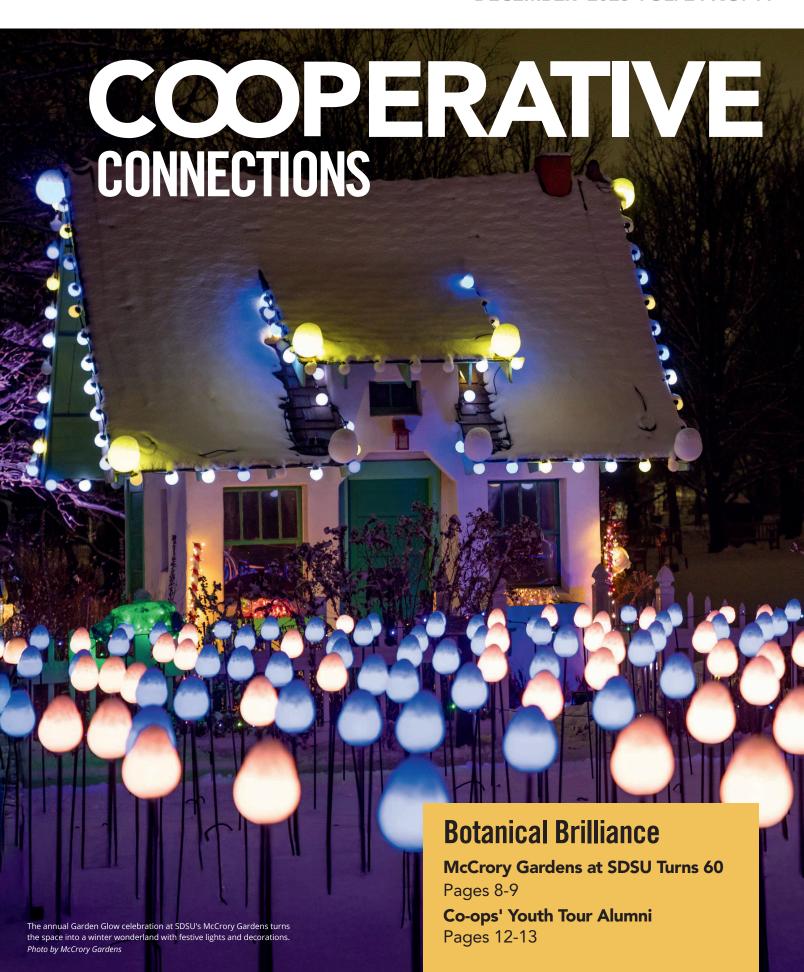
LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

DECEMBER 2025 VOL. 24 NO. 11



Continuing the Rate Adjustment Discussion



Tim O'Leary General Manager

Lyon-Lincoln Electric continues to gather information as we plan for potential rate adjustments in 2026. Our wholesale power provider, East River Electric Power Cooperative (East River), held its initial budget meeting in early October and shared details about expected changes in wholesale power costs that will directly affect all member cooperatives, including Lyon-Lincoln Electric.

Understanding Where Our Power Comes

East River purchases power from two primary sources: the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin).

- WAPA provides about 16% of East River's power, generated from hydroelectric plants along the Missouri River.
- Basin Electric supplies the remaining 84%, producing and purchasing power from a mix of coal, wind, natural gas, recovered energy, solar, and diesel/jet fuel resources.

Both WAPA and Basin have announced wholesale rate increases that will take effect in 2026. These increases reflect the broader industry trend of reinvestment in transmission lines, substations, and generation resources needed to maintain system reliability.

Wholesale Power and System Investments

East River continues to make significant investments in its transmission and substation network, including projects that directly benefit our local area. In recent years, East River has replaced and relocated miles of transmission line in our service territory, with additional work planned across eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota in the years ahead.

These investments are aimed at replacing aging infrastructure, serving new load, strengthening the backbone of the transmission system, and—most importantly—improving reliability for the 25 member distribution systems that make up the East River system. By the end of 2026, East River will have invested approximately \$774.5 million in system upgrades since 2019. Theresa Bostic - 973800.

Like many organizations, East River has faced inflationary pressures that have raised material and construction costs. These higher costs have increased borrowing needs, leading to greater depreciation and interest expenses—costs that ultimately influence wholesale power rates for distribution cooperatives like Lyon-Lincoln Electric.

The Financial Impact

East River's 2026 budget projects nearly \$52 million in additional expenses, including:

- \$35.8 million in higher purchased power costs, and
- \$12.9 million in increased depreciation and interest

For Lyon-Lincoln Electric, these wholesale changes translate into an estimated 11.6% increase in the cost of purchased power, resulting in an average wholesale rate of 7.8 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Wholesale power represents roughly 59% of our total operating costs, so these changes have a significant influence on local rates.

Local Impact and Next Steps

Our board of directors reviewed this information at the October board meeting and determined that Lyon-Lincoln Electric will likely need to implement a local rate adjustment on January 1, 2026. Current projections indicate a potential increase between 12% and 14%, depending on each rate class. Final figures will be discussed and approved at the November board meeting, and details will be shared with members in next month's newsletter.

Each member's bill impact will vary based on individual energy use each month.

Looking Ahead

We understand that consecutive rate increases are challenging. That's why Lyon-Lincoln Electric continues to work closely with East River and Basin Electric to manage costs and reduce the impact of these changes wherever possible.

We will continue to provide updates through our monthly newsletter and at district and annual meetings to help members understand the reasons behind the rate adjustment. While costs are increasing, our commitment remains the same: to provide reliable electricity and services that enhance the quality of life in our rural communities.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN

(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

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www.llec.coop

Lvon-Lincoln Electric Summer hours are 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM Monday thru Friday

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Jessica Gums, Editor

Safety Never Sleeps

When most of us are asleep, our linemen are often out in the dark—battling wind, rain, or ice to keep the lights on. Their work takes them into unpredictable and sometimes dangerous situations.

Early Thursday morning, September 25, 2025, crews responded to an outage and found a failed primary cable on a riser pole, a risky problem quickly identified and safely repaired by our trained linemen.

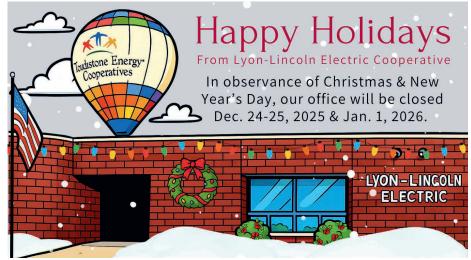
Electrical work, especially in the dark, isn't just challenging, it's high-risk. Our linemen rely on years of training, specialized equipment, and a strong safety culture to protect themselves and the public. Whether they're dealing with a downed line after a storm or a faulty underground cable, safety is always the top priority.

Our crews are on call 24/7. Help keep everyone safe with these quick tips:

- Stay back from downed or damaged lines, always assume they're live.
- Report hazards and outages immediately.
- Give crews space by slowing down and moving over for utility vehicles.

Every time the lights go out, our linemen answer the call. Their dedication keeps our communities connected, comfortable, and safe. So the next time you flip a switch or see those bright headlights in the night, remember: our linemen are out there keeping the power flowing, one careful step at a time.





So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be ener-

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

If you come across downed power lines...

Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines - not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



"Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



Josiah Krcil, Age 9

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, 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.



Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef 2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese (2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk (3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup 10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup 1 can French style green beans 1 can mixed vegetables 1 can diced potatoes

Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

Wendy Thorson Northern Electric

oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

Susan Forma Union County Electric the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

Nick Kvernevig Lake Region 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.



The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, September 29, 2025. The following directors were present: Scott Johnson, James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Mary Gunnink, Jared Dritz, Joel Buyck, Galen Grant, Mike Longtin and Dale Fier. 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 August, 2025 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, reviewed the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending July 31, 2025. The Board reviewed information that had been provided National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation indicating that there was a net distribution for Patronage Capital to Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc., and reviewed information it had received from the Cooperative Response Center, Inc. indicating that the total CRC patronage allocation for fiscal year 2024. Bob Polejewski - 1037100.

The Board then met with Robin Doege, Regional Vice-President for Cooperative Building Solutions, Tim Hooton, Project Director for Cooperative Building Solutions, and James Bever, Project Manager for M & H Architects, to review the facility planning study that was completed for the Cooperative.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:25 a.m. and reconvened at 12:55 p.m.

The board viewed the August, 2025 Outage and Safety Reports prepared by Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent. The Board was informed that there was a Safety Meeting held on August 21, 2025 concerning the topic of ATV Safety. Also provided, was information on the linemen's current work: Replace and finish underground cable installations and continue to change out poles.

The board viewed a report prepared by Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations involving the following topics: The Board was advised through the report that letters were mailed to 22 area electricians describing the LCR replacement project and inviting them to contact Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. for questions or to confirm interest in participation, the Cooperative has received two more solar applications for interconnection and has been contacted by two more members who have indicated that they will be applying soon, and were advised that the members had been surveyed this summer through a National Touchstone Energy Cooperative Program and received an American Customer Satisfaction Index score of 89 on a 100-point scale.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary,

gave his General Manager's Report and was as follows: reviewed the August power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, reported on East River Electric Power Cooperative Inc. Annual Meeting and thought they did a great job in capturing their history and celebrating their 75th Anniversary, and reviewed upcoming meetings and notices.

The Board viewed the General Manager's Expense Report for September, 2025 and a motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Longtin, and carried to approve the General Manger's Expense Report.

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

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, and Director, James Rokeh, gave a report to the Board concerning their attendance at the Regions 5/6 Regional Meeting and the BLC 928.1 Artificial Intelligence and Electric Cooperatives Presentation that was attended by Director, James Rokeh.

The Board reviewed Policy 306 – Compensation and Reimbursement and after review a motion was made by Mr. Rokeh, seconded by Ms. Schreurs, and carried to approve Policy 306 – Compensation and Reimbursement.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 2:20pm.

CO-OP NEWS



Submit recipes to

for more information.

graphics@eastriver.coop

or contact your local co-op

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





Send your recipe to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards

irst and Last Name:					
Со-ор:					
Email:					
By selecting this box you give East River Electric Power Cooperative permission to email updates related to the					

YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON AUGUST 2025

Annually Published Country Cookin' Cookbook

7100001 2020					
		August - 2024	August - 2025		
	Total Revenue	\$7,141,619	\$7,981,481		
	Cost of Power	\$4,161,111	\$4,614,049		
	Operating Expenses	\$3,205,195	\$3,407,011		
	Operating Margins	\$(224,687)	\$(39,579)		
	KWH's Purchased	62,830,070	67,193,911		
	KWH's Sold	59,450,739	63,728,166		
	Members	3,954	3,954		
	Miles of Line	1,671	1,670		
	Members per Mile	2.37	2.37		

OUTAGE REPORT: 10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

SEPTEMBER 2025

9/17/25 - 26 consumers were off 1 hour and 15 minutes in HansonvilleTownship. The line was patrolled and cause was unknown.

9/25/25 - 224 consumers were off 6 hours in Coon Creek and Island Lake Townships. The cause was multiple underground faults.









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 Jennie Popowski and Steven Weber 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

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Source: energy.gov



jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, communityfocused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a springtime syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summertime TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summertime home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace.'

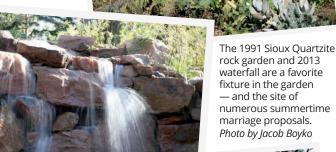


With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators. Photo by Jacob Boyko



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024. Photo by Jacob Boyko

Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring. Photo by Jacob Boyko



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.

Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

60TH ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY **STORY**

Photos submitted by McCrory Gardens

1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.





1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



2025

McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!



HOME LIGHTING 101

Lighting is something most of us don't think much about—until it's wrong. Maybe the living room feels too dim for reading, or the kitchen lights cast an odd yellow glow. We often grab whatever bulb or fixture looks good without considering how it will actually perform in the space. But with a little planning, you can make your home brighter, cozier and more energy efficient.

WATTS VS. LUMENS

When you're shopping for lightbulbs, it's easy to focus on watts, but watts only measure how much energy a bulb uses. When it comes to brightness, what really matters is the lumen count. Lumens measure the actual light output. For example, an 800lumen bulb gives off about the same amount of light as an old-fashioned 60-watt incandescent bulb. (You've likely replaced all incandescent bulbs with longlasting, energy efficient LEDs, but if not-it's time to make the switch!)

A helpful rule of thumb: higher lumens mean brighter light, while lower watts mean less energy consumed. Remember to check wattage ratings for fixtures and only install bulbs that meet the fixture's wattage safety requirements.

DIMMERS AND SWITCHES

Installing dimmers instead of standard on/off switches can be a game changer. Dimmers give you more control over brightness, help save energy and create a more comfortable atmosphere. Not all bulbs are dimmable, so double check labels before buying.

While you're thinking about switches, consider whether you have enough of them—and in the right places. A light you can only turn off from one end of a hallway quickly becomes annoying. For new installations or upgrades, it's best to hire a licensed electrician to ensure everything is wired safely and efficiently.

FIXTURES: FORM MEETS FUNCTION

Bulbs are only part of the equation-fixtures matter too. Each type serves a purpose. Ambient lighting, like sconces or glass-covered ceiling fixtures, provides general illumination. Task lighting, like pendants, desk lamps or track lighting, focuses light where you need it most.

When choosing a fixture, think beyond looks. Ask yourself: does this light provide the right amount of brightness for the space? A beautiful chandelier might look perfect over the dining table but leave the rest of the room too dim. Alternatively, an oversized fixture could flood the room with more light than you need, wasting both energy and money.

COLOR TEMPERATURE AND CONSISTENCY

Light bulbs also vary in color temperature, which ranges from warm yellow to cool white or even bluish tones. This detail often gets overlooked- until you replace one bulb and notice the new light doesn't quite match the others. If mismatched tones drive you crazy, consider buying and installing bulbs of the same brand and wattage in a room at the same time. That way, the look stays consistent, and you won't be stuck hunting for a perfect match later.

SMART LIGHTING: ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEETS CONVENIENCE

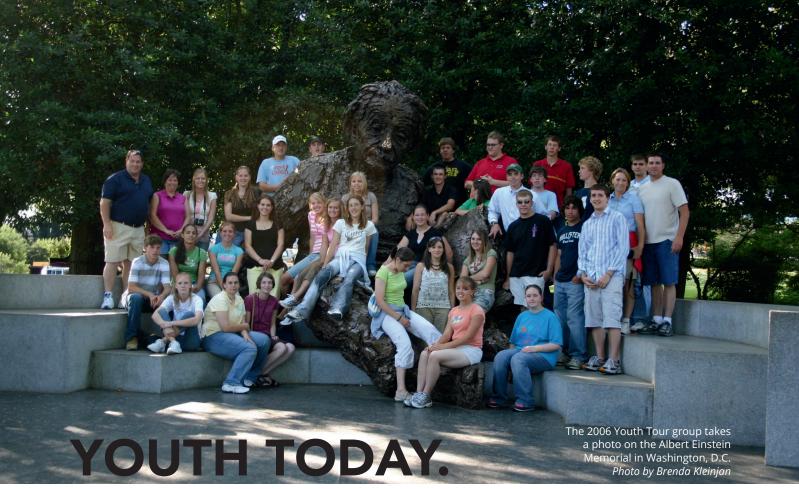
Smart lighting adds another layer of control for illuminating your home. But the real magic is convenience. With smart bulbs, you can adjust brightness, set schedules or even change colors, all from your phone or a voice assistant like Alexa or Google Assistant. Want the lights to dim automatically for movie night? Or to turn on before you get home? Smart bulbs make it easy.

Smart lighting also lets you personalize your space. You can go classic with warm white tones or experiment with colors to set the mood - anything from a soft glow for winding down to vibrant hues for a party. Remember, smart bulbs still rely on power from your wall switch, which needs to stay in the "on" position for remote controls to work. If you prefer using a physical switch, consider pairing smart bulbs with a smart light switch. Many of today's smart switches also come with motion detectors, adding another level of efficiency and convenience.

Home Lighting Guide

The following information outlines recommendation for home lighting, however, additional options for bulbs, fixtures and spaces in your home may be available. Sources: Home Depot, Alcon Lighting

Room/Area	Recommend- ed Lumens	Fixture Type	Smart Tips
Living Room	15-30 per sq. ft. 150 sq. ft. room 2,250-4,500 lumens	Ceiling fixtures, can lighting, lamps, accent lighting	Use small bulbs to adjust color temp and control remotely.
Kitchen	30-40 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Recessed ceiling lights or flush mounts	Smart switches can be used to control zones; undercabinet motion lights offer late-night illumination.
Dining Room	10-20 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 1,000 - 2,000 lumens	Pendant or chandelier fixture	Smart, dimmable bulbs allow various levels of brightness for ambiance.
Bedroom	10-20 per sq. ft. 120 sq. ft. room 1,200 - 2,400 lumens	Ceiling fixtures or recessed lighting	Motion sensors are great options for night time use.
Bathroom	50-80 per sq. ft. 60 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Over vanity fixtures and/recessed lighting	Cool LED bulbs provide brighter light for shaving, applying makeup, etc.
Porch/ Home Entry	100-200 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 10,000 - 20,800 lumens	Wall lanterns, ceiling mount and/or floodlights	Motion activated flood lights and/or smart outdoor bulbs are energy efficient and boost home security.



LEADERS TOMORROW.

South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Fouberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025

he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

"These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids," Larsen said. "I'm from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota - a lot people don't even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody's home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm."

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. "You build connections you don't expect," he said. "One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife's, and years later he attended our wedding."

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. "She was so passionate about the places we visited," he said. "We weren't just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant."

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. "That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen," he said. "When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I'd get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too."

Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. "I'm pretty sure my best



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006. Photo by Brenda Kleinjan



Kevin Larsen 2006 Youth Tour Alum Submitted Photo



Andi Fouberg 1994 Youth Tour Alum Submitted Photo

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool," she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an

"The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles," she said with a laugh. "We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together."

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune's communications director.

"Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point," Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

"I'd see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I'd think, that was me," she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

"The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment," she said. "It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people."

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

"Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don't know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour," she said. "Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour."



One Application, Two Scholarships

Fill out just one Basin Electric scholarship application to be considered for both the Basin Electric and Lyon-Lincoln Electric scholarships.

Apply Online

Find the application at www.llec.coop/ scholarships

🏪 Other Ways to **Apply**

Applications are also available from the Lyon-Lincoln Electric office or through your high school guidance counselor.

Topological Deadline:

Friday, February 6, 2026

Don't Miss Out!

Start your year strong apply today and earn some free money for your future from your local electric cooperative!



As we prepare to welcome a new year, Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative and our generation and transmission partner, Basin Electric, are once again proud to invest in the future of our communities by supporting area students.

Applications are now being accepted for the Basin Electric and Lyon-Lincoln **Electric Scholarship Programs!**

Basin Electric Scholarship

Basin Electric, headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota, generates the electricity that powers more than 140 member cooperatives across nine states, including Lyon-Lincoln Electric. Each year, Basin Electric awards a \$1,000 scholarship to one student from every member cooperative.

For 32 years, Lyon-Lincoln Electric has proudly participated in this program, helping local students reach their education goals.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Scholarship

In addition to the Basin Electric award, Lyon-Lincoln Electric offers a \$500

scholarship to graduating seniors at high schools in our service area through the Operation Round Up program.

Together, these scholarships have supported more than 5,000 students with over \$5 million awarded since the program began.

Why Co-ops Care

Locally owned and operated, electric cooperatives were built by members of our communities — for our communities. Supporting local students is one of the many ways we give back and help empower the next generation of leaders, innovators, and community builders.

Apply Now!

Don't miss your chance to apply for these scholarship opportunities and take the next step toward your future.

Application details:

- www.llec.coop/ scholarships
- 📆 Deadline date: February 6, 2025
- Questions? Contact Lyon-Lincoln Electric at 1-800-927-6276 or email@llec.coop

"When we invest in students, we invest in the future of our co-ops and communities."

THE BRIGHT HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

It's hard to imagine the holidays without the warm glow of Christmas lights. But did you know the sparkle we love today started centuries ago, long before electricity?

Back in the 1600s, families in Germany decorated their trees with candles. Yes, real candles! Beautiful? Absolutely. Safe? Not so much. The flickering glow could only be enjoyed for a few moments before the fire risk became too great.

A Brilliant Idea

Fast forward to 1879 when Thomas Edison gave the world the light bulb. Just a few years later, Edison's colleague, Edward H. Johnson, had the bright idea to hand-wire 80 colorful bulbs on his Christmas tree. The tree even revolved in his living room, powered by a generator. Talk about an over-the-top display for the neighbors!

At first, only the wealthy could afford such a luxury, but the lights got their big break in 1895 when President Grover Cleveland lit up the White House Christmas tree with dazzling colored bulbs. Suddenly, electric lights were the "must-have" holiday decoration.

* From Front Yards to Fame

By the 1920s, safer outdoor light strings made it possible to take the glow outside and Americans didn't hold back. Soon, neighborhoods began competing to see who could create the brightest, most festive displays. What started as friendly rivalry between neighbors grew into full-blown holiday lighting contests, with entire communities joining in the fun. From small-town parades to citywide "best display" competitions, holiday lights became more than just decorations, they became a way to bring people together, spread cheer, and celebrate the season with a little extra sparkle.

≠Brighter, Better, Greener

Now we've traded old glass bulbs for long-lasting, energy-saving LEDs. They use up to **80% less energy** than traditional incandescent lights, shine brighter, and are tough enough to survive winter weather. That means more sparkle for less cost, a win for your wallet and the environment. In fact, running a strand of LED lights for an entire holiday season often costs less than a cup of coffee! To put it in perspective: a house covered in **500 LED lights can use about the same electricity as a single old-fashioned incandescent bulb**. Some LEDs even sync to music or smart-home apps, creating unforgettable "flip the switch" moments that light up the whole block, all while keeping energy use in check.

Why We Still Love the Glow

Through centuries of change, from candles to LEDs, one thing has stayed the same: holiday lights bring joy, warmth, and a little magic to the darkest days of winter.

So, the next time you plug in your holiday display, remember, you're not just stringing up lights. You're carrying on a tradition that's been making spirits bright for over 350 years... and now, you can do it in a way that's festive and efficient. *

Light Up Smarter: Energy-Saving Holiday Tips

Want to keep your home merry and your electric bill in check this season? Try these simple tips:

Switch to LEDs:

They use up to 80% less energy than traditional bulbs and last for years.

Use Timers or Smart Plugs:

Set your lights to shine in the evenings, but give them a rest overnight.

Choose Fewer, Brighter Strands:

Modern LEDs shine so bright you can often use fewer strings for the same effect.

Get Creative Indoors:

Reflective ornaments, tinsel, and mirrors can amplify light and add sparkle without extra watts.

Go Solar When You Can:

Solar-powered holiday lights soak up the sun by day and sparkle by night no outlet or extra electricity needed!

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a prize!

Your Phone Number:______ Your E-mail Address:_____



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.

NOV. 21-JAN 5 Winter Wonderland at the Falls

5 p.m. Falls Park Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 29 Parade of Lights

6 p.m. Holly Boulevard Brandon, SD

NOV. 29

How the Grinch Stole Christmas Holiday Parade 6 p.m.

Flandreau, SD 605-864-1200

NOV. 30 Pepperberries Christmas Market

11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 141 N. 3rd St. Emery, SD

DEC. 1American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast

8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. 1600 W. Russell St. Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 5

Colman Looney Lights 5 p.m. Colman, SD

DEC. 5

Hometown Christmas

Downtown Salem, SD

DEC. 5

Christmas Tree Lighting & Standstill Parade

5:30 p.m. Alcester, SD

DEC. 5

The Winter Roundup Holiday Vendor Fair

4-9 p.m. 307 E. 6th St. Alcester, SD

DEC. 5-7, 12-14 Mighty Corson Players Humbug

Dec. 5-6, 12-13: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7, 14: 2:30 p.m. Corson, SD www.mightycorson.com

DEC. 6KJAM Parade of Lights

5:30 p.m. Madison, SD 605-256-4514

DEC. 6-7 The Black Market

Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Expo Building W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Sioux Falls, SD 605-332-6004

DEC. 7 Parade of Lights/ Christmas Tree Lighting

5:30 p.m. Downtown Hartford, SD

DEC. 13-14

Alexandria Winterfest

Downtown Alexandria, SD

DEC. 14 Lake Campbell Lutheran Cookie Walk

9 a.m. 46610 219th St. Volga, SD 605-864-9907

DEC. 14 Canova Firemen's

Pancake Feed

Legion Hall Canova, 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.