

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pick of the Patch

**Pumpkin Patches Offer
Plenty of Reasons to Get
Outside this Fall**

Pages 8-9

**Ghost Town Under
Lake Oahe**

Pages 12-13



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

August 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 August 24, 2026, pursuant to due call and notice. It being determined that a quorum was present, President Tom Thorpe called the meeting to order. Secretary Eric Odenbach kept the minutes of the meeting. The following directors were declared present by roll call: Josh Heinrich, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe, Kelly Melius and Paula Petersen. Electrical Manager Ryan Holien, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, Operation Manager Sean Christiansen, and CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Angie Sieh

Changes to the agenda none

Changes/Additions to Minutes from July 21, 2026, meeting: none

Next Meeting Date: After a review of the calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Moved by Josh Heinrich, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve administrative business.

The board and staff watched NRECA Governance Video titled "What Directors Need to Know About Line Extension".

Moved by Paula Petersen seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to acknowledge the manager, and staff reports along with East River Electric load management report.

The board acknowledges receiving and reviewing July 2026 Cyber Security Report.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Josh Heinrich and carried to approve 2027 employee benefit package.

Moved by Paula Petersen seconded by Josh Heinrich and carried to enter executive session at 10:26 a.m. for board and CEO performance appraisals.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to come out of executive session at 11:09 a.m.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Moved by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to nominate CEO Scott Moore as voting delegate at CFC Region 6 annual meeting.

Moved by Paula Petersen seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to appoint Cody Scarrott/Ryan Holien/Justin Larson/

Angie Sieh and Perry Ptacek to the 2027 wellness committee.

Attorney Vaughn Beck entered the meeting and a discussion and review of FEM Electric bylaws Page 1 thru 11 – Article I -VI, Section 3 were reviewed. One spelling correction was noted and lengthy discussion on several bylaws was held. No changes were made. The board will review the rest of the bylaws in October.

The board acknowledged East River Official Notice of Meeting Minutes and Bylaw Revisions.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: James & Connie Heinrich, Tolstoy, Vacant Farm; Eureka VFW Post #5126, Eureka, SD, Courtesy Service; H3 Holdings, LLC, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm; James & Mary Spindler, Tolstoy, SD, Active Farm

Reconnects: Max & Francine Buechler, Bowdle, SD, Vacant Farm; Eureka Veterans Memorial, Eureka, SD, Courtesy Service; Timothy Wagner, Cresbard, SD, Active Farm; Josh & Sarah Heinrich, Tolstoy, SD, Active Farm

Contracts: Dale & Sherry Jung, Roscoe, SD, Pasture Pump; Allen & Pamela Hadrick, Faulkton, SD, Grain Bins; Pat Bowar, Cresbard, SD, House; Long Lake Colony, Wetonka, SD, Hog Barn; Taylor & Alexandra Schilder, Faulkton, SD, House

Retired Locations: None

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Josh Heinrich and carried to approved service contracts for Dale and Sherry Jung, Allen & Pamela Hadrick, Pat Bowar, Long Lake Colony, Taylor and Alexandra Schilder.

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

Board of Directors

Tom Thorpe, President
Kelly Melius, Vice President
Eric Odenbach, Secretary
Paula Petersen, Treasurer
Josh Heinrich, Asst. Secretary/
Treasurer
Vaughn Beck, Attorney

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
info@femelectric.coop

Management Staff

Sean Christiansen
Operations Manager
Ryan Holien
Electrical 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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Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

As we close out August, I see silage cutters moving through the corn fields as I travel the state. Semis are hauling almost continuous loads of hay going east and west. We can only hope livestock producers get enough feed gathered to make it through the winter.

September is like the beginning of a new year at FEM as we start putting together our 2027 budget. We will be completing our past four-year work plan, and the operation department will be working with Star Energy on a new four-year work plan which will be approved in 2027. Having a strong annual budget and a four-year work plan helps keep our workload and finances stable. It is like a roadmap to having a successful year. The operations department should get all our 2026 projects completed before winter sets in.

You will continue to hear about data centers, large loads, and stackable nuclear reactors as we move into 2027, along with a stable electric grid

and increased cost. I included some information and history on Southwest Power Pool (SPP). Basin Electric and its members joined SPP sometime around 2016 only after five or six years of investigating, discussing and compromising. I mention this because of the topics currently being discussed in South Dakota and throughout America. Electric cooperatives move slowly because we can't afford to get it wrong. Cooperatives are member owned and member controlled. If Basin Electric did not join SPP and MISO (Midwest System Independent Operators) I believe your monthly bills would be higher, and reliability would have been compromised.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is what is known as a regional transmission organization, or an RTO. SPP is a nonprofit organization that manages the electric grid and wholesale power market the central portion of the United States. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC, does oversee SPP.

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

October 28, 2026 for October's energy
November 25, 2026 for November's energy

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

SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

Fall hunting is a core memory treasured by many in South Dakota. It's a family and friend tradition that should be kept safe. This is your caring reminder to stay safe and enjoy a great hunt this season.

Simple Safety Rules for All Hunters

- Watch for posted warning signs and stay clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land you hunt.
- Be careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be easy to see.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles; energized lines can shock or kill you.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment; they can block lines and create hazards for crews.

Pheasant hunting often takes place in open fields with hedgerows and grassy strips, while dove hunting centers on fast, aerial crossings across agricultural landscapes. In both scenarios, lines may be hidden by trees or tall grass, especially near field edges and canal banks. Staying alert in these transition zones reduces the risk of an accidental encounter with electrical infrastructure.

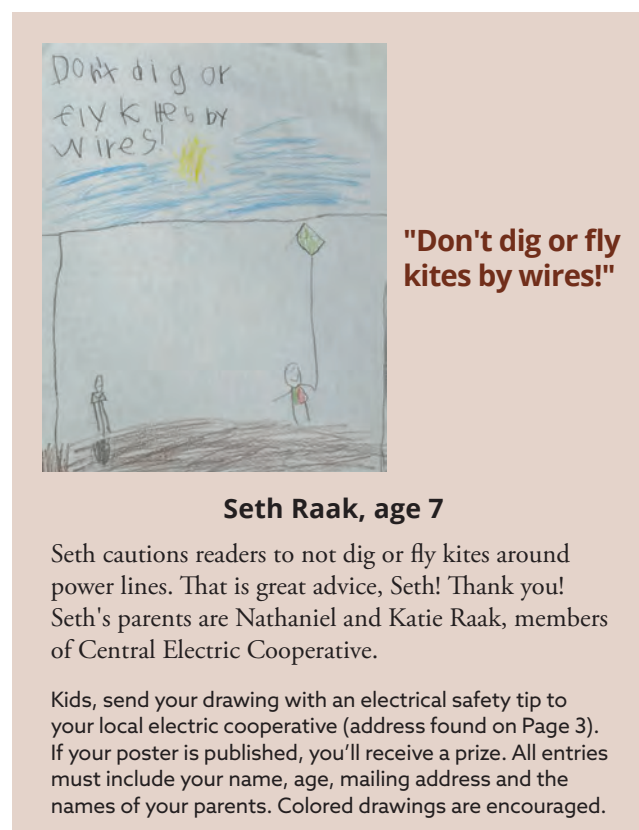
Practical Rules for Pheasant and Dove Hunts

- Plan ahead: Check maps or ask landowners where lines and equipment are located.
- Keep a safe distance: Stay away from overhead and buried lines near fields and edges.
- Hunt with a partner: A second person can help spot hazards.
- Speak up about hazards: If you see lines or equipment, treat it as a hazard and avoid the area.
- Follow rules: Respect any posted electrical safety warnings or access restrictions.
- Share safety: Tell fellow hunters and guests about these tips.

Why These Safety Tips Matter

Power lines conduct large amounts of electricity and contact with lines or equipment can cause serious injury or death. Maintaining distance, avoiding contact with poles or lines, and not placing gear on equipment are effective practices that protect you, your hunting partners, and the line workers who keep power on.

Your electric cooperative remains committed to safe hunting. We encourage members to stay informed about local electrical safety rules and to know line locations on the lands they hunt. If you encounter hazards, report them right away so they can be addressed. Sharing these safety practices help create a culture of safety that benefits everyone.



Seth Raak, age 7

Seth cautions readers to not dig or fly kites around power lines. That is great advice, Seth! Thank you! Seth's parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central 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.

Let's Eat CAKE

SWEDISH PANCAKES

Ingredients:

1.5 cups flour, sifted
3 tbsps. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 tbsps. butter, melted

Method

Sift together flour, sugar and salt. Beat in 3 eggs until thick and piled softly. Beat in milk and butter until blended. Lightly grease griddle with butter. For each pancake, spoon about 1 tbsp. of batter on skillet. Cook over medium heat until lightly brown on each side.

Lois J. Larson
Clay-Union Electric

CREAM CHEESE CUPCAKES

Ingredients:

1 box chocolate cake mix, prepared
1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
Dash of salt
1 (6 oz.) package chocolate chips
1 can cream cheese frosting

Method

Mix cake mix according to package directions. Fill cupcake liners 1/2 full. mix the cream cheese with the sugar. Beat in egg and salt, then add chocolate chips. Drop a teaspoonful of cream cheese mixture into each cupcake. Bake as directed on package. Frost with cream cheese frosting when cool.

Elaine Rieck
Southeastern Electric

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tsps. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. espresso powder (optional)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup canola or vegetable oil
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar, packed
4 large eggs, room temperature
1/3 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt, room temperature
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups shredded zucchini (about 3 medium)
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Method

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease two 9x2 inch cake pans (make sure they're at least 2 inches high or one bundt pan) Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, espresso powder (if using) and salt together in a large bowl. In another large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer, beat the oil, granulated sugar, brown sugar, eggs, sour cream, vanilla and zucchini together until combined. Pour dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until completely combined. Beat in chocolate chips. Batter will be thick. Pour batter evenly into cake pans. Bake for around 25-32 minutes for round pans; 45 minutes for bundt pans or 9x13 pan; 18-22 minutes for cupcakes (24-30 cupcakes). To test doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of cake. If it comes out clean, it is done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

RECIPE CORRECTION THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsps. flour

Topping (makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups brown sugar
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder
3 cups oatmeal

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

Board Report continued from page 2

Capital Credits:

Estates – August 2026: One = \$431.44

73 & Older – August 2026: One = \$2,391.76

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information:

The check register for the month of July 2026 contained information on checks #36436 through #36529 and automatic payments/withdrawals for July 2026 totaling \$417,829.33.

July 2026 financials were reviewed.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to sign the RUS Special Construction Fund Trustee Account Transfer Confirmation for RUS Loan AA45 FRS #7 from 08/6/2026 in the amount of \$705,000.00.

Rhonda Tuscherer reported on RESCO Capital Credits and briefly explained the 2025 CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) report and comparisons.

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

Legal Update: Attorney Beck reported on a service territory agreement reached on Leola Data Farm with Montana Dakota Utilities and FEM Electric.

Meeting Report:

East River monthly board report was given by Kelly Melius and monthly video was watched.

Tom Thorpe gave update on Basin Annual Meeting.

The safety meeting minutes from July 24, 2026, were acknowledged.

Adjourn: President Tom Thorpe declared the meeting adjourned.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Dear, F&M

Thank you for the opportunity to go on youth excursion. It was a very fun trip. The Antelope Valley Station tour was my favorite part. Seeing the boiler fire was fun. I learned so much. Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Emilie Butler

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go on the Youth excursion. I had a lot of fun talking with people, and learning about power and where it comes from.
Thank you again
- Brooke Larson





PICK OF THE PATCH

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

South Dakota Pumpkin Patches Offer Plenty of Reasons to Get Outside this Fall

Cooler air, changing leaves and the search for the perfect pumpkin all mark the arrival of the autumn season. Across South Dakota, fall weekends bring families to farms and orchards for corn mazes, apple picking and hayrides.

But putting together a few weeks of fall fun takes months of work behind the scenes.

Pumpkin patches and orchards are preparing to welcome visitors for another season of pumpkins, games and family traditions.

Country Apple Orchard – Harrisburg, S.D.

By the time visitors arrive at Country Apple Orchard near Harrisburg, owner Greg Jones and his crew have already brought in three semi loads of straw bales and about 6,000 bushels of corn.

It's all part of preparing for a fall season

that lasts just a couple of months but requires work throughout the year.

"The property is kind of a full-time, year-round job," Jones said.

The orchard has been around for more than 30 years, and Jones is six years into owning the operation. Since taking over, he has expanded the pumpkin patches and added many of the attractions that now make up the orchard's fall festival.

The season opens Sept. 4 and runs through October, beginning with apple picking in September before pumpkins take center stage in October. Weekend festivities include zip lines, apple cannons, hay bale mazes, corn mazes, corn pits and, new this year, fresh-cut flowers.

Country Apple Orchard is also a member of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, which helps power the operation through the busy fall season. Keeping everything running takes about

Lucas Hartshorn, owner of Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch, and his family opening the patch for last year's fall season.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

60 seasonal employees. Once the crowds disappear, that workforce drops to Jones and one other worker.

The effort appears to keep families coming back.

"They love coming out and they come out multiple times," Jones said, adding that some families with season passes



Pumpkins grow in the field at Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch near Rapid City.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

return nearly every weekend throughout the season.

Mazing Acres – Yankton, S.D.

What started as a small family project has grown into roughly 35 acres of fall festivities outside Yankton.

Scott and Molly Nedved opened Mazing Acres with their family in 2020. At the time, the idea was to create a small hobby farm that could teach their children the value of hard work while giving the community something new to enjoy.

“It’s grown more than we thought it would,” Molly laughed.

Today, Mazing Acres, a member of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, includes six acres of pumpkins, a five-acre corn maze, a flower patch and several attractions. Visitors can take a hayrack ride, watch pig races, play in the corn pit or try the apple cannons.

The corn maze, sponsored by First Dakota National Bank, changes design each year. For 2026, the design celebrates the nation’s 250th anniversary.

Although the festival lasts only several weekends, planning starts almost as soon as the previous season ends. The family reviews what worked, attends industry



A family poses for a photo in the giant pumpkin chair at Mazing Acres.
Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

conferences and selects the next year’s pumpkin varieties in late fall. By August, Scott said preparing the farm becomes “an all-day affair every day until we open.”

Visitors will notice a few changes this year. Saturday hours are being extended until 8 p.m., allowing families to experience the farm after dark, and a new tiny-town area will feature themed playhouses for younger children.

Mazing Acres opens Sept. 19 and runs through Halloween.

“We want to be something for every age,” Molly said. “Not just for the kids.”

Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch – Rapid City, S.D.

At Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch south of Rapid City, the Hartshorn family’s fall tradition started in 2013 with pumpkins planted by hand.

Since then, owner Lucas Hartshorn said the patch has grown to about 11 acres.

Hartshorn started the pumpkin patch with his parents, Lyle and Donna, after his father retired. The family wanted a way to keep farming while creating an event they could enjoy with their children.

“We were looking for something to do with the kids in the fall,” Hartshorn said.

At the time, pumpkin patches were harder to find around Rapid City. After

visiting one themselves, the family decided they could create a similar experience on their own farm.

Each year brought something new. Planting pumpkins by hand eventually gave way to a planter, while the patch grew to include a petting zoo, bounce houses, wagon rides, a sandbox and other activities.

Lil’ Harvester’s, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, also opens during the week for school field trips, where students get a closer look at agriculture. Hartshorn said demonstrations may focus on pumpkins or the differences between sweet corn, field corn and popcorn, including how each is grown. For Hartshorn, that mix of farming, education and family time remains at the heart of the patch.

“They get to come out to the farm and learn something,” Hartshorn said.

Across South Dakota, there are several more pumpkin patches and fall festivities similar to those put on by Country Apple Orchard, Mazing Acres and Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch. Whether it’s a small hobby farm or a dedicated agritourism operation, each one offers its own take on fall traditions that continue to draw families back year after year.



Visitors of all ages can find something to enjoy at Mazing Acres near Yankton, including the farm’s giant slides.
Photo submitted by Molly Nedved



FARM SAFETY PARTY

For local cooperatives, it was another successful year for the Farm Safety Party at the Brown County Fair. While the Fair is known for its free entertainment, Agtegra, Avera, Northern Electric, Lake Region Electric and FEM Electric have taken on the mission to educate people of all ages about farm and electrical safety through the Farm Safety Party.

During the event, children picked up a bingo card and stopped at seven different stations to learn about safety in many forms. Two of the stations were manned by electric cooperatives, where attendees learned about line worker personal protective equipment and powerline safety.

FEM and Northern Electric presented on personal protective equipment (PPE) that included rubber gloves, a lineworker's belt, a hard hat, and a high visibility vest. Then children were able to try on all the gear, pose with a power pole, and attempt to work like a lineworker with all of their gear.

Lake Region Electric provided their power town demonstration, which is a miniature display of a farm with interactive parts that demonstrate what happens when farm equipment comes in contact with powerlines.

At the end of their safety bingo tour, children turned in their card and received a goodie bag filled with prizes. The farm safety party was well attended again, and we hope that everyone went home thinking about safety.



Manager's Report continued from page 3

This means that SPP must ensure there's available resources and reasonable prices for the members it serves.

To help ramp up production of military supplies during World War II, Southwest power utilities decided that they needed to pool their power production together to meet the growing demand for electricity. The needs of military production facilities outpaced power production from them individually. Pooling their resources helped them meet military production demand, prevent outages and increased reliability during wartime efforts.

Once WWII ended, the group of utilities continued to pool resources as the benefits were increased efficiency and dependability in their region. 11 regional utilities joined when SPP was formed on December 14th, 1941.

Today there are seven regional transmission operators in the United States overseeing electric generation and transmission line deliveries helping maintain reliability to you, our members.

If you are planning on adding electrical load, please call Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605-426-6891.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO CALL US!

If you're experiencing blinking lights or outages, don't hesitate to give us a call! While we rely on advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) to relay meter information to us quickly, that doesn't mean we are always aware of outages.

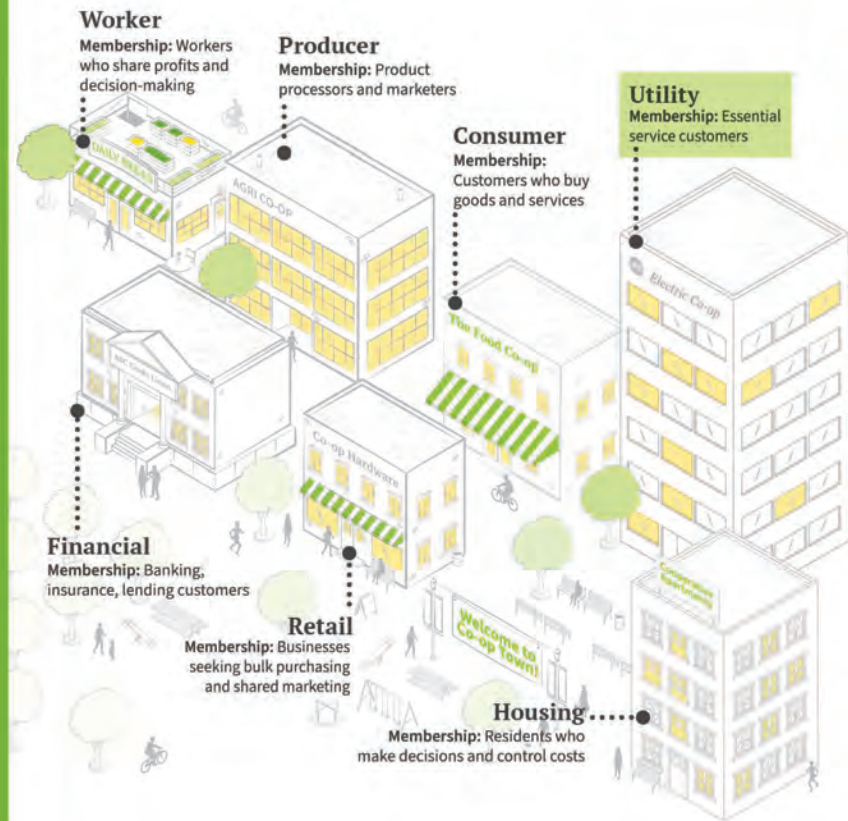
If in doubt, give us a shout! Call us at 605-426-6891 or 1-800-587-5880. Our office is open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. We use an after hours service to monitor our calls over nights and weekends so you can report outages, blinking lights or other issues 24 hours a day.

KINDS OF CO-OPS

Cooperatives come in many forms—from electric utilities and credit unions to farm supply stores and housing co-ops—but all cooperatives are built with a common purpose: to meet the needs of the members they serve.

Co-ops strengthen local communities, keep decisions close to home and invest in long-term success.

October is National Co-op Month.



It's National Co-op Month!

October is the time to celebrate co-ops, and all the ways cooperatives work to make lives easier for their member-owners. Take a look at the different kinds of co-ops:

- **Utility Co-ops (FEM Electric, East River Electric, Basin Electric):** Provide essential services like electricity, water or broadband and are led by the members they serve.
- **Consumer Co-ops:** Owned by the people who shop there or use its products and services.
- **Producer Co-ops:** Help farmers, ranchers or other producers work together to market and sell their products.
- **Worker Co-ops:** Give residents the opportunity to own and manage their housing together.
- **Housing Co-ops:** Give residents the opportunity to own and manage their housing together.
- **Retail Co-ops:** Allow members to shop at and help support a member-owned retail business.
- **Financial Co-ops:** Member-owned financial institutions, such as credit unions, that provide banking services.

Co-ops may look a little different depending on the services they offer, but one characteristic is true for all: co-ops exist to serve their members.



LOST BENEATH OAHE

The Rise, Fall and Disappearance of a South Dakota Ghost Town

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Beneath the waves of Lake Oahe lies more than dead trees and walleye. Just below the surface near Akaska sit the remnants of LeBeau, an early 1900s railroad town once filled with immense promise and prosperity, whose story is worthy of its own Wild West feature film.

For years, Caroline Thorsen has collected the history of her great-grandfather, Antoine Le Beau, and the town that bore his name. Through Thorsen's collection and research by railroad historian Don Hofsommer in "A Promise Broken: LeBeau and the Railroad," we can dive beneath the waters of Lake Oahe and dredge up the story of LeBeau's dramatic rise and fall.

A French Fur Trader

The story of the ghost town of LeBeau begins with Antoine Le Beau Sr., a French fur trader whose journey in the mid-1800s took him from France to Quebec, Canada, then to St. Louis, Missouri and eventually up the Missouri River to what is now South Dakota.

"As I unfortunately did not know [Antoine], I hope he is remembered as being a brave gentleman who crossed the ocean from France to come to America and eventually become friends with the Native Americans, married in Native Tradition," said Thorsen, Le Beau's great-granddaughter.

The woman Antoine married was Mary Little Thunder, a member of the Two Kettle Band of Sioux. Antoine himself was later one of several Frenchmen adopted

into the Sioux Tribe at a Great Sioux Council, where he was given the name "Ogless," or "Red Shirt."

Le Beau worked with the American Fur Company before establishing a trading post along the Missouri River near present-day Akaska. The post became the foundation of a small town that would eventually bear his name and become a brief, yet bright, gateway to the West.

The Railroad

By the time the railroad arrived, Antoine Le Beau Sr. was gone, but the town was quickly gaining the reputation of a small metropolis. In 1907, the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M&StL) reached LeBeau, connecting the small Missouri River settlement to Watertown and markets farther east.

"As LeBeau prospered, so did the M&StL's westernmost extension; as LeBeau withered, so did its railroad," Hofsommer writes.

Cattle companies from Texas had taken notice of both LeBeau and the grasslands west of the Missouri. Once they learned cattle thrived west of the river, they began moving large herds into the region. Through its railroad, LeBeau offered those ranchers a new route to market.

The next trick was getting the cattle across the river. On the west side of the Missouri, large holding pens could accommodate as many as 3,500 animals. From there, cattle crossed the river aboard the Scotty Philip, a steam-powered ferry. Once across, they could be loaded directly onto eastbound rail cars.

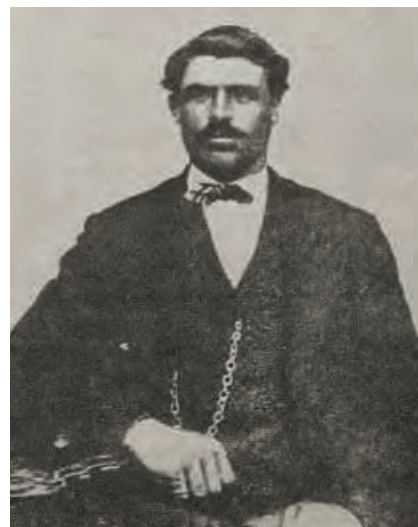
The mouth of Swan Creek on Lake Oahe where the ghost town of LeBeau resides under the waves. *Photo by Frank Turner*

In 1908, roughly 24,000 cattle passed through LeBeau on their way to and from the West River ranges, representing about \$1 million in livestock at the time. The feat helped cement the town's place as a major cattle-shipping point on the Missouri.

A Bustling Town

By the end of the season, LeBeau featured two banks, a newspaper, a drugstore, a general store and a local saloon. The growing town also boasted two lumberyards, a grain elevator and a livery, along with prominent businesses like the Idle Hour billiard and pool parlor, the Hotel LeBeau and Arcade Hotel. For entertainment, residents could even catch a show at Zimmer's Opera House.

As the town grew, M&StL officials planned to continue the rail line west of the



French fur trapper Antoine Le Beau Sr.
Photo submitted by Caroline Thorsen

Missouri by building a bridge across the Missouri, hinting at a long expansion all the way to the West Coast. The excitement only reinforced the idea that LeBeau was destined to become the gate to the west.

The buzz captured the attention of Murdo MacKenzie, general manager of the Matador Land and Cattle Company, and his wealthy son, Dode. Described as a likable and fine young man – while sober – Dode moved to LeBeau in his early 20s to oversee Matador's South Dakota operations.

A Questionable Killing

At the end of the 1909 shipping season, Dode MacKenzie began frequenting LeBeau's saloons. On Dec. 11, he was shot and killed by Bud Stephens, who was tending the bar that morning at Phil DuFran's saloon.

Local accounts of what happened that day – and of Dode MacKenzie's character – differ greatly. One local official described MacKenzie as a stand-up individual, while another local woman said he was known to shoot behind the heels of women in the town when "spirits took him."

Exactly what happened on Dec. 11 will never be known, but according to the version later presented by Stephens' defense at trial, MacKenzie became furious when Stephens failed to hear him order a drink. Rebuffed, MacKenzie crossed the street to purchase what he believed were



The paddle-wheeler Scotty Philip loads cattle at LeBeau, S.D., to be fattened on grasslands west of the Missouri River. For about three years, LeBeau was one of the Northwest's most important cattle-shipping towns.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society

.45-caliber shells, loaded his gun, walked back, pointed it at Stephens and pulled the trigger twice. As the story goes, MacKenzie had accidentally purchased .38-caliber shells, which failed to fire and instead plopped onto the floor. It was then that Stephens reached for his gun and began firing, killing the young MacKenzie.

A Dying Town

The trial resulted in Stephens' acquittal, drawing the ire of Dode MacKenzie's father and the Matador Cattle Company. The company effectively boycotted LeBeau, and no Matador cattle ever entered the town again.

Within months of the trial, a suspicious fire made matters worse. Although fires weren't uncommon in the Wild West, townsfolk discovered that the fire hose, telephone and telegraph lines had all been cut prior to the fire. No arsonist was ever caught.

The bad luck didn't stop there. A competing rail line to the north completed a bridge across the Missouri at Mobridge, undercutting LeBeau's stream of West River cattle. By 1924, M&StL abandoned the town, tearing out its segment of rail line. Within a year, the post office closed.

Beneath Lake Oahe

LeBeau had been a ghost town for decades when Lake Oahe came for what was left.

Construction of Oahe Dam near Pierre began in 1948 as part of a massive federal effort to control flooding and generate hydroelectric power along the Missouri River. In August 1958, the river was closed at the dam and the newly created reservoir began to fill.

As the water rose, it eventually covered the old LeBeau townsite near the mouth of Swan Creek. The empty foundations, cellar holes and remnants of the once-bustling railroad town disappeared beneath Lake Oahe. Unlike most ghost towns in South Dakota that faded away with time, LeBeau vanished beneath the Missouri.



A crowd gathers around a band near the railroad in LeBeau, S.D., with the depot and Missouri River visible in the distance. About a year after this photo was taken, the town installed 10-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Main Street.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society.

STUDENTS TOUR LOCAL POWER FACILITIES

In the spirit of the fifth cooperative principle (education, training and information) FEM Electric sent four students on a three-day trip to Bismarck, ND in late July.

Four students represented FEM Electric on the 2026 Youth Excursion.

This is an all expenses paid trip for the students.

L to R: Stetson Weigel, Emilie Butler, Darcy Yost and Brooke Larson.



Similar to the Basin Tour, students were able to tour several facilities where they learned about energy infrastructure and production. Their first stop was the Coteau Properties Co. Freedom Mine. Here students observed how lignite coal is mined. From there, they stopped at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant where they learned about by-products produced from coal mining. At Antelope Valley Station, students learned how coal was used to produce energy.

After a busy day of tours, students visited the Dakota Zoo and enjoyed a game night. The following day, they toured Basin Electric's headquarters in Bismarck before returning home.

The Youth Excursion is hosted by the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA), but each student is funded by their local cooperative. The goal of the Youth Excursion is to educate youth about where their power comes from and to support local communities.

THANK YOU

FEM-

Thank you for donating
cases of water to our Junior
Class Post Prom Concession
Stand- we appreciate your
generosity!

Jpswich
Class of 2028

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords. Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder for criminals to crack than a short, complex password. Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection.

Source: NIST



Stay Safe Around

SOLAR PANELS

Solar panels generate electricity and can pose hazards, especially when improperly handled or damaged. **Keep these six safety tips in mind:**



- 1 Keep your distance.** Stay at least 10 feet back from solar equipment and panels, even when power is disconnected.
- 2 Look up for power lines.** Keep panels, equipment, ladders and tools at least 10 feet away.
- 3 Keep children and pets away** from solar panels and equipment.
- 4 Do not touch damaged panels.** After storms or high winds, do not inspect, clean up or move damaged equipment.
- 5 Never cut or move wires.** They can remain energized even when power is off.
- 6 Never walk or climb on solar panels.** They can crack or break and expose you to electrical hazards.

! Safety tip: If you see damage, exposed wires, sparks, smoke or loose equipment, call a qualified professional.

SAVE ENERGY THIS *Fall and Winter*

Follow these simple DIY tips to reduce energy use and keep you warm this season:

- Seal gaps around windows and doors with caulk or weatherstripping.
- Close curtains and blinds at night to keep the cold out.
- Open window coverings on sunny days to let the sun in.
- Clean or replace furnace filters.
- Run ceiling fans clockwise to push warm air down.
- Check insulation in your attic, attic hatch and crawl space.
- Use a smart thermostat to lower temperatures when asleep or away.
- Close the fireplace flue when not in use.
- Schedule a home energy audit to find and fix energy wasters.

For more tips, visit:





OCT. 31
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Yankton, SD
www.harvesthalloween.com

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.

OCT. 2-3
Public Ghost Investigation
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 2-3
Pumpkin Festival
 Vendor Fair & Lighted Parade
 Webster, SD
 605-345-4668
wac@webstersd.com

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

OCT. 3
Fall Harvest Farmers Market
 9 a.m.
 Centennial Park
 Hot Springs, SD

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
 Sioux Falls, SD

OCT. 4
St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Swiss Steak 12-1:30 p.m.
 Hoven, SD

OCT. 10
Tabor Church Quilt & Craft Auction
 Sandwich & Pie Supper
 620 E. Hwy. 12
 Webster, SD
 605-880-3377

OCT. 16
Eureka Chamber Open House
 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 707 G Ave.
 Eureka, SD
 605-230-1777

OCT. 16-17
Haunted Fort
 Sat: Trick or Treat
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 17
Faulkton Area Arts Council Craft Fair
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Faulkton School
 Faulkton, SD
 605-380-8444

OCT. 30
Downtown Trunk or Treat
 Groton, SD
 605-397-8422

OCT. 31
Treat Street
 Main Street
 Milbank, SD

OCT. 31
Lantern Tour
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

NOV. 12
The Satin Dollz
 Patriotic Female Vocal
 & Dance Quintet
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

NOV. 14
Kick-Off to Christmas & Santa Shop
 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
 7 p.m. Parade
 Eureka, SD
 605-230-1777

NOV. 16-21
5th Annual FEZtival of Trees
 Mon.-Fri. 4-7 p.m.
 Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
 802 S. Main St.
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-225-4841
yelduz.com

NOV. 20
Aberdeen University Civic Symphony Concert
 7:30 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.