

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The Days of '76 Rodeo

**A Century of Grit and
Glory**

Pages 8-9

Fort Meade Patriotism

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A Legacy of Service Highlighted at the Cooperative's 87th Annual Meeting

The Cooperative held its 87th Annual Meeting with the theme, "A Legacy of Service," highlighting the partnership between the Board of Directors, management team, employees, and member-owners in maintaining reliable and affordable electric service for our communities.

Board Chairman Dale Fier and General Manager Tim O'Leary presented a joint report that focused on reliability, financial stewardship, safety, and the long-term planning needed to meet the future needs of the cooperative.

As part of the meeting, members recognized the employees and directors of the cooperative for their continued dedication and service. The report also began with an important electrical safety message reminding members to watch for damaged electrical cords, avoid overloading circuits, and encourage children to stay away from overhead power lines and underground transformers.

O'Leary reported that the cooperative has continued investing heavily in infrastructure improvements to maintain system reliability. Over the past three years, nearly \$2 million has been invested annually in projects including line upgrades, underground line replacement, pole replacement, transformer upgrades, and vegetation management.

In 2025, the cooperative also received a grant that helped offset the purchase of a new mulcher to strengthen the vegetation management program. These efforts help reduce outages and improve restoration times during severe weather events.

The report also addressed the financial challenges facing electric cooperatives across the region. O'Leary explained that increasing wholesale power costs, higher interest rates on infrastructure loans, and rising material costs contributed to the rate adjustment implemented on January 1, 2026. Additional rate discussions are expected during the 2027 budgeting process.

Despite those challenges, the cooperative continues to focus on returning value to members. Lyon-Lincoln Electric remains ranked #14 out of 698 electric cooperatives nationwide in the return

of capital credits to members, reflecting the strength of the cooperative business model.

The report also highlighted the importance of long-term power supply planning and continued investments in substations, transmission infrastructure, and system capacity to ensure reliable service in a changing energy environment.

Chairman Fier also recognized retiring legislators who have supported rural electric cooperatives and rural communities over the years, including State Senators Bill Weber and Gary Dahms and Representatives Joe Schomaker and Chris Swedzinski. Their willingness to work with cooperatives on rural policy issues was greatly appreciated.

Additional updates included the cooperative's continued commitment to member programs, scholarships, economic development, and energy efficiency initiatives. Members also received an update on the ongoing load control receiver replacement program, which helps reduce wholesale power costs during peak demand periods.

The Board and management team also discussed the cooperative's evaluation of future headquarters facility needs. The current headquarters building, constructed in 1978, continues to serve the cooperative, but aging infrastructure and operational limitations have prompted an evaluation of remodeling the current facility or constructing a new headquarters building. No final decision has been made.

A special moment during the meeting was the recognition of Director Galen Grant for 33 years of service representing District 2. Grant was recognized for his leadership, dedication to the cooperative's membership, and years of service to both the cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative.

The meeting concluded with a continued commitment from both the Board and management team to focus on reliability, affordability, and the long-term strength of the cooperative while carrying forward its legacy of service to the membership and communities served.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

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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

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Lyle Lamote – Line Superintendent
Kristi Jensen – Finance Manager
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Tyler Sand – Journeyman Linemen
Nathan Pavek – Journeyman Linemen
Trent Skjefte – Journeyman Linemen
Sam Rohde – Journeyman Linemen

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Jessica Gums, Editor

Shift Timing, Shift Savings

Summer heat means our homes use more electricity, especially during the late afternoon when air conditioners, appliances and other household activities are all running at once. These high-demand times, known as peak energy hours, place extra strain on the electric grid.

At Lyon-Lincoln Electric, we work hard to provide safe, reliable and affordable power every day. One of the easiest ways members can help is by shifting some energy use to off-peak hours. Small adjustments at home can make a big difference in reducing demand and keeping the grid running efficiently during the hottest days of summer.

Simple changes include running the dishwasher before bed, doing laundry later in the evening or cooking meals earlier in the day. Spacing out the use of large appliances also helps reduce strain during peak times. Shaun Madden - 1566500.

Smart thermostats can automatically adjust temperatures for better efficiency, and even raising the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours can help lower energy use. In the kitchen, using smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers or outdoor grills can reduce both electricity use and indoor heat. Ceiling fans are another easy way to stay comfortable while using less energy.

While these efforts may seem small, they add up when communities work together. By making mindful choices about when and how electricity is used, members help support a stronger, more reliable energy system for everyone all summer long.

Same Energy. Different Impact.

The demand for electricity is typically highest in the late afternoon during peak energy hours. You can help lower demand by shifting when energy-intensive activities happen.



Shift appliance use to off-peak hours.

- Run the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- Use the oven earlier or later (during off-peak hours.)
- Space out use of major appliances.



Use a programmable or smart thermostat.

- Automatically adjust the temp setting during peak hours.
- Schedule home cooling cycles for efficiency.



Opt for low-energy alternatives during peak hours.

- Use small appliances like slow cookers or air fryers—or fire up the grill—instead of the oven.
- Air-dry clothes instead of using the dryer.
- Use ceiling fans for additional cooling.

YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON: MARCH 2026

	March - 2025	March - 2026
Total Revenue	\$3,267,890	\$3,611,647
Cost of Power	\$1,837,323	\$2,140,558
Operating Expenses	\$1,428,861	\$1,418,053
Operating Margins	\$1,706	\$53,036
KWH's Purchased	30,395,635	28,935,351
KWH's Sold	28,841,731	27,593,359
Members	3,955	3,950
Miles of Line	1,670	1,669
Members per Mile	2.37	2.37

BEFORE THE SMOKE: PROTECT YOUR HOME BEFORE WILDFIRE SEASON

Wildfires can move quickly, especially when dry grass, high winds and hot weather come together. In rural South Dakota, where homes, farms, shelterbelts, outbuildings and open grassland share the same landscape, preparation matters.

But there is one important point to make first: fighting a wildfire is not a job for homeowners.

If a wildfire is nearby, leave firefighting to trained professionals. Follow evacuation orders, call 911 to report a fire and stay away from downed power lines, smoke-filled areas and active fire zones. Cooperative members can do their most important work in advance, taking steps that make a property harder for fire to reach and easier for responders to protect.

One of the most effective steps is creating defensible space around the home. That does not mean clearing every tree or turning a yard into bare ground. It means reducing combustible material near houses, garages, sheds and other structures, while thinking about how fire could move from brush to trees to buildings.

Start closest to the house. Embers can collect against siding, under decks, in gutters or near steps. Remove dry leaves, dead plants, stacked lumber, cardboard and other combustible materials from next to the home. Gravel, rock, concrete, pavers and other hardscaping can be better choices near walls, decks and porches.

Gutters and roofs deserve attention, too. Leaves and needles can become dry fuel. Cleaning them before fire season can reduce the chance that embers find an easy place to ignite.

From there, look at the rest of the yard. Clear dead brush, tall grass and dried weeds, especially near structures. Keep grass mowed around homes, outbuildings, propane tanks and driveways. Trim and space shrubs and trees so fire cannot easily climb from grass to brush to tree canopies. Low branches can act like ladder fuels.

Do not overlook decks, porches and crawlspaces. Dry leaves, grass clippings and other materials can collect underneath. Cleaning those areas and using screening can help keep debris from building up.

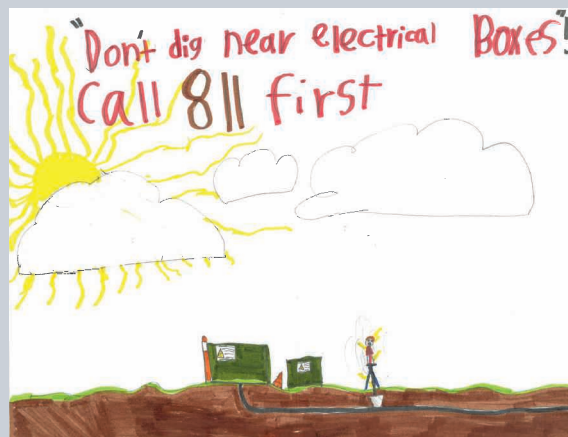
Access is part of preparation, too. Firefighters need to reach

a property quickly and safely. Keep driveways clear, make sure gates can open and trim branches that could block emergency vehicles. Clearly visible address signs can help responders find a home when visibility is poor.

Before making major landscaping changes, building fences, planting trees or adding new water lines, call 811. Underground electric, gas, water and communication lines may be closer than expected. A free locate request helps protect homeowners, utility crews and infrastructure.

Cooperative members can also make a plan. Know two ways out of the property or neighborhood. Keep important documents, medications and emergency supplies ready to go. Take photos or videos of buildings, equipment and belongings for insurance records.

Wildfire preparation is a seasonal habit, much like cleaning gutters, changing filters or preparing equipment for winter. The goal is not to fight the fire. That job belongs to firefighters and emergency responders. The goal is to give the home, property and responders a better chance before the fire ever starts.



**"Don't dig near electrical boxes!
Call 811 first."**

Caleb Blake, age 9

Caleb urges members to not dig near a pad-mounted transformer. Thank you for sharing your picture, Caleb! Caleb's parents are Peter and Stephanie Blake – members of West River Electric.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Sweet on RHUBARB

RHUBARB CAKE

Ingredients:

White cake mix
4 cups rhubarb, diced
1 cup white sugar
2 cups heavy whipping cream

Method

Mix white cake as directed on the box. Pour in a greased 9x12 pan. Place 4 cups of diced rhubarb over the top. Pour 1 cup of white sugar over the rhubarb. Pour 2 cups of heavy whipping cream over the top. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

Jeanette Kleinsasser
Dakota Energy

RHUBARB SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups rhubarb, chopped
4 tbsps. water
1/2 cup sugar
3 oz. red jello
3/4 cup cold water
1 apple, diced
1 banana, sliced

Method

Combine rhubarb, water and sugar. Stir and cook until mushy. Add jello and stir until dissolved. Add 3/4 cup cold water. Cool until it begins to set. Stir in diced apple and sliced banana. Chill and serve.

Leanne Eich
Central Electric

RHUBARB CHEESE CAKE

Ingredients:

Rhubarb Filling

9" pie shell, unbaked
2 1/2 cups rhubarb, chopped
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. flour

Cheese Cake Filling

8 oz. cream cheese
2 eggs, added one at a time
1/2 cup sugar

Topping

3/4 cup sour cream
2 tbsps. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Method

Stir rhubarb with flour and sugar. Put in the unbaked pie shell and bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and lower temperature to 350° degrees.

Beat cream cheese, add 2 eggs one at a time, then add the sugar. Mix well and pour over hot rhubarb layer. Bake 30 minutes at 350° degrees.

Mix the topping of sour cream, sugar and vanilla well and spread over hot pie. Cool 3 hours or more before serving. The flavors blend better the longer it cools. Refrigerate leftovers.

Charles Lebeda
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.

April 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, April 27, 2026. The following directors were present: Scott Johnson, Jared Dritz, Kathy Schreurs, Mary Gunnink, Joel Buyck, Galen Grant, Mike Longtin and Dale Fier. Absent: James Rokeh. 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 February 2026 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, reviewed the Financial and Operating Report for February, 2026. The Board reviewed a letter that had been received from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange concerning an allocation of the 2025 margins and reviewed information that had been obtained from National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation which showed the interest payment on subordinated term certificates.

The board viewed the March 2026 Outage and Safety Reports prepared by Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent. The Board was advised of the March Safety Meeting that had been held on March 17, 2026 concerning the topic of Annual Switchman Training conducted

by Colton Sanderson from East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Mr. Lamote indicated that the linemen were working on the following projects: trimming trees and using the mulcher to control growth along the electric lines in the Cooperative's service territory, started work on underground jobs, and replacing poles.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed his report with the Board and discussion was as follows: advised that the Load Control Receiver (LCR) replacement project has mailed letters to about 25% of the total list of members with an approximate 60% return rate. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is preparing for Round 3 Requests for proposals concerning the National Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Program, which plans to build out charging along non-Interstate corridors. Provided an update on some research concerning AI tools that are available to the Cooperative and may be used to better serve the membership and operate more efficiently.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave his General Manager's Report and was as follows: reviewed the March 2026 power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, presented information comparing past due amounts between March 2025 and 2026, reported on the East River MAC Meeting, reviewed upcoming meetings and notices, discussed the Operation RoundUp Board with the Board and indicated that Katy Vos (District 1)

and Kayla Werkman (District 2) will be completing their second term on the Board and are not eligible to serve another term. Deb Belaeen (District 3) will be finishing her first term and is eligible to serve a second term, and reviewed the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s Cyber Report for March 2026 which was prepared by East River Cyber Security Department.

Directors, Joe Buyck and Mike Longtin discussed the CoBank ENGAGE Minnesota Customer Meeting which they had attended.

There was discussion concerning the District Meetings that had taken place and it was reported to the Board that the following members of the Cooperative received votes to be placed on the ballot for the position of being a Board Member for Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. and the results were as follows:

District One – Scott Johnson received 12 votes and Neil Thoofst received 6 votes.

District Two – John Weise received 14 votes and Glen Grant received 11 votes.

District Three – Dale Fier received 10 votes and Darin Brink received 5 votes.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, then discussed with the Board the remodeling or replacement of the headquarters building and indicated that he was obtaining more information on the possible headquarters project.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 11:58pm.

Electrical Safety *around* Water

*Prevent
shocks around
pools, hot tubs and
spas before
they happen.*

- Use a qualified electrician for any new pool, hot tub or spa wiring.
- Use covered outdoor outlets.
- Make sure outlets are GFCI-protected and tested monthly.
- Keep cords away from water. Don't use extension cords for pool equipment.
- Replace cracked outlet covers, frayed cords, loose plugs or damaged equipment.
- Choose battery-operated and waterproof TVs, radios and speakers.
- Don't handle phones, tablets, laptops or charging cords when you're wet, and keep them away from pools, spas and sinks.
- Check power line clearance with an electrician or your utility when installing pools, spas and structures like diving boards; and have utilities marked before digging.
- Schedule periodic electrical inspections and upgrades for your equipment.
- Have an electrician show you how to shut off all power in an emergency and make sure the shut-off switch is labeled.

Know the risks: Wet skin + wet surfaces = increased risk when electricity is present.

Warning signs of shock in the water:

- Tingling sensation.
- Muscle cramps.
- Restricted movement.

If you suspect electrical shock:

- Turn off all power immediately.
- Do NOT enter the water to rescue anyone.
- Use a non-conductive rescue tool (such as fiberglass).
- Call 911.

If you feel a shock in the water, move away from the source and get out.

 **Safe Electricity.org®** Learn more at:

APRIL 2026: OUTAGE REPORT

10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

4/2/26- 593 consumers were off 5 minutes out of the Tyler Substation. The cause was East River had issues with ice on their transmission lines.

4/2/26- 223 consumers were off 1 hour and 5 minutes out of the Lake Benton Substation. The cause was East River had issues with ice on their transmission lines.

4/4/26- 13 consumers were off 40 minutes in Diamond Lake Township. The cause was ice on the lines.

4/19/26- 139 consumers were off 45 minutes in Lynd and Lyons Townships. The cause was an individual hit a 3 phase pole that had to be replaced.

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, Rita Mack & Kevin Mahoney 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

Running multiple major appliances at the same time—like your dishwasher, laundry machines and oven—can spike energy demand and strain the electric grid, especially during peak hours (typically late afternoon to early evening). Instead of stacking appliance use, spread it out throughout the day or shift chores to off-peak hours when energy demand is lower. This not only helps improve overall efficiency but can also reduce your energy costs. A simple habit change, like doing laundry in the morning and running the dishwasher overnight, can make a meaningful difference for both your wallet and energy reliability.

Source: energy.gov



A CENTURY OF GRIT AND GLORY

The Days of '76 Rodeo

Photos by KSchurr Photography

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

In the historic gulch of Deadwood, S.D., the past isn't tucked away in books – it rides out of old wooden chutes every July at the Days of '76 Rodeo.

What began more than a century ago as a short weekend celebration has grown into a week-long rodeo and parade tradition that draws contestants and visitors from across the country. Yet, amid the growth and national recognition, the Days of '76 remains rooted in family, heritage and a deep sense of place.

Pat Roberts, longtime board member of the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "It started in 1924, and it actually wasn't a rodeo then. It was a celebration of Deadwood and its establishment in 1876 – hence where the name came from. It was started by the community just to promote the founding."

Those early celebrations featured parades, horses, fireworks and the kind of small-town pageantry that fits a frontier

community proud of its past. The full-fledged rodeo format came a few years later in the late 1920s, but the heart of the event hasn't changed: honoring Deadwood's origins and the Western way of life that built it.

Today, the Days of '76 Rodeo is marking its 104th year alongside other milestones – the 150th anniversary of Deadwood and the nation's 250th anniversary.

The rodeo boasts a total payout of roughly \$350,000 and typically draws 700 to 800 contestants, including top names like Rocker Steiner, Lisa Lockhart and rising stars such as Emily Beisel. During a week of performances, 25,000 to 30,000 spectators pack the grandstands, turning the arena into a sea of cowboy hats and hometown pride.

The events remain classic: bareback riding, steer wrestling, calf roping, team roping, barrel racing, saddle bronc riding, bull riding and breakaway roping. No frills, no gimmicks – just the timeless contests of skill and grit that define rodeo.

"We just keep it traditional," Pat said. "Just welcome everybody to Deadwood to enjoy the best cowboys and the best bucking stock that we can get."

For a town of about 1,200 people, the Days of '76 Rodeo has earned outsized recognition.

In 2011, the Days of '76 was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, a distinction the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) had not extended to a rodeo in many years.

Chris Roberts, son of Pat Roberts and fellow board member on the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "We won the PRCA Rodeo of the Year every single year that we were in the medium category until we surpassed into large. We've been nominated many times in the large category and won it once. To our knowledge, we're the only rodeo that's won Rodeo of the Year in each and every category."

In Deadwood, legacy still rides out of wooden chutes, year after year, drawing generational athletes. Rodeo here is a family affair. The Roberts family has been involved continuously since the event began.

"There's been a Roberts at every Days of '76 celebration since it started," said Pat.

Pat attended his first Days of '76 Rodeo when he was four days old and serves on the board with his son, Chris.

"I'm fourth generation," Chris said. "My great-granddad was there from year one, and we never missed a single year. Then his son – my granddad – followed in his footsteps, my dad and now me."

A fifth generation is already helping behind the scenes, continuing a family legacy that mirrors the rodeo's own endurance through the decades.

That kind of continuity isn't unique to the Roberts alone. Many contestants

arrive with stories of parents and grandparents who once competed in Deadwood.

"From a contestant perspective, I'd be willing to bet that no matter where you grew up, if you are a rodeo family, Deadwood was one that was always on the map," Chris said. "I hear it every single year – contestants talking about how grandpa or great-grandpa, grandma or great-grandma competed in Deadwood, and they've always wanted to be here. In the rodeo world, everybody knows Deadwood."

Mackenzi Gatzke, secretary of the board of directors, says her family story is similar. She currently serves on the Days of '76 board alongside both of her parents and noted two other families who have long served on the board promoting the event.

"Our board is all made up of people who were or still are locals to Deadwood, and we're all volunteers," she said. "We really do it because we love Deadwood, and we love the Days of '76 and the tradition behind it. We actually have four different families with multiple generations on our board, and we all just work together like one big family that just loves the community."

That focus on authenticity extends beyond the arena. The Days of '76 Museum houses the largest working



collection of horse-drawn wagons in the country, along with memorabilia from across the Black Hills dating back to 1876. During rodeo week, many of those wagons leave their resting place to roll through downtown Deadwood in historic parades – matching the sight of a 19th-century streetscape.

For Pat Roberts, rodeo's relevance in modern life is still significant and comes down to identity.

"It's tradition – it's the cowboy way," he said. "These cowboys and cowgirls are athletes...and the horses are too. They're bred to buck. We're not hurting anything by doing it – that's what they want to do. Just think of Deadwood and the West. Rodeo fits right in."



COORDINATING POWER Across the Grid

POWERING YOUR DAY: HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOU

Flip a switch and the lights come on. It's something we all count on, every single day.

But behind that simple moment is a coordinated system of people, equipment and organizations all working together to keep power flowing safely and reliably. At Lyon-Lincoln Electric, we think it's important for our members to understand how it all comes together.



WHERE IT ALL BEGINS: GENERATING ELECTRICITY

Electricity starts at power plants. These facilities generate energy using a mix of sources like natural gas, coal, nuclear energy, hydropower, wind and solar.

Having a variety of energy sources helps ensure electricity remains reliable while also supporting affordability and long-term sustainability.

MOVING POWER ACROSS THE REGION

Once electricity is created, it travels long distances to reach our communities. High-voltage transmission lines—those tall structures you see along highways and across fields—carry large amounts of electricity across the grid.

Because electricity can't easily be stored, it has to move continuously and in real time from where it's produced to where it's needed.



OUR POWER PARTNER: EAST RIVER ELECTRIC

Lyon-Lincoln Electric works closely with East River Electric Cooperative, our generation and transmission partner.

East River supplies the wholesale electricity we distribute to our members and helps ensure a steady, reliable flow of power across our region.

KEEPING EVERYTHING IN BALANCE

Across the country, organizations help coordinate the flow of electricity. Think of them like air traffic controllers for the grid, constantly balancing supply and demand and directing where power is needed most.

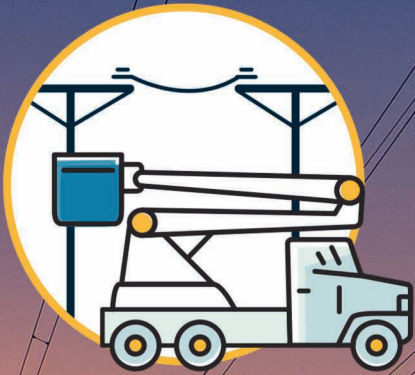
This behind-the-scenes coordination ensures electricity is available the moment you need it.



DELIVERING POWER TO YOU

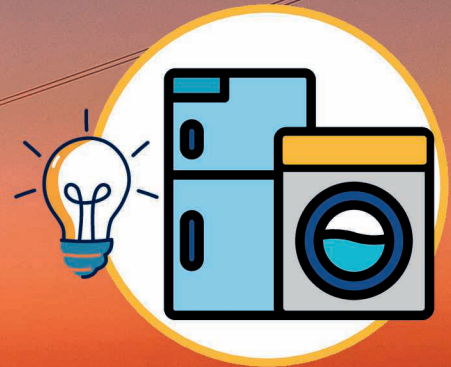
This is where Lyon-Lincoln Electric comes in. We take electricity from the transmission system and deliver it directly to your home, farm or business through local distribution lines. We also maintain poles, power lines and substations throughout our service area.

When storms hit or outages occur, our crews are ready to respond, working safely and efficiently to restore power as quickly as possible.



YOUR ROLE IN THE GRID

Every member plays a part in how the grid operates. Energy use rises during peak times, like hot summer afternoons or cold winter mornings. Small actions, like adjusting your thermostat or running appliances during off-peak hours, can help reduce strain on the system and improve overall efficiency.



WORKING TOGETHER TO POWER OUR COMMUNITIES

From generation to transmission to local delivery, it takes a team effort to keep the lights on.

At Lyon-Lincoln Electric, we're proud to be your trusted energy partner—and to play our part in powering the communities we call home.



FORT MEADE & THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

How South Dakota Set the Stage for a National Anthem

Jacob Boyko

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This month – July of 2026 – the United States of America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when the Founding Fathers declared the end of Great Britain's role as their colonial overseer.

No patriotic song captures the sacrifice and resilience of the American experiment quite like the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." However, the anthem is not from the American Revolution, nor was it immediately adopted as the nation's official song. Its story unfolded over more than a century, from a British bombardment in Baltimore to a flag-lowering ceremony on the plains of western South Dakota.

The War of 1812

The year is 1814. The United States of America is in the midst of its second war with Great Britain – The War of 1812 – and the nation is reeling from a recent attack on Washington, D.C., where British troops torched the Capitol and White House.

A Maryland lawyer, Francis Scott Key, had just boarded a British naval vessel. He was sent there on behalf of the U.S. government to negotiate the release of an American prisoner, and while his negotiation was successful, Key was not allowed to return ashore until the British forces completed their bombardment on nearby Fort McHenry for fear that Key had overheard military plans while on board.

Detained aboard the enemy ship, Key looked ashore to Baltimore as the American forces fended off the invasion. As dusk settled over the harbor, it became harder for Key to track the battle, his only illumination being the occasional glow of British rockets and exploding shells. Key watched through the night, not sure who was winning the drawn-out fight. At dawn, there was just enough illumination for Key to make out the American flag still flying over the fort. The Americans had held



Visitors to Fort Meade (1 mile west of Sturgis, S.D.) will see the very same flag pole used by Col. Caleb Carlton during the flag retirements. These once-a-day evening ceremonies were the first instance of the Star Spangled Banner serving as the United States' unofficial national anthem.

Photo submitted by Randy Bender

the fort and fended off the British from Baltimore.

Key's experience that night inspired him to write a poem he titled "The Defence of Fort M'Henry." Later, it was put to song and became known as "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Fort Meade

Fast forward to 1892, thousands of miles west on the American frontier.

Col. Caleb Carlton is the new commander of the Eighth U.S. Cavalry at Fort Meade, a U.S. Army post in the young state of South Dakota. About a mile west, the bustling town of Sturgis is growing along with the fort, serving as an important stop along numerous trails heading toward gold country in the streams of the Black Hills.

"Fort Meade was put in place in about 1878 to help maintain the peace in the Black Hills region between the native tribes and the settlers coming in," explained Randy Bender, a lifelong resident of Sturgis and second-generation Fort Meade Museum board member.

Carlton was eager to make his mark – not through a battle, but patriotism. He and his wife discussed how they could better instill respect for the American flag among their troops stationed at the fort. The Carltons' idea was to have the band play an official song during the evening retreat, when the flag is retired for the night.

"Carlton issued orders that all within hearing distance were to stand at attention, and all men not under arms were to remove their hats as a sign of respect to the flag," Bender said.

That song, chosen at the urging of Mrs. Carlton, was the Star Spangled Banner.

"We selected the Star Spangled Banner as it was written under very unusual circumstances," Carlton later wrote in a 1914 letter.

Carlton's daughter, Mabel, recalled the first ceremony in her journal.

"As the final notes of the song faded away, the flag landed gently in the arms of the waiting troops," she wrote. "If it had been practiced, it could not have been done more perfectly."

From Fort Meade, the practice began to spread as other officers and government officials visited and observed the ceremony.

"The New York Times referred to the fact that (I) was trying to establish a national anthem," Carlton wrote. "This attracted the attention of Col. Cook in command of the recruiting depot at David's Island, who wrote me that he was having recruits taught to sing our national air. I suggested he concentrate his instruction on the Star Spangled Banner."

Carlton also wrote that later, during a meeting in Harrisburg with Pennsylvania Gov. Daniel H. Hastings, that the governor promised he would initiate the playing of the Star Spangled Banner among the state's militia.

The most decisive support came during a meeting between Carlton and Secretary of War Daniel Lamont, with the two speaking about the custom. Before long,



Above: Officers of the 8th Cavalry in Fort Meade, S.D. in 1892. Photo courtesy of the South Dakota State Historical Society

Right: A photograph of Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Lamont ordered that the Star Spangled Banner be played during evening retreats across the nation.

Nearly 40 years after Fort Meade's first Star Spangled Banner rendition, Congress in 1931 declared it the national anthem.

Today, visitors to Fort Meade can stand near the place where that custom began. A historical marker near the parade ground bears the words "It Started Here," connecting the South Dakota fort to the story of the national anthem.

"That flagpole that they lowered the flag down from for that event is still standing at Fort Meade, and still used," Bender said.

For Bender, who grew up at Fort Meade while his father worked at the

VA hospital and mother served on the museum board, the historic post still carries the feel of another era.

"When you visit Fort Meade, it's like stepping back in time," Bender said.

Many visitors are surprised to learn about Fort Meade's place in the anthem's history.

"It's one of those things we just take for granted that we have a national anthem," Bender said, "We never stopped to think about how these things came to be. But every one of those stories had to start at some point, and the national anthem story got its start in Fort Meade, South Dakota."

The Fort Meade museum is open from mid-May through the end of September 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Basin Electric Breaks Ground on Historic Generation Facility



Basin Electric leaders and partners breakground at Bison Generation Station near Ray, North Dakota. The approximately 1,490-megawatt natural gas facility will help meet growing energy demand from cooperative members across the region.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) broke ground Monday, May 11, 2026, on Bison Generation Station, located near Ray, North Dakota. With two roughly 745-megawatt (MW) units, the combined-cycle natural gas-fueled power plant will produce up to 1,490 MW making it one of the largest electric generation projects in the cooperative's history.

"In a few short years, Bison Generation Station will stand as the flagship of Basin Electric's natural gas fleet," said Todd Brickhouse, CEO and general manager for Basin Electric. "Producing nearly 1,500 megawatts of electricity, it will reflect our commitment to delivering reliable, affordable electricity in a safe and environmentally responsible manner."

The project, estimated at nearly \$4 billion, will be built near the existing Wheelock substation along U.S. Highway 2. Using combined-cycle technology, the facility brings efficiency to its operation by harnessing the energy in locally produced natural gas via both a combustion turbine and a steam turbine to generate electricity. The project supports the cooperative's long-standing strategy of converting low-cost, regional natural resources, such as coal, wind, hydro, and natural gas, into affordable and reliable electricity for its members.

"This truly is a historic day for Basin Electric and our state as a whole," said North Dakota Gov. Kelly Armstrong. "We

produce a lot of reliable and clean energy in North Dakota, and we do it better than anywhere in the world. We are excited to add Bison Generation Station to our impressive fleet of power plants."

As demand for traditional energy increases, Bison Generation Station helps Basin Electric maintain reliability and adapt to an evolving energy landscape. This project is part of the cooperative's all-of-the-above generation portfolio strategy, designed to ensure affordable and dependable power for members while mitigating market and operational risks.

The construction of Bison Generation Station is a historic achievement for Basin Electric. It stands as the cooperative's largest natural gas fueled facility, its largest solely owned power plant, and the most significant generation investment in its history. Mitchell Groen - 864401.

"We're standing in a moment where we can recognize history is happening," said Gavin McCollam, senior vice president and chief operating officer for Basin Electric. "Bison Generation Station represents not just an investment in infrastructure, but a commitment to reliability, collaboration, and the long-term energy needs of our members."

PCL Construction was awarded the general contractor bid for the facility. Grading and site preparation began in August 2025. At peak construction in mid-2027, the project is expected to require a workforce of approximately 1,000 craft workers and field engineers. Once completed, the facility will employ approximately 50 full-time staff for operations, maintenance, and administration. The power plant is anticipated to be fully operational in 2030.

About Basin Electric

Basin Electric is a consumer-owned, regional cooperative headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota. It generates and transmits electricity to 138 member rural electric systems in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. These member systems distribute electricity to about 3 million members. Learn more at www.basinelectric.com

Press release & photos courtesy of Basin Electric Power Cooperative



Artist rendering of the future Bison Generation Station, expected to be completed in 2030.

A STEADY VOICE OF REASON

Honoring Galen Grant's Legacy of Service

After more than 33 years on the Lyon Lincoln Electric Co-operative board, Galen Grant is stepping away, closing out a chapter defined by steady leadership, thoughtful input, and a deep commitment to the people this cooperative serves. Along the way, he also spent 16 years on the East River board, gaining a broader perspective while staying rooted in the same core values.

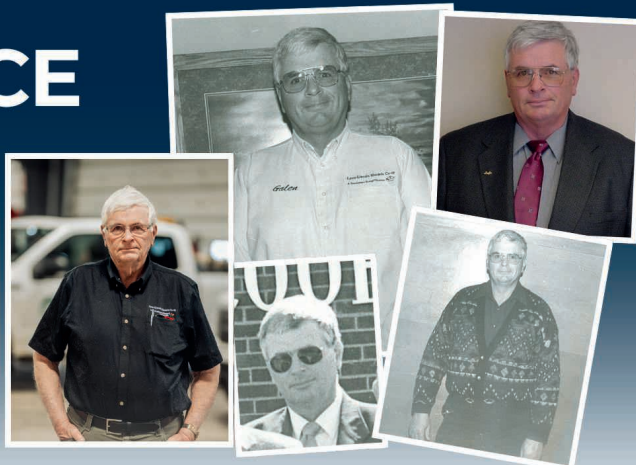


Like a lot of good stories, Galen's start did not come with a big plan. In fact, he will tell you it happened by accident, showing up late to a District meeting and somehow ending up on the ballot. What followed was not about titles or recognition, but about showing up, doing the work, and being part of something bigger than himself.

Ask Galen what he is most proud of, and you will not get just one answer. It is not about a single decision or moment. It is about seeing things come together over time. Projects that improved reliability. Investments that strengthened the system. Progress that made a real difference for the members. But if there is one thing that stands out, it is Operation Round Up. To Galen, that program captures what a cooperative is all about, neighbors helping neighbors. Watching those dollars go right back into local communities, supporting kids, families, and organizations, has meant a lot to him over the years.

And while the work matters, the people mattered just as much. Board meetings were not just meetings. They were a chance to connect, build relationships, and work toward a shared goal. And Galen had a way of making those rooms feel a little lighter. Whether it was a well-timed joke or a quick punch line, he knew how to bring a moment of humor when it was needed most. That sense of connection grew even more during his time with East River, where he built friendships that have lasted well beyond the boardroom.

Over three decades, a lot changed. New faces, new technology, new challenges. Through it all, Galen stayed steady.



He never saw change as something that had to be rushed or forced, but as something that happens over time, with the right conversations and the right mindset. He respected the process, listened carefully, and stayed open to new ideas, helping move things forward without losing sight of what really matters.

If there is one thing Galen would pass along to future board members, it is this: Take your time and listen. You do not have to have all the answers right away. The best decisions come from working together and finding that middle ground. It is simple advice, but it has served him well.

He is also someone who keeps things in perspective. Not every issue needs to be a battle, and not every challenge needs to linger. Keep moving forward, do not dwell too long, and appreciate the opportunity to be part of something meaningful. That is the approach he has carried both in the boardroom and in life.

At the end of the day, what stands out most to Galen is something pretty simple, reliability. When you flip the switch, the lights come on. It is easy to take for granted, but it is the foundation of everything the cooperative does. Being part of that, making sure it happens day in and day out, has been one of the most rewarding parts of his service.



As he steps away, Galen is looking forward to slowing things down a bit. More time on the farm, more time with family, and yes, probably a few well-earned naps. But he will miss it too, the meetings, the conversations, and the monthly routine.

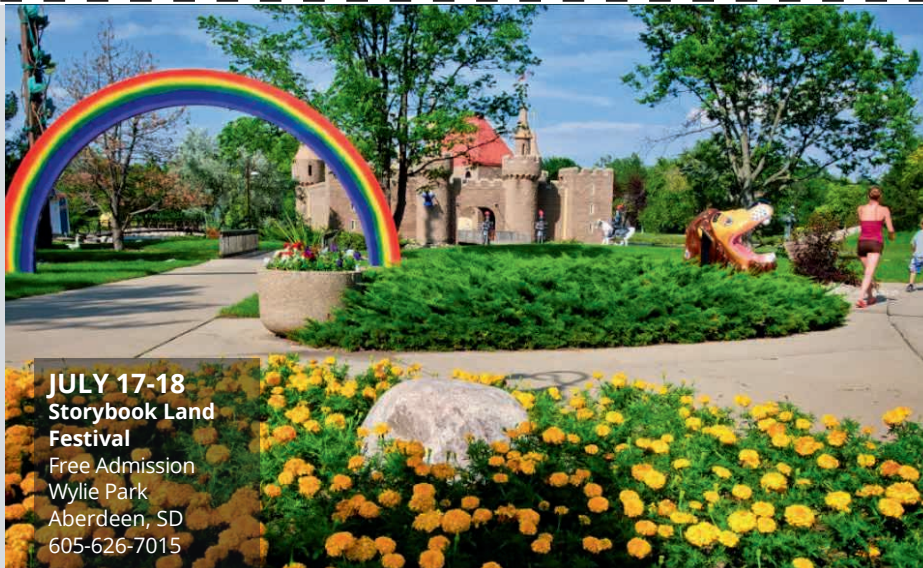
While he may be wrapping up his time in the boardroom, you get the feeling Galen will still be close by, ready with a thought, a story, or a well-timed one-liner when it is needed most. Some things just have a way of sticking around, and Galen is one of them.

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: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 17-18
Storybook Land Festival
Free Admission
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-626-7015

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.

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration
at Mount Rushmore
Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 8
Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour
2-7:30 p.m.
Lakes Area – Shetek, Sarah, Gavin
Rain Date: July 9
Tracy, MN
507-629-3252
tracy.area.garden.quilts@gmail.com

JULY 10-12
Rooted: A Prairie Arts Weekend
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

JULY 11
40th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K
Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD
End: City Park, Spearfish, SD
Register: www.nhcaso.org

JULY 15-19
Danish Days
Viborg, SD
danishdays.org

JULY 18
A Celebration of Johnny Cash
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

JULY 18
Forever Simon & Garfunkel
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 18-19
10th Annual Charles Mix Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

JULY 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JULY 24-26
Winner Elks 57th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape
7 p.m.
Tripp County Fairgrounds
Winner, SD

JULY 25
Planes, Trains & Automobiles
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 25
Disability Awareness & Accessibility Committees Resource Fair (DAAC)
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Minneluzahan Senior Center
Rapid City, SD

JULY 30
Spurs Grand Classic Equestrian Competition
9 a.m.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

AUG. 1-2
51st Annual Pioneer Power Threshing Show
MN Machinery Museum
Hanley Falls, MN
507-828-5437

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Gilfillan Estate
28269 MN Hwy. 67
Morgan, MN
ideagroup.com/farmfest

AUG. 7-9
Fur Trader Days
NEW Art in the Park
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

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.