

## Cooperative Connections



**AgritourismSD seeks  
to attract visitors  
from far and near**

**Education and  
Entertainment  
on the Farm**

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**College Students  
Deal with Change**

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# Board Approves Capital Credit Refunds for Members

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, back to our member-owners, as cash positions allow.

Active Members will see the credit on their May billing that is sent out at the beginning of June. The bill will clearly show the capital credit refund as a deduction and should be kept for tax purposes. Inactive members will be mailed a check in June.

The Lake Region Electric Association Board of Directors approved more than \$640,000.00 in capital credit retirements at their regular meeting in March.

The amount retired in 2021 consists of the remaining 100% of 1994, 100% of



years 1995, 1996, 1997 & 1998 as well as 25% of excess margins from 2020. The total amount to be refunded includes the retirement pass through of East River and Basin's capital credits.

The amount that each member is refunded is based on the electricity purchased during the years for which capital credits are being paid.

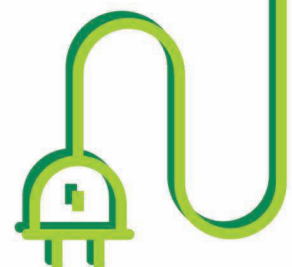
A complete explanation of the cooperative's capital credits can be found in the LREA Bylaws. A copy of the Bylaws is available in digital format on our website: [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop). Anyone who needs a paper copy of our Bylaws may contact our office by calling 605-345-3379 or toll free 1-800-657-5869 or by emailing your request to [lakeregion@lakeregion.coop](mailto:lakeregion@lakeregion.coop).


## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat.

The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause your air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source:  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)





**Welcome New LREA Members**

Carson & Deborah Cobb

Cheryl Berger LLP

Veronica Gollnick Trust

Eric & Jatelyn Paulson

Bernie & Jodi Nowak

Moses Renville

**Memorial Day Notice**

Lake Region Electric will be closed on May 31 in Observance of Memorial Day.





# Lake Region Electric Ripples

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS 018-904)

### Board of Directors

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

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**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.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
Lake Region Ripples Cooperative Connections  
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Toll Free 1-800-657-5869; Fax 605-345-4442  
E-mail: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

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

## Getting Back to Our Values



**Tim McIntyre**

General Manager  
tmcintyre@lakeregion.coop

As I wake up each morning, I pour myself a cup of coffee to start my day, turn the TV on to catch the latest news, then I start to get a feeling of disappointment. It seems that, in this nation, the compassion that we once had for each other has all but disappeared. It's all about "I" and not "we." There seems to be a feeling of what should be done for me, the individual, rather than what I can do to help others. I think maybe it's time to re-instill the good old Lake Region and South Dakota values back into this great nation! Values are standards and principles regarded as worthwhile; they help us reach a desirable outcome.

What does that mean exactly? I might sound like a rebel here, bucking the latest trends that some of our politicians and media seem to be gearing us toward, but I think it's time the world takes a look at the cooperative model and how we work together to achieve such success. You have heard me talk about the Seven Cooperative Principles that we are guided by many times. Right now, though, we need to talk about the core values that Lake Region Electric Association and cooperatives like us were built on. We need to get back to caring for and about one another. We have been given a goal of continuing to provide service for our members, and we do that. Lake Region Electric Association is a service-oriented electric cooperative designed to provide great service to our members, but we want to provide more than just a service. Our goal is to care for you, our members. We work hard and treat people with respect. We need to continue to work together to provide a path for our members to succeed, just as our forefathers designed our electric cooperative. If you ask a lineman or electrician here at Lake Region why they get out there during crazy weather and do work that some of us wouldn't even consider, the overwhelming answer will be "for the people." That is a value instilled in our employees that cannot be taught; it's who we are and how each and every one of us should feel.

I am not sure how to spur the rest of our nation to start thinking in terms of "we," not "I," but it's time to start; it's time to share our values. I appreciated being a part of such a wonderful community here in Lake Region territory. Working at Lake Region and seeing how neighbors reach out to one another, gives me hope. We haven't lost our values here and I have hope for the future that when I wake up, pour that cup of coffee, and turn on the news, there is a more positive message of togetherness. I hope that our nation gets back to a path of success like we have here at home.

Thank you & God Bless,

Timothy McIntyre



## Remodeling? Keep Efficiency in Mind

Sunny days are prime time for tackling remodeling projects, upgrades and repairs around your home. If you're planning a project, make a point of adding energy efficiency features along the way. Here are a few ideas:

- Add insulation around recessed lights so heated or conditioned air doesn't leak out of them and the weather can't sneak in.
- Install programmable thermostats when you add rooms to the house. While you're at it, have the thermostats in the rest of your home upgraded to programmable models.
- Your contractor will install more insulation in any new spaces you're adding than your builder did during the original construction of your home. Consider adding insulation to already-insulated areas, like the crawlspace and attic, to meet new energy efficiency standards.
- A new kitchen means shiny new appliances. Select those rated as energy efficient by ENERGY STAR®, which use less energy than unrated models.
- If your older home still has single-pane windows, consider an upgrade. Double-pane windows are more energy efficient because they better shield your home from the outdoors - and keep your conditioned air indoors.
- Replace old lightbulbs in your most-used rooms with LEDs. They last 10 years or longer and save considerable energy when compared to incandescent bulbs.
- Work with a contractor who understands how passive solar design can affect your energy bills. Rooftop solar panels, sunrooms and skylights are popular additions.
- Add or upgrade ventilation fans in bathrooms. This can improve air quality throughout the home - not just in the bathrooms - by removing moisture from the air.
- Consider having a home energy audit conducted. Audits can help you evaluate your home for energy wasters, suggest ways to remedy inefficiencies and recommend additions that will make your house more comfortable and cheaper to heat and cool.



## Generate Safely.

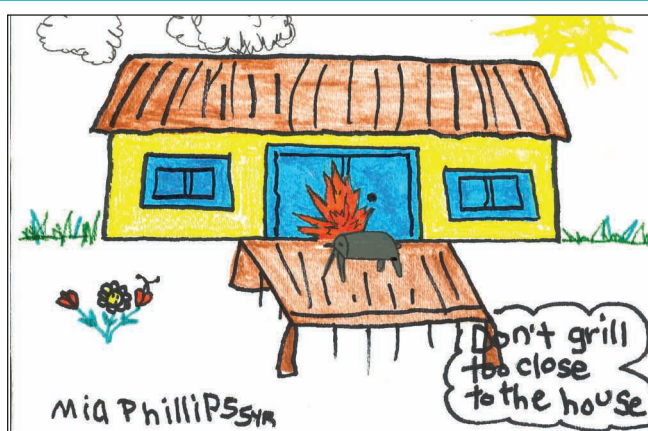
Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



### Don't Grill Too Close to the House

**Mia Phillips, 5 years old**

Mia is the granddaughter of Jim and Hans Moore of Rapid City. They are members of Black Hills 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.



# A Craving for Casseroles

## Chicken and Rice

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 bag Success Brown Rice        | 1/2 package (4 ounces) mushrooms, sliced |
| 1/2 cup ricotta cheese          | 1/4 cup white wine                       |
| 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese  | 4 cups baby spinach leaves               |
| 1 tbsp. chopped Italian parsley | 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken breast   |
| 1 tbsp. olive oil               | 1/2 tsp. salt                            |
| 1/3 cup chopped onions          | 1/2 tsp. black pepper                    |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced         |  |

Prepare rice according to package directions. In small bowl, combine ricotta, Parmesan and parsley; reserve. In large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onions and garlic; saute 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and wine to skillet. Continue cooking 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add spinach and chicken. Stir until spinach is wilted and chicken is heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in rice, salt and pepper. Serve casserole topped with dollops of reserved cheese mixture.

SuccessRice.com

## Meat Lovers Pizza Casserole

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 lb. ground beef                        | 2 c. (8 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese       |
| 1 medium onion, chopped                  | 1 pkg (3 1/2 oz) sliced pepperoni, quartered |
| 1 can (15 oz) pizza sauce                | 1/2 tsp. salt                                |
| 8 oz. elbow macaroni, cooked and drained |  |

In a large skillet, cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in remaining ingredients. Transfer to a greased 2-quart baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until heated through. Yields 6 servings.

Gail Lee, Brookings

## Chicken Doritos Casserole

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups shredded cooked chicken | 1 can Ro-tel tomatoes, drained (canned tomatoes with jalapenos-mild) |
| 1 cup shredded cheese          | 1/2 packet taco seasoning (or more, to taste)                        |
| 1 can cream of chicken soup    | 1 bag of regular nacho cheese Doritos                                |
| 1/2 cup milk                   |  |
| 1/2 cup sour cream             |  |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except Doritos. In a greased 2 quart baking dish, put a layer of crushed Doritos (about 2 cups), then a layer of the chicken mixture. Top with more shredded cheese, cover, and bake 30-35 minutes until bubbling hot. Enjoy!

Alana Neville, Milesville, SD

## Garden Cafe Casserole

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 bag hash browns | 1/2 lb. deli turkey (cut in pieces)             |
| 1 onion           | 1 lb. bacon (fried and cut in pieces)           |
| 1 green pepper    | 2-3 cups cheese (Monterey Jack, Colby, Cheddar) |
| 1 box mushrooms   |   |
| 1 tomato          |   |

Place thawed hash browns in the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Saute onion, green pepper, and mushrooms. Place the meat and tomato on top of the potatoes. Then onion, green pepper and mushrooms. Top with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Joanna Gum, Clear Lake, SD

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



## LREA's 80th ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

6:30 PM

Parking will begin at 5:30 PM

Langford, SD

Stay tuned for location announcements:

- June issue of Cooperative Connections
- Our website: [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop)
- Lake Region Electric's Facebook page
- Local Radio Stations & Newspapers

### Join us!

Drive-In Style Meeting

Join us from your car! Tune in on your car radio!

Snacks will be provided!

(There will **not** be a meal served at the meeting.)

Meal Voucher to a Participating Restaurant of Your Choice

(One per membership. Must be present.)

• Bring canned goods for the Food Pantry •  
 Each Food Pantry Item Donated = Entry Drawing for a \$50 Gift Card!

Practice Social Distancing by enjoying the meeting from the comfort of your car!

Radio Frequency to be announced.

## Annual Meeting Notice

Lake Region Electric Association will host our 80th Annual Meeting in Langford this year. The meeting is scheduled for June 3th at 6:30 P.M. and will be held drive-in style. Parking will begin at 5:30 P.M. at a location to be announced. Members will remain in their cars and tune in to the meeting via their car radio; radio station to be announced the day of the meeting. Lake Region Electric Association staff will be on site to direct parking and assist with radios. The business meeting will commence at 6:30 P.M. when our member-owners will hear from Lake Region's leaders about what has been happening around our service area, discuss future planning and present awards.

There will be an election for director seats for District 1 and District 7.

Snacks and a cold beverage will be provided. A hot meal will not be served at the meeting. Attendees will receive a meal voucher that they can redeem at a local participating restaurant of their choice! Everyone is encouraged to bring canned goods to donate to the local food pantry. Every item donated gets you an entry into a drawing for a \$50 gift card!

The Annual Meeting Notice will be sent to member-owners as a full letter. The letter should be brought to the annual meeting as your registration and door prize entrance.

Active members will receive the letter in an envelope marked Annual Meeting Notice. The letter will have pertinent information regarding your LREA capital credits, annual meeting details, and a contact update form. Registration is quick and easy with the annual meeting letter notice. A simple scan automatically marks the member as present and entitles the member to vote. This process will also assist LREA in tracking attendance numbers, district representation, and other valid information.

We are here to serve you! Please call our office if you have any questions or concerns: 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869.

## Meetings of Members: From the Bylaws

### Annual Meeting: Article 3, Section 1

The annual meeting of the members shall be held at such time and place within a county served by the Cooperative, as selected by the Board of Directors and which shall be designated in the notice of the meeting, for the purpose of electing directors, passing upon reports for the previous fiscal year and transacting such other business as may come before the meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors to make adequate plans and preparations for the annual meeting. Failure to hold the annual meeting at the designated time

shall not result in a forfeiture or dissolution of the Cooperative.

### Notice of Members' Meetings: Article 3, Section 3

Written or printed notice stating the place, day and hour of the meeting and, in case of a special meeting or an annual meeting at which business requiring special notice is to be transacted, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be delivered not less than ten days nor more than sixty days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by

mail, by or at the direction of the Secretary, or upon a default in duty by the Secretary, by the persons calling the meeting, to each member. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be given when deposited in the United States mail, addressed to the member at his/her address as it appears on the records of the Cooperative, with postage thereon prepaid. The failure of any member to receive notice of an annual or special meeting of the members shall not invalidate any action which may be taken by the members at any such meeting.



# Cole Sonne's YouTube Channel Makes Farm Life Look Like a Visit to Disneyland

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Every day on the farm is a new adventure for Cole Sonne. While many 20-somethings contemplate leaving their family homesteads in search of a more urbane and sophisticated lifestyle, Sonne has no intention of giving up the farming life.

His enthusiasm for agriculture is in his blood and in his soul. But it's also all over the internet.

There is perhaps no more effective web-based advocate for South Dakota agriculture than Sonne, as evidenced by his audience of more than 145,000 YouTube subscribers. Sonne's 250 video posts have received over 26 million views since he created his YouTube channel two years ago.

After earning a degree in agronomy from South Dakota State University, Sonne returned to the family farm near Mount



Cole and his father Brian exchange some friendly sniping on the channel.

Vernon and it wasn't long before he had a notion to let the world see how fun and adventurous farming can be.

He saw that some ag-based channels created by young farmers such as Minnesota Millennial Farmer and Farm Life SD were growing in popularity, so he figured he'd take a shot at posting videos of all the wild and sometimes wacky situations that can emerge during a typical day.

"It's really informational and entertaining at the same time," said Sonne, a fourth



Fourth generation farmer Cole Sonne has amassed more than 145,000 YouTube subscribers.

generation farmer. "I think it's important to teach people who have never done this what farm life is really like.

The genesis of the channel came after he bought a drone and started taking aerial shots of raking hay and feeding cattle, but he didn't know what to do with the footage. He started posting his videos and then thought about capturing some of

the dialogue that takes place between him and his father, Brian, and other family members. The animals, machinery, chores and weather conditions never fail to create intriguing scenarios that keep fans tuned in.

Sonne was surprised when the viewer count started to skyrocket.

"It just took off right away," he said. "I call it ag

advocacy. We just show people what we do from day to day and try to make it as fun as possible.

Much of the witty repartee is exchanged between Sonne and his often exasperated father. As Sonne had his camera rolling and capturing a farm task that wasn't going well recently, Brian grumbled, "To me this is embarrassing. To you it's good footage."

The conversation in that episode ran the gamut from Halle Berry to woodpeckers to classic Saturday Night Live skits as the

duo went from gathering hay to scraping manure. Sonne says the near constant laughing, joking and friendly sniping keep things light-hearted as they take care of their business.

Asked which of his videos has received the greatest amount of attention, Sonne is quick with his response.

"A video we did last April got more than one million hits," he said. "There was an approach to a field that was holding back water and we had to dig it out and release the water and put in a culvert. When we pulled the last grab of dirt that was holding a year's worth of water, the water just came gushing through. People seemed to really like seeing that large volume of water. A lot of what's going to get the attention is the thumbnail picture. If you can get the perfect thumbnail, people will click on it."

Apparently, the video titles also help to attract eyeballs. Some recent titles include: "Cole got splattered with poo," "Watch out - angry calf hits Brian and Jeff," "We saved him - moments from the end."

As for the time and dedication it takes to keep content fresh for thousands of eager viewers, Sonne said he considers it just another item on a lengthy list of tasks that every farmer has.

"It usually takes a couple of hours to get the videos done," he said. "I'll farm all day, come home and start editing and work til late at night. That's what most farmers do anyway. You have to balance things out."





The AgritourismSD program blends the state's top two economic drivers: agriculture and tourism. Photos provided by SD Tourism.

# AGRITOURISM

## New Program Blends South Dakota's Top Two Economic Drivers

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Amy Kruse already had a baby before she actually became a mother. That baby was proudly named Circle View Guest Ranch. That's the bed and breakfast establishment in Interior run by Amy and her husband, Philip.

"Before I had three kids, this was my baby," Kruse said on a recent Thursday afternoon while taking a break from getting the nearly 3,000-acre ranch spiffed up for weekend visitors and the busy travel season. "I got out of college and we got married and we came here 18 years ago. It's a lot of work to operate the ranch and make things run to give our guests a memorable experience, but it's worth it to see them enjoy themselves and have a great time in South Dakota."

While Kruse has long been engaged in her own form of what's called agritourism, she's an enthusiastic supporter of a new initiative designed to promote the accelerated growth of more agritourism enterprises across the state.

In 2017, the South Dakota Agritourism Work Group was formed to create an intensive program aimed at providing education, training and various support services to agribusiness owners interested in expanding their operations to include recreational, entertainment, educational, hospitality, cultural, on-farm sales and other activities for the general public. As tourism and agriculture are the two most significant business sectors in the state, organizers felt it only made sense to combine the two.

Spearheaded by South Dakota State University Extension and the state Office of Tourism, other local, state and federal agencies and entities joined in the effort. A partial list of participating organizations includes the Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers of South

Dakota, Experience Sioux Falls, Southeast Technical Institute, the South Dakota Specialty Producers Association, the South Dakota Value Added Ag Development Center and others.

According to Program Coordinator Stacy Hadrick of SDSU, AgritourismSD kicks off this month and consists of eight two-day, in-person workshops taking place over the course of 24 months where instructors provide the basic skills and tools that have been demonstrated to help increase the chances of success. The curriculum includes field visits to venues that already have a sustained track record of running thriving agritourism businesses.

The Circle View Guest Ranch, a member of West River Electric Association, is one of those venues. During the program's second year, the facility is slated to serve as a case study on how to launch and grow an agritourism operation and participants can have direct personal conversations with operators who will offer solid advice on every aspect of their business. Kruse said she looks forward to sharing some of the approaches and strategies that she and Philip have used to keep visitors coming to the ranch. The program, which kicks off this month, is designed to educate and train those associated with the ag industry on how to start, manage and operate an agritourism enterprise.

"This is such an excellent time to do something like this because things are opening up and people are ready to travel and escape the cities, get off the interstate and explore the back roads and see the tremendous beauty of our state," Kruse said. "They're craving an authentic experience after being shut down for so long."

Kruse added that she is eager to coach and encourage the group, but she also plans to shoot straight. That means giving the partici-





pants a healthy dose of unvarnished reality so they'll have a clear understanding of the commitment required.

"I think it's a wonderful program for our state. We're going to show them how we make things work with the overnight facilities and with the animals and their interactions with our guests," she said. "The business pretty much runs our lives for seven to eight months out of the year, and if you do it right it's all-consuming. But it's also extremely rewarding to see families have a terrific time bonding with each other, bonding with the natural landscape and the animals. It can be extremely rewarding for our guests and for our family as we're always making new friends. But you have to be committed."

Amy and her husband operate 12 guest rooms and three cabins with an average of 30 guests at any given time from April through September. She explained the cattle ranch and the bed-and-breakfast are separate businesses all set on 2,800 acres of land that includes prairie terrain in addition to Badlands formations, a river valley, rock beds, rolling hills, grazing pastures and tree groves.

For more effective statewide coordination, the AgritourismSD program organizers have developed a hub system, selecting the communities of Wall, Faulkton and Timber Lake to serve as regional organization centers. Participating business owners work through these hubs and meet six times over two years to share ideas and

discuss strategies for attracting visitors to their communities.

Robin Bickel is the hub coach for the Timber Lake area. A member of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, Bickel runs a Red Angus cattle ranch in Firesteel that has been in the family for four generations. She said her interest in getting involved was to pursue potential economic growth not only for her ranch but for the entire area as well. She also sees agritourism as an incentive to both keep and attract young families to rural communities.

"If working ranches can find ways to expand and diversify their businesses, it may present opportunities for those young people who have left to come back to the family farm and be able to generate enough revenue to sustain multiple families on one place," she said.

Aside from the potential for added revenue, Bickel said she is eager to share with the rest of the world the wonders of rural life and the rural lifestyle she experiences each day.

"I think there's an increased interest people have about where their food and fiber come from, and we need to find a way to make that connection between the producer and consumer," she said. "We have such a rich history and so many natural resources to share. It's insane how many people can't see the sky full of stars at night where they live and can't see the prairie grass waving in the wind and



rolling across a hillside. There are people interested in things we take for granted. There are people in Nebraska that have a prairie chicken dance tour where people actually pay to see the chickens. I think there are many opportunities for our state if we commit ourselves and do it right."

For more information on the program, contact Jacey Ellsworth, Industry Outreach and Development Representative, at 605-773-3301 or [Jacey.Ellsworth@TravelSouthDakota.com](mailto:Jacey.Ellsworth@TravelSouthDakota.com).



## Director Elections to Be Held at Lake Region Electric's 80th Annual Meeting

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.

Two Director seats will be up for election at the LREA Annual Meeting to be held in Langford on June 3, 2021 at 6:30 PM. The seats up for election are District 1 and District 7. Individuals who wish to run for election must file a petition signed by fifteen (15) fellow members 45 days prior

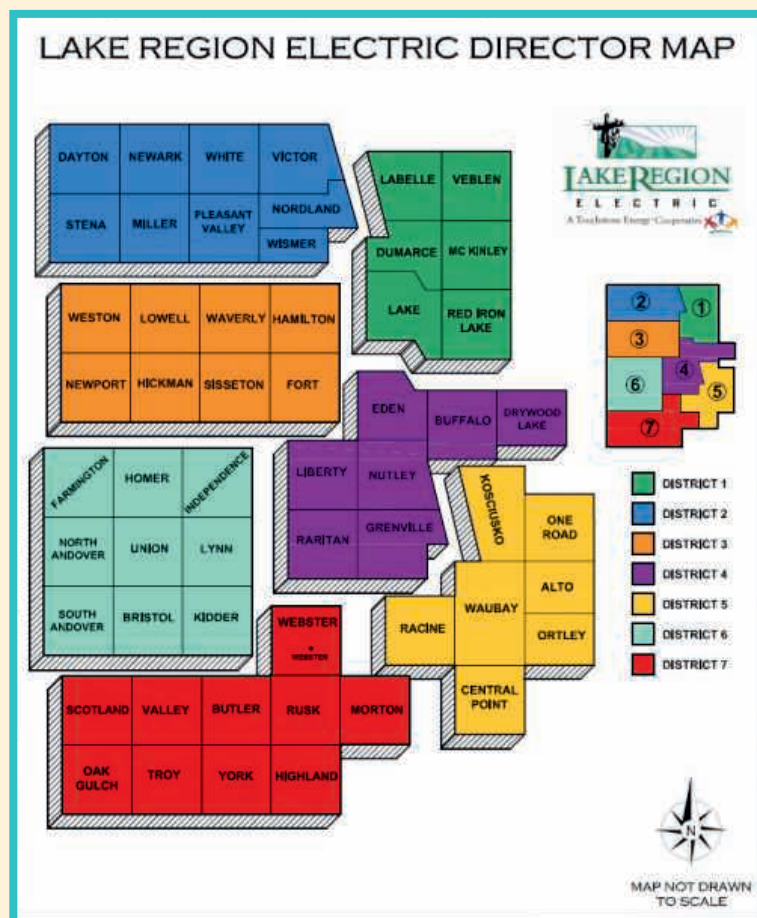
to the annual meeting. Potential Director candidates must be an active member of LREA and agree to attend all meetings. Nominations can be accepted from the floor during the annual meeting with verification of eligibility. Candidates will be published in the "Annual Meeting Notice to Members."

Our service area is divided into 7 districts, as shown on the Lake Region electric Director Map below, with each district being represented by an elected official. This year District 1 and District 7 are up for election.

Both incumbents are eligible for re-election. Members living in these districts

who are interested in serving on the Lake Region Electric Association Board of Directors are encouraged to call 605-345-3379 Toll Free: 1-800-657-5869 or stop by our office at 1212 Main Street in Webster for more information or to request a petition. Those 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.

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 Election Bylaws

### Section 4. Nominations

Any fifteen (15) or more members acting together may make nominations for Board of Directors by a petition filed not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the annual meeting. If no nominating petitions are filed, it shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days before the annual meeting at which directors are elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than four (4) nor more than eleven (11) members who shall be selected from districts in which the vacancy exists so as to insure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on the committee. The committee shall prepare and file a report, at least twenty (20) days before the annual meeting, of a list of nominations for directors in such districts where no nominating petitions have been filed.

The secretary shall mail, with the notice of meeting or separately but at least seven (7) days before the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names and addresses of candidates.

At the annual meeting, the chairman or his/her designee shall read the statement of the secretary as to number of directors to be elected and the names of nominees.

The chairman or his/her designee shall call for additional nominations from the floor and nominations shall cease after a reasonable time. No member may nominate more than one candidate. Any member intending to nominate a candidate from the floor shall notify the Cooperative prior to the opening of the meeting, to verify qualifications and willingness to serve.



# Director Election Bylaws

## Qualifications

### LREA Bylaws Article 4, Section 3

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who is a close relative (father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchildren, first cousins or stepchild) of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative, or is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative and receiving service at his/her primary residential abode or primary business, which must be located in the directorate district that the director is to represent; PROVIDED, that the designated representative of any non human member, such as a corporation or its designee, shall notwithstanding that he/she does not receive services from the Cooperative at his/her primary residential abode, be eligible to become a director if (1) he/she is in substantial permanent occupancy, direction or use of the premises served by the Cooperative, and (2) is a permanent and year round resident within the Coop-

erative's service area or residing not more than fifty (50) miles from the principal location of the non human member that is being served by the Cooperative; BUT PROVIDED FURTHER, that no more than one such person as the designated representative may serve on the Board at the same time and in the event that he/she should resign or is unwilling to so act, that directorship shall become vacant. No person may become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in the Cooperative who does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract, or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or a business providing electric services to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electric appliances, fixtures or supplies to, among others, the members of the Cooperative. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who is not at least eighteen (18) years of age. No ex-employee, either retired or

terminated, will be eligible to become a director of the Cooperative for at least 5 years after their employment ends. If a nominee for director lacks eligibility under this paragraph or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, the chairperson presiding at the meeting at which such nominee would otherwise be voted upon shall disqualify such nominee.

If any person being considered for, or already holding, a directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this paragraph, the Board shall withhold such position, or cause such person to be removed therefrom, as the case may be. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board, unless such action is taken with respect to a matter which is affected by the provisions of this paragraph and in which one or more of the directors have an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.



**Andrea Kilker**

**District 1**



**Mark Wismer**

**District 2**



**Kermit Pearson**

**District 3 (Pres.)**



**Thomas Steiner**

**District 4 (Sec.)**



**Roger Kulesa**

**District 5 (Treas.)**



**Rodney Tobin**

**District 6 (VP)**



**Amy Kuecker**

**District 7**

# Rural POWER

## Leadership Program Aimed at Boosting Co-op Leadership

Intentional listening is a skill Billie Sutton has honed over the course of his adult life. And as he leaned into recent conversations with electric cooperative leaders across the state, the former legislator from Burke started noticing a trend.

He picked up on a common refrain: cooperatives are having a hard time finding qualified candidates to run for positions on their governing boards.

As not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives don't have pockets deep enough to dangle large compensation packages in front of potential board candidates. This reality tends to narrow the field of interested parties.

After hearing this a few too many times, Sutton decided to take action and do something about it. He began working to develop a leadership program through his non-profit Billie Sutton Leadership Institute to encourage and inspire rural co-op members to consider campaigning for a board position.

The new year-long leadership development program is called "Rural POWER: Powering Opportunities While Energizing Rural." It will be held alongside the third leadership class offered by the Institute. The first program in 2019 attracted more than 100 applicants to fill 12 spots. Last year's class drew roughly 70 applicants but was hampered by the impact of the pandemic.

Sutton surmised that the high interest level in the Institute's first two programs stems from a desire to return to a more community-focused style of leadership and steer away from a brand of politics that appears to be growing more openly hostile.

His supposition comes from the comments he heard not only during his six years serving in the state senate but also from voters during his gubernatorial campaign three years ago in which he received more than 167,000 votes while losing the race to Gov. Kristi Noem.



Billie Sutton and his wife, Kelsea (foreground) are shown with the Institute's inaugural class of rural leaders.

"I think people were excited about a new style of leadership I brought to the table that's focused on service, finding common ground, overcoming adversity and getting things done on behalf of the people. I think people are tired of politics as usual," he said.

For the Institute's inaugural class, applicants ranged in age from 18 to 60 and represented a plethora of professional backgrounds: health care, teaching, education administration, local elected officials, ranchers and more. Sutton said he hopes the new program will also attract interest from a diverse set of applicants.

Rural POWER will kick off this summer and is sponsored by the South Dakota Farmers Union. Participants will engage in educational leadership training opportunities emphasizing community building and

**Participants will engage in educational leadership training opportunities emphasizing community building and serving neighbors, while learning from cooperative leaders.**

serving neighbors, while learning from cooperative leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to rural development. They will gain the knowledge and enthusiasm to re-imagine and re-energize rural South Dakota, Sutton said.





Rural POWER aims to provide leadership training that will help re-invent and re-energize rural South Dakota.

The program has an advocate in Melissa Maher, general manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake. Maher notes that while most of the state's electric co-ops qualify as "rural," that doesn't mean they are merely small-time mom-and-pop operations. For instance, Moreau-Grand Electric is a member-owned business with more than \$47 million in assets.

Maher said it's important that electric co-ops be run by managers and board members dedicated to the task at hand. Board directors are democratically elected by the members in their respective districts and charged with the responsibility of developing the policies that guide the future of the co-op. They also have certain legal, fiduciary and industry-related issues they must deal with during the course of carrying out their duties.

"These are positions of responsibility and leadership, and you need qualified people because they're making big decisions," Maher said, adding that serving on a co-op board requires considerable time and attention. "If someone is interested in being nominated, you have to be up front and honest about that fact. That's one of the first things people ask, and the honest answer is that it's a commitment."

Those who succeed in meeting their board responsibilities recognize and appreciate the fact they're contributing to the advancement of their entire service area by providing an essential commodity. Maher said it also takes a certain type of personality and temperament to be a successful board member.

"They have to learn protocol and there can be situations like dealing with personnel issues where they have to be discreet. They have to be the type of person who can agree to disagree and walk away and not let it get to them," Maher said. "They have to study up on the issues. We send out information a week ahead of time so that the board members can brush up on things and we can have a productive conversation. They need to care enough to be engaged and prepared."

Suzie Jones Pranger serves as executive director of the Institute. Today, Jones Pranger is an attorney living in rural Hartford, but she grew up on her family's farm in Burke and remembers her grandfather's involvement in her local co-op, Rosebud Electric.

"Even as a kid, I knew our power came from the local co-op, and I knew my family had a legacy of service to the co-op and our neighbors through my Grandpa's longtime position on the board," she said. "But what I never considered growing up is the need for subsequent generations to become active and continue to power our rural communities and our South Dakota way of life. Rural POWER will help build a pipeline of rural leaders ready to step up and take on leadership positions."

Kevin Mikkelsen, general manager of Rosebud Electric, is also supportive of the program and believes there is a lot of potential in the leadership program, especially when it comes to drawing some younger participants.

"I'm hoping the program sheds some light



on how cooperatives function and how they work on behalf of all the member-owners," he said. "All around the state, we really need to see some younger folks get involved and provide a new perspective and help us discover new and more effective ways to carry out our mission as co-ops, whether it's electric co-ops or ag-based co-ops."

Visit [suttonleadership.org/rural-power](http://suttonleadership.org/rural-power) to learn more about the program or to apply.

# Scholarships Awarded to Area Students

## Basin Electric/Lake Region Scholarship



Colin Frey was selected to receive the Basin Electric/Lake Region Scholarship.

Colin Frey has been selected to receive the Basin Electric/Lake Region Scholarship. This Scholarship is funded by LREA's energy partner, Basin Electric. This \$1,000 is awarded annually to the dependent child of member-owners of Lake Region Electric Association.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on academic record, potential to succeed,

leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

Colin is a student at Langford Area High School. During his high school career, Colin has been involved in basketball, football, track, band, choir and the school play. He has received Student of The Year awards several years in different categories and has been on the Honor Roll, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Colin has also been very involved in his community. He participated in church choir, Adopt-a-Highway and donates to the local food pantry through his 4-H program. Colin has a busy schedule keeping his grades up while participating in school and community activities, yet he contributes to the family dairy farm by working as a farm hand. Colin is the son of Lake Region Electric Association members Mike and Sara Frey.

Colin plans to attend SDSU in the fall to study Ag-business and Accounting. He summarizes his future plans "I plan on attending South Dakota State University, where I plan on majoring in ag-business.

After college, I plan on coming back to our family farm to work and harvest 1,000 acres of land and raise some beef cattle as well."



We look forward to helping Colin achieve his goals and having him return home to Lake Region territory!

As a part of the scholarship application, Colin was asked to write an essay describing how cooperatives can be economic engines for their local communities. Look below to see some of what Colin had to say.

## How Can Cooperatives be Economic Engines for Their Local Communities

A cooperative is owned by its members, so all members should benefit from a cooperation in some way. It depends on what the members are to the cooperative like: co-op suppliers, consumers, or the workers of the co-op. They all benefit from a cooperative in different ways. The primary benefit that mostly all members get is economic: they get good service, good prices, good quality all from being part of a co-op. This brings in the engine part. The cooperatives are democratically controlled by their members, so the members can examine the cooperative and make sure the cooper-

ative is running smoothly and if they make enough money to give back to members.

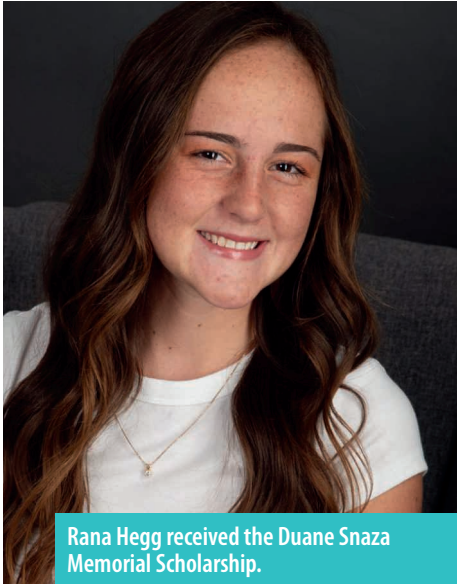
If you think about it more, being there for your local community is huge. Cooperatives do just that. They stay local so they can give the community more accountability, more local spending, more equity, more creativity, more development, and more participation. Cooperatives are run by the members, who are also residents of the community.

By having members be from your local community, they can get more active

participation from newer members and be more involved, which will increase the economic industry for the cooperative. Cooperatives are the engines that run your community and make it work. Without cooperatives, there would be no engine to boost the community and get participation from all the people in the local community. Cooperatives change that get people more active and participate in a cooperative, because the cooperative is the engine of the community.



# Rana Hegg Wins Lake Region Electric Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship



Rana Hegg received the Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship.

Lake Region Electric Association is proud to announce Rana Hegg as the recipient of the Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship. This \$1,000 scholarship, in memory of former Lake Region Electric employee Duane Snaza, is based on the following criteria: participation in school and community activities, grade-point average, work experience, SAT/ACT scores,

statement by student explaining his/her educational and career goals, a written recommendation by a third party and presentation of the application.

Rana is the daughter of Daniel Hegg and Jessi Hegg. She is a student at Webster High School where she has been involved in many activities. Rana participates in Cross Country and Track, competing at the state level multiple times in both activities. She also participated in Robotics and FCCLA. She is Student Council Vice President, Key Club President and a member of the National Honor Society. She works hard to maintain good grades and has been on the honor roll and has been awarded Student of The Month. Rana participates in several community organizations as well such as Church Council and has won multiple awards in 4-H. When she isn't at school or participating in extra-curricular activities, you may see Rana working around the Lake Region community; she works for Waldner Farms in the summer, has waitressed and still does babysitting jobs.

Webster Area High School Counselor



Chelsea Larson describes Rana as a “dedicated and hardworking student. She is enrolled in a rigorous course load and still finds time for extra-curriculars, sports and volunteer activities.” Rana plans to attend South Dakota State University to study Civil Engineering and Mathematics, “My goal is to earn my Master’s in Civil Engineering and eventually become a professional engineer.”

Rana explained how she sees Lake Region Electric Association impacting our community through the Seven Cooperative Principles.

## How LREA Impacts the Community Through the 7 Cooperative Principles

Lake Region Electric Association has a huge impact on my community that can be described through the seven cooperative principles. Those principles are open and voluntary membership, democratic member control, members’ economic participation, autonomy and independence, education and training, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community. Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all people that are able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. They do not discriminate against their members and anyone is allowed to join.

Cooperatives are democratic organizations

controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Members make decisions and vote on them together. One person is not allowed to make executive decisions. The capital of the cooperative is democratically controlled by the members and is common property of the cooperative. Surpluses are generally used for supporting activities that are approved by the members, benefiting everyone. If a cooperative enters into agreements with other organizations, they must ensure democratic control by their members and that they maintain their cooperative freedom.

Lake Region Electric supports education

and training for members and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. They support that future and the growth of their community by providing means of education. Lake Region Electric serves its members by working with local, national, regional, and international structures to strengthen the cooperative movement. They also focus on member needs and work for the sustainable development of their community. Lake Region Electric provides low-cost energy to the community, so it is available to everyone. They express concern and want to help the community grow and flourish.

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

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**April 22-May 2**

Beauty & the Beast, Sioux Empire Community Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-367-6000

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**April 23-24**

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-941-4958

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**April 24**

Party for the Planet, Great Plains Zoo, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-367-7003

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**April 30-May 2, May 6-8**

Radium Girls, Pierre Players Community Theatre, Pierre, SD  
605-224-7826

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**May 8**

Davis Flea Market & Artisan Fair, Main Street, Davis, SD  
605-940-0069

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**May 8**

Wells Fargo Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, Falls Park, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-271-0468

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**May 8 NEW DATE**

Winefest Renaissance, Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD  
605-225-8714

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**May 9**

Mother's Day Tours, Historic Adams House & Days of '76 Museum, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-37241

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**May 13**

Vermilion-Area Farmers Market - Plant Sale, High & Cherry Streets, Vermilion, SD  
605-659-3399



State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, May 21-23, 2021

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**May 15**

Red Dirt Music Festival featuring Casey Donahew, Ian Munsick and Randy Burghardt Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD  
605-559-0386

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**May 21-23**

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD  
605-673-2244

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**May 21-23**

State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks & Recreation Areas, SD  
605-773-3391

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**May 22**

Frühlingsfest & Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD  
605-716-7979

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**May 22**

La Framboise Island Bike Race, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD  
605-224-7054

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**May 31**

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD  
605-641-5591

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**June 3-6**

Wheel Jam, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-353-7340

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**June 4-5**

State BBQ Championships, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-353-7354

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**June 4-6**

Black Hills Blues Stomp & Swamp Romp, Rush No More RV Resort & Campground, Sturgis, SD  
605-347-2916

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**June 4-6**

Lake Andes Fish Days, City-wide, Lake Andes, SD  
605-487-7694

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**June 5-6**

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD  
605-770-5720

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**June 5-6**

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD  
866-489-9241

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**June 19**

South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-945-2333

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.