

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## South Dakota Snowmobiling

Seasonal Fun in the  
Snow

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Gaining Dual Credits

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# BOARD REPORT



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

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on December 19, 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, Kelly Melius, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe. General Manager/CEO Scott Moore, Operations Manager Sean Christiansen, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, and Electrical Dept. Manager Ryan Holien were present. Operation manager Rob Vetch was also present.

Gary Bachman welcomed guest employee Logan Gruenstein.

**Changes to the agenda:** Revised agenda was distributed with Work Order Inventories and SDREA board meeting review.

**Changes/Additions to Minutes from November 21, 2023, meeting:** none

**Next Meeting Date:** After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve administrative business.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve manager and staff report along with the following Work Order inspections:

WOI 603	\$45,381.82
WOI 604	\$11,605.40
WOI 605	\$75,583.26
WOI 606	<u>\$803,433.73</u>
	\$936,004.21

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to enter executive session at 9:30 a.m.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to leave executive session at 9:45 a.m.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Tom Thorpe to approve the following committees for 2024:

Safety committee: Sonje Oban/Sean Christiansen/Angie Sieh/Perry Ptacek.

Grievance Committee: Dan Feldhaus/Crystal Thorson/Perry Ptacek.

Scholarship Committee: Crystal Thorson/Dan Feldhaus/Sonje Oban/Josh Weigel/Will Olson

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to nominate Gary Bachman as NRECA Voting Delegate and Ryan Holien as Alternate NRECA Voting Delegate.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to nominate Gary Bachman as NRTC Voting Delegate and Ryan Holien as Alternate NRTC Voting Delegate.

Staff reviewed 2024 budget changes with the board.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve 2024 budget as presented.

Board acknowledged the October 2023 Cyber Security Report.

## **Membership Business:**

Board acknowledged membership business.

## **New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:**

**Disconnects:** Jason Lee, Rapid City, SD, Active Farm; Daniel Lagerhausen, Faulkton, SD, Shop; Brian Hauck, Roscoe, SD, House; John Riley, Cresbard, SD, Vacant Farm; Duane Martchinske, Miranda, SD, Active Farm; Clarence Dais, Eureka, SD, Vacant Farm; Tom & Sandy Wittmayer, Verona, WI, Active Farm

**Reconnects:** Hunter Wood, Cresbard, SD, Active Farm; Farmer First Agronomy, LLC, Faulkton, SD, Shop; Kyle Hauck, Roscoe, SD, House; James & April Bowar, Faulkton, SD; Vacant Farm; Jerry Martchinske, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Justin & Sarah Bieber, Bowdle, SD, Vacant Farm; Mary Jane Lunetta, Minnetonka, MN, Active Farm

**Contracts:** None

**Retired Locations:** None

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  
info@femelectric.coop

#### Management Staff

Sean Christiansen  
*Line Superintendent*  
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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#### How to contact us:

FEM Electric  
PO Box 468  
Ipswich, SD 57451  
Phone: 1-800-587-5880 or  
605-426-6891  
E-mail: info@femelectric.coop  
Website:  
www.femelectric.coop  
Design assistance by SDREA

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



**Scott Moore**  
**General Manager/CEO**

The evening of December 25th started out similar to Christmas of 2016 with rain and sleet. FEM Electric line crews worked throughout the night and into Tuesday evening battling downed powerlines due to building ice. Tuesday and Wednesday we requested assistance through South Dakota Rural Electric Association and Northern Electric responded with four linemen and support equipment. We lost about 25 poles and had multiple wire breaks mostly on concentrated sections of line.

On Wednesday I had the opportunity to escape the office and assist the operations department with some outages. It didn't take me long to count our blessings as I scoured the county roads and section lines looking for troubled spots. The work that has been completed in the past thirteen years paid off. I can guarantee our members this storm would have resulted in hundreds of broken poles and miles of conductor laying on the ground again. As many remember in 2010 FEM Electric lost

over 4000 poles and had 400 additional workers on site for around thirteen days. When FEM Electric started to rebuild our infrastructure, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) asked if FEM would be interested in installing underground cable instead of rebuilding overhead. The FEMA rules were just changing about this time to allow for such a change.

After spending a day in the country there is no doubt that the actions taken thirteen years ago and until the present have paid off. I usually give credit where it is due, here is a thank you the following: FEMA and South Dakota Emergency Management for financial assistance from the past ice storms along with the mitigation funds that did what they were supposed to do: replace the aging electrical lines before they go down causing outages. Thank you to John Dalager (retired) and his employees at Dalager Engineering for their foresight and knowledge to help FEM management in making good decisions and help create long range construction work plans. A thank you also needs to go out to past and present employees and board of directors. The daily grind or monthly meetings are important. Each decision has consequences and I truly believe good decisions were made and the payoff was noticeable.

We may have ended 2023 somewhat rough but we are looking at a good and prosperous 2024. Please remember to call early when adding electrical load. Call Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen at 605-426-6891.

## Statement Mailing Dates

January 30, 2024 for January's energy  
February 27, 2024 for February's energy

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

## Cooking Safety

### Watch What You Heat: Cooking is the Number One Cause of Home Fires

#### Plan A: Primary Prevention

- The best time to cook is when you are wide awake, and not drowsy from medications or alcohol.
- Always wipe clean the stove, oven, exhaust fan to prevent grease buildup.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Keep a pan lid and dry potholders or oven mitts near you EVERY time you cook.
- Turn pot or pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- When heating food in the microwave, use microwave- safe cookware that allows steam to escape.
- Allow food to rest before removing from the microwave.
- When frying, use a pan lid or splash guard to prevent grease splatter.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you to check on your cooking.
- After cooking, check the kitchen to make sure all burners and other appliances are turned off.

#### Plan B: Secondary Prevention

If your food does catch on fire...

1. Cover the pan with its lid. A cookie sheet works too. Leave covered until the pan is cool. NEVER move the pot or carry it outside - the pot is too hot to handle and the contents may splash, causing a severe burn.
2. Turn the heat off. With the lid on and the heat off, the fire should quickly put itself out. NEVER use water to put out a kitchen fire. Water will cause the

oil to splatter and spread the fire, or scald you as it vaporizes.

3. If the fire is inside the oven or microwave, keep the door shut and turn it off. Keep closed until the oven is cool.
4. If the fire gets out of control- get out, stay out and call 9-1-1. Don't return inside for any reason.

#### STATS

- 47% of all home fires are caused by cooking
- Preventing a burn injury is always better than the pain and trauma of medical treatment afterward.

**National Burn Awareness Week (Feb. 4-10, 2024)** is a window of opportunity for organizations to mobilize burn, fire, and life safety educators to unite in sharing a common burn awareness and prevention message in our communities.

*Source: American Burn Association*



#### Call 811 Before You Dig

##### Lillee Pannell, Age 10

Lillee Pannell instructs readers to call 811 before digging. Lillee is the daughter of Scott and Kim Pannell from Sioux Falls, S.D., members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

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



# BRUNCH SPECIALS

## FRENCH TOAST SUPREME

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter  
2 tbsps. white corn syrup  
1 cup brown sugar  
5 eggs  
1 cup Carnation milk  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/4 tsp. salt

### Method

Boil together butter, corn syrup, and brown sugar for one minute. Grease a 9x13 pan and put the caramel mix in bottom. Slice French bread about one inch thick or use Texas toast. Put slices close together on top of the caramel sauce. Beat together eggs, milk, vanilla, and salt. Pour on top of bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. When ready to serve, turn the pieces over and caramel will be on top. Best served warm.

Brigitta Hofer  
Bridgewater, S.D.

## MINI FRITTATAS

### Ingredients:

8 eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
1 1/2 tps. Italian seasoning  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper  
1 cup crumbled cooked bacon  
1 med. onion, finely chopped  
1 med. zucchini, finely chopped  
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, divided

### Method

Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat eggs, milk, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper in medium bowl until well blended. Add bacon, onion, zucchini and 1/2 cup of the cheese; mix well. Spray one (12-cup) muffin tin generously with no stick cooking spray. Spoon about 1/4 cup egg mixture into each cup. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Bake 20 to 22 minutes or just until eggs are set. Run small knife or spatula around each cup to loosen mini frittatas. Let stand five minutes before serving.

McCormick.com

## CINNAMON PANCAKES

### Ingredients:

2 cups pancake mix  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup milk  
2 tbsps. vegetable oil  
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

### Method

Stir pancake mix and cinnamon in large bowl until well blended. Stir in eggs, milk, oil, and vanilla just until blended.

Pour 1/4 cup of batter per pancake onto preheated lightly greased griddle or skillet. Cook one to two minutes per side or until golden brown, turning when pancakes begin to bubble. Serve pancakes with Spiced Syrup, if desired.

Kitchen Tip: To make flavorful Spiced syrup, mix one cup pancake syrup, one teaspoon pure vanilla extract and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave on HIGH for one minute or until warm, stirring once.

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.

## BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Continued from pg 2

### Capital Credits:

**Estates – December 2023** – one estate = \$2,565.19

**73 & Older – December 2023** – none

2023 Basin Capital Credits Retirement was reviewed. Basin retired \$198,983.27 of FEM's capital credits. They will be passed through to the members with the 2024 general retirement.

**Financial Business:** The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of November 2023 contained information on checks #33919 through #33986 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for November 2023 totaling \$455,473.32.

The November Financials were reviewed.

Write-Offs for 2023 – none.

Aid-of Construction collected YTD for 2023: \$163,210.38.

Staff and board reviewed the CFC KRTA 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.

Paula Petersen gave a report on Board Leadership classes she attended in Pierre.

Gary Bachman gave a report on the Mid-West Annual meeting he attended.

Tom Thorpe gave a report on SDREA board meeting.

Safety meeting minutes from November 17, 2023, were acknowledged.

Safety committee meetings from November 8, 2023, were acknowledged.

**Adjourn:** President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

### HAPPY RETIREMENT ROB!

Rob Vetch, Line Superintendent, will officially have retired from FEM Electric on January 5th, 2024. Rob worked for FEM for 38 years, starting as an apprentice lineman, and working his way up to line superintendent.

We wish Rob nothing but the best, and hope he enjoys his retirement!

# SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

## ATTENTION MEMBER PARENTS AND STUDENTS!

The Basin Electric Power Cooperative and FEM Electric scholarship application is now available!

Graduating seniors or college freshmen can submit ONE application for a chance at THREE different scholarships!

Applications are available at your local high school counselor's offices, via the FEM Electric website (femelectric.coop), or at the FEM Electric office at 800 5th Ave. Ipswich, SD 57451.

### SCHOLARSHIPS:

\$1,000 from Basin Electric Power Cooperative  
\$500 from FEM Electric Cooperative  
\$500 from FEM Electric Cooperative

**Deadline to apply is FEBRUARY 9TH, 2024**



# **FEM Electric**

## **Presents the 2024 YOUTH TOUR JUNE 15-21**

**WIN A TRIP TO WASHINGTON D.C.**

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

**Here is your chance of a lifetime to  
experience an all-expenses-paid trip  
to Washington, D.C., June 15-21, 2024!**

### **What does it cost?**

**Nothing!**

This is why cooperatives are different! Coops 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, 2024**

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

### **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](http://www.femelectric.coop) under the Community tab, through your school counselor, or you can pick up an application at FEM Electric.



**Join the FUN!  
Best of all, it's free  
thanks to your  
local electric  
cooperative!**

### **How do I win?**

FEM electric Cooperative, Inc.'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 Cooperative, Inc. at this year's event.

**For more information contact:**

**Crystal Thorson**

**[thorson@femelectric.coop](mailto:thorson@femelectric.coop)**

**[www.femelectric.coop](http://www.femelectric.coop)**

**Deadline To Apply:  
FEBRUARY 16TH, 2024**

**FEM Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

**PO Box 468**

**800 5th Ave.**

**Ipswich, SD 57451**





# SOUTH DAKOTA'S SNOWMOBILE CLUBS

A group of Black Hills Snowmobile Club members enjoy a ride through the snow covered pines.

## Snow Lovers Create Trails and Lifelong Friendships Through Club Membership

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Being a member of one of South Dakota's many snowmobiling clubs is more like being a member of a big, adrenaline-loving family.

Being a part of a snowmobile club provides the opportunity to meet likeminded individuals that can easily turn into some of your best friends. That's the case for Mike Boock, of Rapid City, who is a longtime member of the Black Hills Snowmobile Club (BHSC).

"Most of the friendships that I have today are because of the snowmobile club. Many of us even camp together during the summer at the lake," Boock said.

Boock said the club boasts up to 70 members in all. While he primarily rides the mountains of Colorado and Wyoming, Boock loves riding in Black Hills when the area receives enough snow.

There are a total of 416 miles of groomed snowmobile trails

in the Black Hills National Forest, making is a pristine spot for snowmobiling.

The snowmobile clubs in the Black Hills have it a little easier than those out east as they don't have to mark, install, groom or repair trails.

"The state takes care of that," Boock said. "This allows clubs like the BHSC to become more of an educational and community support organization."

This allows club members more free time to volunteer or participate in community events, such as the Festival of Lights Parade and Storybook Island Christmas Nights of Light.

Kelly Weaver is the President of the South Dakota Snowmobile Association and a member of the Aberdeen Drift Busters Snowmobile Club.

The Aberdeen Drift Busters maintain what's called the Dakota Midland trail system, which connects Aberdeen, Mina Lake, Richmond Lake, Westport, Frederick and Columbia.

"This provides about 75 miles of riding in a safe, marked, and groomed corridor," Weaver said.

There are rules governing the trail system. While there are no posted speed limits on the trail, when the trail is located in a road right-of-way, the speed limit of the road applies.

There are also laws governing the type of vehicle that can be ridden on a snowmobile trail. Machines must meet the state definition of a snowmobile. ATV's and other motorized vehicles do not typically meet that definition.

Aberdeen Drift Busters has held the title of being the largest snowmobile club in the state for several years. It was established in 1969, the same year the South Dakota Snowmobile



Association was established.

“Currently, our membership is right around 100 families,” Weaver said. “The club has been as large as 225 members but membership has slowed over the past decade due to the lack of snow and the growing number of activities that families have an opportunity to participate in.”

Anyone can join a snowmobile club and snowmobile ownership is not a requirement.

“You are connected with very experienced snowmobilers who can provide information about machines, riding ventures and how organized snowmobiling operates,” Weaver said. “It is a way to connect with people who have a shared passion for the sport.”

Weaver had her first taste of snowmobiling as a young child with her father and neighbors.

“When I was young, I only rode as a passenger, which I found was not to my liking. When I met my future husband, he also had a snowmobile and I had to ride as a passenger once again,” Weaver said.

Weaver and her husband decided to join the Aberdeen Drift Busters while taking a break from riding for a bite to eat years ago.

“In 1986, my fiancé – now husband – and I were on a snowmobile ride and stopped to eat at a trailside business. Another snowmobiler, who we did not know, approached us and told us we needed to join the club. We did and have been actively involved ever since. That snowmobiling ‘stranger’ became a lifelong friend who we’ve shared many snowmobile memories with,” Weaver said. “Like most things we are drawn to, it is the ability to connect with others who share a common interest that keeps us involved. We have met so many people across the state and the nation through our involvement and have experienced some awesome and fun-filled trips over the years. There are so many ways to be involved that even members who are not avid riders can benefit from and enjoy

being part of the club.”

Once married, Weaver decided she’d need her own sled if she were to continue with snowmobiling. When her husband acquired a new Polaris, she was granted a used Arctic Cat Jag that she described as a “trusty starter sled.”

“Early on in our riding, we were able to make trips to the Black Hills, Big Horn Mountains and West Yellowstone. These venues are even more breathtaking in the winter,” Weaver said.

A long day on the trail in a large riding area might last six to eight hours. There needs to be a minimum of six inches of snow on the ground, depending on the terrain.

It may take several layers of snow to create a base for the trail, which can then be groomed and maintained throughout the season.

With adequate snow and a trail in place, an ideal riding day for Weaver would be sunny skies with a little wind, and temperatures between 0 and 30 degrees.

Over in the southeastern corner of

the state, Duane Duerr, President of the Siouxland Sno Trackers, finds great enjoyment in riding his Ski Doo 900 Ave Four Cycle snowmobile.

The Siouxland Sno Trackers is one of the original snowmobile clubs in South Dakota and has around 78 miles of groomed trails for its 80 members.

Duerr grew up in Minnesota and joined the club in 2006 when he moved to South Dakota. Joining the club helped him to learn the trails and rules, and provided him with many friendships.

“I think snowmobiling has become more popular, but involvement in all organizations is down,” Duerr said. “Many do not realize that snowmobile clubs are why we have a trail system and that they put it in and take it out. Without the clubs, we will no longer have trails in South Dakota. Member support is what makes a difference and too many take that involvement for granted.”

More information on the state’s snowmobile clubs can be found at the SDSA’s website at [snowmobilesd.com](http://snowmobilesd.com).



Watertown’s South Dakota Snowmobile Club members take a break during an outing.

# UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

**IF YOU KNOW ANY OF THESE PAST MEMBERS OR BUSINESSES, PLEASE HAVE THEM CALL FEM ELECTRIC AT 605-426-6891 OR 800-587-5880 AND ASK FOR ANGIE.**

STAYE HOOSE, MGR

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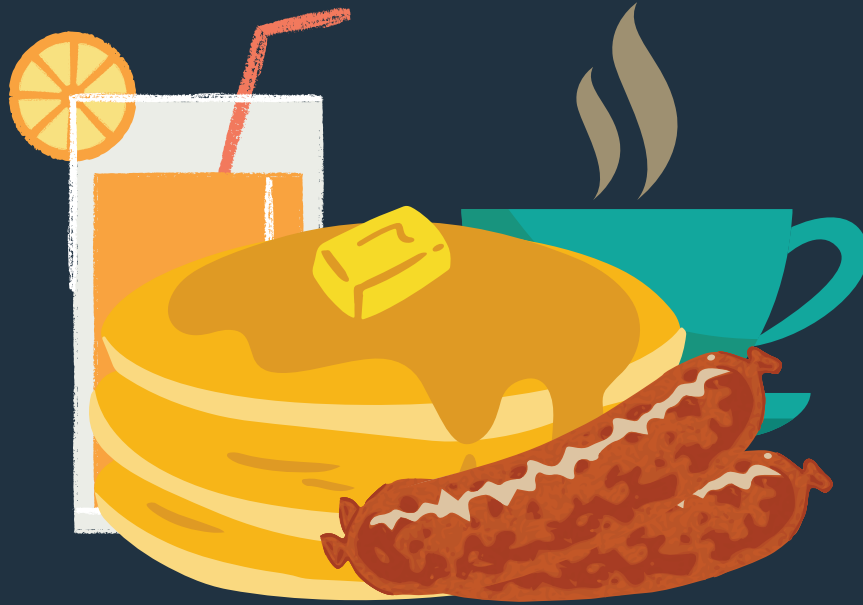
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We'll post outage updates, safety tips, news and more to keep our members informed on all the latest from FEM Electric.



# FEM Electric's Annual PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST



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## Date & Time

February 9th, 2024  
7:00 am - 10:00 am

## Place

North Shop Building  
800 5th Ave.  
Ipswich, SD

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FEM Electric is hosting its annual free pancake breakfast, and will collect paper products and cleaning supplies for local food pantries. Bring your family, your appetite, and any donation is appreciated.

This annual event is a great time for FEM Electric board and staff to visit with our member-owners, show our appreciation, and give back to the communities we serve.

We can't wait to see you and your family at the FEM Pancake and Sausage Breakfast!



Jocelyn Cihak takes a dual-credit calculus class offered by Northern State University. Photo courtesy of Northern State University

# DUAL-CREDIT

## High Schoolers are Gaining College Credits

**Scott Waltman**

Some graduates of South Dakota high schools are showing up on college campuses with a semester's worth of credits.

Sometimes even more.

The dual-credit program has proven to be both beneficial and popular since it was introduced by Gov. Dennis Daugaard in 2014.

It's easy to understand why. Here's how the program works. High school juniors and seniors at any South Dakota high school can take classes for which they get both high school and college credits. There are scores of

classes to choose from, and the cost to take them is steeply discounted.

For instance, once a student enrolls at any of the state's six public schools or universities, they pay between \$253.85 and \$260.55 per credit hour. That cost for a high school student taking a college-level class through the dual-credit program? It's a mere \$48.33 per credit hour.

That's why education officials in South Dakota love the program.

Nathan Lukkes, executive director and chief executive officer for the South Dakota Board of Regents, said providing an affordable education has been a priority for the regents in

recent years. Tuition freezes and an increased number of scholarships are part of that work. But so are dual-credit classes, he said.

Most of the dual-credit courses are general education classes – or generals, as college students often call them – he said. Through the program, students can have some of those courses out of the way before they even get their high school degrees.

The work done by the regents and the universities resulted in Forbes naming South Dakota the most affordable state in which to get a high school education, Lukkes said.

All six South Dakota public universities offer dual-credit classes, and the number of high school students taking advantage has been going up in recent years.

The number of students taking dual-credit classes changes throughout



the year, but there were 1,223 taking classes at Northern State University in Aberdeen in fall 2023 compared to 1,141 the year before. And at South Dakota State University in Brookings, the number jumped from 903 to 1,031 in fall 2023, according to statistics from the board of regents.

Here's how the systemwide numbers are trending based on the number of students taking dual-credit classes, according to the 2023 South Dakota Board of Regents Fact Book, which was issued during summer at the end of the most recent fiscal year.

**2021-2022:** 4,300

**2020-2021:** 3,919

**2019-2020:** 3,781

**2018-2019:** 3,168

## The 10 most popular classes all had more than 150 students.

**College algebra:** 990

**Fundamentals of speech:** 905

**Composition I (English 101):** 830

**General psychology:** 513

**U.S. history I:** 379

**American government:** 317

**Music appreciation (Music 101):** 280

**Introduction to sociology:** 241

**Biology survey I (Biology 101):** 157

**Biology survey lab:** 156

In 2021, there were 9,523 dual-credit courses taken by South Dakota high school students, according to information from the regents. That number includes summer courses and students who took more than one course.

At Northwestern High School in Mellette, Superintendent Rob Lewis said about 25% of the juniors and seniors are taking advantage of dual-credit courses. One student has taken a full semester's worth, he said.

Do the math over the course of a semester, and that's a savings of north of \$2,300. And that doesn't take on-campus housing and food into account.

That's just a great deal for high school kids, Lewis said.

Chris Ulrich, the middle school and high school principal at Northwestern, agrees.

"It's a nice opportunity for kids

to get not only college credits, but also experience what college is like," he said.

And they get to do it within the comfort of their high school, Ulrich said. The program is a great transitional step leading from high school to college, he said.

AP, or Advanced Placement classes, were great, but dual-credit classes are even better, Lewis said.

AP classes are college-level courses taught by high school teachers. But they don't always equate to college credit. Dual-credit courses are taught by college instructors and professors and always result in college credit, if a student passes.

In South Dakota, dual-credit courses can be taken on any of the six public university campuses, in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Huron, Pierre, Watertown and online.

And there's another benefit, Lukkes said. Dual-credit classes create a tie between South Dakota high school students and the regental schools. Any chance a high school student has a chance to engage with a state school creates a bond that could help keep that kid in South Dakota, he said.

Perhaps a Spearfish High School student takes a dual-credit class at Black Hills State University and it's a good experience. Maybe that high school graduate stays in town and enrolls at BHSU.

Lewis, too, said the program is a great way to keep students in South Dakota for college and perhaps beyond.

That's also a focus for the Aberdeen Development Corp., which is starting a program aimed at keeping more Northern graduates in town to start their professional careers.



Rhianna Troske, a student at Northwestern High School in Mellette, takes a dual-credit class while at school. Photo by Scott Waltman

# PREPARING FOR THE WINTER SEASON

In the Upper Midwest, we're used to harsh winters. And as your local electric cooperative, we're prepared to face whatever Mother Nature throws at us: ice, snow, wind, or frigid temperatures. We're here for you through it all to provide you with reliable power at an affordable price. That doesn't mean we won't face challenges – but your electric cooperative prepares for harsh weather in several ways to make sure we have the highest reliability possible.

To enhance energy security and resilience, a diverse mix of energy sources is essential. We often refer to this as an “all-of-the-above” generation strategy. Our generation mix includes a combination of coal, natural gas, wind, hydropower, and soon solar energy. Dispatchable generation that can be turned on when needed includes coal, natural gas and hydropower. Non-dispatchable, or intermittent, resources like wind and solar are only available when the wind is blowing, or the sun is shining.

FEM Electric is connected to large power suppliers like East River Electric Power Cooperative, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Western Area Power Administration. Those entities are part of the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) and Southwest Power Pool (SPP) – both of which are regional transmission organizations responsible for balancing the grid in our region. MISO and SPP officials have analyzed the probability of energy shortfalls this winter and have concluded that there is little chance of energy shortfalls.

“Our meteorologists stay on top of weather forecasting because no two winters are the same,” says Mike Mattox, senior advisor of operations planning at MISO. “When it comes to winter grid planning, we pay close attention to the weather, what resources are available, fuel supplies and lessons learned from past storms.”

In a recent article released by MISO, the organization said for the upcoming winter season “MISO forecasts having enough electricity supply to meet expected consumer demand under typical conditions. Of course, there is always the potential for high risk, low probability weather events impacting the MISO grid. Those type of events often require operators to implement emergency procedures for power to keep flowing.”

“There were no region-wide concerns identified that we are not capable of resolving,” said SPP Senior Vice President of Operations Bruce Rew during a recent winter preparedness and emergency communications meeting hosted by SPP. “We are, however, continually performing studies to assess system changes and to develop ways to mitigate problems should any study indicate the potential for those to occur.”

According to SPP, the operations analysts who have studied grid conditions for this upcoming winter season say with 98.5 percent certainty that the region will have enough energy available to meet demand under normal, expected winter conditions, and even with a 5 percent increase in electricity demand

SPP will have a 97% chance of having sufficient generation to serve consumers. That means while there is still a chance that extreme weather conditions could cause concern, the probability is very low that we could experience power interruptions this winter because of a lack of generation capacity.

Your electric cooperative network has also taken steps to prepare for extreme weather conditions by investing in its electric distribution system, putting an ever-increasing number of miles of line underground, designing a well-connected transmission system so energy can be efficiently transported reliably, and making sure we have an all-of-the-above generation strategy that doesn't rely on just one type of generation technology. We've also installed technologies throughout the system that can detect problems, an energy management system that can reduce energy usage during peak times, and we winterize our equipment so it holds up even in the harshest conditions.

Although the chances of power interruptions this winter are minimal, we are very concerned about the future of generation assets on the grid. The retirement of a number of dispatchable generation units across the country, combined with rising energy demand as sectors of the economy are increasingly electrified, will impact the reliability of the grid. The potential for federal regulatory mandates could force electric cooperatives to close coal or natural gas plants, which will certainly have a negative impact on the reliability of the power grid. Some parts of the country



are predicting dire circumstances this winter because fewer coal and natural gas plants will be generating electricity. We are working with our lawmakers and regulatory officials to stem the tide of premature retirement of these assets because a reliable and resilient energy generation system is vital to meet the heightened demand during the winter season.

We will continue to use and advocate for a diverse energy mix, upgrade infrastructure when needed, and implement winterization measures. As always, your cooperative is working to keep your power reliable and affordable while we maintain a robust energy delivery system that ensures a stable and secure energy supply throughout the winter months and beyond.

*Article courtesy of East River Electric*



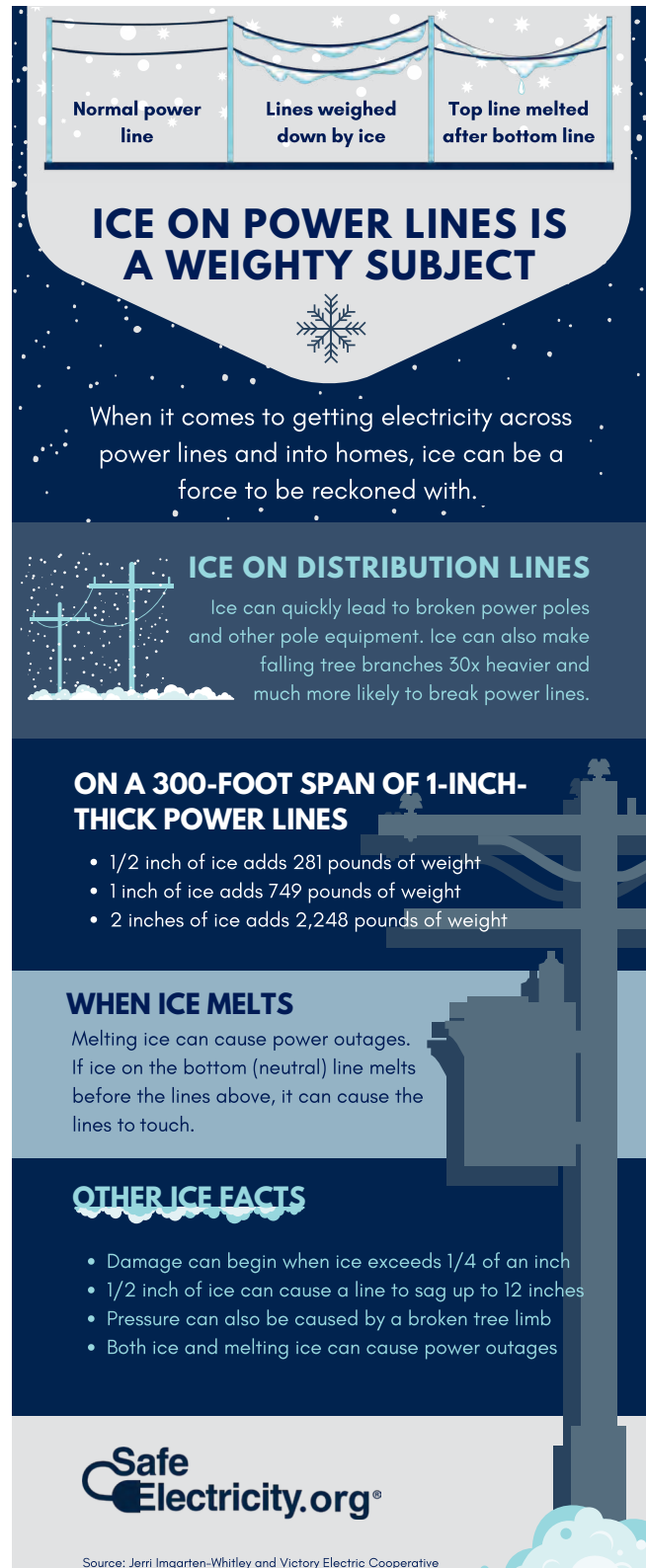
**The Country Cookin' cookbook**

RECIPES NEEDED

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

**Submit recipes via email to**  
[ajohannsen@eastriver.coop](mailto:ajohannsen@eastriver.coop)  
**or contact your local cooperative for more information.**

**DEADLINE:**  
**FEBRUARY 1ST, 2024**



**Normal power line**      **Lines weighed down by ice**      **Top line melted after bottom line**

## ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

### ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

### ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

### WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

### OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

**Safe Electricity.org®**

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative



**FEB. 24, 2024**  
**Nemo 500 Outhouse**  
**Races & Chili Cookoff**  
 10 a.m.  
 Nemo Guest Ranch  
 Nemo, SD

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.

**FEB. 3**  
**Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby**  
 11 a.m.  
 City Boat Landing  
 Hendricks, MN

**FEB. 9-10**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
 Historic Downtown Deadwood  
 Deadwood, SD

**FEB. 10**  
**Polar Bear Chili Cook-Off**  
 11 a.m.  
 Main Street  
 Hill City, SD

**FEB. 11**  
**Beadle County Humane Society Bingo, Silent Auction & Bake Sale Benefit**  
 2 p.m.  
 Huron Community Center  
 Huron, SD

**FEB. 18-20**  
**MASC presents Disaster! the Musical**  
 Vesta Community Center  
 Vesta, MN

**FEB. 22**  
**The Starlets: Pop Female Trio**  
**Aberdeen Community Concert Association**  
 7 p.m.  
 Johnson Fine Arts Center NSU  
 Aberdeen, SD

**FEB. 23-24**  
**Women in Blue Jeans Conference**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD

**MARCH 1-3**  
**National Pheasant Fest & Quail Classic**  
 Denny Sanford Premier Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 2**  
**Live on Stage**  
 High Country Guest Ranch  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 7**  
**Elevate Rapid City Economic Summit**  
 8 a.m.  
 The Monument  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**French Toast/Pancake Feed & Health Fair**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 Tea Community Building  
 Tea, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**SunCatcher Therapeutic Riding Academy & 3rd Annual Shamrock Gala and Benefit Auction**  
 5 p.m.  
 Alex Johnson Ballroom  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 11-15**  
**Black Hills Institute's 50th Anniversary Celebration**  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 15**  
**East Dakota Chapter NWFT 31st Annual Banquet**  
 Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 16**  
**Live On Stage**  
 High Country Guest Ranch  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 16-17**  
**Hill City Antiques, Railroad & Collectibles Show & Sale**  
 Hill City Center  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 17**  
**St. Patrick's Day Green Pancakes and Sausage**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 20-23**  
**Hill City Restaurant Week**  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Tyndall VFW Vegas Night**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Tyndall Community Center  
 Tyndall, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Hill City Children's Easter Egg Hunt**  
 Visitor Info Center  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 24**  
**Ham Dinner & Silent Auction**  
 11:45 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 24**  
**Run for the Rangers**  
 Hill City, SD

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