

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Hurricane Aid

**Linemen Help
Restore Power After
Hurricane Helene**
Pages 8-9

First Responders
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The FEM Board of Directors meet with staff at the October meeting.

October Board Report

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on October 15, 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, Tom Thorpe, Eric Odenbach, Kelly Melius. Operations Manager Sean Christiansen, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, Manager/CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Sonje Oban

Changes to the agenda: None

Changes/Additions to Minutes from September 24, 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, November 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 Tom Thorpe, seconded

by Paula Petersen and carried to acknowledge manager and staff reports.

Member appreciation pancake breakfast date is Friday January, 31, 2025.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to enter executive session at 9:05 a.m.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Tom Thorpe to leave executive session at 9:20 a.m.

September 2024 Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Bev Huss, Watertown, SD, House; Peter J. Geditz, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Donald Olen, Wecota, SD, Active Farm, Shop, Grain Bin

Reconnects: Kelsey & Joy Huss, Faulkton, SD, House; Tony & Rhonda Geditz, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Cody & Lori Bruns, Warner, SD, Active Farm, Shop, Grain Bin

Contracts: Nature Conservancy, Leola, SD, House; Lawrence & Staci Secker, Roscoe, SD, Grain Bin

Retired Locations: Plainview HB, Inc., Leola, SD, Active Farm

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve two construction contracts for new service.

Capital Credits:

Estates – October 2024 – Two =
\$3,091.53

73 & Older – October 2024 - One =
\$3,223.46

Motion by Tom Thorpe was seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve 2025 Market rates for Aberdeen Energy and Agtegra Bowdle.

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of September 2024 contained information on checks #34689 through #34754 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for September 2024 totaling \$357,009.75.

Board acknowledged receipt of September 2024 financials.

Director of Finance and Benefits, Rhonda Tuscherer reported to the board:

Quarterly Budget Projection Update and Current TIER.

Loan summaries with CFC and RUS.

2025 Employee Wellness Plan and budget.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Tom Thorpe to approve and sign 2024 Revenue Deferral Recognition Resolution.

Continued on page 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
info@femelectric.coop

Management Staff

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

Editor's e-mail:

oban@femelectric.coop

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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Design assistance by SDREA

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



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

As I write this article November 6, 2024, election day is over, but not the process or even the final count. I believe one good thing has come out of the 2024 South Dakota election, and it isn't the commercials, or the amount of money spent but the voter turnout. Rural South Dakota needs to vote and be heard in Pierre and Washington DC. You can help by taking the time and dropping that ballot in the voter box at all elections. Although I don't have the exact number or percentage of voters, the turnout looks high. Thanks to everyone who voted.

The electric cooperatives, along with the electric industry, are in a forced expansion both in new and upgraded transmission lines and generation. We look to maintain affordable and reliable power for our existing members and provide for increased demand for expansion and new loads. These aren't new issues that we haven't worked through before, but they are returning to our management meetings and

boardroom. These are good problems and show that rural South Dakota can prosper from change, we just need to have proper contracts in place to protect current members' investment in your cooperative.

Your electric cooperative is in a good place with updated electrical lines, and an experienced and young workforce that is willing to provide you with safe, reliable power, allowing our members to grow.

By the time this article gets in your hands the fall harvest will be completed, and the holiday season will have begun. As a sidewalk agriculture spectator, it seems we had a good harvest through central South Dakota with all the grain piles, and if the weather holds, agriculture producers should have some fall tillage completed. Hopefully this will take some stress off spring work.

We will be presenting our 2025 preliminary budget to the board in November and looking for approval in

Continued on page 10

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@FEMEelectric on

@fem_electric on

@FEMEelectric 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

December 27, 2024 for December's Energy
January 28, 2025 for January's Energy

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

ENJOY A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON

From late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes, safety should be top of mind. Following is tried-and-true advice to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared

If you're traveling this year, be sure your vehicle is in good running condition, get plenty of rest and be prepared for any emergency. Traveling by car during the holidays has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation based on fatalities per passenger mile. Hundreds of people die every year in crashes on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, according to Injury Facts. Alcohol impairment is involved in about a third of these fatalities.

Stay safe on the roads over the holidays – and every day:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit with you.
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving.
- Leave early, planning ahead for heavy traffic.
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled.
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit.
- Practice defensive driving.
- Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol or over-the-counter, prescription and illegal drugs can cause impairment.

Decorate Safely

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency departments see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

When decorating follow these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis – away from children.
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled “fire resistant.”
- If using a live tree, cut off about two inches of the trunk to

expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it, and remove it from your home when it is dry.

- Place your tree at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways.
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them.
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights.
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections.
- Follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket.
- Never nail, tack or stress wiring when hanging lights, and keep plugs off the ground away from puddles and snow.
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

Source: National Safety Council



“Don’t Spill Water on Electronics... It Could Start a FIRE!”

Bethany Langworthy, Age 9

Bethany Langworthy warns readers to be careful with water around electronics. Thank you for your picture, Bethany! Bethany's parents are Kristina and Edward Langworthy, members of West River Electric.

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

Family FAVORITES

CREAM CHEESE AND CUCUMBER SPREAD DIP

Ingredients:

1 large cucumber, grated
1 tsp. onion, grated
8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
3/4-1 cup mayonnaise
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Grate cucumber and onion on several thicknesses of paper towels, squeeze out all the water. Place in a bowl. Blend other ingredients, adding enough mayonnaise to make it a spreading consistency. Serve with crackers or chips.

Mary Ann Klarenbeek
Harrisburg, S.D.

GRANDMA GRACE'S FROZEN FRUIT SALAD

Ingredients:

8 oz. Cool Whip
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup sour cream
3/4 cup sugar
Dash of salt

*Mix all thoroughly until
sugar is dissolved.*

9 oz. can pineapple, crushed
and drained
Small jar maraschino cherries
(halve or chopped if desired)
2 sliced bananas (halve or
quarter slices if desired)
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

Method

Mix thoroughly. Pour into 8x8 or 9x9 container. Cover and freeze. Thaw 10-15 minutes to allow cutting into serving portions.

My mother, Grace Alley, first made this salad for holiday meals. It has become a family favorite, and we always have it for one of our holidays.

Mary Harris
Glad Valley, S.D.

LEMON ROSEMARY GLAZED HAM

Ingredients:

1 bone-in spiral-cut ham,
about 10 lbs.
1 1/4 cups honey, divided
2 tsp. lemon extract
1 1/4 tsp. whole rosemary
leaves, crushed, divided

Method

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place the ham on its side in roasting pan. Mix 1 cup of the honey, 1 1/2 tsp. of the extract and 1 tsp. of the rosemary in small bowl until well blended. Brush 1/2 of the honey mixture over ham, gently separating the slices so mixture can reach middle of ham. Cover loosely with foil.

Bake 1 hour, basting occasionally with pan drippings. Remove foil. Brush with remaining honey mixture. Bake 45 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, mix remaining 1/4 cup honey, 1/2 tsp. extract and 1/4 tsp. rosemary in small bowl. Serve with ham along with the pan drippings.

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

BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Board Report Continued from page 2

The board acknowledged the signing of NRECA VCAP documents by CEO Moore.

Rhonda Tuscherer reviewed CFC Capital Credits, Member Capital Securities, and Capital Term Certificates with the board along with Federated South Dakota Group Retention Report.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve the transfer of RUS Special Construction Loan Funds in the amount of \$575,000.00 on 9/25/2024. The board approved and signed documents.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: Moore reported that FEM Electric Attorney Vaughn Beck and East River Attorney are working on responses to South Dakota PUC request for additional information on Leola Data Center.


Meeting Report:

East River monthly board report was given by Gary Bachman along with a video report.

Tom Thorpe reported on SDREA board meeting.


Safety meeting minutes from September 25, 2024, were acknowledged.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

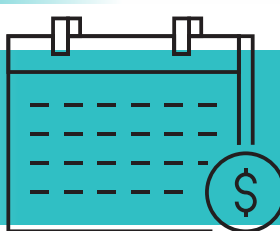


HOW CAPITAL CREDITS WORK

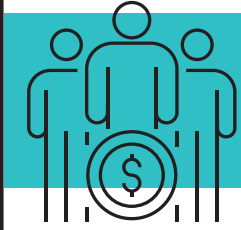
Electric co-ops are not-for-profit and operate at cost. Capital credits are a financial benefit of co-op membership.




1. Members pay their electric bills, and we track their business with us each month.



2. The co-op pays operating expenses throughout the year and allocates any leftover operating revenue as capital credits.



3. When financial conditions permit, the co-op board votes to retire (pay) capital credits to the members.



4. We send members their share of capital credits as a bill credit or check.

FEM ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

Jan 31, 2024
NORTH
SHOP
7 am - 10 am

FREE



JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST!

Accepting free will donations of paper products
and cleaning supplies for our local food pantries.



HURRICANE AID

Linemen Help Restore Power After Hurricane Helene

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Linemen from five of South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives traveled to the Southeastern U.S. in October to help restore power along Hurricane Helene's path of destruction.

The 18 linemen left Oct. 2 for Pickens, South Carolina, where Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative faced over 64,000 meter outages and more than 800 broken poles in Helene's aftermath.

Zach Hansen, a lineman from West River Electric Association, didn't think twice before he volunteered to go along.

"It's just the co-op way," he said. "There are people in need down there who lost their houses – lost their lives – and this is something we know we can do to help. It's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The linemen stayed at a crowded base camp with dozens of other utility workers from all across the country. They slept on cots in a large, open army-sized tent, but with their busy schedules, they didn't spend

much time there anyway. Most days, the linemen woke at 5:30 a.m. for breakfast and worked in the field until supper at 8 p.m.

The work also presented unfamiliar challenges for the linemen; each time the crew needed to repair damaged infrastructure, they'd first have to start the labor-intensive process of clearing through debris and trees toppled by Helene's heavy wind gusts.

"When we have blizzards and ice storms in South Dakota, it's hard work – and you're trying to stay warm," Hansen explained. "But out here, there's a lot more chainsaw work and fixing wire breaks. It's not just straight miles of line lying down like we're used to at home."

By Oct. 9, fewer than 1,000 meters in Blue Ridge Electric territory remained offline, and the South





Dakota crews were dismissed to begin the 1,200-plus mile journey home.

But as the South Dakota convoy – which included bucket trucks, skid steers and ATVs – moved north, another call came in.

Jefferson Energy Cooperative in Wrens, Georgia, also faced catastrophic damage to their distribution lines, with 100% of their service territory without power after the storm. On Oct. 9, as South Dakota's linemen were driving home from South Carolina to reunite with their families, still over 10,000 homes and businesses remained without power.

Just like before, South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives answered the call.

"When our line superintendent called me that morning and asked me how we felt about going to Georgia, I said, 'well, we're right here, so we might as well go in and help,'" Bon Homme Yankton lineman Gunnar Dally said. "If they need help, we're more than willing to come."

The stop in Wrens delayed the linemen's return home by about a week, but the appreciation from the communities helped keep spirits high.

"When we were on breaks, there were people stopping to thank us for helping," Dally said. "A lot of them were very surprised when we said we were from South Dakota."

Hansen recognized another subset

of heroes: the families.

"The unsung heroes of storm jobs are the people we leave behind," he said. "My wife is at home with six kids taking care of the ranch while I'm gone. If we didn't have those people, we couldn't go out and do the things we needed to do. They are the real heroes."

SDREA General Manager Steve Barnett thanked the linemen for volunteering to help with the storm restoration efforts and for embodying

the values of South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives.

"These 18 linemen gave up time at home with their families to help people in need they've never met in a place they've never been," Barnett said. "Their selfless actions reflect what we stand for as a family of cooperatives, as South Dakotans, and as fellow Americans. We thank them for their work, their spirit and their dedication to keeping the lights on – at home, and in South Carolina and Georgia."



Manager's Article Continued from page 3

December 2024. We have received an increase in our power cost for 2025 from our power supplier. As we move through the budget we will be looking to see if FEM Electric can absorb this increase or if there will be a need for an electric rate increase.

Please contact Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605-426-6891 if you are looking to add any electrical load in 2025.



SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK



FEM Electric and Dakota News Now are pleased to announce that Jonathan Butler 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 November 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.

Jonathan is a senior at Leola High School, and has been involved in 4-H, FFA, local and school plays, band and his local church. He has won numerous awards in 4-H such as Champion Senior Beef Showmanship, Best in Show for Photography, Visual Arts and Foods/Nutrition as well as Reserve Champion Breeding Heifer and Champion Market Swine. He is also a reporter for his local FFA club.

Once he graduates, Jonathan plans on pursuing a career in the Marine Corps.

Jonathan's parents are Lanette and Dean Butler of Long Lake, SD.

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



SEND US YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT DATE!

**Your event could
be listed here!**

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 and accepted to confirm date, time and location of event.

SEPT. 27-29
Coal Springs Threshing Bee and Antique Show
Meadow, SD
605-758-2295

OCT. 4-5
Hulman Acres Pumpkin Fest and Vendor Show
Philip, SD
605-441-1080

OCT. 4-5
25th Annual Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD
http://webstersd.com/home

OCT. 5-6
Run Crazy Horse Marathons
Crazy Horse
605-390-6137
www.runcrazyhorse.com

OCT. 5-6
The Black Market
W. N. Lyons Fairgrounds
Sisseton, SD

OCT. 6
Giant Pumpkin Festival
Bismarck, SD
605-248-5475

OCT. 10-11
Rural Women in Agriculture Conference
Oct. 10 from 1-9 p.m.
Oct. 11 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
The Lodge at Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
SouthDakotaRuralWomen.org

OCT. 11-12
Junkin' Market
Rapid City, SD
605-341-1500

OCT. 19
Buffalo Fair
Buffalo, SD
605-341-1500

OCT. 25-27
Forrest

OCT. 26
Mid City Children's Bow Bash and Pumpkin Festival
Mid City, SD
605-774-2368

OCT. 26
Hartford Women of Today Fall Craft Fair
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
West Central Banker Center
Hartford, SD
605-362-0040

OCT. 26
Owl-O-Wren
Helen 5 p.m.
Black Hills Eagle Center
Capota, SD
605-362-0040

OCT. 31
Treat Street
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Main St.
Milbank, SD
605-432-6666
MilbankSD.com/civic

NOV. 2
Fall Fling Craft Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Dakota Christian School
Corral, SD
605-366-7940

NOV. 2
Religious Christmas Caravan
Religious, SD
605-730-0551

NOV. 22-23
Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show
Davison County Fairgrounds
Mitchell, SD
605-359-1000



THE COUNTRY COOKIN' cookbook

RECIPES NEEDED

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes.

Your recipe could be featured in the 41st volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!



Submit to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards

Submit recipes to graphics@eastriver.coop or contact your local co-op for more information.



Deadline: December 15th, 2024



FREE Gift Wrapping

**December 6th
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
at FEM Electric**



STAYING SAFE

First responders put out a fire near Belle Fourche.
Photo submitted by Butte Electric Cooperative.

Butte Electric Cooperative Connects With First Responders

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

October marks First Responders Month, a time to honor the dedication and courage of those who rush toward danger to keep their communities safe. This fall, electric cooperatives across the country expressed their gratitude to these everyday heroes who are always prepared to protect lives and the essential infrastructure that supports local neighborhoods.

Day or night, regardless of the weather, first responders answer the call, whether it's battling a blaze or responding to a medical emergency. When it comes to keeping the community safe, their collaboration with local electric co-ops is key for both local residents and the first responders themselves. Together, they work to ensure that emergencies are managed quickly, effectively and, most importantly, safely.

In September, Butte Electric further strengthened its ties and

communications with local first responders following an eventful summer by hosting a series of safety demonstrations for emergency crews in Meade and Butte Counties and the U.S. Forest Service.

"Earlier this year we faced several incidents that resulted in exposed power lines near first responders," said Matt Sleep, chief executive officer of Butte Electric. "In one case, we had a situation west of Spearfish where strong winds brought down a billboard, exposing lines that sparked and started a fire."

Both Butte Electric and the local fire department responded to the emergency, de-energizing the lines and containing the small grass fire. In a separate incident, a driver suffered a medical emergency and crashed into an electrical pedestal. Although the driver died in the accident, the actions of first responders and the electric cooperative prevented further injuries. The incident, among others, prompted Butte Electric to take proactive steps in preparation for the next possible emergency.

"We wanted to both educate responders and build some rapport, so when they see a power line, they know who to call and that they are comfortable getting in contact with us," said Sleep.

Butte Electric employees organized and led a hands-on safety training using the South Dakota Rural Electric Association's high voltage demonstration trailer, a specialized tool



that highlights the very real dangers of electricity. During the session, linemen demonstrated how electricity can arc, or jump, from one connection to another, always seeking the easiest path to the ground.

The training is one that linemen across the state have facilitated, which includes a memorable demonstration involving a grapefruit to show how contact with electricity impacts organic material. On the outside, the grapefruit appears undamaged after contact with an electrified line but cutting it open reveals it's been cooked from the inside.

The training left an impression with Trevor Papenfuss, an assistant fire management fire officer who has served with the U.S. Forest Service in the Spearfish area for more than 30 years. Papenfuss was just one of roughly 30 U.S. Forest Service members who attended the demonstration.

"We deal with incidents involving electricity at least once a year, if not more," Papenfuss said. "Butte

Electric provided us with a lot of valuable information and a powerful demonstration. Seeing a grapefruit burn from the inside out makes a big impact and impression of just how dangerous live electricity can be. Several of our new wildland firefighters attended and they took away information that will stay with them for a long time."

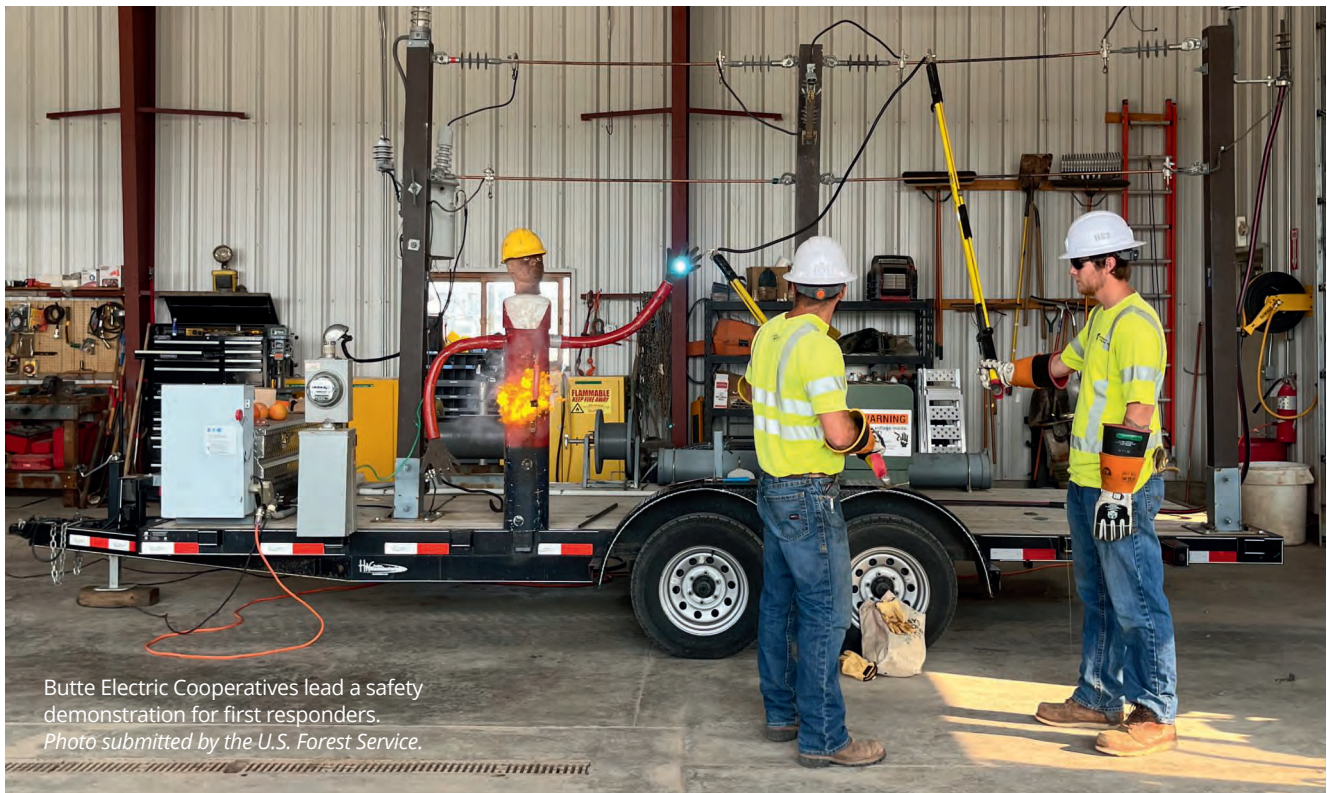
In a separate training tailored to the Sturgis Fire Department, Volunteer Fire Chief of the Sturgis Fire Department Scott Lensegrav said the training was impactful for his fellow volunteers. In addition to noting the value of the demonstration, Lensegrav highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong line of communication between electric service providers like Butte Electric and the fire department, especially during an emergency.

"In a situation involving power lines or electricity, the first thing we do is communicate with dispatch to try and figure out whose power line is involved in the emergency," said Lensegrav.

"The training was just another step in building good communication between our department and utilities. It was also great to have the refresher for our volunteers who have been with us for years and a good learning tool for the new volunteers that are coming into the service."

Looking forward, Sleep plans to continue strengthening the relationship between local first responders and Butte Electric for a safer future in their service area.

"It's all about building relationships and familiarity so that first responders know who to talk to and don't hesitate to call," said Sleep. "We deeply appreciate our first responders and want to help them however we can. These emergency personnel and volunteers are what make our communities great, and we just want to play our part in keeping them and our neighborhoods safe."



Butte Electric Cooperatives lead a safety demonstration for first responders.
Photo submitted by the U.S. Forest Service.



PREVENT HOLIDAY FIRES

KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE AND YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON MERRY WITH THESE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Cooking safety in the kitchen

The kitchen is often the heart of holiday celebrations, but it can also be a hot spot for fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for nearly 20% of holiday-related incidents. Here's how to stay safe:

- **Never leave burners or the oven unattended.** Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies.
- **Ensure children stay away from the kitchen,** where hot appliances and sharp utensils can pose risks.
- **Install smoke detectors** at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances and test them monthly to ensure they're working.

Be aware of holiday fire risks

The combination of candles, fireplaces and flammable decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

Candle safety

- Only burn candles where you can **keep an eye on them.**
- **Extinguish candles before going to bed,** leaving the room or leaving the house.
- **Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles,** placing them out of reach of children and pets.
- **Keep candles away from flammable items** like trees, decorations, curtains and furniture.
- **Opt for battery-operated candles** near flammable objects.

Christmas tree fire prevention

A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.

- **Choose a fresh tree.** Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a

sticky trunk bottom.

- **Keep the tree away from heat sources** such as fireplaces, space heaters and vents.
- **Check the water level daily** to prevent the tree from drying out.
- **Place the tree away from high-traffic areas** and doorways.
- **If using an artificial tree,** ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.
- **When discarding a real tree,** place it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

Holiday lighting safety

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key:

- **Purchase lights from reputable retailers** and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.
- **Only use lights designed for outdoor use** when hanging outside.
- **Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)** for outdoor lights.
- **Avoid water and snow** when using extension cords and outdoor lights.
- **Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines** while hanging lights.
- **Check for broken sockets and frayed wires** before use.
- **Avoid plugging too many devices** into a single outlet.
- **Turn off indoor and outdoor decorations** when going to bed or leaving the house.

Fireplace safety tips

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- **Decorate wisely.** Avoid hanging flammable decorations like stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.
- **Perform annual maintenance.** Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.
- **Use a screen.** Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.
- **Burn responsibly.** Never burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.

By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.

For more information, visit [safeelectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).

FEM ELECTRIC PRESENTS THE 2025

YOUTH TOUR

JUNE 15 - 21, 2025

Here is your chance of a lifetime to experience an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 15-21, 2025.

What does it cost?

Nothing!

This is why cooperatives are different! Co-ops are always giving back to the communities we serve, and helping students learn about the political process to interact with your government is one way cooperatives give back. We hope students who attend walk away from this week as a better leader, and with a sense that they can make a difference.

When is it held?

June 15-21, 2025

Students will meet in Sioux Falls on Sunday, June 15th for an orientation before flying to D.C. on Sunday, June 16th. Everyone will return to South Dakota on Saturday, June 21st.

There will be featured speakers on National Youth Day that will provide insight on the important roles electric cooperatives play in their community. Students will learn about American history, and their role as a citizen by meeting with their representative and senators at the nation's capital.

For more information contact:

Crystal Thorson
thorson@femelectric.coop
FEM Electric Association, Inc.
PO Box 468
800 5th Ave.
Ipswich, SD 57451
www.femelectric.coop
Application Deadline:
December 13th, 2024

This trip is for any high school junior or senior in FEM Electric's territory!

How do I enter?

Students who are interested should complete the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C. application. Applications can be found at www.femelectric.coop, through your school counselor, or you can pick up an application at FEM Electric.



How do I win?

FEM Electric's selection committee will review and evaluate all applications received. Students may be asked to participate in an interview. The committee will select THREE students to represent FEM Electric at this year's event.





DEC. 7
Santa at the Zoo
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Great Plains Zoo
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-7003

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.

NOV. 29
Parade of Lights
 Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Chamberlain, SD

NOV. 30
A Hometown Christmas Market
 2 p.m.-6 p.m.
 Main Street
 Elk Point, SD

NOV. 30
Mid-Winter Fair
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Gregory Memorial Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

NOV. 29-DEC. 29
Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum
 Hill City, SD
 605-665-3636

DEC. 1
A Christmas Carol
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-624-2859

DEC. 5
Christmas on the Prairie
 4 p.m.
 Main Street
 Miller, SD

DEC. 5
Holiday Festival of Lights
 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Yankton, SD
 605-665-3636

DEC. 6
Kimball's Hometown Holiday
 3:30-7 p.m.
 Legion Hall
 Kimball, SD

DEC. 6
Hometown Holiday Vendor Fair
 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
 Armory
 Howard, SD

DEC. 7
Newell Festival of Trees
 9 a.m. – Doors Open
 11:30 a.m. – Community Lunch
 4 p.m. – Auction
 Newell City Hall
 Newell, SD

DEC. 6-8, 13-15
A Sherlock Carol
 Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 7:30 p.m.
 Dec. 8, 15, 2:30 p.m.
 Corson, SD
 mightycorson.com

DEC. 7
Santa Day
 2 p.m.
 Stockholm Buggy Museum
 Stockholm, SD
 605-467-3940

DEC. 7
KJAM Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 605-256-4514

DEC. 7-31
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
 5 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Brookings, SD
 605-688-6707

DEC. 8
Aberdeen Community Concert Association Fund Raiser
2024 Medora Magical Christmas Memories Tour
 3 p.m.
 Aberdeen Civic Theater
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-228-0946
 aberdeencommunityconcerts.com

DEC. 14
Parade of Lights
 Wessington, SD
 605-359-2049

DEC. 15
A Poker Alice Christmas
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD

DEC. 31
American Legion Post 15 Save the Last Dance 2024
 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
 El Riad Shrine
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-336-3470

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