

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota Art

**Trashyard
Treasures**

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**The Story of
Dude Dad**

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BOARD REPORT



A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 p.m. on January 17, 2023, pursuant to due call and notice. It being determined that a quorum was present, President Gary Bachman called the meeting to order. Secretary Eric Odenbach kept the minutes of the meeting. The following directors were declared present by roll call: Gary Bachman, Paula Petersen (teleconference), Kelly Melius, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe. Line Superintendent Rob Vetch, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, Ryan Holien and Jesse Brown were present.

Changes to the agenda: none

Changes/Additions to Minutes from December 20, 2022, meeting: none

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve administrative business.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to acknowledge

manager, staff, and electrical department reports and approve.

Work Order Inventories

#589	\$62,109.71
#590	\$5,852.81
#591	\$9,341.42
#592	\$141,984.94
#593	\$16,584.03
	#235,872.91

Cyber Security Report: None

Resolutions, Contracts, and Nominations:

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve review of Policy 315 Annual Connect Fee.

FEM Electric board seat District 2 Tom Thorpe and District 3 Gary Bachman are up for reelection on June 27, 2023 at the FEM Electric Annual Meeting. Both Gary Bachman and Tom Thorpe plan to run for reelection. The official notice will be posted in a future Cooperative Connection magazine.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Roger Artz, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Jim Lacher, Ipswich, SD,

Active Farm; Darrel & Jeanette Yost, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm; Elroy Goetz, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm

Reconnects: Alex Jung, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Ron & Patty Kadlec, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Michael D. Yost, Leola, SD, Active Farm; Marie Goetz & Sharon Rucker, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm

Contracts: None

Retired Locations: None

Capital Credits:

Estates – January 2023: None

73 & Older – January 2023: None

Minutes from FEM Electric Value-Added Economic Development Loan Committee were acknowledged.

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: preliminary December 2022 financials and check register for the month of December 2022 contained information on checks #33048 through #33102 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for December 2022 totaling \$282,550.94.

NISC 2022 Capital Credits and Renewable Energy Credits (REC's) were acknowledged.

Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve director and attorney fees.

Legal Update: None

Meeting Report:

East River board update was given by Gary Bachman.

SDREA board annual meeting report was given Tom Thorpe and Gary Bachman Tom Thorpe provided the SDREA Board Report.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the December 13, 2022 Safety Meeting

Continued on pg 10

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

Board of Directors

Gary Bachman, President
Tom Thorpe, Vice President
Eric Odenbach, Secretary
Paula Petersen, Treasurer
Kelly Melius, Asst. Sec./
Treasurer
Vaughn Beck, Attorney

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
info@femelectric.coop

Management Staff

Rob Vetch
Line Superintendent
Rhonda Tuscherer
Director of Finance and
Benefits

Editor's e-mail:

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FEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc., 800 5th Ave., Ipswich, SD 57451. FEM Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: As part of their membership, FEM members devote \$1.00 from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$15 annually. (USPS 189-720) Periodical Postage Paid at Ipswich, SD 57451 and at additional offices.

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Design assistance by SDREA

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opportunity provider and
employer.**



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

As I begin this article in the first part of February, we have the 2022 year-end books closed, and our year ended with strong financials. Our 2023 budget is in place, and FEM is on the path for another successful year as we look forward. We have material ordered and are receiving material for our construction projects beginning in a few short months. The remaining Verizon meters have arrived, and employees in operation are working with the office to get them installed. This is a team effort; operation installs the meters then the paperwork makes its way through the office where there is a process to make sure everything is working properly. This will be the end of a three-year project, and the start of outage management, which is a software program. These new meters will assist our engineers and operations with real-time voltage recordings. In the past, we managed our system with old data. Now we can be proactive. As with most all our projects, it's just getting everything aligned to move forward while still being efficient.

We have several other projects that we have been working on. For instance, we're reducing the number of third-party companies that need access to our data base or computer servers. We have been in the process of moving our digital mapping to Star Energy, our electrical

engineering company. We currently use Rushmore Electric from Rapid City, and they have done a great job for FEM Electric. As I stated earlier our goal is to reduce third parties, and this was started several years ago. You can see we do not make rash decisions, and sometimes we must make investments before projects can move forward.

I would ask our members to please plan ahead if you are looking to add any electrical load, and call Rob Vetch or Ryan Holien. If you are planning to build a new shop or house, please contact Ryan Holien to discuss rebates and electric heat.

With good planning and working together, we can have productive construction season.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@FEMElectric on

@fem_electric on

@FEMElectric on

We'll post outage updates, safety tips, news and more to keep our members informed on all the latest from FEM Electric.

Statement Mailing Dates

Feb. 28, 2023 for Feb.'s energy

Mar 29, 2023 for Mar.'s energy

**Regardless of the statement
mail out date, payments are
due in the office by the 9th of
the following month.**

Spring Planting Safety

Farming equipment has become more massive and technologically advanced over time. While these welcome improvements help farmers cover more ground in less time, taller equipment and longer extensions can bring added challenges around power lines.

As farmers prepare to enter the fields for planting, we urge everyone working in the agricultural field to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.



Follow the 10-foot distance rule

To stay safe around overhead power lines, follow safe work practices at all times to help prevent serious and even deadly accidents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line, but to the full 360 degrees around it. Not only can electricity change paths if direct contact is made, it can also happen when someone or something gets too close to a power line, and the current jumps, also known as arcing.

Other precautions

In addition to the 10-foot rule, take these steps to help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to deenergize the power.
- If it is not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make

a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Hop away with feet together as far as you can.

- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 9-1-1 and do not approach the scene.
- Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.
- Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.
- When working around power lines, always use a spotter, who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low, never try to move it; instead, contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.



Take care when plugging in appliances

Stella Nilson

Stella Nilson gives good advice on circuit safety. Overloading circuits is a major cause of residential fires, and she warns people to take care when plugging in appliances. Stella is the daughter of Kyle and Alision Nilson, members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.



SEAFOOD SPECIALTY

SEAFOOD PARTY DIP**Ingredients:**

1 pkg. mock crab sticks
 1 pkg. mock crab pieces
 1 pkg. mock lobster
 1 pkg. salad shrimp
 1 can water chestnuts
 1 medium onion (optional)
 1 c. real mayonnaise
 2 pkg. Philly cream cheese
 Dried parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste

METHOD

Grind crab, lobster, shrimp, and water chestnuts. Chop onion. Using a mixer, blend mayo and cream cheese until smooth. Add parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Combine with seafood. Mix well and refrigerate. Serve with various kinds of crackers.

Kari Larson Reder, Warner, S.D.

WALLEYE CAKES**Ingredients:**

8 oz. walleye (cooked, cooled, and flaked)
 1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 4 eggs
 1 c. cooked wild rice
 1/2 c. Parmesan cheese
 4 green onions (chopped)
 1 sleeve saltine crackers (crushed)
 1 tsp. crushed garlic
 2 tsps. seasonings (salt, pepper)
 2 tbsp. oil or butter

METHOD

In large bowl, combine walleye, mayo, rice, onion, garlic, and cheese. Add eggs and seasonings. Fold in crushed saltines until the mixture is firm enough to form cakes. Fry in olive oil for 2-3 minutes on each side or until crispy. Serve with topping: 1/2 c. mayo, 1 tsp. garlic powder, and 1 oz. crumbled blue cheese. Mix together.

Dar Duncan, Milbank, S.D.

SHRIMP PASTA**Ingredients:**

1 can (14 1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste
 1 c. water
 2 tsps. sugar
 1 tsp. basil leaves
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. oregano leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
 8 oz. pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti
 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

METHOD

Mix tomatoes, tomato paste, water, sugar, basil, garlic powder, oregano, salt and red pepper in large saucepan. Bring to boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta as directed on package, adding shrimp during last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain. Return pasta and shrimp to saucepot. Pour tomato sauce over shrimp and pasta. Toss gently to coat well. Serve immediately with shredded Parmesan cheese, if desired.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

POSTAL DELAYS

FEM Electric has been made aware of changes made to our local mail system, and we understand it is causing delays in mail reaching our members as well as the FEM office. This is a great time to enroll in ACH payments, or sign up for SmartHub. You can enroll in ACH by filling out a form with the FEM office and payments will automatically come out of your checking account each month. You will never have to worry about missing a payment!

SmartHub is useful in a number of ways. You can sign up either with the SmartHub app or through the web. You can enroll in automatic payments with a checking account or with a credit card. If that's not right for you, that's okay! You can just view your bill the day it's available without having to wait for the mail to reach your home! It's that easy!

If you have any questions about either option, please call FEM Electric at 605-426-6891 or 1-800-587-5880.

*A big thank you
to all involved to
keep the electricity
going! I am sure it was
tough going out there.
Appreciated everyone so
much! Thank you!
Bat Olen*

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: energy.gov



FEM,
Thank you so much for
your donation to our
annual Holiday Fair.
All proceeds from this
event go towards
pediatric cancer research.

Thanks again,
Nancy

Pancake & Sausage Breakfast

Another successful pancake and sausage breakfast was held on January 20th, 2023 at FEM Electric. Over 175 FEM members and community members were served a free breakfast that included pancakes and sausage. Donations were also accepted on behalf of food pantries in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties.

Members of FEM and the community filtered in all morning, which kept board members Gary Bachman, Tom Thorpe, and Eric Odenbach busy flipping pancakes. Board member Kelly Melius kept coffee cups warm and full while visiting with patrons.

The FEM board and staff would like to thank everyone who came out to have breakfast with us as well as those who were able to donate!



Donations from pancake breakfast separated and ready to be delivered to local food pantries in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties.



FEM Board members Eric Odenbach (left) and Gary Bachman (right) are preparing pancakes for a line of waiting patrons.



Left: Board member Eric Odenbach and his daughter tried their hands at making fancy pancakes. They did a great job replicating the FEM logo!



Left: Eric and his daughter created this extra special pancake design at the pancake breakfast!

TRASHYARD TREASURES

Lee Lindsley of Piedmont turns trash into treasure when he isn't on the clock working for the South Dakota Department of Transportation.

South Dakota Man Welds Junkyard Scraps Into Pieces of Art

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Lee Lindsley has a real talent for welding trash into treasure. Given the time, Lindsley can sculpt even the most unwanted junkyard scrap – busted gears, rusted lug nuts and mangled bicycle chains – into an artistic masterpiece.

By day, Lindsley works as a region inspector for the South Dakota Department of Transportation in the Black Hills, but by night, he can be found in his shop putting hours of work into his metallic puzzles, welding them together piece by piece.

When not on the clock, Lindsley is busy tackling his next project, investing anywhere from 30 to 100 hours into each sculpture. The end result often portrays a snapshot of rural life in the Black Hills: a life-size hunting dog made from a mix of old tools and spent rifle rounds, a miniature snowmobile standing on a displaced piston and a gun-slinging Yosemite Sam with a beard fashioned from old nails.

“Metal sculpting is some-



Famous cartoon character Yosemite Sam is one of Lindsley's favorite metal creations.

thing that anyone can do if they put their mind to it,” said Lindsley. “All I do is throw parts of junk together.”

In many ways, Lindsley’s passion for sculpting and welding echoes the resourcefulness of the very artwork he makes. When Lindsley began his metal sculpting journey, he didn’t have a formal education or even a background in art to guide him. Instead, he relied on his welding skills and the bits of scrap he had available to make his remarkable artwork.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity.”

It was Lindsley’s second cousin Chris Degen, a teacher at Mitchell Technical College, who inspired Lindsley’s first foray into metal sculpting four years ago. Degen recalls gifting Lindsley’s son, a former lineman, a simple lineman made from nuts and bolts during the holidays. The quirky Christmas gift became a catalyst for the two to start creating new projects and bouncing new ideas off each other. According to Degen, Lindsley just ran away with the idea.

“He went crazy with it,” Degen laughed. “Lee started making sculptures that went way above and beyond what I was doing. I would put an hour into my project, and he would put one hundred into his.”

Taking another step forward in his hobby, Lindsley began researching works and art pieces posted online by world-famous metal sculptors, including metal sculptors John Lopez – a South Dakotan – and Brian Mock, whose masterpieces provided Lindsley a roadmap of what can be accomplished.

Since embarking on his metal sculpting journey, Lindsley has completed more than 18 metal sculptures, and his hobby continues to blossom. For the first time ever, Lindsley put one of his sculptures

up for sale in A1 Al’s Pheasant Ranch in Emery S.D. Since November, Lindsley’s metal hunting dog has stood proudly in one of the ranch’s hunting cabins, waiting for a buyer, and although the dog hasn’t left the shelf just yet, Lindsley said he is

excited to see his work out in the open and visible to the public eye.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity,” he said. “We will see what happens.”



Lindsley’s metal German shepherd sits proudly in his workshop.

Continued from pg 2

Minutes and accident reports. Board also acknowledged December 28, 2022 Safety Meeting Minutes.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

STEWART DRIVE
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PLAYER COURT
NICKLAUS COURT
STEWART DRIVE
PALMER CIRCLE
US HIGHWAY 12

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SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK



FEM Electric and Dakota News Now are pleased to announce that Quincy Olivier was selected as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week and will receive a \$250 scholarship. Her story will be featured on Dakota News Now the week of February 26th through March 4th, 2023.

In 2002, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives joined with Dakota News Now to recognize area high school seniors for their academic and community achievements. Seniors who are selected for scholarships often excel in the classroom, and are highly involved in extracurriculars inside and outside the school.

Quincy is a senior at Ipswich Public School, and has been involved volleyball, basketball and track. Outside of sports, she's participated in rodeos, 4-H, FBLA, NHS, band, and art.

Quincy is leaning towards SDSU in the fall, but has not fully decided yet.

Quincy's parents are Jess Freeland & Clay Olivier.

FEM Electric would like to extend a congratulations to Quincy Olivier for winning Touchstone Energy's Scholar of the Week!

FEM DIRECTOR DISTRICTS 2 AND 3 UP FOR ELECTION

FEM Electric Directors in District 2 and District 3 will be up for election at the 2023 annual meeting June 27th, 2023.

Tom Thorpe and Gary Bachman will seek re-election for their districts.

To be an eligible nominee, one must be an active member (with an FEM Electric energy account in their name) who resides in the Director's District in which the nominee seeks to run. FEM Electric Director Districts are as follows: District No. 1: McPherson County Townships of Bauer, Bergdorf, Cleveland, Detmold, Glucksthal, Hillsideview, Jackson, Kassel, Odessa, Petersburg, Rosenthal, Spring Creek and Stickel, and Edmunds County Townships of Hosmer, Modena, Sangamon;

District No. 2: McPherson County Townships of Arena, Blaine, Carl, Dewey, Harrison, Highland, Hoffman, Howard, Koto, Leola, Lincoln, Long Lake, Moscow, Spring, Wachter, Wacker, Washington, Weber, Willow;

District No. 3: Edmunds County Townships of Bowdle, Bryant, Cloyd Valley, Cottonwood, Glen, Glover, Hillside, Hudson, Madison, Montpelier, North Bryant, Odessa and Vermont, and Faulk County Townships of Clark, Enterprise and Sherman;

District No. 4: Edmunds County Townships of Adrian, Belle, Clear Lake, Cleveland, Cortlandt, Fountain, Harmony, Huntley, Ipswich, Kent, Liberty, Pembroke, Powell, Richland, Rosette and Union;

District No 5: Faulk County Townships of

Arcade, Bryant, Centerville, DeVoe, Elroy, Ellisville, Emerson, Fairfield, Freedom, Hillsdale, Irving, Lafoon, Latham, Myron, O'Neil, Orient, Pulaski, Saratoga, Seneca, Tamworth, Thirteen, Union and Wesley.

to seven members from the Director District(s) which are up for election and shall include one at-large position. This group shall be appointed no more than 180 days and no less than 60 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee shall post the nominations at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc. set for June 28th, 2022.

Nomination by Petition: Any 15 or more members of the cooperative may make additional nominations by listing their nominee and the appropriate Directorate District and signing such Petition for Nomination. The petition must be submitted to the board of directors at least 25 days prior to the annual meeting. Any such petition so submitted will be posted along with the list of nominations made by the Nominating Committee.

The colored areas of the district map are up for election in 2022.

District 2 Director Tom Thorpe will be seeking re-election.

District 3 Director Gary Bachman will be seeking re-election.

District 1 is represented by Eric Odenbach of Eureka, District 4 is represented by Paula Petersen of Cresbard, and District 5 is represented by Kelly Melius of Faulkton.

FEM Electric Director Districts

	Spring Creek	Detmold	Petersburg	Bergdorf	Harrison	Wacker	Weber	Wachter
	Glucksthal	Rosenthal	Odessa	Long Lake	Highland	Hoffman	Koto	Carl
McPherson County	Bauer	Stickel	Kassel	Moscow	Arena	Spring	Leola	Willow
	Jackson	Hillsideview	Cleveland	Blaine	Dewey	Howard	Washington	Lincoln
	Modena	Hosmer	Sangamon	North Bryant	Adrian	Rosette	Belle	Pembroke
Edmunds County	Bowdle	Cottonwood	Glen	Bryant	Huntley	Ipswich	Fountain	Cortlandt
	Odessa	Cloyd Valley	Glover	Montpelier	Cleveland	Harmony	Union	Richland
	Hudson	Madison	Hillside	Vermont	Liberty	Powell	Kent	Clear Lake
	Sherman	Clark	Enterprise	Freedom	Emerson	Fairview	Union	
Faulk County	Elroy	O'Neil	Saratoga	Pulaski	Myron	DeVoe	Wesley	
	Seneca	Latham	Bryant	Tamworth	Lafoon	Centerville		
	Ellisville	Thirteen	Irving	Orient	Arcade	Hillsdale		

NOMINATIONS

There are two processes (committee and petition) by which an eligible member's name may be nominated for the board of directors election for FEM Electric Association, Inc. No nominations may come from the floor during your co-op's annual meeting.

Any member of FEM Electric requiring additional information may refer to the bylaws of the association or may contact the FEM Electric office at 605-426-6891.

Nomination by Committee: The board of directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee which shall consist of three



THE STORY OF DUDE DAD

Taylor and Heidi Calmus play with their kids (Theo, Juno and Otto) on a playset Taylor built. The family will welcome another baby in March.

Howard Grows More Than Corn

Tara Miller

Central Electric Cooperative

His kids may only know him as dad, but Jimmy Kimmel, the entire internet and 7 million followers can't be wrong – Howard native Taylor Calmus has evolved into a new-age celebrity. Better known as Dude Dad, Calmus is an accomplished actor, video producer, digital content creator, author, builder, television show host and comedian. Besides making regular appearances on Jimmy Kimmel Live, Calmus has also shared the screen with home remodeling experts Chip and Joanna Gaines, acclaimed actor Anthony Anderson and several YouTube stars.

Calmus is the son of Larry and Julie Calmus. He grew up west of Howard with siblings Zach and Maggie, and graduated from Howard High School in 2005. He now lives in Fort Collins, CO, but Calmus credits much of his creativity to his rural upbringing.

"Growing up in rural South Dakota was awesome because it forced us to create our own fun. My parents were big advocates of that. They would say, 'Go outside and

find something to do.' It enabled us to be creative," Calmus said.

His mom, Julie, agrees. "We were sticklers. We didn't let them play Nintendo or watch tv all day." Instead, the kids often spent time outside constructing BMX bike ramps, among other things.

Building Strong Connections

Now a dad himself, Calmus enjoys putting his ingenuity and building skills to work for his kids. "Building things with your kids is one of the best ways to bond with them," he said. "I've made carnival rides, backyard bike parks, multiple tree houses, a boat, just so many things. Being a dad gives you permission to imagine the impossible like kids do. It allows me to connect with them."

Calmus and his wife Heidi, who is originally from Fargo, have three children and another baby due in March. Heidi is often the subject of her husband's videos. Calmus puts his acting skills to work, sporting a long brunette wig as he comedically embellishes her life. Luckily, Heidi is a good sport, and they often share reaction videos in which she critiques his performance.

The couple went on tour this year, performing comedy shows as a team in North Dakota, South Dakota and Colorado. Calmus said without his wife, they would not have experienced this level of success. "Heidi believed in me before I did. Without her, Dude Dad wouldn't exist today."

The Evolution of Dude Dad

Success didn't happen overnight, Calmus explained. Early on, he would often pick up work doing set construction for tv shows and movie projects to make ends meet.

"When I moved away, I worked hard to make it in Hollywood as an actor, and I had some success," he said. "Then, when Heidi was pregnant with our second child, it was clear to me that I needed to do something more stable to support a family. That's when we created Dude Dad."

Mastering the Dude Dad brand took a great deal of time and commitment. Calmus constantly brainstormed new ideas for videos that would align with the brand and appeal to viewers. After all, the more views his content generates, the more income he earns from paid advertising on the various platforms.

A humble individual, Calmus doesn't necessarily consider himself famous. He said, "I think my content caught on faster in



Taylor and Heidi perform stand-up comedy as a team. They recently sold out shows in Fargo, Sioux Falls, and Fort Collins.

South Dakota because I have family here.”

But the numbers don't lie. Dude Dad content has more than 1 billion views on Facebook and roughly 150 million views on YouTube. So, his reach is far greater than just the state of South Dakota.

“With TikTok and other apps, there are a billion new creators every year, so it's a challenge all the time,” Calmus said. “Anybody can make videos online now, but not everybody can stand in front of an audience and perform comedy. It's been a fun and rewarding challenge. Now we get to see the people who are connecting with our content.”

Calmus authored a book entitled “A Dude's Guide to Baby Size” to help expectant dads understand their baby's size throughout pregnancy. He shares guy-friendly size comparisons for reference, such as a lug nut, a tape measure, a pound of ground beef and a football.

Giving Back

Because of his success, Calmus has been able to give back in unique ways. In 2019, he partnered with HGTV “Fixer Upper” star Chip Gaines to raise \$1.49 million for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. This partnership led to Calmus's television show, Super Dad, where he helps other dads build custom backyard play areas for their children.

Calmus is also a champion for Horizon Health Foundation's Smiles for Miles program. He helped the non-profit raise more than \$20,000 in a single day to provide free dental care for local kids.

Most recently, Taylor and Heidi performed

a live show in Fort Collins and donated the proceeds to a neighborhood family who sadly lost their father.

“He left behind two little kids who are friends with our kids, and we just wanted to be there for them however we could,” Calmus shared.

Making the Family Proud

Reggie Gassman, Calmus's uncle, is the Manager of Customer Electrical Services at Sioux Valley Energy in eastern South Dakota. He said he's proud of his nephew's accomplishments.

“When the kids were little, Taylor and Zach were already making home movies. His success creating videos doesn't surprise me at all,” Gassman said. “He takes something from normal, everyday life and sees it from a different angle.”

Gassman joked, “I told Taylor acting genes run in the family because I was named best actor in the junior class play. That's like the Emmys of Canova!”

Calmus said both sides of his family – Calmus and Gassman – are naturally funny and talented in different ways. While Gassmans are widely known for their baseball skills, his uncle Kurt (and his mustache) have famously inspired some of Dude Dad's most iconic characters.

He's Still Just Taylor

Despite his growing list of accomplishments, he's still the same guy his family knows and loves.

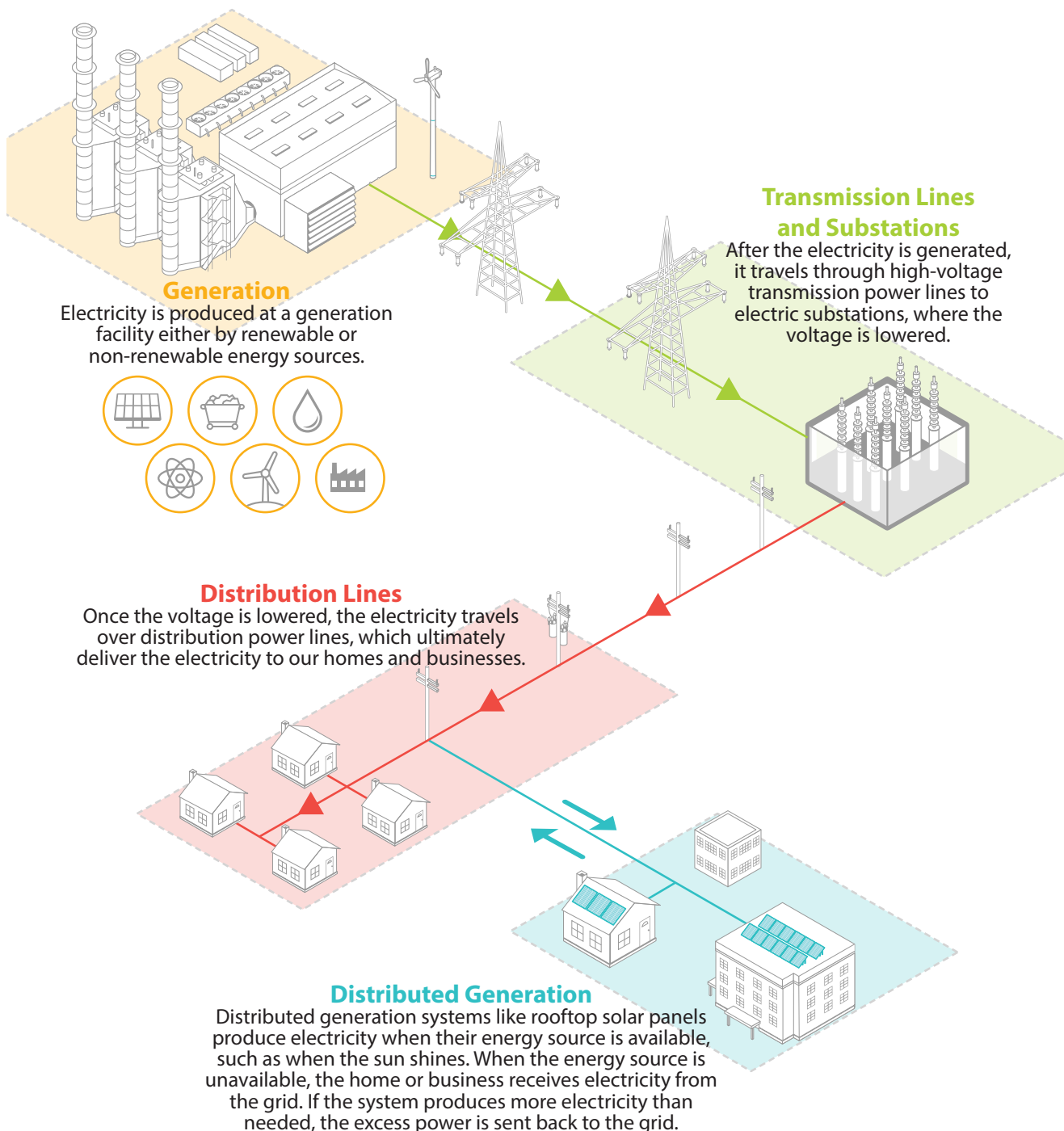
Calmus's mom Julie shared, “Since he was two years old, Taylor was always entertaining people and goofing around. His older brother Zach is just as clever, so there's always laughter when the family gets together. It's pretty cool he's been able to make a living doing that.”

She said when strangers recognize her son as Dude Dad, she chuckles. “He's still just Taylor to us.”



“Husbands of Target” is a viral video with more than 80 million views that Taylor developed in collaboration with other digital content creators.

HOW ELECTRICITY REACHES YOU



SIGN UP FOR BASIN BUS TOUR

The Basin Tour is back on! Let us treat you to a relaxing and informational two-day trip! On June 12th and 13th, FEM Electric members will embark on a FREE charter bus trip to Basin Electric's facilities in North Dakota. As a cooperative member of Basin Electric, FEM and its members own and have interest in these facilities.

The first day will include a tour of the Basin Headquarters and a drive through tour of the Wilton Wind Farm. In the evening, we will enjoy a dinner cruise on the Lewis and Clark Riverboat. The following morning tours consist of the synfuels plant, Antelope Valley Station and Freedom mine. Each station provides an essential piece of the power generation puzzle, and you'll be amazed at how they achieve it in a clean manner.

Reservations are limited, and are on a first-come, first-serve basis. There are a limited number of seats available and they fill up fast!

Please note the following tour guidelines from Basic Electric:

To be able to fully participate in these tours, guests should be able to:

- Stand up for 30 minutes
- Navigate stairs and steel grating without canes, walkers, crutches, walking boots, etc.
- Withstand temperatures in excess of 100 degrees for 10 minutes
- Ride in bumpy, off-road conditions for up to 90 minutes
- Wear closed-toe shoes (no flip-flops or high heels allowed)
- Must have a photo ID
- Field tours at the coal mine are contingent on road conditions at the mine site.

Tour guests who cannot fully participate will be given opportunities to stay behind in a seating area.

Please fill out the form below and return it to FEM Electric if you're interested!



Questions? Call Sonje at 605-426-6891 or toll free at 1-800-587-5880

FEM Electric Basin Tour

At least one registrant must be a current member of FEM Electric to be eligible, and priority will be given to members who have not attended the tour before. There is no cost to the cooperative members for this tour. **Selected members will be entered into a drawing for a \$300 bill credit!**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Pick-up Point: (circle one)

IPSWICH

ROSCOE

BOWDLE

EUREKA

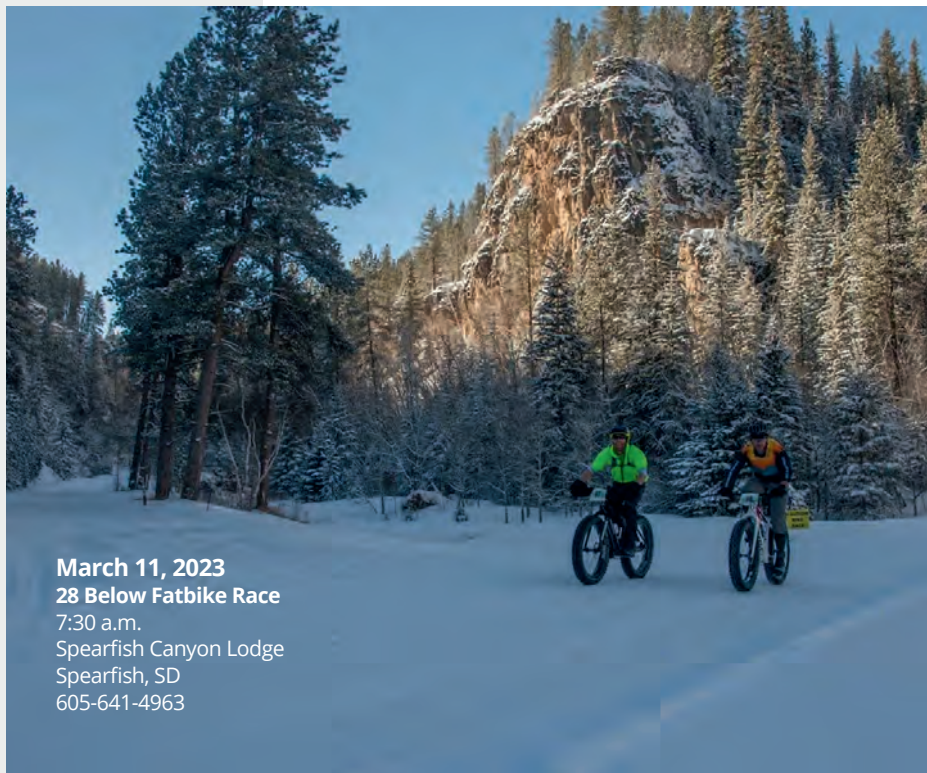
Return to:

FEM Electric

Attn: Sonje Oban

PO Box 468

Ipswich, SD 57451



March 11, 2023
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD
 605-641-4963

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.

MARCH 1-7
"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibit & Silent Auction
 Vermillion Public Library
 Vermillion, SD
 605-658-6654

MARCH 4
Annual Ag Day
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

MARCH 4
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

MARCH 11
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD
 605-895-2559

MARCH 18
Shriners Kids Fun Day
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Scherr-Howe Event Center
 Mobridge, SD
 605-845-2500

MARCH 18
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

MARCH 21
Knee High Naturalist: Birds
 Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center
 Custer, SD

MARCH 24-25
Schmeckfest
 Freeman Academy Campus
 Freeman, SD
 605-321-7351

MARCH 25-26
Greater Sioux Falls Model Train Show
 Multi-Cultural Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 30
"The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest"
 5:30 p.m.
 South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-339-1203

MARCH 31-APRIL 2
70th Annual Hayes Play: Trouble in Tumbleweed
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD
 605-280-6556

APRIL 1
East Dakota Chapter NWTF 30th Banquet
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

APRIL 2-4
"The Psychic-a Murder Mystery of Sorts" Community Theater Performance
 Town Players Theater
 Watertown, SD
 605-882-2076

APRIL 21-22
Junkin' Market Days, Spring Market
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

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