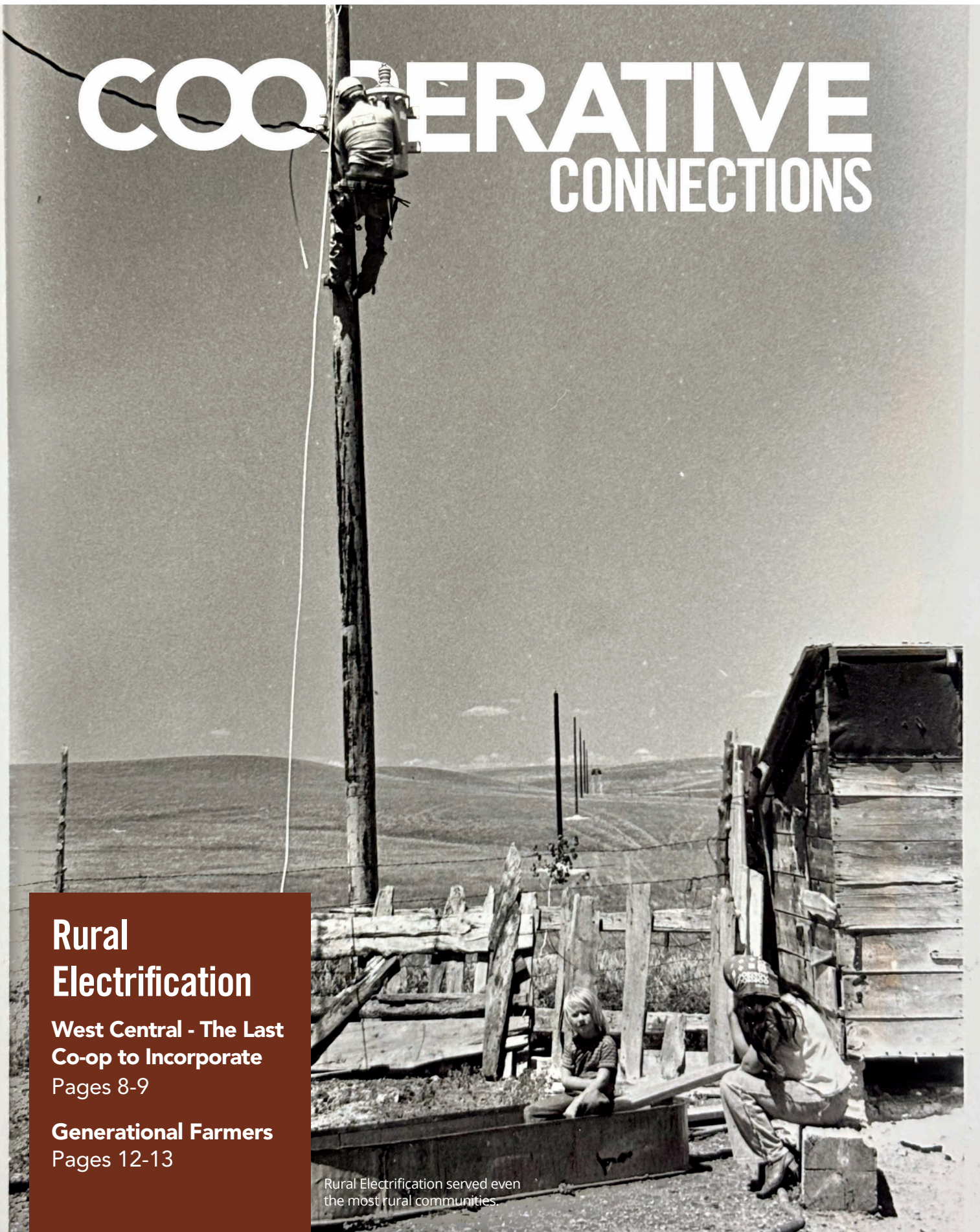


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Rural Electrification

**West Central - The Last
Co-op to Incorporate**
Pages 8-9

Generational Farmers
Pages 12-13

Rural Electrification served even
the most rural communities.

Wholesale Electric Rate Increases: What They Mean for LLEC Members



Tim O'Leary
General Manager

Let's continue last month's discussion on wholesale power rates with an update on what has happened over the past month. As a reminder, wholesale power rates make up nearly 60% of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative's (LLEC) yearly costs and they make up the largest share of uncontrollable costs.

Basin Electric (Basin) held its Annual Meeting the second week of August to discuss their accomplishments over the last year and to update the membership on issues that are driving the need for a substantial rate increase in wholesale power costs. Basin provides 84% of the power needs of LLEC member-owners and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) provides the remaining 16%. We are expecting no changes in the two-year rate increase that WAPA started last year, so I will focus on the Basin increase which will have a large impact on our financial situation over the next several years.

The initial numbers that were shared with Basin members indicated that Basin would need a substantial increase to meet their financial covenants and to meet the requirements to maintain an "A" investment rating. The "A" rating allows Basin to borrow from the market at lower interest rates and provides them flexibility and better access to capital when adding debt to their balance sheet. As a reminder, Basin is looking at completing and spending over \$10 billion on new

generation and transmission capital projects over the next several years. The projects will help meet member demand/load growth, improve reliability, and help offset costs associated with power market volatility.

Basin took member input and updated their financial forecast with updated assumptions. This is the same process Basin used to implement a two-year rate increase last year as we were faced with similar market conditions. This year Basin came back and informed the membership at their Annual Meeting that the increase would be phased in over the next two years. While it's good news that the increase will be smaller than originally proposed and spread out, the increase will still impact LLEC's wholesale power costs by over \$520,000 from last year's estimate. In total, we are estimating an increase in total power supply costs of nearly \$900,000 for 2026. Debra Bruns - 1527100.

The LLEC board will be sending a resolution to the Basin Board of Directors and to its CEO to ask them to consider additional measures to lessen the rate increase impact on our member-owners. We will see how that is received as the Basin Board will be looking at approving their 2026 rates at their September board meeting.

We will know more as East River, our power supply and transmission cooperative, provides its draft budget presentation at our joint CEO/Board meeting in October. As we learn more, I will continue to use this article to update the membership on what will need to be done to our local rates to make sure ensure the cooperative's financial stability well into the future.

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY
KNOW THE SIGNS

As school buses hit the road, remember: The most dangerous time for kids is when they're getting on or off the bus. Let's work together to keep every child safe this school year.

- STOP FOR RED LIGHTS
- ⚠ WATCH FOR KIDS
- 📏 STAY BACK 10 FEET

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

Board of Directors

Dale Fier, Taunton – President
Scott Johnson, Tyler – Vice President
Kathleen Schreurs, Tyler – Sec./Treas.
Joel Buyck, Garvin
Jared Dritz, Porter
Galen Grant, Russell
Mary Gunnink, Lake Benton
Mike Longtin, Taunton
James Rokeh, Minneota

Staff and Personnel

Tim O'Leary – General Manager
Lyle Lamote – Line Superintendent
Kristi Jensen – Finance Manager
Brian Jeremiason – Manager of
Marketing & External
Relations

Rochelle Borresen – Accountant
Lisa Hauswedell – Billing Clerk
Jessica Gums – Executive Assistant
Wade Thooft – Operations Staff
Assistant

Alan Fischer – Work Order Clerk/
Warehouse Coordinator
Ross Birath – Journeyman Linemen
Dan Tutt – Journeyman Linemen
Tyler Blomme – Journeyman Linemen
Tyler Sand – Journeyman Linemen
Nathan Pavek – Journeyman Linemen
Trent Skjefte – Journeyman Linemen
Sam Rohde – Journeyman Linemen

www.llec.coop

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Summer
hours are 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
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Free 1-800-927-6276; Fax (507) 247-5508.

Jessica Gums, Editor

WHEN POWER LINES COME DOWN



A variety of conditions or scenarios
can result in a downed power line.
Sometimes downed lines are
visible while other times they are
hidden by ice, snow, branches or
storm debris.

Collisions with a pole or padmount
transformer can cause the ground
and objects to become energized.
Regardless of the cause, always
consider a downed line or
damaged equipment energized
and deadly.

If you are in a car accident
involving a downed line, stay in
the cab or car and wait until
someone from the electric utility
says it is safe to get out.

**Call 9-1-1 to report a downed or
damaged power line. Stay away
and alert others to do the same.**

Remember, if there is a downed
line, stay away! Electricity can
jump from a wire or object to you
to find the quickest path to
ground.

**If you see a downed or
damaged power line or
pole or a dislodged
electrical cabinet:**

- **DO NOT GO NEAR IT**
- **DO NOT TOUCH IT**
- **DO NOT TRY TO MOVE IT
WITH ANOTHER OBJECT**
- **DO NOT TOUCH ITEMS
THAT COULD BE
ENERGIZED**

Learn more at:

**Safe
Electricity.org®**



Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

Anne Prince
NRECA

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used.

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.

- Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment. Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- Avoid using metal poles inside bins. Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.



"Don't play with outlets!"

Kinzlee Klomp, Age 12

Kinzlee warns readers not to play with power outlets. Great advice, Kinzlee! Kinzlee's parents are Kaitlin and Austin Klomp from Box Elder, 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.

Fresh BREADS

ZUCCHINI BREAD

Ingredients:

3 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup oil
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 cups zucchini (shredded)

Method

Cream together eggs, sugar and oil. Then add the vanilla. Mix together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and add to the egg mixture. Stir in zucchini. Pour into two loaf pans. Bake at 325°F for approximately one hour.

Kimberly Grimm
Southeastern Electric

GLUTEN FREE OATMEAL PANCAKES

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups oats
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs
1/2 cup milk
3/4 cup applesauce
3 tsps. maple syrup
2 tsps. apple cider vinegar
2 tsps. vanilla

Method

Grind 2 1/2 cups oats in blender until turned into flour. In large bowl, whisk together oats, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Form a bowl in center, add eggs and whisk them. Then, add milk, applesauce, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar and vanilla. Stir to combine. Wait five minutes to thicken batter. Cook in oiled pan.

Jean Beauchamp
Southeastern Electric

KUNSI' FRY BREAD

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. yeast (quick rise)
2 tsps. sugar
1 qt. warm water
1 tbsp. oil/melted butter
1/2 tsp. salt
6 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsps. powdered dry milk
4 cups oil for frying

Method

Mix yeast, sugar, salt, warm water, oil/melted butter and let proof for 15 minutes. Mix flour and powdered dry milk. Make a well in the flour mixture and add yeast mixture. Gradually add warm water until dough comes together and is no longer sticky. Cover and let rise until doubled in size. Heat oil to fry dough. Separate dough into 10 to 12 baseball-size dough balls (or smaller if you want smaller pieces). Stretch dough balls and shape into oval discs or round discs approximately 1/4 inch thick. Test the oil to see if it's hot enough by dropping a small pea size piece of the dough in the oil. If it floats it's ready. Flatten the disc between your hands and stretch it again. Fry the bread until both sides are golden brown. Transfer to paper towel lined plate to drain. Continue until all the dough is fried. Enjoy with soup or a Spam and egg sandwich or taco toppings.

Sheila Ironheart
Whetstone Valley Electric

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

July 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, July 28, 2025. The following directors were present: James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Mary Gunnink, Dale Fier, Jared Dritz, Mike Longtin, Galen Grant, and Joel Buyck. The following directors were absent: Scott Johnson. Also present at said Board Meeting were General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, and Attorney, Michael W. Cable.

The Board and others in attendance stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance. President, Dale Fier, then called the meeting to order and conducted routine business including approval of the June, 2025 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the outage report for June, 2025. He also advised the Board that there was a Safety Meeting held on June 18, 2025 concerning the topic of Annual Pole Top/Bucket Rescue. Erik Boder, MREA's Safety Instructor, conducted the annual Pole Top and Bucket Rescue with Mayday Review. Mr. Lamote indicated the linemen were doing the following work: completing underground cable installation and changing out poles. General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, reviewed Policy 604-Line Extensions with the Board. After discussion, General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, said that he would revise Policy 604-Line Extensions and present it to the Board at the August Board Meeting.

Chris Swendenski, Minnesota State Representative, and Jenny Glumack, Director of Legislative Affairs for MREA, met with the Board and reviewed the events of the past Legislative Session. There was discussion concerning various topics such as Prairie Island, Nuclear Power, AI Data Centers, Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance, the possibility of lifting

the Nuclear Moratorium, Net Metering Reform together with other matters.

Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending May 31, 2025. Ms. Jensen brought to the Board's attention information received from the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange (FREIE) which provided information concerning the Minnesota Group Retention Program for the policy period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 and January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 as of June 30, 2025 and reviewed Form 990 which is required to be filed because Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an organization exempt from Income Tax.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:15pm and during the lunch recess the Board viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. monthly video report which included the Basin Summary and reconvened at 12:40pm.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, gave his report as follows: The Board was advised on some of the larger solar projects planned for the areas of Lincoln and Lyon Counties, draft copies of the Load Control Receiver Replacement Letters to members and area contractors were shared with the Board, and an update was provided on Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. new website that is in the final stages of completion.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave his General Manager's Report and was as follows: reviewed the June power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, reported on the East River MAC Meeting, NRECA has indicated that there will be no dues increase in 2026, and reviewed upcoming meetings and notices.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, reviewed with the Board the proposed 2026 rate increase that was being made by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. The proposed rate increase was driven by the following key factors, including:

- a. Member Load Growth
- b. Commodity Prices
- c. SPP Reserve Requirements
- d. Reliability

It was indicated to the Board that the 2026-2035 forecast does not account for additional growth that will be served through Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.'s large load program. Basin indicated that the difference between last year's forecast and this year's is as follows:

- Increase in targeted margins due to higher levels of capital spent earlier.
- Changes in member surplus sales and purchased power costs.
- Change in Dakota Gas results.
- Increased maintenance expenses.
- Increase interest expense due to additional debt issuance and interest rate forecast.

LLEC Board and Management will continue to discuss concerns about the size of the increase with ER Management and its Board.

The Board reviewed the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s Cyber Report for June, 2025 which was prepared by East River Cyber Security Department.

There was discussion concerning the CFC Forum/Federated Annual Meeting by General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, with the Board.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, reviewed with the Board the Strategic Plan Update. Terrence Lack - 1469200.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 2:15pm.

How to Put Out Electrical Fires

Stay safe. Act fast. Know what to do.



Power down immediately.

If wires or appliances seem unsafe or smell odd, unplug if safe to do so, and switch off the circuit at the breaker box. If there's a fire, cut power, but only if you can do so safely.



Do NOT use water.

Water conducts electricity — throwing it on an electrical fire could cause a shock or electrocution.



Use a Class C fire extinguisher.

These are specifically designed for electrical fires and are the safest way to put out the fire.



No extinguisher? Use baking soda.

Baking soda can smother small electrical fires by cutting off oxygen.



Call for help, even if you think the fire is out. Evacuate the area immediately if the fire is too large to extinguish safely.

Safe Electricity.org®

YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

JUNE 2025

	June - 2024	June - 2025
Total Revenue	\$5,254,687	\$5,912,839
Cost of Power	\$3,023,102	\$3,380,524
Operating Expenses	\$2,461,515	\$2,701,147
Operating Margins	\$(229,930)	\$(168,832)
KWH's Purchased	47,443,745	50,935,746
Services in Place	4,126	4,133
Miles of Line	1,671	1,670
Revenue per Mile	\$3,145	\$3,541

WIN MONEY

FIND YOUR NAME & MEMBER #

The tradition of listing member names and numbers in the newsletter continues in the Co-op Connections. If you find your name and member number, call the office and let us know and you will receive a \$20 energy credit.

In last month's Co-op Connections, Daniel Lasnetski and Peter Baerg were listed and will receive an energy credit if they spotted their names and called the office. Once again, there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Leaks reduce indoor comfort and lead to higher heating costs. If you can see daylight around the edges of a window frame or if a window rattles slightly when touched, air is likely leaking. Caulking and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows. These materials are available in a variety of compounds and forms, each designed for different types of surfaces. Choose the right product and apply it properly to reduce heat loss, improve comfort and lower energy bills.

Source: energystar.gov

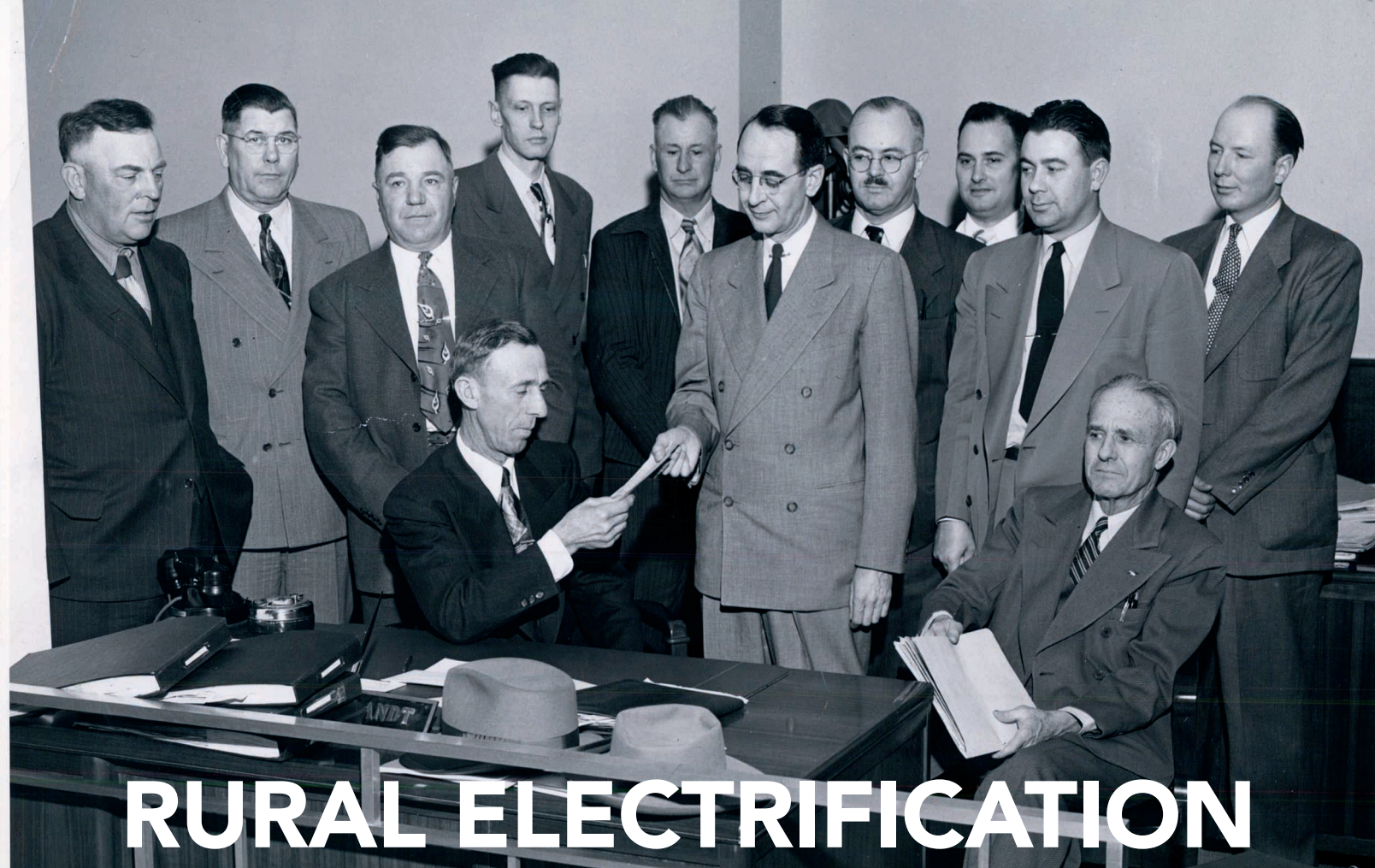
OUTAGE REPORT

JULY 2025

10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

7/18/25 - 41 Consumers were off 2 hours and 25 minutes in Nordland and Island Lake Townships. The cause was a burn-down on the primary wire.

7/18/25 - 16 Consumers were off 4 hours in Lake Marshall Township. The cause was a tree branch on the line.



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

WEST CENTRAL

Last to Incorporate, Lasting in Impact

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Before rural electrification, South Dakota's farmsteads ended the day in silence. There was no music from the radio playing in the living room or hum of an electric refrigerator in the kitchen. Over decades of work, power lines would stretch across the prairie through President Franklin Roosevelt's vision of rural electrification, carrying not only electricity but also a new way of life.

In 1935, President Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his New Deal policies to revive a nation struggling through the Great Depression and bring electricity to

America's rural communities, something that private and investor-owned utilities refused to do.

Clay-Union Electric was the first rural community in South Dakota to adopt the cooperative model in 1937, and West Central was the last in 1949. But as former West Central Electric CEO Steve Reed can attest, being the last to adopt the cooperative way didn't hinder their success. Once the path to forming a cooperative was established, the members of West Central benefitted from electricity's transformation from a luxury into a necessity with the rest of rural South Dakota.

"We couldn't rely on the power

West Central Electric board directors present a check to a representative of Central Electric and Gas in 1951, finalizing the cooperative's purchase of the private utility system. *Photo submitted by West Central Electric.*

companies to come out to serve rural South Dakota," said Reed, a 42-year cooperative veteran who joined West Central Electric as a lineman and worked his way up to CEO. "They were never going to do it at price that was affordable, so rural electric has been great for not only the members of West Central but the entire country."

So why was West Central the last to form a cooperative? According to Reed, the rural communities that organized West Central Electric in 1949 had several hurdles to clear. The first was overcoming the sheer remoteness of the territory, which then had a system that averaged 1.5 members per mile of line constructed, even including towns and

cities. Because members were few and far between, the REA needed the towns in the proposed West Central territory to become members: from Philip to Hayes and Murdo to Kennebec, where West Central Electric was incorporated.

That led to the next problem: the towns and cities in the proposed West Central Electric's service territory were already being served by Central Electric and Gas, a private company based out of Philadelphia. This obstacle didn't stop the people who had a vision of what rural electrification could accomplish. Following lengthy discussion in 1951, West Central Electric purchased systems from Central Electric and Gas for \$850,000 using low-interest REA federal funds.

Former West Central Electric Attorney John Larson outlined the discussions in his 50th Annual Meeting Speech: "There was no choice but to buy out the private supplier, Central Electric and Gas, and that was accomplished... (Former South Dakota Governor M. Q. Sharpe, who served as West Central Electric's attorney), showed up for the meeting that morning unshaven and unkempt, with a threadbare shirt and suit. For the entire morning, he listened with his head down and eyes shut to the Philadelphia lawyer types who represented the power company. After the dinner break, however, he showed up in a new suit, shaved, and took over the meeting by dictating exactly what West Central would do and what we would pay. During an afternoon break, one of the Philadelphia types was heard to mutter, 'You want to watch that old guy. When he's got his head down and eyes shut, he's not sleeping!'"

West Central Electric's 1951 purchase included all the electrical infrastructure within the town boundaries, as well as the diesel generation system extending west from Chamberlain. Shortly after, the evolution of West Central Electric progressed with the construction of distribution systems to farms and reconstructing the systems of various

towns, including the installation of street lights.

Since that iconic moment, West Central has continued to grow with its membership, meeting more demand for electrical energy than had been previously thought possible, a reflection of just how integral electricity has

become in day-to-day living for business owners, ag producers, and rural folk alike.

"That moment modernized us," said Reed. "It just did so much for everything – and without it, where would we be?"



(Top) A West Central Electric Annual Meeting.
(Bottom) A West Central Electric Board Meeting with the REA.
Photos submitted by West Central Electric

POWERED BY PURPOSE

October is National COOP Month

In October, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you - the members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

At Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, we see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you - our members, our neighbors and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible - because we know how much rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And when storms hit or outages occur, Lyon-Lincoln Electric crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines.

Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs, or partnering with volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought - it's part of our mission.

We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer—you're an owner, a stakeholder, and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.

7 COOP PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. Let's reflect on these principles that have not only stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future.



1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services, and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.



2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (Directors) are elected among members and are accountable to them. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



3 MEMBERS ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.



4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors), CEOs, and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, help boost cooperative understanding.



6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

By working together through local, national, regional, and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs.



7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policy, supported by the membership.



Photo submitted by JT and Luann Weber.

GENERATIONAL FARMERS

Four Generations of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Members Ranch on Lake Benton-Area Land

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Nestled amongst the rolling green pastures of western Minnesota, there's a generations-old farm worked by one family for over three quarters of a century.

From their Lincoln County property, the Weber family watched rural electrification improve the prairie, connect neighbors and bring reliability to farmsteads. Now they watch precision agriculture guide planting, bovine genetics strengthen herds, and social media and the internet connect their business to the wider world.

It all started in 1947, when John and Marie Weber moved into the old three-bedroom farmhouse from nearby

Elkton, S.D. Luckily, the move came six years after Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative energized lines in the area, so the Weber home enjoyed many of the modern amenities brought on by rural electrification, including electric lights, kitchen appliances and a washing machine.

"I know I had the best mom and dad in the world," said JT, one of John and Marie's eight children, who today helps run the ranch with his wife, Luann, their three sons and their families. "Dad was very community-oriented. He was on the school board, the elevator board and the rural water board. In fact, he was instrumental in starting rural water. He went from place to place, talking people

into getting rural water."

JT was born on the farm in 1957 during a blizzard that left his parents unable to reach the hospital in town. As a boy, he remembers collecting rainwater in a cistern and using it for cooking, cleaning and baths. Even as rural electrification began to transform the countryside, life on the farm remained far different – and often harder – than life in town.

"When I grew up, back in the 60s and 70s, if you milked 40 cows that was quite a few," JT said. "We were milking about 100 cows – we were kind of ahead of our time. But we had a big family, and us boys, we got right in there."

He continued, "We were hauling silage, hauling manure, milking cows and doing chores. But Dad never told us to do anything. He always asked us if we wanted to, and there's a difference. You wanted to work for him. He made you want to work for him, and it was never a burden."

That was a quality JT kept in mind with his own seven children on that same

ranch where he grew up. Today, JT and Luann's sons Jake, Garret, and Matt all stay involved in the ranch, now Weber Bros. Cattle.

"Growing up, I kind of always had that bug to get in the tractor, chase cows, put up fence, and do what needs to be done," explained Jake, the oldest son.

Today, they specialize in raising purebred Angus bulls and Simmental-Angus crosses, while also producing corn silage and alfalfa to help sustain the operation. While the operation may be old, it's not at all low-tech.

"Our main thing is our bull program," Jake said. "We sell about 50 registered Angus and Simmental bulls by private treaty every spring, and we also develop 50 replacement and bred heifers, and market a portion of them. We do a lot of artificial insemination and embryo transfer. Some of the more elite donor cows we can get our hands on by buying females and buying embryos. We're just trying to make good cows."

Jake, like his dad, graduated from South Dakota State University with an animal science degree, and was excited to return to the ranch to incorporate some of his new skills into the operation.

"When I got back from school, we really amped up our embryo transfer program with different ideas and stuff I learned about genetics from contacts and producers we've met over the years," Jake continued. "We went from selling 10 bulls per year to selling close to 50 bulls."

Jake's younger brother and fellow SDSU animal science graduate, Garret, keeps involved on the family's ranch as well. Though he works full time as swine genetic company Hypor's US Sales Manager, he helps out with the operation and finds the time to run Weber Bros. Cattle's social media pages, which he says has successfully expanded their presence in the market.

"Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or our company website, we're able to hit such a broad spectrum of people, and it's a great way to tell the story of our operation, what we're doing year-in and year-out and advertise the



genetics of the cattle that we're showing and selling," Garret explained. "We're able to have a much greater touch point of individuals that we can reach out to and market our livestock."

JT, Jake and Garret all credit their spouses and families for supporting them as they work to grow the operation.

"It took a long time and a lot of support for us to get established and get to where we are today," JT said.

Looking toward the future – and the next generation, their goals are to make an already successful operation even better.

"We'll keep working with the cow herd, continue to make improvements and make better genetics every year," Jake said. "I want this opportunity to be available to my kids, so that if they want to be able to do this, they'll have the same chance we did."

Garret added, "It's something that I hope my sons can do someday if we're able to continue to grow the operation. I hope it's something they're going to be able to share and cherish with their own kids, because those are the memories that stick with you forever."

JT and Luann Weber with their adult children, Jake, Garret, Matt and Sara Weber, Liz Mergen, and Maria Opheim, and families.

Back, from left: Garret Weber, Levi Weber, Kailey Weber, Jake Weber, Amanda Weber, Sara Weber, Cade Opheim, Maria Opheim, Tawnee Opheim, JT Weber, Luann Weber, Brent Mergen, Liz Mergen, Davie Fiedler, Matt Weber, Racheal Krog.
Front, from left: Adam Weber, Chisum Weber, Abeline Weber, Vidalia Fiedler.
Not pictured: Talon Weber



Photo submitted by JT and Luanne Weber.



A purebred Angus Heifer.
Photo by Garret Weber



COOPERATIVE COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

TOGETHER WE MAKE A
POWERFUL DIFFERENCE



Lyle Lamote

Line Superintendent

The utility industry has a commitment to high safety standards, yet actively contributing to a culture of safety requires a personal commitment from all of us. Do we treat it as a priority – for all of our co-workers as well as the consumers and public we serve? A true “Culture of Safety” means we care about everyone’s safety!

At Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, we place an emphasis on safety and participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) “Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program,” which we refer to as RESAP. This program is nationwide and an important tool for us to build a strong safety program.

The RESAP program consists of five components:

Leadership Commitment, Performance Measures, Safety Health Check, Verification and Observation, and Safety Improvement Plan.

Most steps are completed annually, except for the “verification and observation” step which is conducted every three years. In July, it was our turn to invite an observation team to complete this step.

The process involves a group of our cooperative peers and our statewide coordinator from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

The group gathered unannounced at the cooperative for an on-site audit. We chose an unannounced visit because we want a fair assessment of our situation, rather than a scheduled day, which we could prepare for. This year, the observation team was made up of 5 individuals with varying backgrounds.

There are 17 areas of focus, ranging from inspecting office spaces and vehicles to crews working in the field. Both office and field employees are interviewed to assess their understanding of safety concepts and work procedures. Each item reviewed is given one of four rankings by the observation team: strong, satisfactory, minor improvement, or needs attention.

I’m proud to report that we received 16 satisfactory rankings and one strong performance in the “Environmental/Hazardous Materials” category. This category is to ensure hazardous substances or wastes are managed per Federal and State EPA regulations including reporting, storage, transportation, and disposal. Lyon Lincoln is Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) free. PCBs are toxic man-made chemicals that were used extensively in many industrial products from the 1950’s through 1978. This is an outstanding achievement as we are one of very few entities in the state with this approval from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

A culture of safety is a win-win for everyone. When safety is a core value and safe practices are part of our processes, it protects you, increases everyone’s overall productivity, reduces personal injury and damage to equipment, and builds a strong community reputation.

Making safety a priority is one of our core values and I want to congratulate our cooperative employee group on a very successful inspection. Keep up the great work!



Cooperatives work with their members

Let us answer your questions about cold weather shut-off protection for our members



What is the Cold Weather Rule?

The Cold Weather Rule protects some members from having their electricity shut-off due to non-payment between October 1 and April 30.

Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

Yes. The Cold Weather Rule allows electricity to be shut off for non-payment. You will only be protected if electricity provides your primary source of heat AND you have done ALL of the following things:

- Your household income meets the state guidelines (at or less than 50 percent of the state median household income)
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from LLEC.
- You have a payment arrangement with LLEC for which you make reasonably timely payments.

Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

No. You will receive a "Notice of Disconnection". There will also be a list of rights and responsibilities for you as well as the Cooperative and a list of agencies that may help you.

If you receive a Notice of Disconnection, you **MUST** take the next step and call us and the agency that serves your county to see if they can help you.

We will not disconnect electricity without first notifying you by letter. We also attempt to make phone calls if we have correct phone numbers. We will not shut off electricity on a Friday, a weekend, or the day before a holiday.

We don't want to shut off anyone's electricity. We will work with you to set up a payment arrangement or help you to see if you qualify for shut-off protection. Below is a list of providers that can help with your energy bills. It is up to you to contact them for help.

What must I do to receive shut-off protection?

If you are behind in your electricity payments, your first step is to call or email Lyon-Lincoln Electric. Please call (800) 927-6276 or email@llec.coop.

If my electricity has been disconnected, how can I be reconnected?

In order to re-establish power, contact LLEC for the total balance due, which will include additional fees and a deposit.

Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and home owners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income (\$71,999 for a family of 4) to qualify for benefits.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance>
- Contact your county EAP service provider (See listing)

Meeting Your Payment Obligation

Please contact our office if you find that you cannot pay your electric bill. We will work with you to set up a payment schedule during the cold weather months if you think you will be unable to pay your bill on time. It is your responsibility to call our office to arrange a payment schedule.

Failure to Respond to a Disconnect Notice May Lead to Shut-off of Service, Even in Winter.

Our members are important! We'd rather work with you to set up a payment plan than shut off your electricity.

If you are in need help, don't delay!
CALL TODAY: 800-927-6276

Active-Duty Military Shut-off Protection

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment or for a change of permanent duty station, utility disconnection is restricted. Minnesota law protects these military households from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

If the member and Lyon-Lincoln Electric cannot agree on a payment plan, members have the right to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Lyon-Lincoln Electric will not disconnect electric service during the appeal process.

EAP service providers

Southwest Health & Human Services
Ivanhoe, MN Office
(507)694-1452

Southwest Health & Human Services
Marshall, MN Office
(507)537-6747

Prairie Five Community Action Council
Montevideo, MN
(320)269-7976

United Community Action Program
Marshall, MN
(800)658-2448



OCT. 10-12
Black Hills Powwow
 Rapid City, SD
 605-341-0925

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.

UNTIL OCT. 31
Wallace Dow, Prairie Architect
Traveling Exhibit
 Lake County Museum
 Madison, SD
 605-256-5308

OCT. 3-5
Black Hills Film Festival
 Journey Museum
 Rapid City, SD

OCT. 4-5
Run Crazy Horse
Full & Half Marathon
 Crazy Horse
 Custer, SD

OCT. 4-5
Sioux Falls Quilt Guild
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Sioux Falls Convention Center
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-951-2034

OCT. 10-11
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest
& Vendor Show
 Fri. 12-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.,
 Philip, SD
 605-441-1060

OCT. 11
Fall Festival
 4 p.m.
 Fairburn Church
 Fairburn, SD
 605-255-4329

OCT. 11
A Celebration of Classic Hits
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

OCT. 18
Arts & Crafts Festival
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Faulkton, SD

OCT. 18
Northern Prairie Arts
Barn Quilt Class
 Highland Conference Center
 Register by Oct. 6
 Watertown, SD
 605-882-1780

OCT. 18-19
Heartland Quilting Stars Show
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD
 605-770-1551

OCT. 19
Helping With Horsepower
Year-End Horse Show
 10 a.m.
 Reclamation Ranch
 Mitchell, SD

OCT. 25
Trick or Treat Trails
 3-6:30 p.m.
 Big Sioux Recreation Area
 Brandon, SD

OCT. 25
The Greats of Country
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

OCT. 31-NOV. 2
Haunted Trail at
Reclamation Ranch
 7-10 p.m.
 Reclamation Ranch
 Mitchell, SD

NOV. 1
Reliance Christmas Carousel
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Reliance, SD
 605-730-1462

NOV. 1
Black Hills Meat Fest
 2-4 p.m.
 Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall
 Rapid City, SD

NOV. 1
Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Dakota Christian School
 Corsica, SD
 605-366-7940

NOV. 15
Club 14 Craft & Vendor Fair
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Hendricks Public School
 Hendricks, MN
 605-690-5586

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.