

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Keeping the Lights On

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Community Outreach**
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BOARD REPORT



The FEM Board of Directors meet with staff at the February meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on February 23, 2024, 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, Kelly Melius, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe. Operations Manager Sean Christiansen, Accounting Clerk Angela Sieh, and Electrical Manager Ryan Holien.

Changes to the agenda: None

Changes/Additions to Minutes from January 16, 2024, meeting: none

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday March 19, 2024, 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 Paula Petersen seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve manager and staff reports.

Board acknowledged the January 2024 Cyber Security Report.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Motion By Tom Thorpe seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve Marvin Beidler and Glenn Bode as nominating committee for District 5 and Justin Davis as at large committee person.

Board acknowledged receipt of NRECA Proposed Resolutions.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried approve updated Emergency Procedures.

Board acknowledged Request for NCSC District Candidate.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Deis Farms, LLP, Pierre, SD, Active Farm; Mark & Sherry Perrion, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Richard & Janice Schumacher, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Richard & Kellie Bisbee, Cresbard, SD, Active Farm; Jayme & Amie Frasier, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Hadrick Farms, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Larry Kolb, Leola, SD, Active Farm; Gregory & Lona

Hoff, Eureka SD, Active Farm & Pasture Pump; William Fischer, Forreston, IL, Active Farm; Russell Beyers, Roscoe, SD, Pasture Pump; Angela Harris, Morristown, AZ, Active Farm

Reconnects: Shaun Schaefer, Seneca, SD, Active Farm; Lance & Sarah Perrion, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Riley Nehlich, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Tyler Bisbee, Cresbard, SD, Active Farm; Alex & Sadei Frasier, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Allen & Pam Hadrick, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Daniel & Anne Jo Erdmann, Leola, SD, Active Farm; Jeremy & Brittany Hoff, Eureka, SD, Active Farm & Pasture Pump; Bill & Mary Bachmeier, Mobridge, SD, Active Farm; Nathaniel Preszler, Roscoe, SD, Pasture Pump; Mitch & Kraig Steinhoff, Brookings, SD, Active Farm

Contracts: None

Retired Locations: None

Capital Credits:

Estates – February 2024 – none

73 & Older – February 2024 – none

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Paula Petersen to approve increasing demand rate by \$0.30/kw to policies #307 Three Phase Large Commercial, #309 Irrigation, and # 310 Large Power Standby Service.

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of January 2024 contained information on checks #34049 through #34129 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for January 2024 totaling \$401,641.51.

East River and Basin 2023 allocations were reviewed.

The December 2023 Financials were reviewed.

December 31, 2023 financial ratios were

Continued on pg 6

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. Secretary/
Treasurer
Vaughn Beck, Attorney

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
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Management Staff

Sean Christiansen
Operations Manager
Ryan Holien
Electrical Department Manager
Rhonda Tuscherer
*Director of Finance and
Benefits*

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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.

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**FEM Electric is an equal
opportunity provider and
employer.**



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

We live in a fast-paced world and the electric industry is also an ever-changing industry. Changes in our industry are created by demands or changes in existing and alternate industries or government policy. We are seeing the size of electric loads grow and industries looking to expand to South Dakota. Fuel choices to produce electricity continue to ask or demand presences on our electrical grid, and I believe we can accommodate requests.

However, there are several thoughts and questions to keep in mind. In the mid-west, electric cooperatives have been able to keep power affordable and reliable to both existing energy users and future load growth. We have a great demand coming from Washington DC to change fuel choices at a speed that will harm reliability and price. Fuel choice should come from a request or demand from the market not the request of the government and the subsidies taxpayers are providing.

There is also a push to change the fuel our automobiles use coming from Washington DC with huge tax credits and subsidies. Electric vehicles may be good for some mid-west residents but not all. There is a lack of fueling infrastructure created by a true market. Batteries need technical improvements, and we need to make sure the material used to produce batteries is mined and produced according to today's standards, not just corporate profits. I would suggest we slow the fuel conversion on automobiles and electric production to make sure what we are doing is correct and sustainable.

I don't believe we are going to change direction on fuel choices, but we should move cautiously forward to make sure good long-term decisions can sustain long term challenges. We need affordable, reliable power for a strong rural economy.

As we move towards spring work, please remember to be safe. If you are looking to add any additional electric load, please contact Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605-426-6891.

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

March 28, 2024 for March's energy

April 26, 2024 for April's energy

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

Break Dirt Without Breaking the Law

As the warmer spring temperatures cause the ground to thaw, contractors and homeowners alike are likely to begin on projects that require some sort of digging.

By law, anyone who is digging in South Dakota needs to call 811 and have a locate ticket in their hand before moving any ground. If you're not the one that's digging and you've hired a landscaper to do the work instead, that landscaper should have a ticket in their name.

When someone calls 811, the call goes through a center in Dallas, Texas. That call center then notifies utilities in the area, according to South Dakota 811 Executive Director Codi Gregg.

An excavator or digger has to allow 48 hours for the utilities in the area they plan to dig into to come on site and mark the location of those underground utilities. On average, there are five to eight utilities notified per call.

If there's a potential loss of life or property, the allowed response time is shortened to a maximum of two hours during normal business hours.

"When the ticket goes in, the excavator is given a list of the utilities that are involved or are working or that are in that area where they're working," Gregg explained.

Those companies that own the utilities will make marks that identify the location. Those flags are also color coded according to the type of utility. As more and more overhead electrical lines are converted to underground lines, it's imperative that anyone who plans on doing a project that requires digging call 8-1-1 to avoid a dangerous and deadly situation.

"It's a free phone call for the excavator to make. There's no real reason for them not to make the phone call other than not being aware of it," Gregg said.

Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Chairwoman, echoed Gregg's comments, stating that making the call to 811 is the "most important and easiest call anyone can make before starting a digging project."

"This simple and imperative effort will help to prevent damages to vital underground utilities and safeguard critical services that our residents and economy depend on," Fiegen said. "During the 2024 construction season, I urge everyone to call 811 before you dig and protect all South Dakotans by abiding by our state laws and making safety our highest priority."

- Last year, there were 176,984 notices to the 811 Center of work occurring.
- South Dakota's 811 laws were established in 1993.
- In 2017, South Dakota 811 added damage reporting to our laws, stating if there was a damage, disturbance, or a dislocation of a utility – 811 was to be contacted to report the damage. It was also added that 911 was to be contacted first if there was a leak.
- Free accounts are offered upon request, allowing account holders to enter locate tickets themselves without calling an agent.
- A total of 1,944 utilities were reportedly damaged in 2023. Of that total, 375 excavators did not have a previous ticket.
- According to Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year and 60% of nationwide damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professional contractors not contacting 811 prior to digging.



Don't Fly Drones Near Power Lines

Lyndon Kaski, Age 8

Lyndon Kaski warns readers to stay away from power lines when flying drones. Great advice! Lyndon's parents are Jonathan and Amanda Kaski, members of Kingsbury 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.

SALSA SAVORY

FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4-6 med. to large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 med. onion, chopped
4 fresh jalapenos, seeded and finely chopped*
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tbsp. dried parsley or fresh cilantro to taste
1 tsp. salt

Method

*To prevent jalapenos from burning your fingers, lightly rub fingers with shortening, especially around fingernails.
Serve with tortilla chips.

Linda Hubbard
Rapid City, S.D.

LUANN'S FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper
1-2 tbsps. jalapeno or other hot pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
pepper to taste
1 tbsp. lime juice or red wine vinegar
1-2 tps. catsup
dash garlic powder
dash cayenne pepper
1-2 tps. sugar
cilantro (optional)

Method

Mix all ingredients. Serve with any tortilla or corn chips for dipping. Will keep approximately 1 week in the refrigerator.

Nancy Stenson
Fort Pierre, S.D.

TAMARIND PASILLA MANGO PINEAPPLE SALSA

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups diced fresh pineapple
1 large mango, pitted and diced (about 1 1/4 cup)
1 small red onion, diced
1 small red bell pepper, diced
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 med. jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
3 tbsps. fresh lime juice
1 tbsp. honey
4 1/2 teaspoons Tamarind Naturally Flavored & Pasilla Chile Seasoning

Method

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Stir before serving. Serve with tortilla chips or use to top tacos or nachos.

McCormick

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Continued from pg 2

reviewed.

RUS/CFC Loan Summary was reviewed ending December 31, 2023.

KWH Tax report for 2023 was reviewed.

Board acknowledged receipt of January 2024 financials.

Board acknowledged receipt of RUS "AA45" Loan Approved for Advance Letter.

Board acknowledged receipt of Federated Group Retention Report.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: none

Meeting Report:

East River board update was given by Gary Bachman
East River Energized Forum report was given by Gary Bachman.

Safety meeting minutes from January 9, 2024, and January 23, 2024, were acknowledged.

Safety committee meetings from December 12, 2023 were acknowledged.

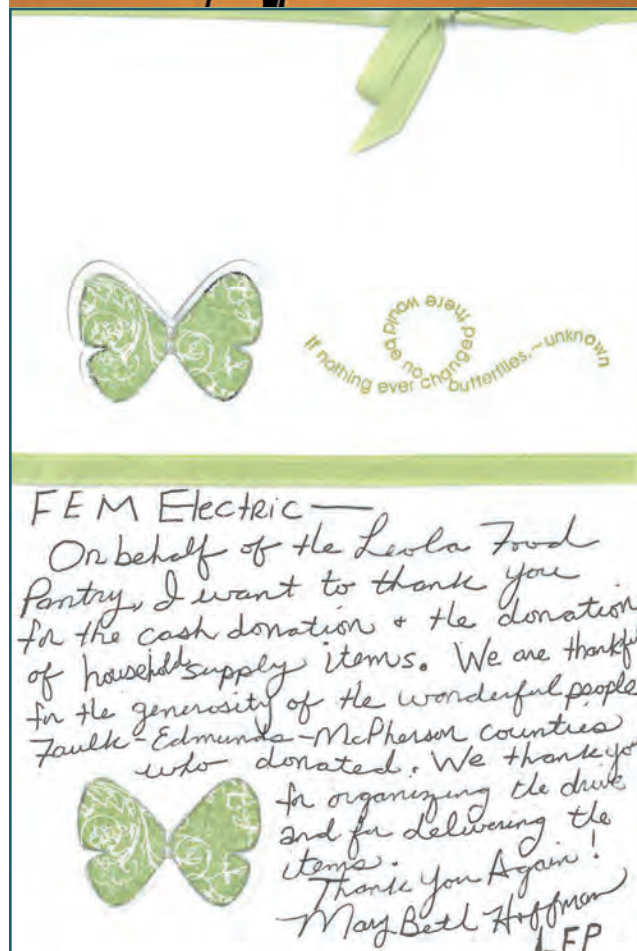
Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: energy.gov



LINEWORKER APPRECIATION

ELECTRIC LINEWORKERS KEEP THE POWER MOVING

When people flip a light switch, they may not give much thought to why or how the light comes on.

Electric lineworkers provide an essential service: They work hard to install and maintain overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out.

Lineworkers work with high-voltage electricity, often at great heights, in all kinds of weather conditions, such as snow, wind, rain, ice and extreme heat and cold. The work required to maintain the power grid is physically demanding. To become proficient, most lineworkers go through a technical training program and first learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned lineworkers who have earned journeyman status.

- Climb poles and transmission towers and use truck-mounted buckets to get to equipment.
- Operate power equipment when installing and repairing poles, towers and lines.
- Drive work vehicles to job sites.
- Know and implement safety standards and procedures.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work quickly to restore service to customers.

Although everyone at FEM Electric works hard to provide reliable service, we salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, electric power line installers and repairers typically:

- Install, maintain or repair the power lines that move electricity.
- Identify defective devices, voltage regulators, transformers and switches.
- Inspect and test power lines and auxiliary equipment.
- String (install) power lines between poles, towers and buildings.





KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON

Elliot and Janaye Rayman at their second annual Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser.

One Lineman's After-hours Outreach

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the state, linemen are charged with keeping South Dakota's power going. It's a big responsibility: troubleshooting electrical systems, operating heavy equipment, and maintaining power lines. These workers are frequently asked to navigate high voltage and confront dangerous challenges in all kinds of extreme weather. In the face of these challenges, it takes a truly community-minded individual to ensure the community's lights stay on. Many of these crucial workers demonstrate their commitment to their community daily, both during and outside of work hours.

Butte Electric Journeyman Lineman Elliot Rayman, who has been with the cooperative for seven years, serves as just one example of an electric cooperative employee who has pulled extra hours for his local community of Spearfish, S.D. In addition to his role as a lineman, Elliot wears many hats in his community beyond just the hard hat of a co-op employee. He is a veteran of the National Guard, having served a deployment overseas. Elliot and his wife, Janaye, are also deeply involved in their community as the owners of Barefoot Fitness, a gym in the Spearfish community. Janaye, a cancer survivor, operates the gym and is an integral part of their community efforts.

Janaye and Elliot purchased Barefoot Fitness in 2018, fulfilling Janaye's long-standing dream of owning a gym. Shortly after their purchase, the couple learned that Janaye's cancer, previously in remission, had metastasized into Stage 4 breast cancer.

"In 2020, I had reoccurrence everywhere – brain, lungs, liver, bones," said Janaye. "Since then, I have been on a mission every day to heal and recover. It's also been my goal to help others every single day, day in and day out, and that's

what keeps me going. That's my job and it's what I love to do, so I'm not stopping."

"My wife is an inspiration to many people," added Elliot. "She is the strongest person I know."

Undeterred, Elliot and Janaye decided to press on and use their gym as a platform to engage with their local community. Despite Janaye's ongoing battle with breast cancer, the two started a new Barefoot Fitness tradition – an annual Memorial Day fundraiser to benefit South Dakota's gold star families, the families of fallen soldiers.

"After a few years of owning the gym, we decided we needed to give back to the community, because the community had really been there for us through everything," said Elliot. "We knew we had the ability and the platform to give back to the community through Barefoot Fitness, so we settled on a Memorial Day fundraiser that would benefit gold star families in our state."

This May, Elliot and Janaye will host their fourth Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser. Like previous years, the event will feature local catering from Spearfish businesses, such as Spearfish Brewing Company and Timmons Market. The event will also include an optional community workout for all ages.

"We kick off our day with the National Guard leading the pledge of allegiance and national anthem," said Janaye. "We do a prayer, and then we do our Memorial Day workout. It's a team workout that people are encouraged to complete with their family or friends."

According to Janaye and Elliot, the team workout is about more than just breaking a sweat. Instead, it's about remembering those who gave their lives for this country.

"You always hear about people doing things for veterans, but you never hear about the story on the other side of

that – the families," Janaye said. "A lot of times the family is forgotten so we really want to honor the families that also made a sacrifice."

At the end of the day, Elliot and Janaye said none of their efforts would be possible without the support they have received from the Spearfish community, the veteran community,

and the electric cooperative community.

"Butte Electric and the co-op world have helped us out so much," said Elliot. "The culture of the co-op community is huge: there is brotherhood – it's the way people help each other out. You just can't ask for a better group of people, and that's the same way with the veteran world."



Janaye and Elliot lead a community workout session, challenging participants to complete 300 weighted ball throws.

FEM Electric's Annual PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

173 SERVED AT FEM'S ANNUAL PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

FEM's annual Pancake and Sausage breakfast was a success! 173 people were served on February 9th, 2024 at the FEM Electric headquarters. Members, as well as people from the community, came together to enjoy a free breakfast on behalf of FEM.



Donations from community members stacked high and ready to be sorted into 3 piles.

Donations were also accepted for food pantries in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties. Deliveries were made to a donation site in each county throughout the following week.



Board members Gary Bachman, Tom Thorpe, and Eric Odenbach flip pancakes for community members.

People filtered through all morning, keeping FEM board members Gary Bachman, Tom Thorpe and Eric Odenbach busy flipping pancakes. FEM linemen prepped and served sausage and drinks throughout the morning.

The FEM board and staff would like to thank everyone who came out to enjoy breakfast with us, as well as those who were able to donate items for our local food pantries. See you next year!



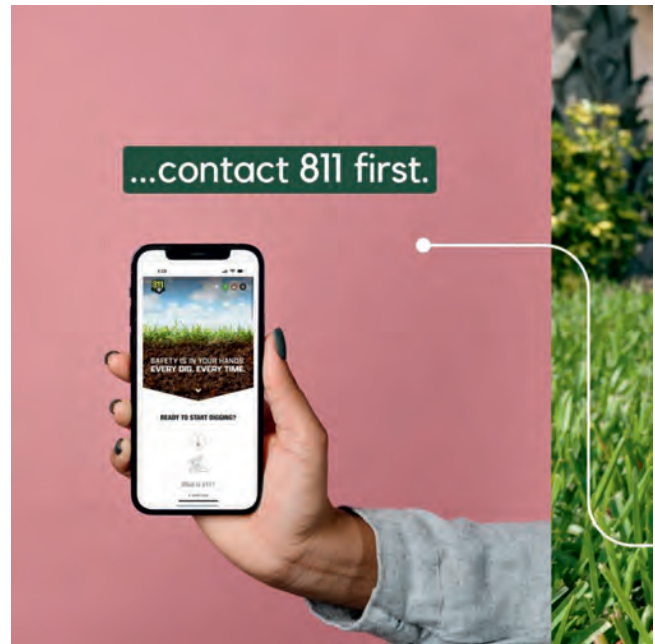
Above: Attendees visiting and enjoy their breakfast.

Below: Board member Eric Odenbach tries his hand at making a bucket truck pancake. It turned out awesome!



SAFE DIGGING MONTH

April is safe digging month! The weather is beginning to turn nice, and we know you can't wait to start those outdoor projects! Remember to practice safe digging by contacting 811 first. Let's work together to protect underground utility lines and ensure a safe environment for all. When you start your dig, be sure to dig slowly. Even though lines have been marked, they may have shifted in the ground. Digging slowly around flagged lines helps prevent accidents, and in some cases, even death.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**



SDHP Trooper Megan Koch stands by her patrol vehicle. Koch works within the state's Motor Carrier Division. *Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel*

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Shannon Marvel

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When commercial motor vehicles come into the state of South Dakota, it's the job of the South Dakota Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Division to ensure the drivers of those vehicles have the necessary paperwork, permits and documents.

The task is one of public safety.

Making sure the carriers are adhering to safe driving practices is just another way to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be while driving on the state's roadways.

South Dakota Highway Patrol

Trooper Megan Koch is one of the officers who works within the motor carrier division.

"Our main focus is making sure the motor carriers or trucks are safe on the roadways and keeping everybody else safe. It helps them perform their job of carrying their property or passengers across the state lines and within the state. We help make sure that they can do that job," Koch explained.

Mainly, Koch works specifically with commercial motor vehicles that carry over a certain weight or property of monetary value within the state or interstate.

"When we do an inspection on a driver, we're checking a bunch of different things. Weight sometimes is one of them, but not always. It just depends on the situation," Koch said.

"They have to have certain paperwork with them and they are required to follow certain rules. It depends on what they're doing."

The dependent variables include whether a carrier is traveling with goods within the state or going out of the state and how far away they are from the hub, or where they leave every day or go home to every day.

Koch also checks their paperwork to ensure the drivers are within compliance of state law.

"They have to follow certain hours that they can work so that they don't get tired while driving. It's a big thing that we follow for safety," Koch said.

"We also check things like

equipment violations, headlights, taillights, tires, you know, stuff that makes them safe on the roadway and keeps them safe. We'll also check for things such as bad driving behavior, if they're not staying within their own lane, using blinkers, not properly stopping at stop sign – stuff like that. So, if we see something like that, we can initiate an inspection."

Koch, a Plankinton native whose father was a truck driver, said the division is typically checking brake lines and lights.

In South Dakota, there are four main ports of entry. The ports are located along Interstate 29 in Jefferson and Sisseton, and along Interstate 90 in Sioux Falls and Tilford.

Each carrier is issued a "safety score," which is assessed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"That's based on whether or not they have the proper paperwork, if they're driving within their hours, if they have the proper equipment and whether or not they've received any driving or alcohol violations," Koch said.

If a driver has a high enough safety score, they aren't required by law to stop at a port for inspection.

Overall, it all comes down to keeping the roadways safe for everyone, regardless of what type of vehicle they are driving.

"These rules and laws are in place for a reason. They have to be extra alert and awake while they're driving and that all of their equipment works properly. If you're driving a very heavy, large vehicle, you need excellent brakes. You have to be able to stop in time. That is the main reason we're checking all these things. It helps everybody on the road."

The division also works

with rural electric cooperatives when oversized loads travel along the state's highway system, according to Lieutenant Austin Schmitz, District Four Assistant Commander with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Sometimes oversized loads require that overhead power lines be moved out of the way to let the carrier pass through.

"As a district we do work with a lot of the cooperatives such as East River Electric. We all get together when planning for oversized loads coming through our area," Schmitz said.

"They usually run the route first and let us know what lines they need to move."

That was the case when a massive generator was moved across the state. The generator was so heavy and huge that the truck carrying it could only travel 30 miles per hour. That truck was also equipped with over a hundred tires, Schmitz said.

"That generator came through Watertown a couple of years ago and we've got some more coming in two or

three years," Schmitz said, referring to the multi-million pound machines.

"The planning for those started last year. That equipment will be coming in through the Great Lakes on a ship. They'll pick them up there and then they'll move through our state then Wyoming, Montana, however they can go," Schmitz said.

The truck carrying the heavy equipment is too big to go across most bridges and overpasses, so finding a route that allows the machinery to snake across the country is tricky.

While moving huge pieces of machinery can be one of the more interesting parts of the job, it's the flexibility of the job that Koch enjoys most.

"I get to pick and choose where I want to go for the day. I get to do something a little bit different every day. Because, I mean, nothing is ever the same," Koch said.

"It's kind of nice to be able to do that and make the day what you want of it."



A SDHP officer has the latest technology at his or her fingertips to ensure trucks on South Dakota roads are operating safely. Photo Credit: South Dakota Highway Patrol

SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK



FEM Electric and Dakota News Now are pleased to announce that Chet Peterson was selected as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week and will receive a \$250 scholarship. His story was featured on Dakota News Now the week of March 10th through the 16th, 2024.

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.

Chet is a senior at Ipswich Public School, and has been involved in football, basketball, golf, FBLA, National Honor Society, band and more during high school. He is also taking AP classes through Northern State University.

Once he graduates, Chet plans to attend Lake Area Technical College.

Chet's parents are Rodney and Cindy Peterson of Ipswich, SD.

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

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE

The energy industry is changing, but electric co-ops are known for adapting to their local members' needs. As we plan for changes and challenges ahead, innovative solutions are essential.

Here are a few ways we're innovating for the future.



Use of Advanced Technologies

Drones aid in power line inspection and maintenance.

Smart meters provide real-time data and help pinpoint service issues.

Preparing for Increased Energy Use

The demand for electricity is increasing as more technologies are electrified.

Co-ops are exploring innovative solutions like battery storage to meet demand.

Energy Solutions for Members

Co-ops provide innovative efficiency services like appliance rebates and flexible billing options to help members manage their energy use.

Strength in Numbers

By working with and learning from other co-ops, we are uniquely positioned to improve service for our local communities.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO RESTORE POWER?

Depending on the reason(s) for a power outage, power can be restored relatively quickly, or it can take a few hours or more. Restoring power safely and efficiently is always the goal.



The length of time to get the power restored depends on several factors, including:

- The extent of a storm's destruction.
- The number of outages.
- How much time it takes to troubleshoot the issue(s).
- The exact cause(s) of the outages.
- Whether it is safe for utility crews to get to the damaged areas.



Power Outages in the U.S.

According to the Energy Information Administration, in 2021:

- Excluding major storm events, U.S. outages lasted an average of 2 hours.
- Including major storm events, the average outage time was a little more than 7 hours.
- The frequency of outages was 1.42 events per consumer per year.

To stay safe:

- If you are already inside, stay inside until the power is restored.
- Never approach a downed power line, as it could be energized and deadly.
- Do not enter a flooded basement since the water could be energized.
- Keep a portable generator at least 20 feet away from all doors and windows.
- Do not turn off the power or flip a switch if you are standing in water.
- When cleaning up storm damage, look up and look out for overhead power lines.



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 30
BHEC Community Easter Egg Hunt
 10 a.m.
 Hermosa Baseball Fields
 Hermosa, SD

MARCH 31
Easter Sunday Sunrise Celebration
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore National Monument
 Keystone, SD

APRIL 2
Clay-Union Electric Ribbon Cutting & Open House
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
 31321 SD Hwy. 19
 Vermillion, SD

APRIL 5
A Night at the Races fundraiser for Safe Place of Eastern SD
 6:30 p.m.
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 5-7
71st Annual Hayes Play: Under a Cowboy Moon
 7 p.m.
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD

APRIL 12-14
The Farmer's Daughter 19th Anniversary Celebration
 Hill City, SD

APRIL 13
Front Porch 605 Shop Hop
 9 a.m.
 Groton, SD

APRIL 14
Hill City Senior Sunday Breakfast
 8 a.m.
 Hill City Center
 Hill City, SD

APRIL 20
Healthy Kids Day
 10 a.m.
 Liberty Center YMCA
 Box Elder, SD

APRIL 20
Groton Firemen's Spring Social
 7 p.m.
 Groton Fire Station
 Groton, SD

APRIL 21
Fiddle & Popular Song
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Hall
 Gayville, SD

APRIL 26
Mitchell Technical College Alumni Cornhole Tournament
 6:30 p.m.
 World's Only Corn Palace
 Mitchell, SD

MAY 5
Opening Day
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 11
Opening Day
 1880 Train
 Hill City, SD

MAY 18
Booth Day
 10 a.m.
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

JUNE 1
Eureka City Wide Rummage Sale & Farmer's Market
 Eureka, SD

JUNE 14-16
Ipswich Trail Days
 Ipswich, SD
ipswichtraildays.com

JUNE 28-30
Bowdle Tower Days
 Bowdle, SD

JULY 26-27
Eurekafest
 Eureka, SD

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