

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Barb Gross, Adele Enright and Jean Tehle have all worked hard to facilitate free and fair elections for registered voters in Dewey County

Poll tenders rock the vote

Election workers are dedicated to the task
Pages 8-9

Freshman Impact teaches sound decision making

Pages 12-13

Planning for the future of your electric cooperative

Running a successful electric cooperative doesn't just happen, it takes planning, and more planning, and a lot of hard work happening behind the scenes.



Tim McIntyre
General Manager

We start with what we call a Strategic Planning session, during which the board of directors and management get together with a planning team to discuss the needs of the cooperative based on input from all areas of our organization.

Following our Strategic Plan, we begin building a Four-Year Workplan. This is the area where we address issues like aging infrastructure, capacity issues and increased loading in areas. We work with our engineers and technology professionals to create accurate mapping models and gather AMI metering data.

Much of our funding is based on this workplan so we try our best to be proactive and accurate with the forecasting in order to stay financially responsible to our membership. All of the planning that we do at Lake Region Electric includes input from our board, managers, employees and even our members.

All of this work ensures that we have a great plan in place to successfully run our cooperative in a way that is most beneficial to our members. We all know what can happen to the best laid plans,

though. Wrenches can get thrown right into the mix, upsetting everything.

Currently, those wrenches are coming at us in the form of supply chain issues, increased cost of materials and lead times on equipment. Over the past couple of years, our suppliers have had almost unprecedented problems getting our orders to us. Environmental, energy, and other considerations have been not only driving up costs for raw materials needed to make electrical supplies, but the extra demand for the materials has also caused delays.

We have even had trouble getting necessary and common equipment like wire and transformers. As many of our members have experienced with their own equipment needs, new trucks have a lead-time of three to four years.

What can our members do to help keep our plans on track? Communicate with us. Make Lake Region Electric a priority call when you are in the initial stages of planning a project. We need to make sure that we can get the supplies and equipment necessary to energize your new build.

We can work together to get through these challenging times!

Thank you & God Bless,
Timothy McIntyre

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Aaron Abrahamson
Rick & Liz Schaff
Jacob Debaun
Cathy Stiegelmeier
McKenzie Anderson
Paul Bezdicek
Jacob Siglin

Alyssa & Scott Green
Sheila Anderson
Cody Valnes
Matt & Nicole Muth
Lucas & Corina
Brockhaus
Nicole Christensen

Shirley A Johnson
Ronald Snaza
David Thomas
Todd Sprang
Justin & Kimberly
Bawek

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

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Britton-Hecla High School's Alyssa James chosen as TSE Scholar of the Week



Shown above from left to right are Jenna Peters, Alyssa James and Brett Kwasniewski.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now and your local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors the region's accomplished high school students. Each weekly winner receives a cash award from their local Touchstone Energy Cooperative and is featured on Dakota News Now. All winners are eligible to receive one of the three scholarships given away at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet. Nominations are submitted by school principals and faculty, whose selections were based on excellence in the classroom and service in the community.

Alyssa James, daughter of Lake Region Electric members Brian and Carrie James, is a student at Britton-Hecla High School. She is a leader in every sense of the word. She has been a student council representative for the entirety of her high school career and was a HOBY (Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership) representative her sophomore year. "She is rarely seen without a smile on her face and a pep in her step," says teacher Jenna Peters who nominated Alyssa.

A true scholar, Alyssa has maintained

a 4.0 GPA or better. According to her teachers, she is always attentive in class; taking organized notes, asking questions, and sharing ideas in class discussions. Alyssa is known for being the student to ask when other students need help.

Alyssa is active in extracurricular activities such as volleyball, basketball, golf, all-school play and chorus. Although she has faced many injuries throughout her sports seasons, she has never let it get her down. Alyssa is always cheering on the bench, giving a fellow teammate a pat on the back or helpful tip, and/or helping the coach with team manager duties.

Outside of school, Alyssa is a kind, caring young lady with a heart of gold. She is an avid volunteer at her church as well as with the community's youth. She has many special bonds with kids all around the community from babysitting children to mentoring young athletes.

Alyssa was featured on Dakota News Now during the 6 p.m. news on Monday, Oct. 10 and again on the Dakota News Now morning news on Tuesday, Oct. 11 between 6 and 7 a.m.

A heaping helping of holiday home safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays for cooking, decorating and heating.

Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some helpful tips:

- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet. Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least 3 feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least 3 feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

LINEMEN PARTICIPATE IN RUBBER GLOVING SCHOOL



Roughly 50 electric cooperative linemen from across the state recently participated in a Rubber Gloving School at the Mitchell Technical College training facility. The program included simulating maintenance and repair work on energized power lines, awareness of proper safety procedures, grounding and insulation of vehicles, operation of aerial lift devices and more.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Don't play on transformer boxes

Traci Tschetter

Traci, 11, warns readers to stay away from transformer boxes, which contain high-voltage underground electrical equipment inside. Traci is the child of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter and they are members of Whetstone Valley Electric.

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.

CROCKPOT CREATIONS

SLOW COOKER CHILI

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 pkg. McCormick Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning
- 2 cans (14.4 ozs. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cans (16 ozs. each) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15.5 ozs.) tomato sauce

METHOD

Brown ground beef or turkey in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Place cooked beef, Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, beans and tomato sauce in slow cooker. Stir until well mixed. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high. Stir before serving. For best results, do not remove cover during cooking.

McCormick.com

SLOW COOKER TURKEY BREAST

Ingredients:

- 2 tsps. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 2 tsps. McCormick Paprika
- 2 tsps. McCormick Rubbed Sage
- 2 tsps. Sicilian Sea Salt
- 1 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1 tsp. McCormick Whole Thyme Leaves
- 1 turkey breast, (about 6 lbs.) fresh or frozen, thawed
- 3 tsps. butter, melted

METHOD

Mix seasonings in small bowl; set aside. Rinse turkey and pat dry. Brush turkey with melted butter. Sprinkle seasoning mixture over entire surface and under skin of turkey. Place turkey breast in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 1 hour on high. Reduce heat to low; cook 7 hours longer or until turkey is cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165 degrees). Transfer to platter or carving board and slice.

McCormick.com

SLOW COOKER MASHED POTATOES

Ingredients:

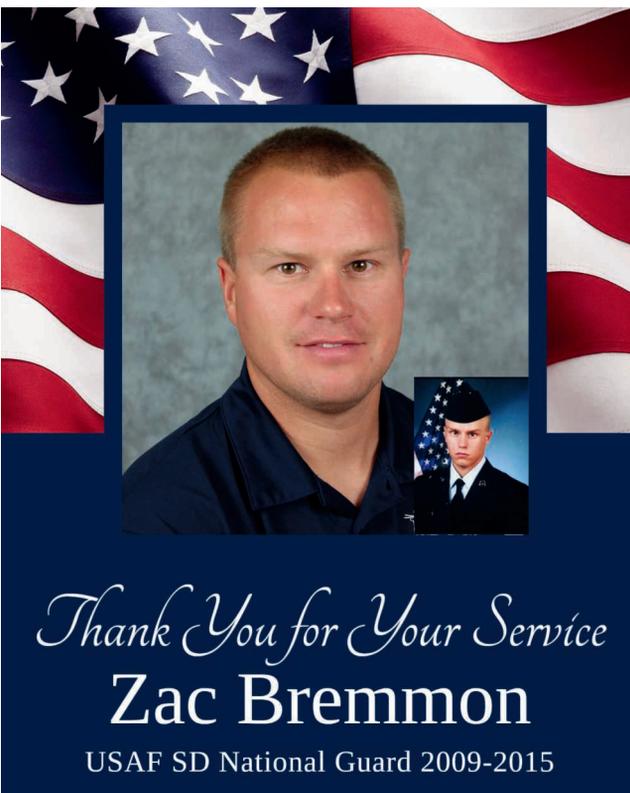
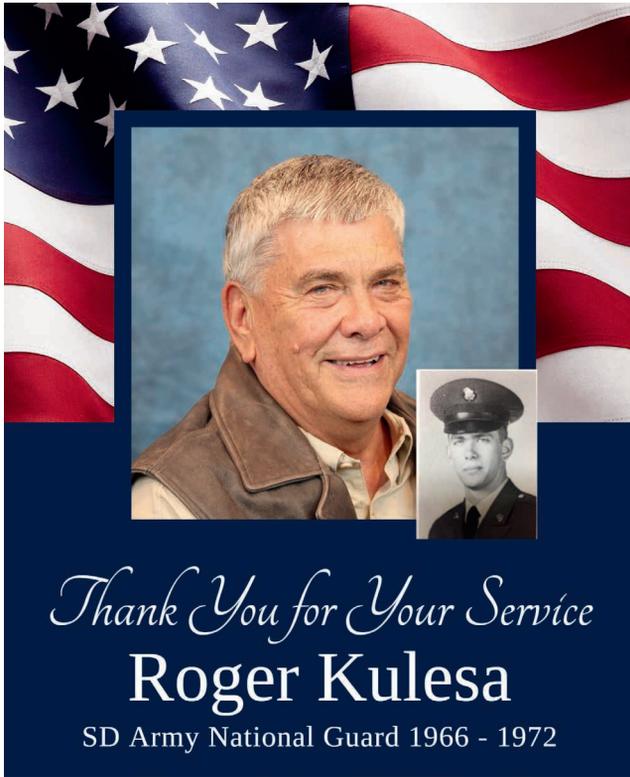
- 5 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 1 c. chicken stock
- 2 McCormick Bay Leaves
- 1/2 c. (1 stick) butter, cut into chunks
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 1/2 -1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. McCormick Parsley Flakes

METHOD

Spray inside of 6-quart slow cooker with no-stick cooking spray. Add potatoes, stock and bay leaves. Cover. Cook 4 hours on high or until potatoes are tender, stirring after each hour. Remove bay leaves. Stir in butter, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Cover. Let stand 5 minutes. Beat potatoes with electric mixer on medium-high speed or mash with potato masher, gradually adding milk, until smooth. Stir in parsley. Top with additional butter, if desired. Serve with McCormick Brown Gravy or Perfect Brown Gravy.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



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d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	28	28
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	0	0
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	0	0
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Thank You for Your Service
Briana Johnson
SD Army National Guard 2002 - 2022

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

THANKFUL
FOR
Our Members.
[AND PIE.]

WE WILL BE CLOSED
NOVEMBER 24 -25TH
SO THAT OUR EMPLOYEES CAN SPEND THE HOLIDAY WITH THEIR FAMILIES.



THANK YOU ALL WHO SERVED

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC
WILL BE
CLOSED
NOVEMBER 11
TO HONOR VETERANS DAY



Jamalia Franzen, auditor deputy in Dewey County, encourages all eligible citizens to register to vote. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Poll workers urge voters to stay active in the election process

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

About 10 years ago, Michele Moore was newly retired and looking for something interesting to occupy her time. Out of the blue, she received a call from the Clay County elections auditor.

“She wanted to know if I was interested in working the elections and I told her I’d do it. It’s been very rewarding and it feels like I’m doing something important and worthwhile,” Moore said.

When she’s not facilitating the election process, Moore takes care of the bookkeeping for the family’s welding and manufacturing business operated by her husband, David.

While election work isn’t a full-time gig, poll tenders put in long hours on voting day. They typically report to the local precinct at 6 a.m. before the polls open an hour later. The shift goes straight through to 7 p.m. when the polls close, although any voters still

standing in line at that time are allowed to cast their ballots. Workers have to stay on duty the entire time and often pack their own lunch and dinner.

After the last voter is done, all the sealed ballots and accompanying paperwork are brought to the auditor’s office for verification and certification to ensure the election is “free and fair.”

Moore said all the workers at her precinct located at the National Guard Armory in Vermillion are diligent, dependable, thorough and conscientious. She said they take their jobs very seriously and are careful not to be “political” in any way, a guideline contained in the orientation and training process that workers go through before each election regardless of one’s years of service.

The training material requires that workers be professional, punctual, respectful to voters, team-oriented and “leave partisan leanings at the door.” Anyone concerned about the validity of the election process can appear at



the precinct as a “poll watcher” or “poll observer,” however, those individuals must adhere to a separate set of guidelines as set forth by the Secretary of State’s Office.

“We’re not here to change anyone’s mind or influence how anyone votes,” Moore said. “We’re just here to do anything we can to help them vote as quickly and smoothly as possible and make sure the process goes well. We try to make it easy for them.”

That doesn’t mean everything always goes according to plan. As the political passions and divisions have grown more intense over recent years, Moore said she’s encountered some fairly tense situations. But she said she generally



Poll workers are on the job from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time. If the polls close while you are in line, you will still be permitted to vote.

Here is a breakdown of party identification as of Sept. 1, 2022:

- Republican - 291,956
- Democrat - 150,760
- No party/Ind. - 142,538
- Libertarian - 2,733
- Other - 1,376

Total - 589,363

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Election poll workers see themselves as doing something helpful to support and facilitate the democratic process.

feels safe while doing her work inside the armory.

Some voters can get upset when they try to make requests that violate the voting rules, such as attempting to change their party affiliation on voting day or not providing the proper identification. She said tensions can run high during contentious presidential or mid-term elections.



“Sometimes people get angry and you just try to calm them down. They don’t know how things work and what’s required because they’re not paying attention,” she said. “Social media and TV stirs up their passion and they don’t always know how to control that.”

She recalled one particular fellow who insisted on voting without presenting the proper identification. When he was

told he would have to use a provisional ballot, he became agitated and stormed out of the precinct. Moore was “a little nervous” about the man returning and what he might do, but she took comfort in the fact that the National Guard soldiers were right there in the building.

Cris Sichmeller, a resident of Webster, signed on to join her local precinct in Roslyn six years ago and enjoys the



Michele Moore

social aspects of the assignment. A self-described “farm wife,” Sichmeller said she doesn’t often have an opportunity to sit down and visit with friends, but being at

the polling place means visiting with folks and catching up on current events.

“People used to spend time just visiting with one another, going to houses and having coffee and playing cards, but that doesn’t happen a lot these days,” she said. “There’s a lot of camaraderie that comes with being around people you know in the community that you have something in common with.”

She said at her precinct things normally proceed “without a lot of drama,” but she remembers that the Covid pandemic did cause a few wrinkles. Several workers contracted the virus, along with the precinct deputy.

The workers had to wear face shields, and Plexiglas was set up in the voting area and at the registration tables.

“I remember a man who had just retired from the military and he came in and saw the face shields and just laughed,” Sichmeller recalled. “He said that wasn’t going to keep us from getting the virus or passing it on to others. He said we needed a hazmat suit for that. I guess he was right.”

Barb Gross recently retired after tending the polls in Dewey County since the 1980s. She describes herself as a stickler for adhering to the rules and buttoning everything down.

“We always made sure everything tallied up because we knew we were going to be audited and we invited that because it was a challenge to see if we could pull it off without a hitch and without anything slipping through the cracks,” she said.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett emphasized the fact that poll workers serve a very valuable role in society.

“They’re on the front lines of the election process. You couldn’t run an election without them,” he said.

Barnett stressed importance of voters meeting their obligation to stay actively involved and make sure they are familiar with the rules and regulations. To find out more about voting rights and responsibilities, visit www.sdsos.gov.

Member Spotlight: *A salute to our veterans*

Laura London

November is upon us, and we take time to focus on the things we are thankful for. The employees of Lake Region Electric are thankful to be able to work for such a wonderful cooperative in the beautiful communities of Northeast South Dakota. We are also always thankful that we are privileged to live and work in the United States of America. Despite her ups and downs

and some of the turmoil over the last couple of years, we love this country. We are thankful for all of the men and women who have dedicated themselves to defending our freedoms and serving in our military.

A few months ago, I put out a call to our members looking for those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces to feature in our Member Spotlight for this month. A few responses trickled in, then I had to do a little digging to

spotlight a few of our members to say thank you. Brave men and women tend to get a little shy when you mention publishing their stories, and the abundant photographs displayed on mantles and stored in shoe boxes and more recently phones, become scarce, but persistence prevailed. We are grateful for all of our members; this November, Lake Region would like to say an extra thank you to those who served in the military.

Nilson pursues fascination with planes in USAF

LREA member Clinton Nilson has spent all of his life in the Webster and Roslyn area, save for two years that he spent serving our country in the Air Force. Nilson served right in the middle of the Korean War (1951-1952.) He never went overseas but “got to see a lot of our country from up in the air, and by car too.”

Nilson joined the Air Force because he had always been fascinated with airplanes. He enjoyed his time in the service, exclaiming, “It was the only vacation I ever got.” It sounds like the worst part was K.P. rotation where he peeled a lot of potatoes and washed more dishes than he cares to remember “K.P. duty made for some really long days, but it wasn’t awful. We prepared meals for the entire base!”

He went to bootcamp at Parks Air Force Base in Dublin, Calif. Camp Parks had been unused for several years until the Air Force established a basic training center in 1951 and renamed the facility Parks Air Force Base and made it a Basic Military Training Center. The Air Force had to completely rebuild the base. Base personnel were initially housed in temporary facilities and ate from a field mess. Nilson was one of the first groups of Airmen to train at Camp Parks 1951. Parks Air Force Base is notable since it is one of the few facilities to be called an Air Force base, but which did not



have a functional runway on site. He then went to Sheppard Field AFB in Texas to continue his military training. He became a flight engineer; it was his duty to check out the planes before they could take off. He performed mechanic duties but flew as an engineer. “Usually, I sat in the co-pilot seat, but I occasionally flew,” Nilson recalls. He finished his service at Edwards Air Force Base in California before returning home to South Dakota in 1952.

After completing his time as an enlisted man, Nilson once again became a farmer. Born in 1928, he was the youngest of 8 children. His parents were

immigrants from Norway, like many in the area. They were married in 1906 in the Tabor Church that his father and uncles help built alongside neighbors and other church members. As were the times, Clinton only went to school through 8th grade, “It was a time when money wasn’t flowing, and I needed to be working.” Nilson continued on farming, he was married and had two children. Still an active and social man at 94, Clinton only “retired” 14 years ago, proudly boasting “I milked cows until I was 80 years old!”

When you see Nilson out and about, be sure to thank him for his service!



Bill Wagner recalls his time in the military service repairing tanks and defending his base

Paul “Bill” Wagner enlisted in the U.S. Army at 23 years of age and served from September, 1968 to October, 1969. He attended Basic Training at Fort Lewis Military Base near Tacoma, Washington. He knew that he would be bound for Vietnam.

Fort Lewis had become an active training facility for troops heading to the Orient after the conflict in Vietnam began to escalate. According to Lewis Army Museum, The Center’s three brigades graduated up to 1,900 men a week from Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training; and by 24 June 1972, when it officially closed, the Center had trained over 302,000 men.

The U.S. Army Personnel Center at Fort Lewis processed up to 50,000 personnel a month bound to and from the Orient. By April 15, 1972, when the facility closed, nearly two and one-half million troops had been processed

through the Center.

After Basic Training, Bill became a Track Vehicle Mechanic. He took his first overseas flight into Vietnam where he landed at the Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base near Saigon in southern Vietnam. It was a different atmosphere than he was used to.

He was stationed at the Cu Chi Base Camp (also known as Cu Chi Army Airfield) and spent his days fixing tanks and other vehicles. “There was a lot of dirt getting thrown in fuel tanks. They would break down, I would put 2 new fuel filters in, sometimes air filters too, put in new fuel and in 15 minutes, they were gone. I was always fixing, fixing, fixing...” he recalls.

Bill’s time in Vietnam was short but difficult. He was present during the ground attack on Cu Chi Base Camp. “The Vietcong tried to take our base camp, we had to defend it.” As many who return from war often experience,

he suffers from PTSD. After PTSD became recognized by the military, Bill sought some treatment from the V.A. Wagner is proud of his time spent serving our country and is a member of the Legion Post 253 in Roslyn.

Bill’s time in Vietnam was short but difficult. He was present during the ground attack on Cu Chi Base Camp.

After his discharge from the Army, Wagner returned to the Roslyn area. He was married and had three children. His son is also a member of Lake Region Electric. Bill’s father, Paul Wagner II, served on the Lake Region Electric Board for many years, beginning in 1957.

We appreciate your service!



SOUND DECISIONS

Central Electric lineman Cody Riggs uses a hot stick to simulate de-energizing a power line during a Freshman Impact emergency exercise at Hanson High School in Alexandria. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Freshman Impact program promotes sound safety practices for students

Billy Gibson
billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The students at Hanson High School were stunned and aghast at the horrific scene unfolding right before their eyes.

There were two wrecked sedans, a downed utility pole and tangled wires strewn across the road. Emergency responders were swarming everywhere as a fire truck barreled onto the scene with its sirens blaring. And the most unsettling sight of all: four of their fellow students lying in the crumpled cars with massive wounds and barely clinging to life.

Fortunately, it turns out the accident scene was just a drill staged by a group known as Freshman Impact: Caught in the Moment, and coordinated as part of Cornbelt Program Day at the school located in Alexandria.

Nearly 200 students came from surrounding schools for a full slate of

learning opportunities centered around vehicle safety, first aid, emergency response, drug abuse awareness and much more. Participating schools were Hanson High School, Armour, Bridgewater-Emery, Ethan, Marion, McCook Central, Plankinton and Wessington Springs.

Local organizers Yolanda Price and Don Huber worked with Freshman Impact Executive Director Rick McPherson, local school officials and emergency response agencies to plan the event.

The morning session included seven separate stations scattered throughout the school's parking lot and in the gymnasium. The learning stations focused on the following subjects: teen mental health; healthy relationships; jaws of life and ambulance demonstration; seatbelt awareness; drug dog; social media dangers; and a distracted driving course where the



West River Electric is one of several electric cooperatives that support the Freshman Impact program.

students wore goggles simulating drug and alcohol impaired vision and attempted to navigate a short course behind the wheel of an ATV.

Taking part in the program was Central Electric Cooperative, which provided the downed power pole and wires. Once the emergency exercise was set into motion, two co-op linemen promptly arrived on the scene to de-energize the lines and worked with other responders to secure the area and form a safe perimeter.

Central Electric's Manager of Communications Tara Miller helped



A Hanson High School student takes on the role of an accident victim during a recent mock emergency scenario. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

facilitate the partnership while working alongside local organizers.

“This is an incredible opportunity for area students to learn about good decision-making, safety and the real dangers that are out there,” Miller said. “Concern for community is one of our guiding principles as a cooperative. This experience serves to educate first responders and students. It aligns with our values, and we are pleased to support it.”

The day’s program covered just about all the bases. The schedule included a poignant perspective of loss and grief from LeAnn Moe, who lost her teenage daughter to an automobile accident. During the mock accident response, one of the crash victims was carried away in a hearse furnished by a local funeral

home. And after all the activity settled down outside, the students returned to the gymnasium to observe a mock legal trial and sentencing hearing over the car accident they had witnessed.

The day ended with the distribution of educational materials by CORE (Community Organized Resources for Educating), the parent organization of Freshman Impact.

McPherson said he has found that the teaching method employed by Freshman Impact is successful in driving the message home to students, and they also develop a rapport with local

agencies and emergency responders.

“The students see up close and learn through hands-on activities the possible consequences of wrong choices and the lasting effects physically and emotionally on their bodies, their families and friends and their community,” he said, noting that West River Electric based in Wall is also an event sponsor. “It’s all about making safe choices and preventing destructive behaviors, and it’s important our teens learn the life-long skills and values to help them make the best possible decisions.”

Visit www.freshmanimpact.com.

Central Electric Cooperative of Mitchell presented CORE with a \$2,500 Operation Round Up grant to help fund the local program. Pictured left to right are Freshman Impact founder Rick McPherson, CORE Coordinator Yolanda Price, CORE Coordinator Don Huber, Operation Round-Up Trustee LeAnn Moe, Central Electric Director Merl Bechen and Hanson County Chief Deputy Mike Brown. *Photo by Tara Miller*



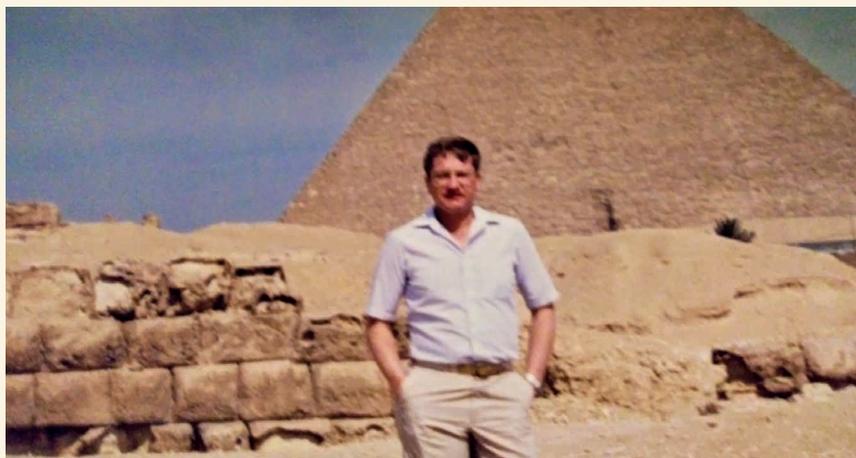
U.S. military is a family affair for the Nelsons

Hans Nelson, his wife Laure Nelson, and his son Ryan Rajaniemi all dedicated themselves to the armed forces for two decades.

Hans claims his memory of Basic Training may be a little fuzzy as that was around 45 years ago, but he seems to remember a lot. Hans joined the Air Force and trained at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. His first assignment was at Myrtle Beach, S.C. He jokingly recalls, "First I had to look up on a map where Myrtle Beach was. I was a farm boy from Veblen. I had done some traveling with my mother, but never really on my own. I was 19 and single in a place like Myrtle Beach, Wow!"

During his military career, Hans was stationed in Illinois, Utah, and California while stateside. These posts were in addition to the time that he spent training and serving overseas. Hans kept all of his travel vouchers, depicting every place he traveled. The voucher slips are kept in a box with other mementos chronicling his travels around the entire Pacific Rim. He went to Egypt a couple of times, Korea, Okinawa, Spain, Italy and Wake Island, Hawaii, "Where America's day officially begins."

His service time overseas and stateside spanned multiple conflicts and operations including Grenada, Panama, Operation Recovery, Desert Storm and Desert Shield, and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT.) Perhaps the most impactful times spent overseas was in Germany. While



Pictured at top, Hans and Laure Nelson began dating while they were both in the Air Force. Above, Hans Nelson visits the pyramids in Egypt.

there, Hans learned, exercised and performed work with NATO Forces. Training with NATO forces is a different experience, teaching soldiers and personnel from other countries and

learning different things from them.

Germany also holds a special place in Hans's heart for another reason. That is where he met his wife Laure, who was also in the USAF. She was in supply

Rajaniemi follows in parents' footsteps

Lake Region Electric member-owner Ryan Rajaniemi is the son of Hans and Laure Nelson. He followed in his parent's footsteps for the most part, investing 20 years of his life in service to the military. He decided on a different branch of service, choosing water over air, Ryan enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He attended Basic Training at Great Lakes, Ill., in 1994.

By the time he retired, Rajaniemi had reached Petty Officer First Class/E-6, Machinist's Mate. A Petty Officer First Class serves both as a leader and as a technical expert, and all Petty Officers have a specified rating, or job. As a Machinist's Mate, Rajaniemi had the responsibility to operate, maintain and repair (organizational and intermediate level) ship propulsion machinery, auxiliary equipment, and outside machinery. He also trained in Maritime Civil Affairs, Hydro RAS winch and as a Navy Recruiter.

Ryan enlisted to serve his country because it seemed the most reasonable choice. He knew he did not want to go to college and there really wasn't anything of interest by way of a career around his hometown of Rosewood, N.C. "I wanted to travel and see the



Ryan Rajaniemi followed in his parents' footsteps by having a successful career in the military.

world and I got to do that with the Navy." Ryan sure did get to see the world, as he was deployed three times to the Mediterranean Sea. He served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Opera-

tion Iraqi Freedom and the Suez Canal.

After retiring from the Navy, Ryan decided to join his parents in the Veblen area. He is a member of the American Legion Post 76 in Veblen.

U.S. military is a family affair, *continued*

during the early days of the Space Shuttle program and worked closely with NASA. "She had a higher level of clearance, so I didn't get to hear a whole lot about what she did. I do know that she requisitioned fuel, etc.," said Hans. Laure served for 20 years as well.

Hans was an Egress Technician, responsible for maintaining exit equipment planes to ensure pilots could safely eject from aircraft in the event of an emergency. Egress Technicians have

mottos such as "All else can fail except one," or "When all else fails, egress prevails." Hans reached the level of E-6 Technical Sergeant, which qualified him to perform highly complex technical duties in addition to providing supervision. They're responsible for the career development of each subordinate under their supervision.

Twenty years after enlisting, Hans and Laure decided it was time to retire. Hans's father "dangled a carrot" in front

of him asking him to return to the farm, which they did. Since retiring, Hans "mowed a lot of grass," and is now semi-retired as he still does some work for a local farmer. Hans learned a lot during his time in the service, not just on the technical side of things but about people and other countries and more. He is a member of the American Legion Post 76 in Veblen and proudly states, "If I was 19 again tomorrow, I would do it all again!"



NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge
 Huron, SD

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

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.

OCT. 28-30

ZooBoo
 Great Plains Zoo
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-7003

OCT. 31
Halloween Parade
 Belle Fourche, SD

NOV. 3-5
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Downtown, Yankton, SD

NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge
 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

NOV. 4-6
Girlfriends' Weekend
 Hill City, SD

NOV. 5-20
Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
 Ethan, SD
 605-770-2411

NOV. 5
Fairburn Community Center Bazaar
 Fairburn, SD

NOV. 11-13
Christmas at the Barn
 Front Porch 605
 Groton, SD
 605-216-4202

NOV. 12
Black Hills Meat Festival
 Black Hills Harley Davidson
 2820 Harley Dr.
 Rapid City, SD
 605-390-7917

NOV. 12
Holiday Extravaganza
 Sisseton, SD
 605-698-7425

NOV. 13
Lutefisk, Lefse, Meatball Supper
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-234-6698

NOV. 18-20
Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

NOV. 19
Legion Post #39 Turkey Party
 Contact Groton American Legion
 at 605-397-2603

NOV. 19
Lille Norge Fest
 Canyon Lake Activity Center
 Rapid City, SD
 605-342-4226

NOV. 24
Community Thanksgiving
 Community Center
 Groton, SD
 605-397-6693

NOV. 25
Olde Tyme Christmas Kick-off and Parade
 Hill City, SD

NOV. 25
"Light up the Night" Parade and Fireworks
 Belle Fourche, SD

NOV. 25-26
Kris Kringle Kraft Fair
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 2-3
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
 Gregory Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

DEC. 2-3
Christmas in the Hills
 Mueller Center
 Hot Springs, SD
 605-745-4140

DEC. 3
Santa's Thrift Village
 Minneluzahan Senior Center
 Rapid City, SD
 605-394-1887

DEC. 3
60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale
 Central States Fair Grounds,
 Rapid City, SD
 605-343-0710

DEC. 3
Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
 Groton, SD
 605-397-3333

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