

Cooperative Connections



**Electricity in
the classroom**

Page 8-9

**People behind
the power**

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Jennifer Gross has educated thousands of students about electricity through the Cooperatives in the Classroom program.

As of Dec. 31, 2020

New Year Update

Melissa Maher

melissa@mge.coop

Writing this on the last day of 2020 – reflecting on the blessings throughout the year. Doug and I welcomed another grandson – Vince Dale Maher born to Dane and Syd on Dec. 10; he is perfect in our eyes! Holding a newborn baby is truly witnessing a miracle from God.



Future co-op members Waylon and Vince. Photo by Kathy Olsen.

The board approved the 2021 budget at the December meeting. The current rate schedule will suffice for 2021. The following is a list of the major projects scheduled in this budget:

- Pole testing – Trail City east – then running north into McLaughlin (approximately 13,000 poles)
- A motor operator will be installed on the Dupree GOAB (Gang Operated Air Break Switch)
- Two transmission GOAB switch replacements to replace the oldest ones in the system
- Six miles of 3/0 UG replacement from EB to Parade as part of our four-year work plan
- 1.5 miles of 3/0 underground replacement along highway by Lantry – result of a road move
- Final leg of 500 MCM line in Eagle Butte – this has been a carryover for a couple years – need to obtain the easements and complete this loop around Eagle Butte

- Upgrade transformer and regulators at Dupree substation as part of our four-year work plan
- Replace bucket truck #8 which is stationed at McLaughlin
- Replace two one-ton pickups as normal replacement for high mileage

Four board members (Kelly Landis, Ryan Maher, Kerry McLellan and Larry Hieb) agreed to serve on the committee to oversee the new headquarters facility process. Joining the committee will also be Kent Larson, Roger Lawien, Kyrie Lemburg and myself. I envision this group touring several sister co-op facilities around the state to gain ideas for an efficient design for this facility. Full board will be updated on a continual basis.

I received word on Dec. 26, that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe signed the WAPA contract thus extending the WAPA credit for tribal members well into the future. This is certainly a positive for tribal members on the beneficiary list who have been receiving credit on their monthly bills since 2000.

Congratulations to Kerry McLellan for receiving his board leadership certificate at the December meeting.

Until next month...God Bless



Director Kerry McLellan receives Board Leadership Certificate.

Comparative Report		Current (Nov. 2020)	1 year ago (Nov. 2019)	10 Years Ago (Nov. 2010)	% Change in 10 years
Number of Meters		7,038	6,989	6,462	9%
Kilowatt Hours Sold		7,711,623	9,107,526	8,649,921	-11%
Cost of Purchased Power		\$491,369	\$586,881	\$413,442	19%
Overall Ave. Rate / kWh Per Member		0.1221	0.1206	0.1065	15%

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-951)

Manager: Melissa Maher

Editor: Roger Lawien,
Member Services & IT Director

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Kerry McLellan, Vice President
Kelly Landis, Secretary-Treasurer
Lois Bartlett
Clint Clark
Bob Keckler
Paul Lawrence
Ryan Maher
Royce Walker
Troy Wall

Attorney: John Burke

Management Staff:

Kent Larson,
Operations Superintendent
Linda Dahlgren, Finance Officer
Kyrie Lemburg, Accountant

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December 2020 Board Minutes and October 2020 Financial Info

The Dec. 22, 2020, board of directors' meeting was held with the following directors present: Bartlett, Clark, Hieb, Keckler, Landis, Lawrence, McLellan, Walker and Wall, Director absent: Maher and others present: Manager Maher and Finance Officer Dahlgren (Delegated Recorder of Minutes).

The Large Power Users monthly report was given by Linda Dahlgren, which included topics on large power usage and payments.

The Member Services report was given by Roger Lawien, which included SmartHub, DRU installations, large power meter testing, metering, new buildings, iPads, bar coding implementation, billboard project and cyber security.

The operations report was given by Kent Larson, which included pole changes, testing grounds and hot sticks, fire extinguisher testing, apprentice lineman progress update, trencher usage, security lights, maintenance, tree trimming, crews able to continue construction with the nice weather, road move by the Grand River Casino and inventory deliveries.

Manager Maher gave the managers report that included WAPA contract, capital credit general retirement, wheeling contracts, FEMA meeting regarding mitigation projects, Load Management report, SDREA News Bulletin, East River News Line, new Stimulus Bill, Timber Lake Christmas Parade, thank you notes, Basin and Rushmore estimated allocations and NISC allocations.

The directors completed and returned their Conflict-of-Interest surveys for the Form 990.

The board discussed establishing a building committee and Directors Hieb, Landis, Maher and McLellan volunteered to serve on the committee.

Manager Maher presented the 2021 budget and work plan to the board.

The board paid their ACRE memberships for 2021.

Manager Maher presented Director McLellan with his NRECA Board Leadership certificate.

The board gave the BLC training report that included board governance and relations, while the final session covered equity management.

Director Lawrence gave the Rushmore board meeting report that included he attended via teleconference, a presentation from Basin, a financial report, approved the 2021 budget, approved Legal Counsel, Vic's report, staff reports, postponed annual meeting until June and member cooperative issues.

Manager Maher gave a report on the Midwest annual meeting that was held virtual and included a caucus and a very shortened meeting with all the presentations available online until the end of the year.

Board approved the following: the agenda, the minutes from the November meeting, new members, refunds, line extensions, financial statistics, disbursements, safety report, write-overs in the amount of \$22,025.81, the 2021 budget and work plan, Manager and Staff salaries for 2021 and change the January board meeting date to Jan. 18, 2021.

The next board meeting was scheduled for Jan. 18, 2021, at 8:30 a.m., in the Timber Lake office.

October 2020 Financial Information

	October 2020	October 2019	YTD 2020
Operating Revenues	\$969,822	\$980,298	\$10,359,782
Cost of Power	\$526,370	\$513,546	\$5,170,657
Cost of Electric Service	\$1,005,302	\$1,014,505	\$10,037,120
Margins	\$(19,226)	\$(31,614)	\$442,147
kWh Purchased	8,543,572	8,605,429	89,263,137
kWh Sold	7,446,071	7,585,183	81,862,154

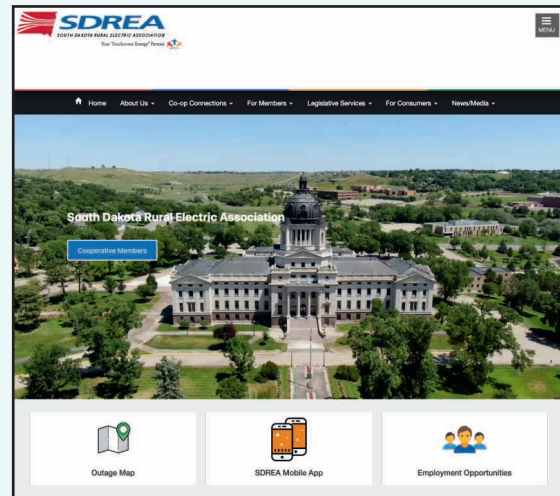
Lighten Your Laundry Load

Laundry isn't a task that many people relish, but if the process can be tweaked to save money, conserve electricity and prolong the life of your clothes, some minor adjustments may be worth your time. Here are some suggestions from Consumer Reports.

- Opt for cold water. Hot water is only needed for laundering oily stains, cloth diapers and sheets and towels used by a family member who has been sick.
- Use high-efficiency detergent for front-loaders, high-efficiency top-loaders and where otherwise recommended by the machine's manufacturer. Conventional detergents create more suds, which can cause the washer to repeatedly rinse laundry, wasting water and time.
- Increase the spin speed to extract more water from your laundry, reducing dryer time. Shake clothes out before transferring them from the washer to the dryer to avoid wrinkles.
- Clean the dryer's lint screen before every load. This improves air circulation and prevents fires. Dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, so if you use them, scrub the filter with a brush monthly.
- Clean the dryer duct regularly to increase airflow, which dries your clothes faster and prevents fires.
- Clean the dryer's moisture sensors. Dryer sheets can leave residue on the sensors that affects their ability to gauge how dry laundry is. Check the owner's manual for instructions on how to clean them.
- Dry similar items together. Don't mix heavy cottons with lightweight fabrics. Wash and dry towels and sheets separately, for example.
- Use the automatic cycle instead of timed drying. If the moisture sensors are working properly, the automatic cycle avoids over-drying, which shortens the life span of clothes and can shrink them.
- And for the least expensive, most efficient method, dry your laundry on a clothesline or use a drying rack indoors. This approach takes a bit more time but is gentler on your clothing, keeping it nicer looking for longer - a savings in itself.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"The Electric Fence is Unsafe!"

Gabbie Eichmann, 11 years old

Gabbie is a resident of rural Canistota. She is the child of Jeremy and Melanie Eichmann, members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

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.

Recipes to Power Up Your Day

Bacon and Egg Lasagna

12 uncooked lasagna noodles	or crumbled
1/3 c. bacon drippings (or oil)	1 lb. bacon/turkey bacon/sausage, cut up
1/3 flour	1 c. chopped onions
1/4 t. pepper	1/2 t. salt
2 c. Swiss cheese	4 c. milk
2 T. parsley	1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
12 eggs, hard cooked, sliced	

Cook lasagna noodles per directions on package. In large skillet cook bacon until crisp (or cook other meat of choice). Reserve 1/3 c. bacon drippings (or use oil) and cook the onion until tender. Add the flour, salt and pepper. Stir until smooth and bubbly. Gradually add the milk, cook until mixture boils and thickens. Stir continuously. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 pan. Spoon a small amount of the sauce onto the bottom of the pan. Layer the noodles, sauce, cheese and bacon (or other meat). Pour the remainder of the sauce over the last layer and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Kristine Shaffer, Lennox, SD

Apple Cranberry Muffins

1-3/4 c. brown sugar	1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. vegetable oil	2 eggs
2 c. flour	1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking soda	2 c. thinly sliced apples
1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 lb. cranberries, halved
1 tsp. nutmeg	1/2 c. nuts, chopped

Cream oil and sugar; add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to mixture. Add spices next. Stir in apples, nuts and cranberries. For Streusel: 1/2 c. flour; 1/3 c. brown sugar; 3 tbsp. butter. Cut butter into flour and sugar until crumbly. Pour into muffin tins and sprinkle with Streusel. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

Ruth E. Schilberg, Viborg, SD

Breakfast Bread Pudding

Butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup creamy peanut butter, divided	4 cups cubed brioche or challah bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2 eggs	2/3 cup pure maple syrup
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1/3 cup crushed peanuts
2/3 cup milk	Powdered sugar, for garnish
1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract	

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter four 4-ounce ramekins. In bowl, mix 1/3 cup peanut butter, eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla and salt. Toss bread cubes in mixture until thoroughly coated. Divide evenly among prepared dishes. Bake until custard is set in middle and tops are golden, about 35-40 minutes. If tops of bread brown too quickly, cover ramekins loosely with aluminum foil. In small saucepan over low heat, combine remaining peanut butter and maple syrup until thoroughly warmed. To serve, drizzle ramekins with maple-peanut sauce and garnish with chopped peanuts and powdered sugar. Substitution: Whole wheat rolls may be used in place of brioche or challah bread.

culinary.net

Baked Eggs

Line muffin pans with 2 wafer thin slices of chicken, beef or pork. Break an egg into each cup. Add a 3/4 tsp. half-and-half and a bit of butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until eggs are cooked to desired firmness.

Elaine Rowitt, Sturgis, SD

Please send your favorite seafood 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.

Which Appliance Should I Upgrade?



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

When you're looking to replace an old fridge, style counts.

Dear Pat and Brad: My husband and I just bought a home that was built in the 1970s. The kitchen appliances are so old that they may be originals, but we only have enough money for one appliance upgrade. Which appliance replacement will help reduce our energy bills the most? – Jessica

Dear Jessica: You're smart to consider energy use as you look at replacing appliances because most new appliances use much less energy than they did in the past. Manufacturers have found innovative ways to reduce appliance energy use without sacrificing performance. The federal government began tightening appliance standards in the 1980s and has continued as technological innovations became more cost-effective.

It may seem like the oldest appliance should go first. That may make sense if you want the looks and features of a newer oven or dishwasher. But with most appliances, the energy savings you get from a new one will take several years to pay for itself with the energy saved.

The appliance replacement most likely to produce the greatest energy savings is your refrigerator. An older fridge can cost about \$20 to run every month. Replacing an old fridge with a new ENERGY STAR®-rated model can cut that down to less than \$5 a month. The ENERGY STAR® label certifies that the appliance saves energy. New refrigerators will include an additional label, the Energy Guide label, which shows how much energy it uses annually and compares that to the most and least efficient models available. It's also possible to measure how much energy your fridge is using with a kWh meter. Energy auditors use these meters to measure energy use for common household appliances. Sometimes the energy use of an older fridge can be reduced by replacing the seal around the door.



The appliance replacement most likely to produce the greatest energy savings is your refrigerator.

When you're looking to replace an old fridge, style counts. A top-freezer setup is the most efficient, while a lower-freezer unit offers medium savings, and a side-by-side style is the least energy efficient.

If your goal is to save money on your energy bill, resist the urge to keep the old fridge in the basement or garage - that won't help you reduce your energy use. An old fridge in an uninsulated garage on a hot summer day can use a lot of energy. Maybe you just need more freezer space. If so, we recommend the most efficient freezer you can find. You can find recommendations on www.energystar.gov.

If your current fridge is in good condition, another appliance you may want to consider upgrading is the dishwasher. With most of us spending more time at home these days, chances are you're using your dishwasher more than you used to.

As with any major purchase, be sure to read customer reviews for any brands and models you're considering, and look for additional opportunities to save money, like an upcoming Presidents Day appliance sale.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips

Legendary Performer Gary Mule Deer - and His Pompadour - are Still Going Strong

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Just like his trademark pompadour, Gary Mule Deer is still standing tall and proud after all these years. Thanks to the wondrous super holding power of Kenra 25, Mule Deer is still taking the stage with his skyscraper hairdo and delivering the sharp wit and old-school country music that have made him a South Dakota entertainment icon.

Going strong at 81, Mule Deer is one of the first to be amazed that he continues to have the stamina to do hundreds of shows a year (pre-pandemic) after six decades in the business. Not that he's prone to just let himself go. Despite some age-related medical issues, he works hard to keep his physical and spiritual energy up.

"I try to stay as fit as I can," Mule Deer said from his home in Spearfish. "I'm careful about what I eat, and I always pay attention to what I watch on TV or see on the internet. I try to keep things light and stay away from the dark. Tuning into the news any more than necessary can really bring your spirits down."

Mule Deer was part of a 40-show tour with Marty Stuart and The Steve Miller Band – including 24 scheduled appearances at the Grand Ole Opry – when the pandemic brought the tour to a halt. He managed to perform at the Opry last November and returned in January. But it wasn't anything like pre-pandemic days.

"A lot of the fun of doing the Opry is hanging out backstage," he said. "Now you can't just hang out. You have to wear a mask up to the microphone, then you can take it off. After you do your show you have to put the mask back on, go to your locker and grab your stuff and leave."

Mule Deer said he is happy to comply with the rules to help contain the virus. He recently lost one of his long-time friends and fellow country music stars, Charlie Pride, to the disease.

"Charlie was a real legend. We had just

done the Opry together last February. My wife Nita and I were great friends with him and his wife, Rozene. He could not have been a nicer guy and a true gentleman," Mule Deer said. "This disease is scary, but the scariest thing to me is that some people still think it's all a hoax."

Mule Deer also stays busy helping his son, Shawn Michael Bitz, promote the budding novelist's new book, *The Slim Chance*

"I always thought 'adult humor' wasn't very grown up," he said. "You can tell what kind of laughter comes out of people who respond to clean humor and 'blue' humor. When you're entertaining to make people happy and not just shock them, you can hear the difference. My type of humor brings a healthier kind of laughter. It comes from the gut and the spirit, where all the good stuff is."



Legendary performer Gary Mule Deer is still going strong entertaining audiences all over the country. Photo courtesy of Jill Jarrett.

Tour: *Stories in the Key of G-Whiz*. Bitz is also author of *Butterfly Pit Crew*. Both books are available on Amazon.

Apart from his 350 TV appearances and sharing the stage with every notable performer from Frank Sinatra to Willie Nelson, he said there are two things he is most proud of: working clean and working for charity.

Audiences can always count on a clean, upbeat show from Mule Deer.

He has also been a solid supporter of a great number of charities. Many of them have been projects also supported by fellow performers such as Pride, Vince Gill, Bing Crosby, and a long list of sports celebrities. The Make-A-Wish Foundation honored Mule Deer with a Walk of Fame star for his fundraising efforts.

Mule Deer signs off with a joke: "I saw a woman the other day riding a bike in Spearfish. I yelled out to her, 'Cow!' She flipped me off. Then she hit the cow."



Jennifer Gross teaches the fundamentals of electricity to students at Warner Elementary. Photo by Ben Dunsmoor.

ENLIGHTENING STUDENTS

Teachers, Co-ops Take Energy Education to the Classroom

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdea.coop

Jennifer Gross doesn't know it for a fact, but she has a sneaking suspicion she has saved someone's life. Maybe more than once.

Gross is not a nurse, or a doctor, or a firefighter or an emergency medical technician. She serves as the education and outreach coordinator at Madison-based East River Electric and oversees the organization's Co-ops in the Classroom program. In that role over the past five years, Gross has instructed thousands of students on the importance of electric safety.

She goes into the classroom and covers a wide range of concepts in less than an hour, including how electricity is generated, how it can be conserved and how potentially dangerous it can be. She's been accused of speaking at the speed of light because there's so much for the students to grasp.

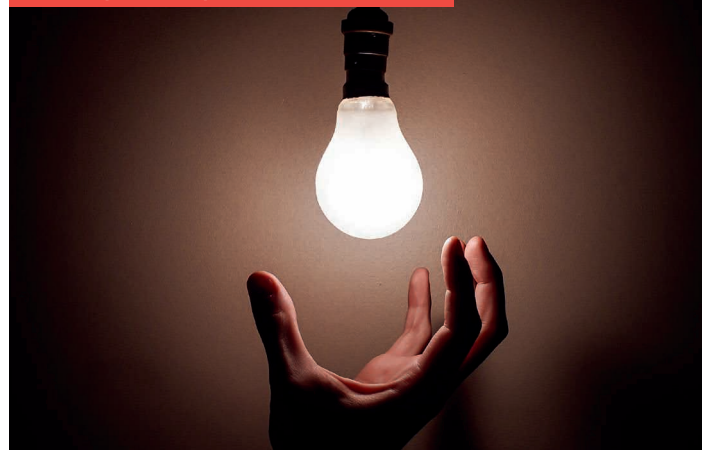
"Our follow-up evaluations sometimes show that I talk too quickly," Gross said with a chuckle. "But there's a lot to cover, so many things they need to know that could keep them safe and free from harm. These are things they're going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It's a lot to pack into an hour, but it's important information."

Gross is one of many cooperative employees across the state who teach students the importance of understanding the benefits and potential dangers of electricity and how to use it wisely. In fact, member and community education is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide South Dakota's electric cooperatives.

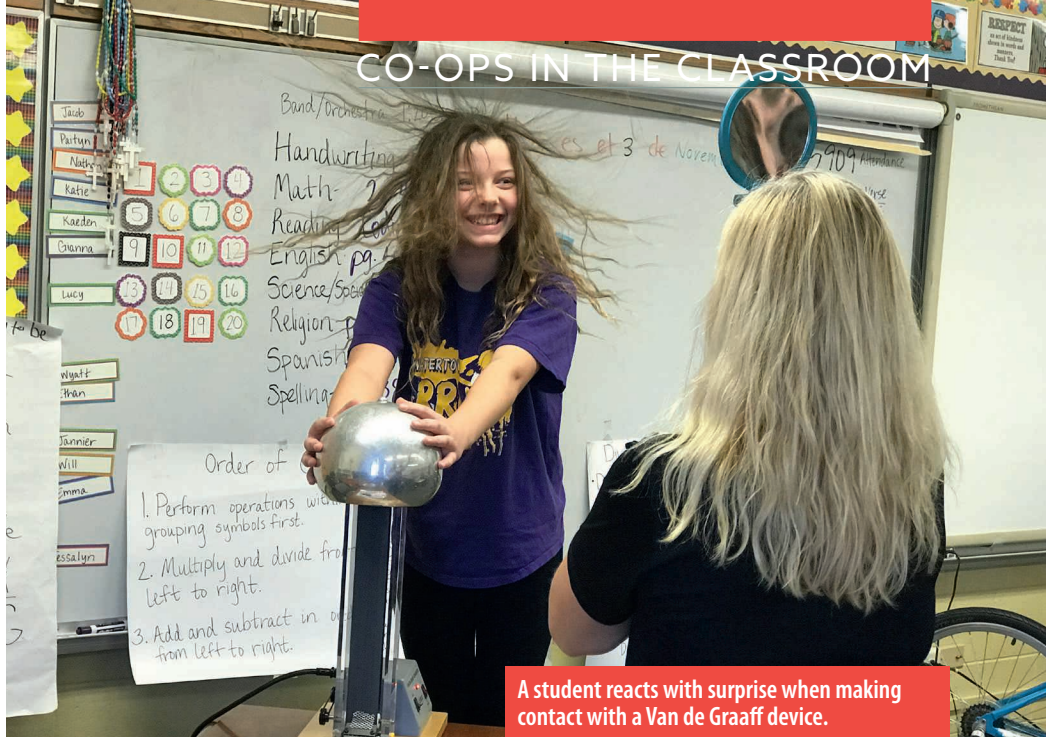
The classroom program that Gross delivers includes how electrical power is generated, how it's transmitted, how it's conserved and how use it safely. The program also includes information that distinguishes electric cooperatives from investor-owned and municipal electric utilities. And one of those differences is a commitment to education and youth leadership development.

"We teach them that there are all kinds of cooperative businesses out there – food co-ops, clothing co-ops, housing co-ops, marketing co-ops and others – and we're here to do more than

Students learn incandescent light bulbs cost more to operate compared to LEDs.



"These are things they're going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It's a lot to pack into an hour, but it's important information."
- Jennifer Gross



A student reacts with surprise when making contact with a Van de Graaff device.

just provide electrical power. We're here to deliver this information because we care about the welfare and well-being of our members, and we're always here for them if they have questions about electricity."

Gross was a social worker before she joined East River as support staff in the engineering department more than 10 years ago. Since taking over the Co-ops in the Schools program, she has interacted with many primary and secondary educators who also see the need to teach the fundamentals of electricity.

One of those is Jami Heinrich, a fifth-grade teacher at Warner Elementary School where Gross recently delivered her presentation. She has seen how students respond to discussions about electricity and see the direct application to their everyday lives.

"It's something that's always around them and they deal with all the time," Heinrich

said. "It's good to get them the information they need to make better choices. When Jennifer was talking about insulators, one of my students brought up that his grandparents' cell phone chargers were worn out and you could see the wires. He said, 'So, this is a bad idea.' It brought up a good discussion in the classroom. Safety around electricity is definitely a priority, and teaching children about it will lead them to make safer choices."

South Dakota's electric cooperatives extend their education outreach well beyond elementary school classrooms. The cooperatives have invested in an electrical safety demonstration trailer that makes its way around the state not only to instruct linemen but also to attend public events and show the various components of a grid-based power delivery system. During the demonstration, facilitators send an electrical current through a hotdog, grapefruit and tree branch to show how much destruction unharmed and mishandled electricity can do.

To view a video of the safety demonstration trailer, visit youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s.

Cooperatives have also supported programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and the Youth Excursion

that teach high school students not only about electricity but also some of the political considerations surrounding the electric utility industry and the history of the country's rural electric cooperative movement.

Many elementary and secondary school educators throughout the state – including Gross – have attended the annual teacher education seminar sponsored by the Lignite Energy Council, which attracts 130 participants from Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota. The four-day program takes place at Bismarck State College and offers professional development credits for attendees.

The seminar focuses on how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses. In addition, the seminar covers lignite's economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry. Since 1986, more than 3,400 teachers have attended the seminar.

Roger Lawien, director of member services at Moreau-Grand Electric in Timber Lake, underscores the importance of electric education: "Member education is a vital part of what we do as co-ops. We have a program we call 'Neon Leon,' and one day after a safety demonstration a woman came up with her two boys and said, 'I just wanted to thank you for what you do here. Because of what you taught my boys at last year's demonstration, my husband is alive.' That really shows how important it is."



Science is at the center of learning about how electricity is generated and used.

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Continuity of Service

The Cooperative shall use reasonable diligence to provide a constant and uninterrupted supply of electric power and energy.

If the supply of electric power and energy shall fail, be interrupted, or become defective through an act of God, government authority, action of the elements, public enemy, accident, strikes, labor trouble, required maintenance work, premature obsolescence of equipment or any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the Cooperative, the Cooperative shall not be liable therefore or for damages caused thereby.

How to Get Paid \$50 and Make a Big Difference

When you flip on a light switch, electricity travels in an instant to your home and the bulb glows – that's called demand. When all of us turn on lights, heaters, run a hot bath or any of the other appliances at the same time, it increases the demand load system wide.

We offer a one-time incentive of \$50 to our members for the opportunity to install a Demand Response Unit (DRU) on water heaters and central air conditioning units. After a licensed electrician (hired by Moreau-Grand Electric) has installed the DRU, we begin managing your energy consumption – on average, four to eight days out of the month.

If you would like to be one of the nearly 500 other members of Moreau-Grand Electric in the Demand Response Program, you can contact Member Services at 800-952-3158 to set up a time to have a DRU installed.



MotorSavers Do What Name Implies

Moreau-Grand strives to provide you with the high quality power your valuable equipment needs. Unfortunately, Mother Nature and other issues may intervene. This is why we encourage you to consider protecting equipment with devices such as the MotorSaver.

MotorSaver power monitors can protect motors from low and high voltage and rapid cycling conditions and voltage unbalance, single-phase and reverse-phase conditions on three-phase systems.

Typical applications include: air handlers, conveyor drives, oil and gas pumps, elevator drives, lift station pumps, commercial/industrial air conditioning and refrigeration compressors and irrigation pumps.



All MotorSavers are microcontroller based and factory calibrated for accurate voltage and current measurements to provide high sensitivity while minimizing nuisance tripping. The high accuracy of MotorSavers allows unbalance and single-phase detection even with regenerated voltages present.

SymCom's Model 77C and 777 overload relay family can be used to protect any single- or three-phase motor drawing 1 to 800 amps. They combine overload (high current), underload (low current) and voltage and power monitoring functions in one package and have a three-digit display for viewing real-time voltage, current and last fault information.

Model 77C and 777 are complete motor, pump and system protection devices. The monitoring of both current and voltage provide ideal, robust motor management.

This is not an endorsement of this item, just an example of what equipment is available. More information is available about this South Dakota-made product on the web at www.symcom.com.

Tips to use portable generators safely:

- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can 'back feed' onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly enclosed areas such as garages.
- Gasoline is extremely flammable and explosive. Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- Always start or stop the generator only when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. We strongly recommend that you check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations relating to grounding.
- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly and contact the nearest authorized dealer for parts needing repair or replacement.



SmartHub Tips

Roger Lawien

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Recently, I was assisting members who wanted to set up SmartHub on their iPads. What a great learning experience for all of us. As we shared a cup of coffee, they taught me some iPad tricks and I was able to assist them getting access to their online Moreau-Grand account.

When we were finished, one of these wonderful ladies asked if they could use the same app for Cheyenne River Telephone Authority. Well, as luck would have it, YES!

By simply clicking the "Providers" button on your login screen, you can change providers. So, if you are a member of Moreau-Grand, C.R.S.T. Telephone Authority, West River Telecom (WRT), or WRCTC out of Bison, we can all use the same app on our computers, phones or iPads to track usage, contact us or pay your bill online.



Sisters Janet Keckler, left, and Faye Kraft, right, are the 936th and 937th Moreau-Grand Electric members using SmartHub to track usage, contact us or pay their bill online.

Standby Generating Plants

Standby generating plants owned by members shall be properly connected.

No other source of supply of electricity shall be introduced or used by any member/consumer in conjunction with the electric service supplied by Moreau-Grand without the prior approval of the cooperative. All installations of standby or emergency generating equipment shall be required to be wired through a UL-listed double-throw switch device of a type that prevents electrical feedback into Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative facilities. It shall be the member/consumers' responsibility to notify the cooperative at the time of installation of emergency or standby generating equipment.

If a co-op employee should discover a generator installed without a double-throw disconnect switch, he may shut down or isolate the generator to protect Moreau-Grand personnel while doing their work. He must inform the member of the hazards to members' equipment and to cooperative personnel. A 30-day notice will be given for installation of a double-throw disconnect switch by the member or cooperative crews. Noncompliance with this policy may subject the member/consumer to discontinuance of service at once and without prior notice. Generator safety information is available at Moreau-Grand Electric offices and on the web at www.mge.coop.



Antelope Valley Station control room operator J.D. Wolf sits at the control center where he monitors the facility operations.

The People Behind the Power

Power Providers Take Pragmatic Approach to Fuel Use

Billy Gibson

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With every change in presidential administrations, there comes a predictable shift in policy positions surrounding coal and the fossil fuels used to generate the electricity that drives the country's economic engine and allows for the conveniences of modern life.

The Obama Administration, for instance, waged what many described as a “war on coal.” It pursued an agenda that focused on imposing stringent regulations designed to push the power generation market toward renewable resources and eliminate fossil fuels. It was an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate an emerging renewable industry.

The next administration followed with President Donald Trump declaring an end to the “war on coal” during his first State of the Union address. President Trump signed executive orders revoking various rules regarding carbon emissions enacted by his predecessor. He vowed to revive the coal mining industry and “put those miners back to work.”

And with yet another change in political

power, President Joe Biden has started the pendulum swinging back in the other direction. His energy approach, which he dubs the “Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice Plan” involves reinstating many of the Obama-era policies including restrictions on oil and gas leases and investing \$400 billion in clean energy technology and innovation over the next 10 years. It also includes pushing the ag sector toward net-zero emissions.

While these policies play out in the political arena, those who bear the responsibility of actually generating the power the country needs have their own perspective. Working diligently and silently in the background of the high-profile political battles pitting climate change activists against climate change deniers are thousands who see these issues as a lot less political and much more practical. Pundits and ideologues suit up each day to argue over policy. Power generators suit up every day to keep the lights on 24/7 at rates people can afford.

For South Dakota's electric cooperative members, that responsibility falls on the staff, management and board members of Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric). Owned by the members it serves, Basin Electric generates electricity

for 140 transmission and distribution co-ops in nine states. The massive power co-op has professionals in place to deal with the political considerations of power production, but most are concerned with keeping the ions flowing toward three million homes, businesses, farms and ranches across the region.

For those individuals, policy decisions have real consequences in terms of how they carry out their work. For example, while some lawmakers roll out plans intended to push the industry in the direction of net-zero emissions, engineers, rate designers, operators, financial experts and others are dealing with the realities of making that happen.

According to Andrew Buntrock, Basin Electric's director of strategic planning, so often it comes down to a delicate balance – a three-legged stool – between on-demand accessibility, zero emissions and low rates. It's practically impossible to achieve all three at optimal levels simultaneously.

“Someone explained it like this: Let's say a rancher wants a vehicle that's affordable, cheap to operate and has zero carbon emissions,” said Buntrock. “But he's not going to be able to pull his loaded cattle trailer with a Prius. He needs the power

of an F-350 to do what he needs to do, to make a living, to bring his product to market and contribute to the economy. Sometimes we want to have it all, but that's not always possible."

He explained that power generators experience constant pressure to curb greenhouse gas emissions and eliminate fossil fuels in favor of renewable power while staying in compliance with governmental and regulatory agencies. To many vocal environmentalists, no realistic timeline to make the country completely energy independent is fast enough.

Basin Electric, Buntrock explained, has long been working to reduce emissions. For instance, in 2000 roughly 85 percent of the cooperative's power was generated with coal as the primary fuel source. Today that percentage is around 44 percent, with nearly \$2 billion spent on environmental emissions control technology. The co-op also has renewable power projects underway including the Wild Springs,



Tom White serves as a mechanic technician at Basin Electric's Deer Creek Station.

from a podium or street protest is often difficult to carry out in the trenches.

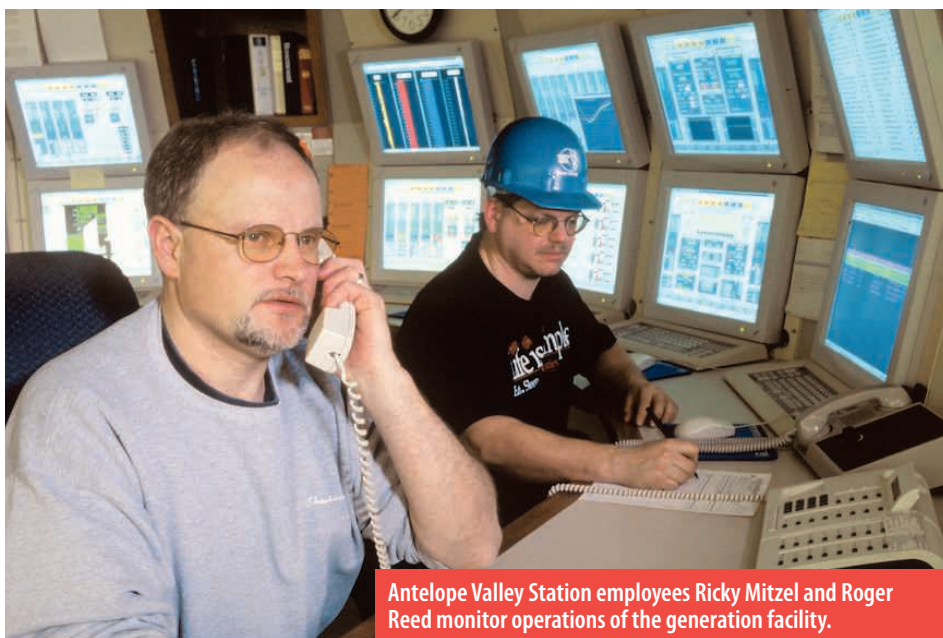
"We've been working on this for 20 years and we've been making strides. We're proud of our efforts to accomplish the thing that we all want: a clean environment. But we also want affordable, accessible power and for now and the foreseeable future, that's going to include

noted that price is even more of a priority since the pandemic struck a blow to the economy.

"Our approach and our strategy is 'all of the above.' We can't put all of our eggs in one basket," Buntrock said. "We're mindful of the concerns expressed by environmentalists because we share those concerns. But we think we're moving in the right direction. We just want our members and the public to understand that a plan or a goal may be easy to formulate, but actually making it happen often entails complex challenges that most people aren't aware of. The story behind the switch isn't one that people hear very often."

Even if fossil fuels could be eliminated altogether and baseload demand could be met entirely with renewable sources, the transition would still leave power producers – and consumers – in a financial lurch.

"It's like having two cars. You have one that you're still paying for. But then you want another model and you can't just dump the first one. You end up having two car notes, but you can only drive one to work," Buntrock said.



Antelope Valley Station employees Ricky Mitzel and Roger Reed monitor operations of the generation facility.

West River and Cabin Creek solar farms and Northern Divide Wind Project. There is also a division dedicated to conducting research on renewable energy sources and applying the most cost-effective implementation.

Buntrock said most power providers welcome and embrace efforts to reduce emissions, but the timetables should be realistic and take into account the fact that formulating a plan that sounds attractive

fossil fuels because it's the best source for being able to control the power production process. You can't always depend on the wind blowing and the sun shining."

Basin recently conducted an extensive survey of its members in an effort to identify their top priorities. The list of responses was led by price, followed by reliability, the two factors necessary for providing power that people can afford and they can access on demand. Buntrock

As the rest of the country watches the Biden Administration and congress negotiate on policy, Buntrock said Basin Electric will continue to produce on-demand power for its members.

"We know we're moving in the right direction and we know our members are confident that we're doing our best to look out for their interests, deliver the power they need and strive to be a good and trusted partner."



Jaclyn Arens of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor practices yoga during her vacation breaks.

DE-STRESSING

Shed the Stress of a Busy Life: Take it Easy on Yourself

Billy Gibson

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Take it easy on yourself.

That bit of advice was dispensed by Country Music Hall of Famer Don Williams back in the late 1990s, and it's the same wisdom imparted by Kristie Ching, a certified health and life coach.

Ching, an employee at Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Deer Creek station near Elkton, works with clients who find themselves being overwhelmed by the breakneck speed of modern life and feeling lost and ridden with angst.

What can you do to stay centered while the flurry of activity and information all around you is leaving you exhausted and reducing your quality of life? Ching believes she has the answer. After earning her master's degree in human science in 2014, Ching has helped many clients find the balance they need to regain control of their lives and thrive. But if she had to boil it all down to one pearl of wisdom, she'd say the most important consideration is to make your own success a priority and take it easy on yourself during those times you don't always hit the bullseye.

"You have to give yourself some grace and understand that you don't have to be perfect and it's okay to make a mistake," Ching said.

Maintaining a close mind/body connection is also paramount in being able to cope with the stress and pressures that come to

bear on any given day filled with family and work responsibilities, Ching said. Over the past seven years, she has led classes in PiYo, a blend of pilates and yoga training.

Classes usually include meditation techniques, deep and controlled breathing exercises and vigorous physical movements. The idea is to slow down your mind while moving your body. Some prefer to call it "yoga on crack."

In her work, Ching has discovered that the most helpful directive for many clients is to intentionally take an extended hiatus from the news and generally spend less time in front of a phone, computer or television screen. The results can be transformative, she said.

"The biggest 'aha' moments I get with my clients is when they unclutter their lives and just quiet their minds. We take in so much information from hour to hour. In order to absorb it all, you have to push all of that chaos out with the old stuff cluttering your mind," she said. "One client said what brought her the most peace is when she stopped watching the nightly news. It would literally bring her down. Take some time away from the world and feed your soul. Spend some time laughing with friends or reading a book before you go to bed, not watching TV or scrolling through Facebook."

Tips for Dealing with Stress

By Kristie Ching

- Be thankful. Showing gratitude for all you DO have in your life brings more good into your life.
- Move your body. Do the things you enjoy, attend a class at the local gym, go for a walk or run, dance in the kitchen, play with your kids or grandkids, play a game of basketball with friends. The main thing is to find a physical activity you enjoy.
- Unplug. Put down the phone, iPad, computer.
- Meditation or deep breathing. There are a ton of meditation resources on YouTube, or I teach my clients to utilize a 5-5-7 breathing technique that can be done in just 2 minutes. Set your intention of what you want and just breathe. Breathe in for 5 seconds, hold for 5, exhale for 7.
- Get enough sleep. When you are tired you tend to make more poor choices.
- Write it down. When stress is high it's often a good practice to write it down and get all the frustration down on paper. Then throw it away and release it.
- Slow down and eat with all your senses. We often add stress to our bodies just by scarfing down our food. Slow down. Enjoy the smells and tastes.
- Spend time with people who lift you up and make you laugh. Laughter is the best medicine!
- Make time to do the things you enjoy. Reading, blogging, going for a walk, watching your favorite TV show, draw, color, anything to let your inner child come out.
- Unclutter. I encourage clients to first look at areas they need to unclutter. In order to bring in the new you need to take out the old, just like when you buy a new couch, you get rid of the old one.



One thing that Ching is sure to bring up with her clients is the connection of food, eating, the body and the mind.

She said one highly effective way of losing weight is to unclutter the mind before approaching the dinner table. While many succumb to overeating due to worry and stress, managing the spirit and the mind typically results in fewer bad dietary habits and prolonged body weight control. Less stress leads to fewer calories, and fewer calories leads to weight loss. She calls it food freedom.

"When you achieve food freedom, you don't have to diet all the time and deal with the stress that comes with always being on a diet," Ching said. "Stress can

lead to overeating. If you're under stress, don't reach for those potato chips or candy bar. Go find a quiet place and relax for a moment and meditate. If you can meditate for a few minutes before you sit down to eat, that can help you relax, and it will also aid in your digestion."

Jaclyn Arens sometimes experiences stress in her role as marketing and member services coordinator at Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor. She was a fixture at the Soul Story Yoga Studio before the local business shut down its facility due to concerns over the pandemic. Arens said the concepts and techniques she has learned can be practiced anywhere. She sometimes pauses during vacation trips to center herself and

prepare herself for a day of outdoors fun.

"Yoga is adaptable for any fitness level and can be practiced pretty much anywhere," she said. "I do yoga to increase my strength, balance, and flexibility, and to take time to think and breathe. One thing I appreciate about yoga is the supportive community, and I look forward to returning to the studio when the pandemic is under control and feeling that sense of community again!"

Soul Story Studio owner Rebecca Johnson said she has no timetable to re-open the studio but has begun offering classes online at www.soulstoryyoga.com/online-classes.

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."



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

January 18-25

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD
605-717-9294

January 21-24

Elf The Musical, Area
Community Theatre,
Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

January 23

Treasured Lives Presents:
Bazzel Baz, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
1-800-468-6463

January 29-30

Pro Snocross Races, Days
of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

January 29-February 6

Black Hills Stock Show &
Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-335-3861

January 29-31

Winterfest, Lead, SD
605-335-3861

February 5-6

Mardi Gras Weekend,
Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

February 10-13

Watertown Winter Farm
Show, Codington County
Extension Complex,
Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

February 12-13

SD High School State
Gymnastics Meet, Watertown
Civic Arena, Watertown, SD



Pro Snocross Races, Jan. 29-30, 2021

February 18

The Q's High Line to
Deadwood – A 130-year
Retrospective, Homestake
Adams Research and Cultural
Center, Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills
Film Festival, Virtual
605-574-9454

February 20-27

SD State High School
Wrestling Tournament,
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

February 25

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood
Live: Neighbor Day,
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD
605-367-6000

March 5-6

SD High School State Debate
& IE Tournament, Central
High School, Aberdeen, SD

March 12-13

St. Patrick's Day Weekend,
Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

March 13

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
and Tour, Spearfish Canyon
Lodge, Lead, SD
605-641-4963

March 13

St. Patrick's Day Celebration,
Knights of Columbus Hall,
Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun
Show, American Legion Hall,
Philip, SD
605-859-2280

March 19-20

Annual Schmeckfest,
Freeman Academy,
Freeman, SD
605-925-4237

March 23-24

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center Fine Arts
Theatre, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead
Hills, Homestake Adams
Research and Cultural Center,
Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

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.