

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Beneath the Black Hills

**Charting Untrodden
Miles in Jewel Cave**

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**Striking Gold
in Science**

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BOARD REPORT



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

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on November 21, 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.

Gary Bachman welcomed guest employee Justin Larson.

Angie Sieh, Barb Schaefer and Sonje Oban were present during budget and portions of meeting.

Changes to the agenda: None

Changes/Additions to Minutes from October 17, 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, December 19, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve administrative business.

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve manager and staff reports.

At 9:30 Emily Marcotte with Beck Law Office and Tom Jones with RUS (Rural Utilities Services) joined the meeting for the signing and closing of RUS loan in the amount of \$8,704,000 to cover the next four-year work plan.

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Kelly Melius to approve the resolution for signature on RUS AA45 loan in the amount of \$8,704,000.

Preliminary 2024 Budget was reviewed with the board and will be brought back to the December board meeting with a few changes for final approval.

The board acknowledged receiving the October Cyber Security report.

Resolutions, Contracts, and Nominations:

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve Unclaimed Property List and approve annual Resolution to Donate Unclaimed Property.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and Carried to nominate Gary Bachman as SDREA Voting Delegate and Tom Thorpe as Alternate SDREA Voting delegate.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Monica & Byron Palsma, South Sioux City, NE, Active Farm; James Goebel, Woonsocket, SD, Active Farm & Grain Bin; Joel & Dawn Melius, Faulkton, SD, Grain Bin; Todd & Shonda Rau, Eureka, SD, Pasture Pump; D&J Land Company, Warner, SD, Active Farm; Katherine Osterman, Conde, SD, Active Farm; Rieger Farms, LLC, Bowdle, SD, Active Farm

Reconnects: MT Enterprises, Bowdle, SD, Active Farm; Mary Sandness, Woonsocket, SD, Active Farm & Grain Bin; Eric & Laci Melius, Faulkton, SD, Grain Bin; Rick & Kathleen Woehlhauff, Graden City, SD, Pasture Pump; Collin Fischer, Eureka, SD, Active Farm; John & Michelle Kiel, Hosmer, SD, Active Farm; Loel & Mary Rieger, Bowdle, SD, Active Farm

Contracts: Sean & Nicole Frerk, Eureka, SD, House; Pioneer Wireless, Raleigh, NC, Tower Service

Retired Locations: None

Capital Credits:

Estates – November 2023 – one estate = \$1,159.52

73 & Older – November 2023 – none

Financial Business:

The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of October 2023 contained information on checks #33847 through #33918 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for October 2023

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

Board of Directors

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

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
info@femelectric.coop

Management Staff

Rob Vetch
Line Superintendent
Rhonda Tuschler
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

From FEM Electric board and employees we would like to wish our members a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous, and safe New Year. The weather reporters are predicting record breaking temperatures on December 7. We have been blessed with a good fall and I'm not complaining as we all know it is nice to get a break from high heating bills.

FEM Electric and our region has had a good year completing work, no matter what your trade is. Our maintenance and electrical crews have been able to continue cleaning up maintenance and completing fall projects due to the lack of frozen ground. It is nice to see the area agriculture producers get an early start for spring planting with applying pre-emergence, spreading fertilizer, and getting manure away from the facilities and applied to agriculture land. Like I said, a good start to 2024.

With weeks left before FEM Electric closes the yearend ledgers, I'm certain

we will end 2023 financially strong. Over the years we have tried to reduce our work plan projects as we manage our revenues, expenses, and debt. Even though we try to slow spending, we continually get pushed by new and expanding loads and construction that drive our expenditures. This is a great problem as our members seem to have a vision for the future and continue to grow their operations. The FEM Electric board and employees have no plan to stand in the way, but we plan to be part of the growth by continuously providing safe, affordable, and reliable power to each current and future member.

Many of you may know that Rob Vetch, our operations manager, and employee at FEM Electric for thirty-eight years, will be retiring in early January 2024. Rob started his electric cooperative career on July 22, 1985, as an apprentice lineman. He then received his journeyman lineman's certificate before moving into the foreman's position. In 2006 Rob was promoted to operation manager and has held that position since. Rob's knowledge of FEM Electric's system and leadership within the operation department has helped keep your cooperative strong financially, improve reliability to each meter, while keeping the employees and public safe. I and all FEM Electric would like to wish Rob a long, happy, and healthy retirement.

I will continue to remind our members to please call early if you are planning to add some electrical load. Good planning

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Statement Mailing Dates

December 28, 2023 for December's energy
January 30, 2024 for January's energy

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

January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a Natural Danger

About one in 15 homes in the U.S. has radon levels at or above the the EPA action level, according to the National Cancer Institute. You can't see or smell radon, and scientists estimate 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year are attributed to it.

Radon is produced from a natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It enters homes, offices, schools and other buildings through cracks in floors and walls, construction joints or gaps around service pipes, electrical wires and sump pits. The Environmental Protection Agency reports elevated levels of radon gas have been measured in every state and estimates nearly one out of every 15 homes in America has elevated radon levels.

People who breathe in these radioactive particles, swallow water with high radon levels or are exposed to radon for a long period of time are susceptible to lung damage and lung cancer. Smokers who are exposed to elevated levels of radon gas have a 10 times higher risk of developing lung cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control.

It may take years before health problems appear. Your chances of getting lung cancer from radon depend mostly on:

- How much radon is in your home
- Where you spend most of your time (the main living and sleeping areas)
- The amount of time you spend in your home
- Whether you are a smoker or have ever smoked

Test Your Home

Old homes, new homes, homes with basements and homes without basements can have radon problems. Testing is the only way to determine how much radon is present.

Consider hiring a professional tester. Short-term (2-90 day) and long-term (more than 90-day) test kits are available, with the long-term kit producing more accurate results. The EPA website can help you find a radon test kit or measurement and mitigation professional near you. Do-it-yourself test kits also are available at many local hardware stores.

No level of radon exposure is considered completely safe, however the EPA only recommends reducing radon levels in your home if your long-term exposure averages four picocuries

per liter (pCi/L) or higher. A pCi is a measure of the rate of radioactive decay of radon gas. This decay causes radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe.

Reduce Radon Gas in Your Home

The American Cancer Society says a variety of methods can be used to reduce radon gas levels in your home, including sealing cracks in floors and walls and increasing ventilation through sub-slab depressurization using pipes and fans.

The EPA recommends using a state or nationally certified contractor, because lowering high radon levels often requires technical expertise and special skills. Two agencies have set the standard for participants seeking certification:

- The American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists
- National Radon Safety Board

Always test again after the work is finished and then every two years. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated January as National Radon Action Month, a time when health agencies across the country urge all Americans to have their homes tested for radon.



Don't Plant Trees Near Power Lines

Annette Tschetter, Age 9

Annette Tschetter instructs readers to not plant trees near power lines. Annette is the daughter of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter from Revillo, S.D., members of Whetstone Valley 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.

SOUPS & STEWS

PUMPKIN APPLE SOUP

Ingredients:

3 tbsps. butter
1 cup finely chopped onion
2 tps. pumpkin pie spice
1 tsp. ground ginger
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
1 cup chunky applesauce
3 1/2 cups chicken broth
3/4 cup heavy cream

Method

Melt butter in large saucepan on medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in pumpkin pie spice and ginger.

Stir in pumpkin, applesauce and broth until well blended and smooth. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat. (If a smoother soup is desired, place mixture in batches in blender container; cover and blend until smooth.) Stir in cream. Heat gently before serving, if necessary.

McCormick.com

CREAMY CHICKEN NOODLE STEW

Ingredients:

1/3 cup butter, cubed
1 med. carrot, shredded
1 celery rib, finely chopped
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 carton (32 oz) chicken broth
1 cup whole milk
1 cup uncooked kluski noodles or other egg noodles
2 cups cubed cooked chicken
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Method

In a large saucepan, heat butter over medium high heat; saute carrot and celery until tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add the broth and milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until thickened, 1-2 minutes. Stir in the noodles. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered, until noodles are al dente, 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the chicken, salt and pepper. Cook and stir until the chicken is heated through. Stir in the cheese until melted. Serve.

**Susan Mitzner
Balaton, Minn.**

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP WITH ROTISSERIE CHICKEN

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups chopped carrots, (about 1/2-inch)
1 1/2 cups chopped celery, (about 1/2-inch)
1 cup chopped white onion, (about 1/2-inch)
1 tbsp. rotisserie chicken seasoning
4 cups chicken stock
4 cups medium egg noodles
2 cups chopped rotisserie chicken
1 tbsp. parsley flakes

Method

Heat vegetable oil in large saucepan on medium-high heat. Add carrots, celery and onion; cook and stir 8 to 10 minutes until softened and lightly browned. Stir in Seasoning. Cook 1 minute.

Add stock and egg noodles. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 8 to 10 minutes until noodles are just tender.

Gently stir in chicken and salt. Simmer 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat. Stir in parsley to serve.

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.

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totaling \$294,268.49.

October Financials were reviewed.

Staff and board had a discussion on projected 2023 Patronage Capital and Operating margins and reviewed options. No action taken.

Rhonda Tuscherer reviewed Federated Insurance Value of Membership financials with board and staff.

Rhonda Tuscherer mentioned the NRECA VCAP program. No action taken.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: Member collection was on agenda, no report given.

Meeting Report:

East River board update was given by Gary Bachman. Discussion on Legislative supper held in Aberdeen. Safety meeting minutes from October 24, 2023, along with reports for Property Damage and Accidents reports were acknowledged. Safety committee meeting minutes from October 11, 2023, were acknowledged. Employee Meeting Minutes from October 20 were acknowledged.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

Continued from pg 3

helps FEM and our members to complete a successful project. Please call Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen for assistance with your electrical expansions 605-426-6891.



COMING SOON!

In conjunction with SmartHub's new look, our Pay By Phone system will be updated. You can set up automatic payments and manage your account, all from one phone number!

Use the number (833)-699-1827 to make payments, manage ACH or automatic credit card payments, and more!

smart hub

MESSAGING SIMPLIFIED

You can make payments and receive text updates from one number: (833) 699-1827

FEM Electric

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub.

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.

RECIPES
NEEDED FOR

The
**Country
Cookin'**
cookbook

Your recipe could be
featured in the
40th volume of
East River Electric's
Country Cookin'
cookbook!

Help us create
another great
cookbook by
submitting your
favorite recipes

Submit recipes via
email to

ajohannsen@eastriver.coop

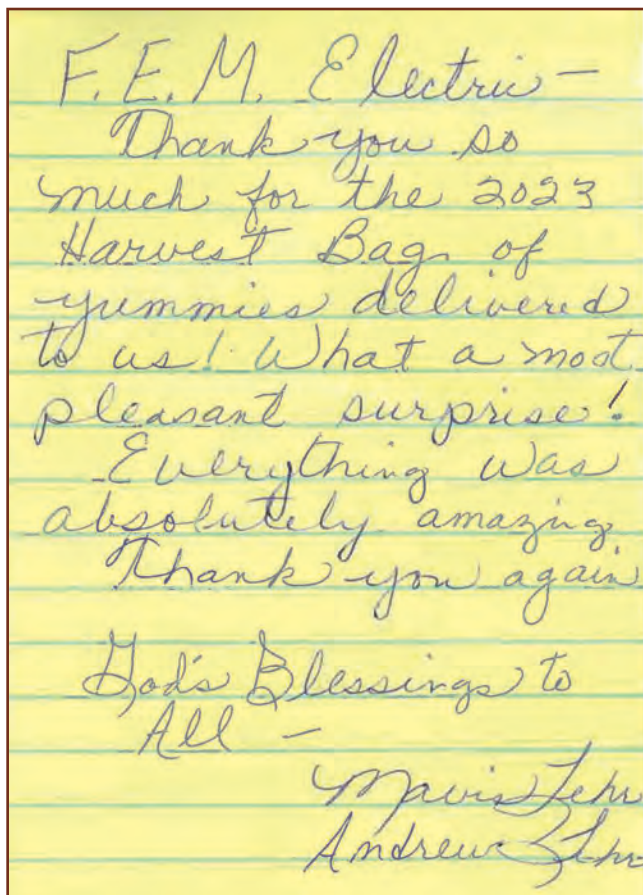
or contact your local
cooperative for
more
information.

FEM WELCOMES WILL OLSON



FEM staff welcomed Will Olson as a full time apprentice lineman on October 10th. He graduated from Mitchell Technical College from the Powerline Construction and Maintenance Program in 2023.

Welcome to the team, Will!





Jewel Cave's walls glisten with a coating of calcite crystals coating that give this cave its unique name. *Image credit: NPS*

BENEATH THE BLACK HILLS

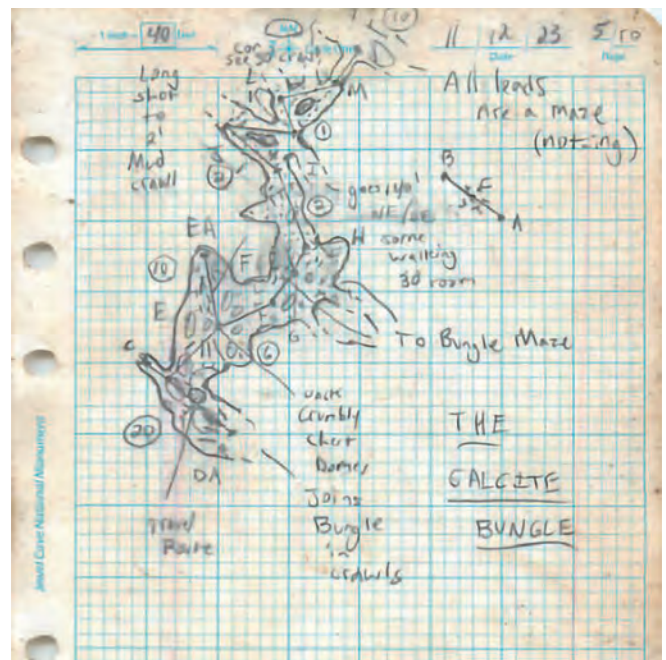
Charting Untrodden Miles in Jewel Cave

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

In the depths of the Black Hills lies an immense domain of underground caves renowned for their untouched beauty, enticing tourists with the opportunity for stunning photography and expert-led tours. Digging a little deeper, however, reveals that many of these unsuspecting attractions are actually home to a vast network of rooms and passages where no human has ever set foot before. Jewel Cave National Monument, located west of Custer and celebrated for its unique, crystal calcite coating, is one such subterranean cavern that continues to be a frontier of exploration.

Jewel Cave has thousands of miles of unexplored passages, crawlways and chasms that await discovery, making it one of the largest cave systems in the world. The immensity of Jewel Cave and others like it in the Black Hills has inspired multiple



A field sketch from the four-day Veterans Day weekend expedition. *Image credit: NPS*

generations of ambitious cave explorers who have devoted years of their lives to mapping out new areas of these underground expanses.

Despite their efforts, only a small fraction of Jewel Cave has

been navigated and mapped, leading to new cave discoveries being recorded even now.

Recently, a group of National Park Service volunteer cave explorers, led by volunteer Chris Pelczarski, expanded the known limits of Jewel Cave in an expedition over Veterans Day weekend of this year.

In total, their journey lasted four days. Bringing only what they could carry, the small group of cavers wriggled through miles of passages without natural sunlight or ready supplies to ultimately be the first to step into what was previously untrodden terrain.

To achieve their goal, the volunteers tackled the 3-D maze that defines the Jewel Cave network, hiking and climbing steep underground terrain. Despite the challenge, Pelczarski said the ending discovery made the whole journey worthwhile. When discovering something new, the challenge pales in comparison.

“The experience of pushing the edge of something is very unique,” said Pelczarski. “When entering a new space, it weighs on you that it’s the first time that a human has ever interacted with that space. As explorers, we have an incredible amount of responsibility because we are the ones who share that story with others and set the tone of that space.”

In total, the explorers discovered and charted just over one mile of new passages during their Veterans Day expedition, uncovering new passages and even a distinctive split in the rock their group named ‘Fruit by the Foot,’ due to the volunteer group garnering a “fruitful yield” of discovery from the rock formation.

The broader work of these cavers has led to several breakthroughs over the years, including the discovery of Jewel Cave’s first cave lake, Hourglass Lake.

“In 2015, our explorers got to a point where the lowest part of the cave dipped into the Madison Aquifer. It was Jewel Cave’s first cave lake,” said Michael Wiles, Chief of Resource Management at Jewel Cave National Monument. “Since that initial discovery, 12 more lakes have been

found within Jewel Cave.”

With the possibility of discovery around every corner, Wiles regards volunteer explorers like Pelczarski as torchbearers in a continuing legacy created by the many cave explorers that came before them, including South Dakota caving legends Herb and Jan Conn and Wiles himself.

“Herb and Jan are icons in the Black Hills area and throughout the world because they were the first to document and map the cave back in 1959,” said Wiles. “They fell in love with the cave and it really captured their imagination.”

Together, Herb and Jan discovered the first 70 miles of Jewel Cave. Building from Herb and Jan’s initial discoveries, Wiles, with the help of volunteers like Pelczarski,

has been involved in the mapping of an additional 150 miles of cave since the Conns retired.

To date, 218.8 miles of Jewel Cave have been discovered. However, Wiles explained that barometric airflow studies indicate that the cave could be up to 14,000 miles long, and only 3% of the cave’s estimated total length has been mapped and discovered.

“Jewel Cave, for practical purposes, isn’t going to end,” said Wiles. “We know that the cave is hundreds if not thousands of miles long and that, alone, is exciting.”

With only a fraction of the total cave discovered, it’s evident that several years of cave discoveries lie ahead.



Volunteer cave explorer Dan Austin sketching a passage of Jewel Cave. Using coordinates to draw a survey line in the book, Austin draws the cave walls around the line to represent the cave walls around him, adding additional notes as needed. *Image credit: NPS*

OBAN COMPLETES CCC CERTIFICATION

FEM's own Sonje Oban completed her Certified Cooperative Communicator course this fall. The course consisted of classes, both virtually and on location in Arlington, VA and Madison, WI throughout 2023.

The program is geared towards communicators, and required attendees to complete a strategic communications plan, a crisis communicators plan or a marketing and branding guide for their respective cooperatives. In addition to one of the three projects, attendees recapped what they learned through periodic quizzes in order to receive their certificate.

Many of the classes were geared towards communicating with cooperative membership, but there were classes that also focused on communicating with board members and co-workers, as well as managing projects, stress, and the cooperative brand. The goal is to make attendees more effective communicators overall.



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.

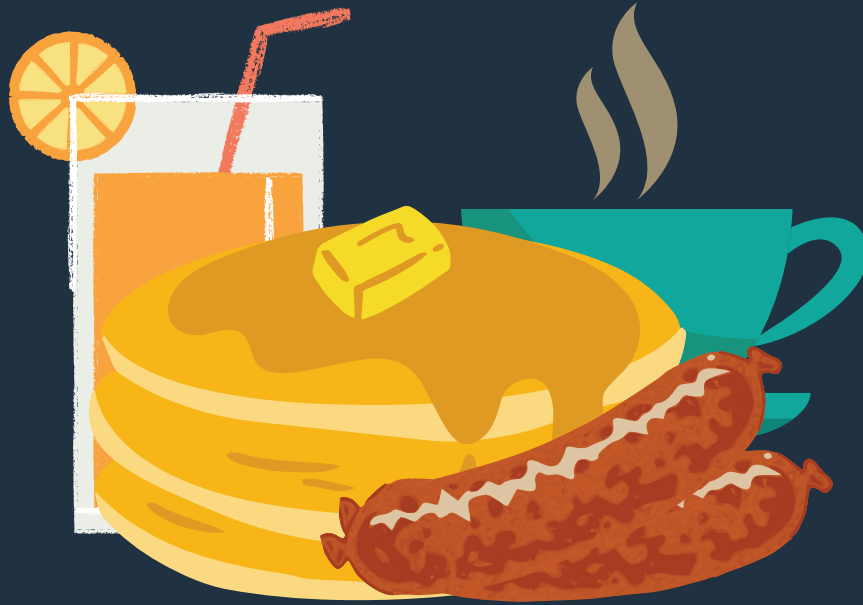
SCHOLARSHIPS:

- \$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's Annual PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST



Date & Time

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

Place

North Shop Building
800 5th Ave.
Ipswich, SD

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!



The Sanford Underground Research Facility partners with more than 2,000 scientists from more than 200 global institutions and universities, enabling groundbreaking research across multiple disciplines.

STRIKING GOLD IN SCIENCE

Unearthing Research at the Sanford Underground Research Facility

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Years ago, the Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota, lured prospectors with the promise of riches during the gold rush era. Yet today, the site where miners once delved for gold now hosts scientists pursuing their own discoveries, not for gold, but for discoveries in particle physics and dark matter at the Sanford Underground Research Facility.

The mine's transformation into a

state-of-the-art research facility really began in 1970 when Raymond Davis Jr. began what is now known today as the Homestake experiment, a research project that would forever change the entire landscape of western South Dakota. Seeing beyond the precious metal, Davis envisioned the Homestake Mine as the perfect location to conduct research on the illusive neutrino particle. Conducting neutrino research underground was a crucial component of the project because the deep

environment of the mine shielded his experiments from cosmic rays, allowing for more accurate detection of neutrinos. While the Homestake Mine was still in operation, Davis worked among the bustle of mining activities to conduct research, which led to groundbreaking discovery in neutrino research and ultimately to a Nobel Prize in 2002.

As Davis concluded his groundbreaking neutrino research, a chapter was closing for the Homestake Mine. According to the facility's website, Homestake was North America's largest and deepest gold mine at the time of its closing, producing approximately 41 million ounces of gold in its 126-year lifetime. When the mine was decommissioned in 2002, it threatened to not only leave a vast cavern in the earth but also a significant void in the local economy. Davis's success, however, prompted South Dakota's leadership to step in at a critical moment and

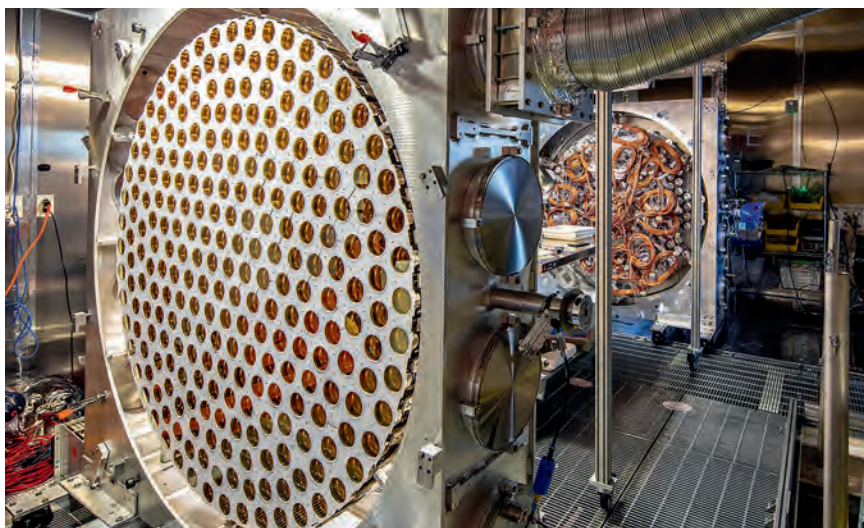
repurpose the mine into a bastion of scientific research.

Mike Ray, Media Relations Manager at Sanford Underground Research Facility, reflected on the state's response to the mine's closure. "Those in leadership at the time saw that this mine was closing and the terrible economic impact that the closure was going to have on the northern hills and this community, but they saw a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

The light at the end of the tunnel became the Sanford Underground Research Facility. To advance one of South Dakota's most ambitious projects, the state secured a \$70 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford and a land donation from Barrick Gold Corporation, the mine's owner. The state then established the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority, which contributed an additional \$40 million to realize the project. These donations paved the way forward to begin construction on a space for some of the most advanced science projects ever made.

The herculean effort, Ray explained, was not only to mitigate the negative economic impact of the mine's closure but to create something even more impactful for South Dakota and its residents. Today, the Sanford Underground Research Facility collaborators include over 2,000 scientists from over 200 institutions and universities worldwide. It is expected to garner an estimated \$2 billion net economic impact in South Dakota by 2029.

Beyond its economic contributions, the lab holds potential for groundbreaking discoveries across various disciplines, including projects researching biology, geology, engineering or particle physics. Notably, the lab is currently home to LUX-ZEPLIN, the world's most sensitive dark matter detector and DUNE, the Deep



An array of the LUX-ZEPLIN, the world's most sensitive dark matter detector.
Photo Credit: Matthew Kapust, Sanford Underground Research Facility.

Underground Neutrino Experiment, among several other significant projects. While LUX-ZEPLIN and DUNE are distinct projects, both seek to provide fundamental insights into our current understanding of the laws of physics.

"There are so many examples of how fundamental research can take decades to lead to innovation," Ray said. "The beauty of this is that we don't always know where this research will

take us, but if we don't do this kind of exploration, we will never know the applications of these far-reaching projects."

Regardless of the outcome, the Sanford Underground Research Facility will continue to not only preserve the historic legacy of South Dakota's Homestake Mine, but also place South Dakota at the forefront of discovery and innovation for years to come.



A historic view of the Davis Cavern that hosted Ray Davis's Nobel Prize-winning solar neutrino experiment. The cavern has since been expanded and its walls have been coated with shotcrete, a type of spray-on concrete, to accommodate research on dark matter.
Photo Credit: Anna Davis, Sanford Underground Research Facility.

LOOK UP, LOOK OUT

With tall equipment, there is a tall order for safety

Maintaining safe distances from electrical equipment is important because accidents with electrical equipment are both dangerous and costly. Additional precautions need to be taken when using large equipment in the vicinity of electrical lines and equipment. Not doing so puts the operator at risk as well as the safety of those nearby.

Before beginning work, conduct a site survey and note the locations of overhead power lines, and take measures to prevent electrical accidents. Never attempt to move or raise a power line yourself. If any potential clearance issues are identified, contact the utility.

When operating equipment, maintain situational awareness, and keep yourself and the equipment safely away from overhead lines. Know the clearance rules for the machinery you are operating. Equipment like dump trucks, backhoes, and loaders require a minimum 10-foot clearance from overhead lines. Cranes and derricks need to maintain an even greater distance for safe operation.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires the clearance for cranes and derricks be a minimum of 20 feet from overhead power lines. The equipment's maximum working radius, 360 degrees around the equipment, must also be taken into account. A dedicated spotter is very helpful when working in close proximity to overhead lines to help the operator keep the required clearance.

Even if contact is not made with electrical lines, but a collision occurs with other related equipment such as electrical poles or guy wires, it should still be reported to the utility. Though the equipment may appear to have survived the collision, unexpected degradation of electrical equipment can lead to public safety hazards such as fallen power lines. Just because a power line has fallen does not mean

that it is not carrying electricity. There is still the potential for the line and the nearby area to be energized.

If the equipment you are operating does make contact with any overhead lines, it is best to stay in the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power before exiting the machinery. If you see an operator's equipment make contact with a power line, resist the instinct to rush to that person to provide help. It is best to stay back and warn others to stay away.

Remember to slow down, look up, and look out. Safety should always be your number one priority.

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



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 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

www.femelectric.coop

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

FEM Electric Cooperative, Inc.

PO Box 468

800 5th Ave.

Ipswich, SD 57451



Jan. 26-27
Pro Snocross Races
 18 Seventy Six Dr.
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

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.

JAN. 5
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 6
Live on Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 10
45th Annual Ranchers Workshop
 9 a.m.
 Sinte Gleska University Multi-Purpose Center
 Mission, SD

JAN. 12
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 13
Knights of Columbus Bowling Tournament
 1 p.m.
 Meadowood Lanes
 Rapid City, SD

JAN. 20
Live on Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 23
A Trip to Chile (Reservations Required)
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 25
A Trip to Chile (Reservations Required)
 5:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 26
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 26-27
Reliance Area Community Development 29th Annual Dinner Theater
 6 p.m.
 Reliance Legion Hall
 Reliance, SD

FEB. 3
Live On Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

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

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

FEB. 10
Tour de Chocolate
 Main Street
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 17
Live On Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

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

FEB. 20
A Trip to Portugal
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 22
A Trip to Portugal
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

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

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