

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pristine Prairie

**Tellus & Lori Waddell Grow,
Harvest Native Plants**

Pages 8-9

Drive Out to a Drive-In!

Pages 12-13



FEM staff, employees and board listen to preliminary cost of service study results.

July 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 July 21, 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 Christensen, and CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Sonje Oban

Guest: Star Energy Director of Operations Kristi Robinson

Changes to the agenda none

Changes/Additions to Minutes from June 19, 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 Monday, August 24, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Changes/Additions to Board reorganization meeting minutes held

June 23, 2026: none

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

Star Energy Director of Operations Kristi Robinson gave a presentation to FEM board and all employees except two, on the framework of a cost-of-service study and went through some numbers that were obtained from FEM Electric and our meter data management. The presentation was informative, giving the board, staff, and employees some information to explore. Kristi Robinson will return to September board meeting to discuss a plan for electrical rates. The board and staff gave input on what they would like to see moving forward.

The board and staff watched NRECA Governance Video titled "What Boards Need to Consider in Setting Rates".

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

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

Board President Tom Thorpe handed out

board and CEO performance appraisals that will be reviewed in August.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Moved by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius to vote for Todd Hettich for a position on the RESCO board of Directors.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to revise Policy #318 Courtesy Service Policy to change the name of the Eureka VFW Memorial to Eureka Veterans Memorial.

Moved by Eric Odenbach seconded by Josh Heinrich to nominate Tom Thorpe as Basin voting delegate and Paula Petersen as alternate voting delegate.

The board acknowledged Notice of East River Bylaw Committee Meeting.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to nominate CEO Scott Moore as NRECA voting delegate, no alternate.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Cherri Brick, Mansfield, SD, Active Farm; Judith & John Baudler, Arden Hills, MN, Vacant Farm; Bruce & Ginger Schilder, Faulkton, SD, Shop & Vacant Farm; Michael & Mary Johnson, Wetonka, SD, Active Farm; Jeremy & Chantel Stoecker, Onaka, SD, Active Farm

Reconnects: Christopher Brick, Mansfield, SD, Active Farm; Tam & Brian Landrigan, Duluth, MN, Vacant Farm; Brady & April Schilder, Faulkton, SD, Shop & Vacant Farm; Jennawade Reiter, Wetonka, SD, Active Farm; Darin & Marissa Stoecker, Onaka, SD, Active Farm

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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*

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FEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc., 800 5th Ave., Ipswich, SD 57451. FEM Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

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employer.**



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

By the time this article passes through your mailbox, fall sports will have begun and classrooms will be filled with eager students looking to reconnect with friends and begin a new year of learning. Please remember to be cautious while driving through our communities and watch for our children on bikes or walking. Also, when driving our country roads please use caution, our crops are tall and some intersections have limited visibility.

When I was the operation manager I wrote about this many times: "How high is too high?" I'm speaking of stacked round bales. If you have a path from hay field to home with no overhead powerlines you may be safe but if you must travel under overhead powerlines, please use extreme caution. Striking overhead powerlines can be dangerous and costly.

At the July FEM Electric board meeting Kristi Robinson, Star Engineering's Director of Operations, was present

and a good conversation with the FEM board and employees was held about the cost-of-service-study. Mrs. Robinson explained rates and what information is needed and used, and how beneficial automatic meter reading information and meter data management is to current rate studies. With information used now we have a better understanding of where and when the power is being used. Kristi will return in September to discuss rates, and FEM will have better information from our power provider on any cost increases for 2027.

Operations will be finishing our work plan projects in August as we continue to complete new and updated electrical services for our members. I keep hearing the economy is slowing but at FEM Electric we have not witnessed that trend. We are pleased with the new services and service upgrades that are being requested within our service territory.

As we move towards fall harvest, we

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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

September 30, 2026 for September's energy
October 28, 2026 for October's energy

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

STAYING PREPARED IN RURAL S.D.

As most South Dakotans know, weather on the Great Plains can be frightfully unpredictable. In fact, South Dakota holds the record for the fastest temperature rise ever recorded. On Jan. 22, 1943, the temperature in Spearfish climbed from 4 degrees below zero to 45 degrees above zero in only two minutes.

Winter storms also offer reminders of how quickly severe weather can reshape daily life. The Blizzard of 1966 brought wind gusts of 70 mph and snowdrifts reaching more than 30 feet. Roads remained blocked for days, and massive livestock losses made it one of the most severe blizzards in state history.

Winter Storm Atlas, another devastating blizzard in October 2013, dropped several feet of snow over the Black Hills. Heavy snow and strong winds toppled trees and power lines, and devastated livestock operations, leaving some residents without electricity for a week or longer.

Although not every storm will make the record books, severe weather can still disrupt a household. A little preparation on an ordinary day can make a difficult day much easier.

Make A Plan

Emergency preparedness begins with a plan. FEMA recommends that households develop a plan for alerts, appropriate shelter, evacuation and communication if family members become separated.

Start by identifying the types of emergencies most likely to affect your area. For rural South Dakotans, that may include anything from blizzards and tornadoes to severe thunderstorms and wildfires. A good safety plan starts by choosing a safe place inside the home for high winds and tornadoes, generally a basement or small interior room, away from windows.

Next, consider who in your household may need extra help during an emergency, including infants, older adults and pets. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do, then walk through the plan together.

Build A Practical Supply Kit

Once the plan is in place, start collecting and organizing supplies your household could rely on if the power goes out or travel becomes difficult. FEMA recommends keeping enough food and water for at least several days, with one gallon of water per person for each day. For example, a

family of four preparing for three days would need at least 12 gallons of water.

Choose nonperishable foods your household already eats and that can be prepared without electricity. Then add the basics needed to get through an outage, including flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and a way to recharge cellphones. A NOAA Weather Radio can also provide important updates even when cellphone service is unavailable.

Next, tailor the kit to your household. Set aside medications and other essentials.

There is no need to build the entire supply kit at once. Start with what is already in the house, then add supplies during regular shopping trips. Check the kit a few times each year to replace expired food, medications or batteries.

Preparedness cannot stop a storm, reopen a highway or restore electricity, but it can provide time and options when conditions begin to change.

For more information, visit Ready.gov for additional tips on making an emergency plan, building a supply kit and staying prepared.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Owen Williams, age 7

Owen reminds members to not plant trees near power lines. That is great advice, Owen! Thank you!

Owen's parents are Bruce and Jing Williams from Wakonda S.D.

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.

FALL DESSERTS

GOLDEN GRAHAM/ SMORES BARS

Ingredients:

7 cups Golden Graham cereal
16 oz. mini marshmallows
1/2 cup butter
6 full size Hershey bars

Method

Unwrap Hershey bars and break apart on lines and then each piece again in half. Set aside. Melt the butter and 6 cups of the marshmallows. Stir in the Golden Grahams cereal. Cool for one minute. Stir in remaining marshmallows and Hershey pieces. Press lightly into a greased 9x13 pan with slightly wet hands. Cool and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

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

Topping

(makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder

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

VERY GOOD PEACH DESSERT

Ingredients:

First layer:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup nuts
1 stick margarine
Mix together and press in 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 F for 10 minutes.

Second layer:

1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1 cup powdered sugar
Cream together and add 1 cup Cool Whip. Spread on top of cooled crust.

Third layer:

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. white corn syrup
3 tbsp. cornstarch
1 cup water
Combine ingredients, cook until thickened, then remove from heat. Add 3 tbsp. of peach-flavored gelatin and 1/4 tsp. almond flavoring. Cool. Peel and slice fresh peaches, then combine with the cooled mixture. Spread on top of cheese filling. Top with a layer of whipped topping and chill.

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.

Board Report continued from page 2

Contracts: Grass Land HB, Inc. Westport, SD, Hog Barn – Comm; Sid & Launa Feickert, Long Lake, SD, House; Deerfield HB, Ipswich, SD, Grain Bin & Concrete Plant; MDU, Bismarck, ND, Tower Service; Thunderbird HB Inc, Faulkton, SD, Hog Barn – Comm; Roger & Lori GutenKauf, Onaka, SD, Grain Bins

Retired Locations: None

Moved by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve service contracts for Grassland HB, Inc., Sid and Launa Feickert, 2 for Deerfield HB, MDU (Montana Dakota Utilities), Thunderbird HB Inc., and Roger and Lori Gutenkauf.

Capital Credits:

Estates – July 2026: one = \$197.08

73 & Older – July 2026: one = \$3,050.91

Moved by Eric Odenbach seconded by Josh Heinrich and carried to set June 22, 2027, as FEM Electric's 79th annual meeting.

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

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

The check register for the month of June 2026 contained information on checks #36335 through #36435 and automatic payments/withdrawals for June 2026 totaling \$1,456,026.44.

June 2026 financials were reviewed.

Federated Umbrella limit increase information was reviewed. The board took no action to increase the amount.

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to sign the RUS

Special Fund Trustee Account Transfer Confirmation from 06/25/2026 in the amount of \$950,000.

Forms for Ipswich State Bank accounts were signed by new officers – Tom Thorpe, President and Josh Heinrich, Assistance Secretary/Treasurer.

The board acknowledged Quarterly Budget Projections along with updated current TIER and reviewed the RUS and CFC loan summaries.

Moved by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: Moore reported on Leola Data and that it seems will continue through the legal process.

Meeting Report:

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

Tom Thorpe gave update on SDREA and SDREA board meeting held in June.

The safety meeting minutes from June 17, 2026, were acknowledged along with employee meeting minutes held on July 8, 2026.

Adjourn: President Tom Thorpe declared the meeting adjourned.



Manager's Report continued from page 3

are hopeful the lack of moisture and extreme heat will still allow our agriculture producers to have a good harvest. Last week of July I heard of some large cattle losses, due to heat, in our South Dakota feedlots. Once again Mother Nature has the power of letting us know who is in charge.

Mark your electronic or paper calendar June 22, 2027, will be the date for FEM Electric's 79th annual meeting.

With the conditions of this summer and growing season, stress can be high, please make sure you take care of yourself and your family.

If planning any new electrical load in 2027 please call Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605-426-6891. It is never too early to start planning; we still see some long lead times for certain equipment.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Department of Energy

DON'T GET OUT

If your machinery, vehicle or other **equipment makes contact with a power line, guy wire or electrical box, DO NOT get out of your cab.** Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground.

To avoid becoming electrocuted:

- **Call 9-1-1** and wait for us to arrive to cut the power.
- **Wait to exit** your cab until the power is de-energized.

In rare cases you may need to exit your cab due to smoke or fire. **If you must get out:**

- **Make a solid jump out** without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle.
- **Hop away as far as you can**, keeping both feet together as you hop away.

For more information visit **[SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)**.



WONDROUS WILDFLOWERS & PRAIRIE PRESERVATION

Tellus and Lori Waddell.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Waddell Native Seeds Turns Rural Acreage into Prairie Paradise

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Journeying east on U.S. Hwy. 12 toward Milbank, as you make a steep descent into Whetstone Valley, you'll pass the usual South Dakota crops – corn, soybeans, some wheat here and there.

But for Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative members Tellus and Lori Waddell of Marvin, the most fascinating – and lucrative – harvest is one most of us would overlook, growing tall in roadside ditches and uncut fields.

For more than 30 years, the Waddells have allowed their Grant County acreage to run wild as they grow, harvest and sell the seeds of dozens of native wildflowers and grasses.

"We started noticing wildflowers up in the pasture, and at that time [the internet was] coming out so we could do some research on what they were," Lori recalled. "Tellus started calling nurseries asking them if they wanted this or that ... and that's how we built into this – and there are not a lot of people that do this."

When Lori says "this," she's referring to more than just collecting seeds. She means getting up early before the weather

is too hot, rolling up her sleeves and driving around the property in a side-by-side scanning the ground for patches of whichever wildflower type is ready to be harvested – by hand – for seeds.

"It's very, very labor-intensive," Tellus added. "It's not like picking flowers – because we don't pick a flower. You have to let [the seeds] develop. Right now, we're picking things that blossomed about six weeks ago."

With dozens of plants and just as many harvest schedules, the Waddells have a steady amount of work to do from mid-spring all the way into fall.

Traversing the lightly traveled trails over their expansive, glacially carved property, (this reporter was joined by two labs in the back seat of the side-by-side) Tellus and Lori are quick to point out distant patches of coneflowers, blazing star, wild turnips, vervain and their personal favorite flora they cultivate, milkweed.

"It's for the butterflies," Tellus explained as he pulled the vehicle up to the family's newest experiment: milkweed planted as a row crop.

"It's the first time we've ever done that," Tellus said, proudly explaining his youngest son, Levi Waddell, is heading up the initiative.

Tellus added, "As every generation takes over, you'll get different things."

Most outbuildings on the Waddells' land double as drying rooms for at least one harvest during the season.

That includes their three-stall garage – a more accurate description may be the seed processing facility – where the Waddells dry the seeds, separate them from the chaff and package them for shipment to area greenhouses and other customers.

Demand has grown to the point where the Waddells have hired about a dozen part-time summer workers to help harvest seeds.

Their harvesting efforts don't stop at the

The Waddells are row cropping milkweed for the first time. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed, making it an important resource for conservation efforts.

Photo by Jacob Boyko





Lori Waddell enjoys photographing native flowers on the acreage.
 Top row: prairie lily, pasque flower (S.D. state flower), wild turnip.
 Bottom row: blazing star, scarlet gaura, coneflower.
Photos by Lori Waddell

fence line – Tellus is known to park his car, knock on the doors and ask to collect seeds if a patch of prairie catches his eye.

"We have picking rights [agreements with property owners] from here to Pierre down to Grand Island, Nebraska," Tellus said, recounting an especially vibrant purple field of vervain near Forestburg.

This led Tellus to a more solemn conversation. Piece by piece, he and Lori have bought surrounding acreage in an effort to isolate their native plants from the effects of drifting pesticides. Tellus said that when mixed into a slight breeze, the chemicals are potent enough to wipe out their native broadleaf plants for years at a time – even if the spraying takes place miles away.

Tellus and Lori's observation is that biodiversity is shrinking throughout the region for this same reason – diverse fields of native flowers and grasses are becoming more difficult to find, and the wildlife that relies on native plants for food are becoming increasingly scarce.

"You talk to people in their 80s, and they'll talk about walking through a field of lilies," Tellus said. "And then they just sit there for a bit and try to think of the last time they've seen that. Sometimes 40 or 50 years ago."

He continued, "that's when people realize the prairie is pretty much gone."

Levi Waddell uses social media to spread awareness about native plants, conservation and his family's operation.

His TikTok page, Waddell's Wildflowers, has more than 1,000 followers and 19,000 likes and chronologizes the day-by-day life of a native plant harvester.

The Waddells hope to share their story to educate others on the importance of conservation and inspire them to preserve the native prairie for generations to come.

"God gave us this beautiful earth and we're ruining it," Lori said. "If we can at least preserve and protect our little corner, I feel like we've done our job."



PROCESSING NATIVE SEEDS



The harvested seeds are spread indoors to dry for several weeks.



The dried seed heads are broken apart to loosen the seeds from the surrounding plant material.



The seeds are fed into a hammer mill to break apart remaining plant material from the seeds.



The cleaned seeds are sifted one final time to remove any extra material. The separated chaff is spread where the seeds were harvested so any unseparated seeds can germinate.

FEM MEMBERS TOUR BASIN ELECTRIC FACILITIES

On July 13th, FEM members joined members from Lake Region Electric and Northern Electric cooperatives for a 2-day tour of several Basin Electric facilities.

Their first stop after arriving in Bismarck, ND was Basin Electric Power Cooperative headquarters. There, members were treated to lunch, a presentation about Basin Electric and the 3-tier cooperative model, and a tour of four key areas within HQ. One key stop was Security and Response Services (SRS), a call center that 100 out of 136 Basin members use. Staff within SRS monitor radio communications, after hour calls and track crews if needed. Another stop was the Marketing department, where employees monitor energy generation and buy or sell excess in the open market. Attendees also stopped in the board room, where Basin Electric member representatives make important decisions that impact every member of Basin Electric. Finally, members visited the print and video production studios where Basin provides additional services to help members with advertising or graphic needs. Each stop was a glimpse into the services Basin Electric provides to each of its members.



Wind towers at Wilton Wind Farm.

The tour continued with members piling on the bus to visit the Wilton Wind Farm, just outside of Bismarck. The towers are owned and operated by NextEra, but Basin purchases power from the towers.

To end the evening, members enjoyed a river boat cruise on the Missouri River with dinner provided.

The first stop on day two was Dakota Gasification Company, Great Plains Synfuels Plant. Here members toured the model room and learned about different by-products that are manufactured from the coal that is mined nearby.



Members learn what each section of the synfuels plant does by walking through a model of the plant.

From there, the bus stopped at Antelope Valley Station, where coal is burned to create electricity. Here members toured the model room, saw the coal fire up close, and made their way to the top of unit one, 18 floors up. Those who went up to floor 18, endured temperatures around 130 degrees Fahrenheit for about 10 minutes for an aerial view.



A tour guide describes what each part of Antelope Valley Station does using a model of the plant.

After a nice lunch, tour attendees loaded the bus to make their way to the Coteau Properties Company Freedom Mine. There, the bus took members around mine facilities, up close to the large drag mine, and down into the valley where coal was actively mined.

Antelope Valley Station



Thank you to all the FEM members who attended. We hope the tour was educational and fun! Be on the lookout in future editions of the Cooperative Connections for details about the 2027 Basin Tour.



Members are given the opportunity to see the actual fire from the coal burning at Antelope Valley Station.





DRIVE OUT TO A DRIVE-IN

Outdoor Movie Theaters Offer Old-Time Fun

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

It's one of the defining cultural behemoths of the 20th century. Load the family into the station wagon – or someone you fancy in a borrowed hot rod – and head over to the drive-in theater. You pick up popcorn and soda pop, tune your car stereo to the transmitter, and settle in for an unforgettable experience.

It all started in 1933, when Richard Hollingshead of Camden, New Jersey, began developing an accessible and comfortable way to bypass the confining indoor theater seats and allow moviegoers a way to enjoy a show from the comfort of their own vehicle.

The Smithsonian Magazine reports a peak of more than 4,000 American drive-in theaters in 1958. But with cities continuously expanding and the price of property increasing, most of them have closed in the time since. Today, it's estimated that fewer than 300 drive-in theaters remain.

But don't fret! If you're reading this magazine, there are still some nearby drive-in movie theater options for you and your family (or your date) to enjoy!

Midway Drive In – Miller, S.D.

In Miller, mid-May through Labor Day weekend is drive-in movie season. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights are illuminated by the distant glow of the local drive-in movie theater.

Sarah Resel is one of the owners of the Midway Drive-In. Growing up in Miller, the drive-in was her weekend hangout and the site of so many cherished memories. Years later, that's still the case – just under slightly different circumstances.

A show is about to start at the Midway Drive In near Miller.
Photo submitted by Midway Drive In

"We pretty much don't have weekends during the summer," Resel said. "We're committed to being here with the theater. We all have full-time jobs; we always call this our community service."

Despite the hefty commitment, Resel says seeing people turnout from all over the country for an authentic drive-in experience makes it worthwhile.

"I think with us in our Miller community, we take it for granted that it's just here," Resel said. "It's crazy the support we get from other towns coming to our community."

Pheasant Drive-In – Mobridge, S.D.

Cam Wal Electric Cooperative members Jon and Jill Olson of Mobridge have experience with both indoor and outdoor theaters.

"The day-to-day prep is a little bit different," Jill said, explaining



The Pheasant Drive-In sits on the Missouri River hills near Mobridge.
Photo submitted by Pheasant Drive-In

the maintenance needed for the property and screen, along with weather surprises.

"I think weather is probably the number one issue," she continued. "We had a windstorm that came through Sunday [July 19] and caused some damage for us."

Even with the unexpected challenges, Jill said owning the drive-in theater is a positive experience, and on summer nights as people from near and far gather for a showing, she's reminded why she does it.

"It's a completely different vibe than sitting inside a dark theater," Jill said. "Parents do such a good job making it a fun experience, like bringing a pickup, backing it in and letting the kids sit in the back end. The other weekend, we had a family bring a bunch of blow-up air mattresses. The kids can talk and run back and forth – it just isn't your typical thing."

Hilltop Drive Inn Theater – Gregory, S.D.

"It's awesome," Rosebud Electric Cooperative member Dawn Boyer said when asked about running a drive-in movie theater.

"It's like owning a piece of the past while being in the present – and hopefully the future."

When Dawn was a kid, her mom worked at the ticket counter, sometimes taking Dawn along too. When she learned in 2018 the theater was looking for a new owner, it just seemed right.

"Two weeks later, I was running a theater I knew nothing about," Dawn laughed.

The drive-in is an 80-year-old landmark in Gregory County, and the oldest operating drive-in theater in the state. The age is catching up with it, Boyer said, explaining the heavy maintenance schedules necessary to keep the theater running.

Though the theater is becoming harder to operate, Boyer says the smiles on visitors' faces make it all worth it.

"The people who come through that have never seen a drive-in before – that's who we do it for," Boyer continued. "The expression on somebody's face when that big screen lights up at night is awesome."

Pheasant City Drive-In Theatre – Redfield, S.D.

Redfield's drive-in theater has been open continuously since 1953, and thanks to Dave and Stacey Marlow, it will continue for many years.

"We bought it at the time the industry was changing over to digital projectors," Stacey said, recalling the 2014 sale. "And [the previous owner] wasn't going to do it, so we went to him and asked if he'd like to sell it."

Since taking over, they've upgraded the display system again, installing a brighter, higher-contrast laser projector that allows shows to begin earlier and helps future-proof the theater.

While modern, the theater retains its original elements: the speaker poles are functional (Dave spends hours wiring each spring) and the propane popcorn maker satisfies hungry moviegoers.

"People tell us all the time, 'We are so glad you took this and have kept it going,'" Stacey said. "This is a part of our town we didn't want to lose, so we decided we were the ones to step up and save it."

Winner Drive In Theater – Winner, S.D.

In 2022, Rosebud Electric Cooperative members Austin and Jill Moser were looking for more space for their family. They finally found the perfect house on a nice chunk of land – with a catch.

"The movie theater was included," Jill said. "We thought, 'Why not?'"

The Mosers say running the drive-in theater with their three kids has been a good experience for the family and has given the kids an opportunity to work concessions.

During the Mosers' second season in operation, a windstorm damaged the screen, necessitating a lengthy rebuild. Luckily, the theater was able to reopen for the 2025 season.

"It's really great to see how many people still support drive-in movie theaters," Jill said. "There's not that many left in the country. We meet people from all over – we've had people from France come to the theater."

Verne Drive In – Luverne, Minn.

Half an hour east of Sioux Falls, the Verne Drive In welcomes hundreds of I-90 travelers Wednesday through Sunday each summer.

Owner and operator Doug Rozeboom said his goal is to provide an experience that is affordable, fun and unique for both locals and travelers.

"I don't want to say drive-in theaters are a thing of the past, but they're becoming it," Rozeboom said. "It's a unique experience because you can't just go anywhere to watch a movie outdoors on a big screen."

He continued, "Kids are able to run around and throw a football, so they can blow off some steam."

Rozeboom described the enthusiasm of moviegoers, recounting creative truck-bed setups, typically with lawn chairs, sofas or mattresses.

"For the Toy Story 5 premiere, someone had a tree-trimming truck, so they had the boom arm out," he laughed. "I was like, 'Huh, that's interesting.'"

Making the perfect setup is part of the drive-in movie theater experience!
Photo submitted by Verne Drive In



Winner's drive-in features a curved screen.
Photo by Kim Boyko





STORM SAFETY TIPS: HOW TO PREPARE AND STAY SAFE

It is easy to become complacent about the weather, but severe weather claims hundreds of lives each year.

From tornadoes and floods to lightning, high winds, extreme heat and cold, severe weather can cause destruction and power outages. Many people end up in dangerous situations because they think they can outrun or outsmart a storm, extreme temperatures or other hazardous conditions. Being prepared with supplies, a plan and safety knowledge can help protect you and your family.

WATCH VS. WARNING

When severe weather is approaching, many people turn on the TV, check a weather app or go online for updates. It is important to know the difference between a watch and a warning.

A **watch** means conditions are favorable for severe weather, such as a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Stay alert, monitor conditions and take precautionary steps, such as unplugging electronics and checking your emergency kit.

A **warning** means severe weather is occurring, is imminent or is indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately in the safest part of the building, such as a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor, away from windows.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO STAY SAFE

- Install a weather app and enable severe weather alerts.
- Remember that a warning means it is time to act.
- Have an evacuation plan for hazards such as floods or wildfires.
- Establish a family communication plan, including each person's responsibilities and a meeting place in case you are separated.
- Keep emergency kits stocked and up to date. Include a first-aid kit, portable phone

charger, flashlights, batteries, food, water and enough supplies to last at least three days.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a generator.
- Use a generator only outdoors in an open area, never in a garage, carport or other enclosed space.
- Keep portable generators at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents.

KNOW HOW TO KEEP OTHERS SAFE

Storms can be unpredictable and can damage the power grid. Severe weather may also make utility equipment harder to access. During and after major weather events, line crews may be out restoring power and making repairs.

Everyone should do their part to help keep lineworkers and utility crews safe:

- Slow down and move over in work zones.
- Do not distract crews while they work.
- Direct service questions to your utility.
- Check your utility's social media channels or text alerts for outage updates, if available.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. Doing so can cause backfeed, which sends electricity from your home back onto power lines.

STAY ALERT DURING CLEANUP

- If the power is out, stay indoors unless you must leave to remain safe.
- Be alert for downed power lines that may be hidden by ice, snow, standing water or storm debris.
- Never approach a downed power line. Call 911, then keep others away.
- Do not trim trees or branches within 10 feet of an overhead power line.

Power outages, downed lines and generator misuse can create serious risks during and after severe weather. To learn more about keeping loved ones safe, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

AFTER A DISASTER: REPLACING IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS



Recovering after a disaster can feel overwhelming. Having important records organized and stored in a secure place, such as a safety deposit box, a waterproof and fire-resistant lockbox or digital backups, can make insurance claims, taxes and applications for assistance easier later on.

PREPARE BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

- ☐ **Make a home inventory.** Take a video walkthrough of your home and belongings.
- ☐ **Store digital backups** in the cloud or on an external drive in a safe place.
- ☐ **Keep key papers together** in one secure, easy-to-access location.

DOCUMENT LOSSES TO PROTECT YOUR CLAIM

- ☐ **Contact your insurance representative.** Before you begin cleanup, ask what your policy covers, how to document losses and when an adjuster will inspect the damage.
- ☐ **Take photos and videos.** Capture several angles of your home, belongings and property. Narrated video can also help explain what was lost or damaged.
- ☐ **Save receipts** for cleanup, repairs, temporary housing and other recovery-related expenses.
- ☐ **Look for proof of purchases.** Check email receipts, online shopping accounts and digital statements to help verify and value lost items.

START WITH THESE RECORDS

After a disaster, it's hard to remember everything that may have been lost. Here's a starting point for replacing important records.

- ☐ **Bank checks, ATM, debit and credit cards:** Contact your bank or card issuer.
- ☐ **Social Security card:** Contact the Social Security Administration or your local Social Security office.
- ☐ **Birth and death certificates:** Contact the state or local vital records office where the record was filed.
- ☐ **Marriage or divorce records:** Contact the state or local vital records office where the record was filed.
- ☐ **Passport:** Contact the U.S. Department of State.
- ☐ **Income tax records:** Request a transcript or copy of your return from the IRS.
- ☐ **Military records:** Contact the National Archives and Records Administration.
- ☐ **Real estate documents:** Contact your county recorder, recorder of deeds or clerk's office.
- ☐ **Mortgage documents and property titles:** Contact your lender or loan servicer.
- ☐ **Lease documents:** Contact your landlord or property management company.
- ☐ **Driver's license or state ID:** Contact your state motor vehicle agency.
- ☐ **Home and auto insurance policies:** Contact your insurance agent or insurance company.
- ☐ **Will or trust documents:** Contact the attorney who prepared them.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!



SEPT. 3 (ONE DAY EVENT)
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
Horticulture Park, State Fairgrounds
Huron, 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.

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 6
Studebaker Car Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
South 6th St.
Custer, SD

SEPT. 10-12
DKG Used Book Sale
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-6713

SEPT. 11-13
James Valley Threshing & Tractor Club Show
Andover, SD
jamesvalleythreshers.com

SEPT. 12
Salute to Ellsworth
3-8:30 p.m.
Box Elder, SD
605-390-9341

SEPT. 12
Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 12
Harvest Bash
Webster, SD

SEPT. 12-13
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
605-505-0535

SEPT. 19
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m.
American Flag at Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-380-6762

SEPT. 19
SPURS Annual Barn Dance
Doors Open: 4 p.m.
Dinner: 5 p.m.
\$25 per person
Live & Silent Auction
Lizzy Hofer Band
605-226-1099
SPURSAberdeen.org

SEPT. 26
Harvest Pumpkin Fest
3-7 p.m.
Eureka City Park North Shelter
Eureka, SD
605-230-1777

OCT. 1
The Dreamboats
7 p.m.
50s & 60s Rock n' Roll Band
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

OCT. 2-3
Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
Prairie Village
Madison, 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
605-332-6004

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

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.