | Ackerman | Phillipsburg, MT |
| Ben or Bonnie | Anderson | Webster, SD |
| Terry or Wanda | Block | Bristol, SD |
| Orville | Brandlee | Bristol, SD |
| Aaron | Buss | Fargo, ND |
| Karen | Davis | Redfield, SD |
| Calvin | Diehl | Oakes, ND |
| Dawn | Feather | Houston, TX |
| Elizabeth | Goodsell | Sisseton, SD |
| Mark | Hanse | Claremont, SD |
| Joseph or Donna | Hanson | Sioux Falls, SD |
| Chris | Hinkelman | Summit, SD |
| Harley | Hoisington | Eden, SD |

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Amanda | Holy Bull | Fargo, ND |
| Mark | Janisch | Britton, SD |
| Charles | Jaspersen | Willmar, MN |
| Lee P | Johnson | Britton, SD |
| Mary C | Joyner | Sisseton, SD |
| Tami | Joyner | Mason City, IA |
| Don or Macella | Kotzea | Webster, SD |
| Pat | Kulesa | Laramie, WY |
| Jeff | LaCroix | Sisseton, SD |
| Robyn | Lacroix | Sisseton, SD |
| Alfred | Lamee | Britton, SD |
| Lance | Larsen | Bath, SD |
| Lisa | Likness Halbert | Sisseton, SD |
| Lisa or Phillip | Macconnell | Britton, SD |
| Dean | Marske | Aberdeen, SD |
| Roger | McKittrick | Coon Rapids, MN |
| Nancy O. | Nelson | Britton, SD |
| Jeffrey | Opitz | Roslyn, SD |
| Marlys | Osness | Sioux Falls, SD |
| John | Owen | Watertown, SD |
| Everett or Caron | Peck | Sioux Falls, SD |
| Rick | Peckham | Clark, SD |
| Joseph or Debbie | Peterson | Sisseton, SD |
| Dawn | Price | Manistee, MI |
| Carl | Privatt | Advance, MO |
| Marsha | Renville | Agency Village, SD |
| Craig | Rickert | Sioux Falls, SD |
| Paul or Mary | Rickert | Sioux Falls, SD |
| Robert | Rohl | Aberdeen, SD |
| Robert or Eugene | Rumpza | Grenville, SD |
| Elmer | St John | Veblen, SD |
| Adelaide | Swanson | Brookings, SD |
| Gregg | Tobin | Winner, SD |
| John or Jerry | Vrochta | Sisseton, SD |
| Geraldine | Walker | Waubay, SD |
| Larry | Wertman | Manchester, NH |

| BUSINESS/ORG. | CONTACT NAME | CITY/STATE |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Ray Kwasniewski Est... | Beverly Kwasniewski | Webster, SD |
| Lew Marian Est. | Tammy Paul | Anchorage, AK |
| MM Sigaty Est. | Nancy Sigaty | Peoria, AZ |
| Wayne Bowers Est. | Kay Marie Bowers | Montrose, CA |
| Sy Herrick Est. | Linda Herrick | Webster, SD |



Members who are considering adding a grain bin or a new dryer to their farming operation are encouraged to contact Lake Region Electric about their plans to accommodate power supply.

Thinking about installing a new grain bin?

As fall soon approaches, area farmers may be thinking of adding another grain bin for storage, or possibly a grain dryer, to their operations.

Lake Region Electric would really like to hear from members as you are in the very first stages of your plan. There are several reasons why it is important to communicate with your local electric cooperative during the planning stages.

One of the reasons is safety. There may be overhead, or even underground, powerlines in the area where you are having the grain bin installed and we will need to make sure there are no safety risks present, and how to avoid any safety issues that may come up in the process.

Secondly, it is important for Lake Region Electric to review the service location, motor sizes and future plans for bin expansion at the site so that we can provide the best service to the member and the surrounding area.

Services are limited in some areas,

and we have had members put in grain bins and dryers that are oversized and can affect the power quality for their neighbors.

Lake Region Electric Operations Manager Jim Grimes explains, “We typically try and run new sites through the engineering department at the cooperative to make sure we can determine any impact there might be on the system.”

Another reason to contact Lake Region Electric during the planning stages of your project is due to supply chain issues as of late. Materials and electrical equipment such as some transformers, amongst others, have been known to have lead times of over a year before supplies can be delivered. This is an issue that essentially all electric cooperatives across the country are facing.

Lake Region Electric’s Manager of Member Services Brett Kwasniewski wants to remind everyone, “Members

Materials and electrical equipment such as some transformers, amongst others, have been known to have lead times of over a year before supplies can be delivered.

who are interested in having LREA’s service department complete the wiring part of your project, should contact us when you begin to put together your plans. An early contact is a really good idea, as the department’s schedule is very full through the summer and fall months.”

An early call may help you get on the service department’s upcoming schedule and help avoid delays in completing your project!

CO-OPS KEEP THE RALLY ROLLING



Electric co-ops are committed to keeping The Rally energized

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The frenetic atmosphere that has come to be associated with the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally can be loud, chaotic and - well let's just say - very colorful.

But behind those vivid scenes are electric cooperative employees working hard to make sure the Rally has the juice required to keep the lights glaring, the amps blaring, the air conditioners humming and the blenders blending.

The three local co-ops that serve the Black Hills and surrounding area are Butte Electric, West River Electric and Black Hills Electric. In conjunction with wholesale supplier Rushmore Electric in Rapid City and power generator Basin Electric based in Bismarck, N.D., the co-ops deliver much of the electricity used by campgrounds, restaurants, shops, concert stages, biker bars and other entertainment venues.

The power providers are diligent about keeping pace with the increasing growth of The Rally, which is rebounding from a temporary drop in attendance brought on by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years.

Corey Trapp, chief engineering officer at Rushmore Electric, said power demand can increase significantly during The Rally. For instance, he indicated the area north of Sturgis served by Butte Electric that includes Full Throttle and other sites can jump from 1-2 MW to 8-9 MW during the event.

At the Buffalo Chip, West River Electric has nearly 40 meters located across the 600-acre spread serving scores of bars, campgrounds and cabins, as well as the main stage. Power use skyrockets from about 30 KW to more than 4.2 MW.

This year marks the 82nd installment of The Rally. Ten years ago, organizers were concerned about the potential future of the event if younger riders didn't start joining in on the fun. According to data gathered by local government agencies, Mount Rushmore National Park and other sources, attendance is back on the upswing.

An estimated 555,000 riders participated in the Rally last August, up nearly 14 percent from 2020 and an increase of 9.5 percent over the five-year average from 2016 to 2020.

Statistics show that nearly 30 percent of attendees were first-timers in 2021, which is welcomed news for promoters who work year-around to keep The Rally rolling, including



RALLY FACTS

- 🏍️ 555,000 – No. of 2021 participants
- 🏍️ 54 – avg. age in 2019
- 🏍️ 46.5 – avg. age in 2021
- 🏍️ 52% - campground attendees
- 🏍️ 18% - hotel attendees
- 🏍️ \$81,005 - avg. household income
- 🏍️ \$382 - spent per day
- 🏍️ 85% - motorcycle owners
- 🏍️ 81% - Harley owners
- 🏍️ \$1,090,398 - raised for charity

the city of Sturgis, the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the Black Hills and Badlands Tourism Association and scores of business owners who depend on the seasonal revenue to sustain their operations.

The increased buzz of activity keeps the V-twin economic engines purring throughout the Black Hills area, but delivering the power has its own set of challenges that may not be apparent to partiers. Electric cooperative officials report that global shortages in materials and supplies make it difficult to meet the increase in power demand, but they're committed to doing everything possible to meet that demand.

“We’re seeing delays in equipment necessary for infrastructure upgrades, but we know how important electricity is for The Rally to run successfully,” said Brett Fosheim, director of operations at Butte Electric based in Newell. “A lot of visitors and business owners are

An estimated 555,000 visitors enjoyed the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally last year. As attendance climbs, electric cooperatives are committed to delivering the power needed to keep the party going. *Photos by South Dakota Travel*

depending on us, so we’re prepared every year to step up to the plate with power that’s affordable, reliable and there when everybody needs it.”

Fosheim said just as organizers work all year long to plan and promote the 10-day event, electric cooperatives also anticipate the rise in electricity demand and coordinate with their common power generator, Basin Electric, to fill the need and handle peak loads. Butte Electric serves Full Throttle, Days Inn Campground and the Sons of Silence Campground, among other venues.

Because electric cooperatives are created by their members to serve their members, they’ve been delivering electricity since the early days of The Rally. The annual event traces its roots back to 1938 when a group of Indian Motorcycle enthusiasts led by local franchise owner Clarence “Pappy” Hoel got together to race one another, pull off some riding stunts and party together around a common interest in the brand.

What started as a quaint occasion called the Black Hills Classic with just

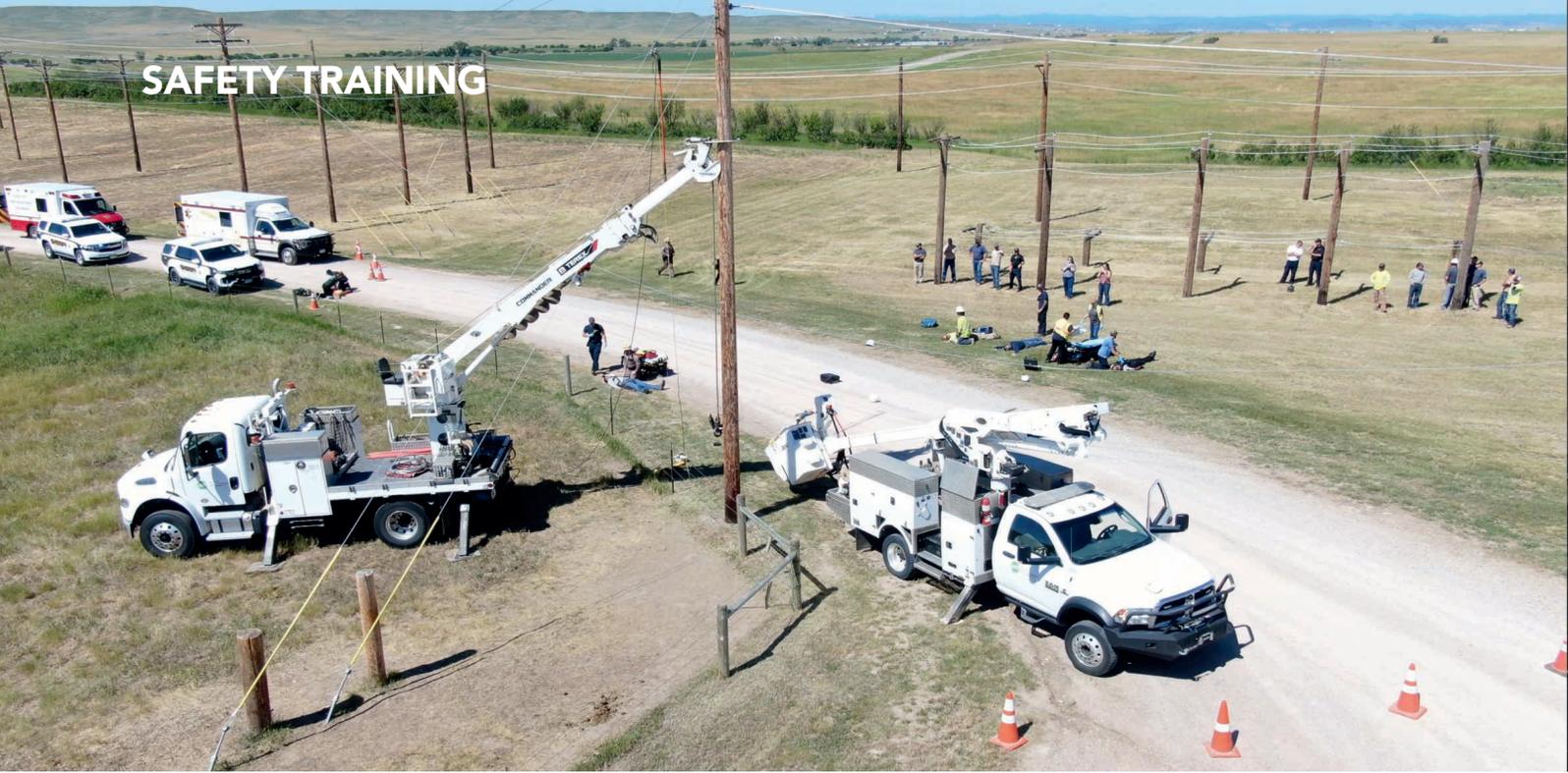
nine racers and a sparse crowd has become an international attraction.

Except for the World War II years between 1939 and 1941, The Rally has been a much-anticipated mainstay attracting visitors from across the planet. During the war, organizers suspended the event due to gas restrictions in support of the war effort.



While the current supply shortages mentioned by Fosheim have kept power providers on their toes and doubly prepared for The Rally, he said cooperatives are committed to delivering quality service not only during the event but long after the riders have peeled out of town.

SAFETY TRAINING



A mayday drill was conducted near New Underwood to train co-op employees and first responders. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Mock mayday drill highlights cooperative training programs

By Laura London and Billy Gibson

A tragic scene unfolded near New Underwood last month with several accident victims lying on the ground severely injured after making contact with an energized power line.

There was blood, bruises and burn marks. Sirens blared, engines revved and vehicles kicked up clouds of dust as more than a half-dozen agencies arrived to save lives, manage the crisis and reduce the risk of further harm. Paramedics, deputies and other first responders began CPR on the victims and hauled them into ambulances.

Fortunately, the scenario was fake news, all part of a mock mayday drill organized by West River Electric at the Brinks Training Facility east of Rapid City. The co-op staged the drill not only for the benefit of its linemen and other employees but also to educate first responders on how to work in the presence of electric utility infrastructure.

“The goal was for everyone to get something out of it, from the paramedics to the dispatchers,” said Brendan Nelson, line superintendent at West River Electric. “It was an effective

exercise, but we hope we never actually have to go through something like this. All the co-ops in our system throughout the state and region strive to develop a culture of safety and we’re all working to achieve the same objective - getting everybody back home to their families at the end of the day.”

Nelson said there were many lessons to be learned regarding managing an accident scene, coordinating communication and maneuvering around what are always assumed to be energized power lines. After the drill, participants held a debriefing session and compared notes back at the co-op’s office in Rapid City.

CULTURE OF SAFETY

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, also attended the exercise. He said electric cooperatives place the highest priority on safety and invest considerable time and resources toward making sure line workers are prepared to respond to emergency situations as they arise.

“All of our co-ops take safety training very seriously,” Patterson said. “Part of

that commitment means participating in these kinds of drills and other training programs to make sure we’re prepared to respond to accidents and emergency situations as expeditiously as possible. To make sure our response is effective, it’s important that we have a good idea about our roles and responsibilities well before an accident occurs.”

Patterson and his team conduct on-site safety programs at cooperatives like Lake Region Electric throughout the year, including rubber-gloving, hot-sticking, grounds testing, pole-top rescues, equipment inspections, state and federal rules and regulations, First Aid and more.

He emphasized that intra-agency coordination and awareness of the presence of power lines are paramount in successfully managing an accident scene and saving lives.

“Sometimes an emergency responder might not be fully aware of power lines and transformers and other equipment because they’re focusing on other things in an intense situation,” Patterson said. “So we just want to have some conversations to make sure everyone knows that we need to assume all equipment is energized and to notify us as soon as possible so we can get to the scene and do what we need to do to lower the risk of danger.”



Cooperatives work with first responders to prepare for emergency situations. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

PRACTICING SAFETY LREA

Lake Region Electric also strives to create and maintain a culture of safety to reduce the risk of harm not only for co-op employees, but for members and the public at-large as well. General Manager Tim McIntyre emphasized that safety is the primary focus when working to provide members with reliable service.

“We are committed to zero contacts. We send these guys out there day and night to do an extremely dangerous job. We need to make sure they are properly trained and are able to watch out for each other so they can return home to their families,” he said.

It can be easy to become complacent, especially when doing a particular job you may have done many times before. That is why Lake Region Electric holds regular safety meetings and has a designated Safety Committee chaired by Bryce Jorgenson. Daily checklists are performed and procedures are followed; employees are encouraged to remind their co-workers of safety practices and to watch out for one another.

Jorgenson observed: “Safety should always be on your mind. Sometimes the job is routine, and sometimes it changes. But the need for safety never changes.”

Every department holds safety meetings with topics ranging from

workplace complacency to allergies. Law enforcement officers conduct demonstrations on drug recognition, D.O.T rules and other subjects.

Manager of Member Services Brett Kwasniewski discusses safety with his team on a regular basis and said when he was a crew foreman, he would end every tailgate meeting with the reminder, “Be safe and we all go home tonight.”

Manager of Operations Jim Grimes said in addition to day-to-day safety awareness, emergency response is also a vital component of the co-op’s overall safety regimen and includes maintaining clear lines of communication with local first responders.

“We have a great relationship with our local and regional law enforcement officers, fire departments, ambulance services, medical teams and others to make sure we can coordinate our response in a timely fashion when an emergency situation develops,” he said.

Cultivating a safe working environment not only benefits the co-op by reducing the risk of injury but it also saves money. Any time an employee is out with a physical injury, it means that individual isn’t on the job working to serve the members. A successful safety program reduces reportable lost-time accidents, lowers insurance premiums and increases operation efficiencies.

There are many aspects that members don’t often think about, such as safe driving practices. LREA linemen and electricians are on the road every day and travel many thousands of miles each year going from job to job. Just making sure the crews are trained in safe driving habits reduces insurance premiums, saves on vehicle accident repairs and so on. Safety saves lives and money.

McIntyre stressed: “Safety is our priority, so next time we have to turn the power off for a short period to make repairs, please be patient. We are doing this for our crew’s safety as well as your own. We just want everyone to go home to their loved ones every night.”



LREA’s safety training program includes pole top rescue drills.



FAMILY FUN AT CATFISH BAY

Summer fun for the entire family awaits at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park in Sioux Falls. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Pigs fly and family fun abounds at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

If you stop by Catfish Bay, you probably won't see a single catfish during your stay. But you will definitely see a pig flying, a chicken hurtling through the air and water skis sprouting up from a pocketful of magic seeds.

Catfish Bay Water Ski Park, located just off I-90 in Sioux Falls, is a family entertainment venue where a squad of highly skilled skiers leap and spin and build four-tier human pyramids as they skim across the water's surface.

Billed as "The Greatest Show on H2O," the event attracts spectators from miles around who show up each Friday evening during the summer months to see the high-flying theatrics reminiscent of Florida's famed Cypress Gardens. The show features ski jumpers dressed as chickens, Hee Haw-inspired corn pone humor and a daredevil in a pig costume elevating 30 feet into the air astride a water-propelled fly board.

The show is the brainchild of Jim

Bruns, an idea that spawned from his mind as "a God thing." While he was a college student in the early '90s, Bruns joined the Sioux Falls Water Ski Club and honed his skills enough to turn pro.

It was during college that he hatched a plan to establish a show similar to those being staged at SeaWorld and other similar sites. First thing he needed was a lake. He found the perfect spot when a contractor dug out a 25-acre borrow pit adjacent to the interstate. He bought the pit and – voila! – one man-made lake...just add water.

Second thing he needed was a performing cast. Bruns gathered some of his fellow skiers of all ages and sizes, pulled together a program and then plowed forward for a few years determined to make the show a success. Just when he began wondering if he was going to be able to keep the labor-intensive venture alive, he experienced another epiphany. He needed to rededicate the program to building youth, strengthening families and developing leaders. He formed a

mission statement: "MV2 – Mission, Vision and Values."

"It was a simple plan from the start," Bruns said just before the start of the season-opening show on Memorial Day. "But in 2007 I hit a wall. I sat down and prayed about it and came up with MV2. Now I have so many stories of kids who have come out here and learned a skill and learned about teamwork and goal-setting. They learn how to overcome obstacles."

One of those youngsters is Beth Bruggeman, who serves as assistant show director. A recent college graduate, she has been involved in the program for 10 years. She was a 13-year-old gymnast and cheerleader when she decided to try out for the ski team and now she's a star in the show with boundless energy, a beaming smile and a scar on her eyebrow as her personal badge of courage and grit.

"One of the things I like about it is there are people who participate of all skill levels who are anywhere from 6 to 60 years old. You don't find groups with that kind of diversity. You get to form different kinds of connections and friendships," she said.

Brun's own children, James and Amara, are two other stars of the show. Amara, 13, professes to be the more gushingly dramatic. A student at O'Gorman Junior High, Amara has been part of the act since she was 2, riding on her dad's shoulders. Today she barefoots, swivels, climbs the pyramid and charms the crowd with her effervescent smile.

"I like entertaining people and making them feel like they've come to a special place," she said.

Beside Brun's, Jeremiah Newman is another example of the motto: the family that skis together stays together. He and his children, 14-year-old Marissa and 12-year-old Tyler, are involved in all aspects of the show. He's a member of the military and a former international professional skier who still competes around the region and specializes in performing flips and twists on an air chair hydrofoil.

"This is such a family-friendly environment. It's priceless. It keeps me active and it keeps our family close. Instead of sitting on the sidelines watching my kids, I get to be out there with them," he said. "We talk about the importance of making a life-long commitment to fitness and good nutrition and things that will serve them well along the way."

While the skiers are preparing for their next set, attention turns toward the stage area and a charming recurring character named Norman, who always comes up with some crackpot scheme that never fails to fail. Brun's explains that the Norman character stands as a metaphor for anyone who has had a dream and felt the frustration of failure.

"The thing about Norman that makes him different is that he never loses his enthusiasm and keeps on trying," Brun's said. "His motto is to dream big and never give up."

Brun's is living out the dream he had as a younger man. To this point, Norman has never revealed his last name. But it could very well be Brun's.

Below, Catfish Bay performers pull off a "four-stack" configuration. At right, the character known as "Norman" rides a flying pig.





TOUCHSTONE SUPPORTS H.S. RODEO

The Touchstone Energy flag has flown proudly at the last 20 State High School Rodeo Finals. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Electric co-ops support high school rodeo through popular Short Go Shirt program

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Folks who attended the State High School Rodeo Finals in Fort Pierre this summer could see Tobi Hintz coming from halfway across the arena.

Hintz is a student at Timber Lake High School and serves as the association's 2022 Rodeo Queen. She cut a dashing figure at the event with her decorative sash, bright red lipstick, fringed shoulder bag, buckle-shaped sterling silver earrings and baby blue cowgirl hat with a sparkling tiara wrapped above the brim.

Oh, and she can also ride pretty well, too. Over the past two years, she's earned Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirts at the state finals in recognition of her rodeo skills in barrel racing and pole bending.

This year marked the 20th celebration of the Touchstone Energy Short Go

Shirt program. Since 2002, Touchstone Energy cooperatives have donated more than \$140,000 towards the program that honors contestants who make it to the Short Go round of the state finals competition in their respective events.

This year in Fort Pierre, 145 student-athletes visited the Touchstone Energy booth to sign up for their shirts, which will be embroidered with the TSE logo and delivered to contestants this fall.

While Hintz has a bubbly personality and a flair for fashion, she takes pride in wearing her two Short Go Shirts that identify her as an accomplished competitor.

"It's so cool and it's such an honor to win a Short Go Shirt," she said. "It's so unique for us competitors because I don't know how many states actually get the opportunity to receive something like this. Every contestant appreciates it. The more shirts the merrier!"

Tobi, a national finalist in the rodeo

queen competition two years ago, has been involved in rodeo from a young age and said she likes the friendships that are forged with her peers.

"You meet so many people and make so many friends. Sometimes you wonder why you're doing it, but then you learn that there's a rhyme and reason for all the chaos and madness," she said.

Ann Sundermann has served as executive secretary for the High School Rodeo Association for the past 17 years. She describes the level of enthusiasm surrounding the TSE Short Go program that she's experienced over the years.

"Winning one of these shirts is the thing the kids anticipate the most," Sundermann said during a brief pause in the rodeo action. "We'll have 40 kids coming into the office asking where do they sign up for their Short Go Shirts. Then once they've been ordered they want to know when is their Short Go Shirt coming in. All the kids know about Touchstone because they've seen these shirts for the past 20 years."



Over the past 20 years, electric cooperatives have distributed more than 3,200 Short Go Shirts.

Sundermann said she's seen a lot of value from the program that demonstrates the electric cooperative system's ongoing involvement in youth development, education, sports activities and overall community support.

"It's been a privilege to work with the local electric cooperatives. They take pictures of the kids with their shirts and run them in their magazines and the kids send the pictures to us. They give the kids a lot of recognition for all their hard work and all they've achieved. With the commitment cooperatives have to their communities and their support for this outstanding program, I think it's a great long-term partnership and we look forward to continuing for many years to come," she said.

Marty Philips is public relations coordinator for the association. He noted that Short Go Shirts don't spend much time stashed away and gathering dust in the closet.

"The shirts get worn out because the kids wear them constantly. They're right at the front of their closets. It's such a great honor for them. They wear them to work, they wear them to school, they wear them to college and even when they're adults. I see them all over the state," Philips said. "They wear them

with pride because they know they earned it and they know they did the work to make it to the Short Go round. A lot of kids think it's better than a buckle. We appreciate what TSE has done for the kids because that's what this is all about, it's all about the kids. Everything we do is for the kids."

Todd Eliason, a recent retiree from Rushmore Electric in Rapid City who administered the program for Touchstone Energy since it began in 2002, said he looked forward to working with rodeo organizers and the student-athletes each year.

"These kids are our future, and to see how goal-oriented and determined they are and to see how hard they work, it really makes you feel positive about the future," he said.

Eliason cited Layni Stevens as a prime example. Not only did Layni earn a Short Go Shirt but she also punched her ticket to the national event in Gillette, W.Y., by finishing first in the girl's cutting competition.

"It's such an honor to receive a Short Go Shirt. The more shirts, the merrier!"

- Rodeo Queen Tobi Hintz

"I'm just grateful to be at the finals and it's an even greater blessing to get to wear a Short Go Shirt," Layni said. "It's one of your goals to get to the Short Go round. Sometimes it doesn't always go your way, but to know you get the reward of getting a shirt is just really cool. You can wear it all year long, to all kinds of events and to college."

To see a video of the event, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT-oZ1Oxn7o



REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____

AUGUST 16-18

Dakotafest

Photo Credit: AFBF photo/Philip Gerlach



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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**EVERY TUESDAY,
JULY-OCTOBER
Webster Area Farmers
Market**

486 Main St., Webster, SD,
facebook.com/farmersmarketwebstersodak

**JULY 24
Langford Car Show**
Park of the Pines, Langford, SD,
Call Russel Nickelson at
605-493-6597 for more info

**JULY 29-31
Bruce Honey Days**
Various Locations, Bruce, SD,
605-627-5671

**JULY 29-31
Paha Sapa Cowboys and
Indians Art Festival**
Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

**JULY 30
South Dakota Chislic Festival**
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman,
SD, sdchislicfestival.com

**AUGUST 5-6
Foothills Days**
Citywide, Wessington Springs,
SD, 605-539-1929

**AUGUST 5-7
Sioux River Folk Festival**
Newton Hills State Park, Canton,
SD, facebook.com/SDFOTM/

**AUGUST 5-13
Sioux Empire Fair**
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux
Falls, SD, siouxempirefair.com

**AUGUST 5-14
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**
Main St., Sturgis, SD,
sturgismotorcyclerrally.com

**AUGUST 11-13
Clay County Fair**
515 High St., Vermillion, SD,
claycountyfair.net

**AUGUST 13
Antique Tractor Pull &
Concessions**
Britton, SD, 605-448-8611

**AUGUST 13
Puttin' In The Pasture for
Relay For Life**
Lake City, SD

**AUGUST 15-21
Brown County Fair**
400 24th Ave. NW, Aberdeen,
SD, browncountysdfair.com

**AUGUST 19-21
Yankton Riverboat Days**
Citywide, Yankton, SD,
riverboatdays.com

**AUGUST 24-28
Corn Palace Festival**
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD,
605-995-8430

**AUGUST 24-28
Kool Deadwood Nites**
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

**AUGUST 25-28
Prairie Village Steam
Threshing Jamboree**
45205 SD Hwy. 34, Madison,
SD, 605-256-3644

**AUGUST 26-27
Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ**
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com

**AUGUST 26-27
Sizzlin' Summer Nights**
Main St., Aberdeen, SD,
605-226-3441

**AUGUST 27
Tabor Quilts & Craft Sale**
Tabor Church, Webster, SD,
605-880-3377

**AUGUST 27
Veblen Summer Bash**
5K, car show, rodeo & dance
Veblen, SD, 701-403-4688

**SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair**
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD,
sdstatefair.com

**SEPTEMBER 10
Antique Tractor Pull**
Andover, SD, 605-448-8611

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