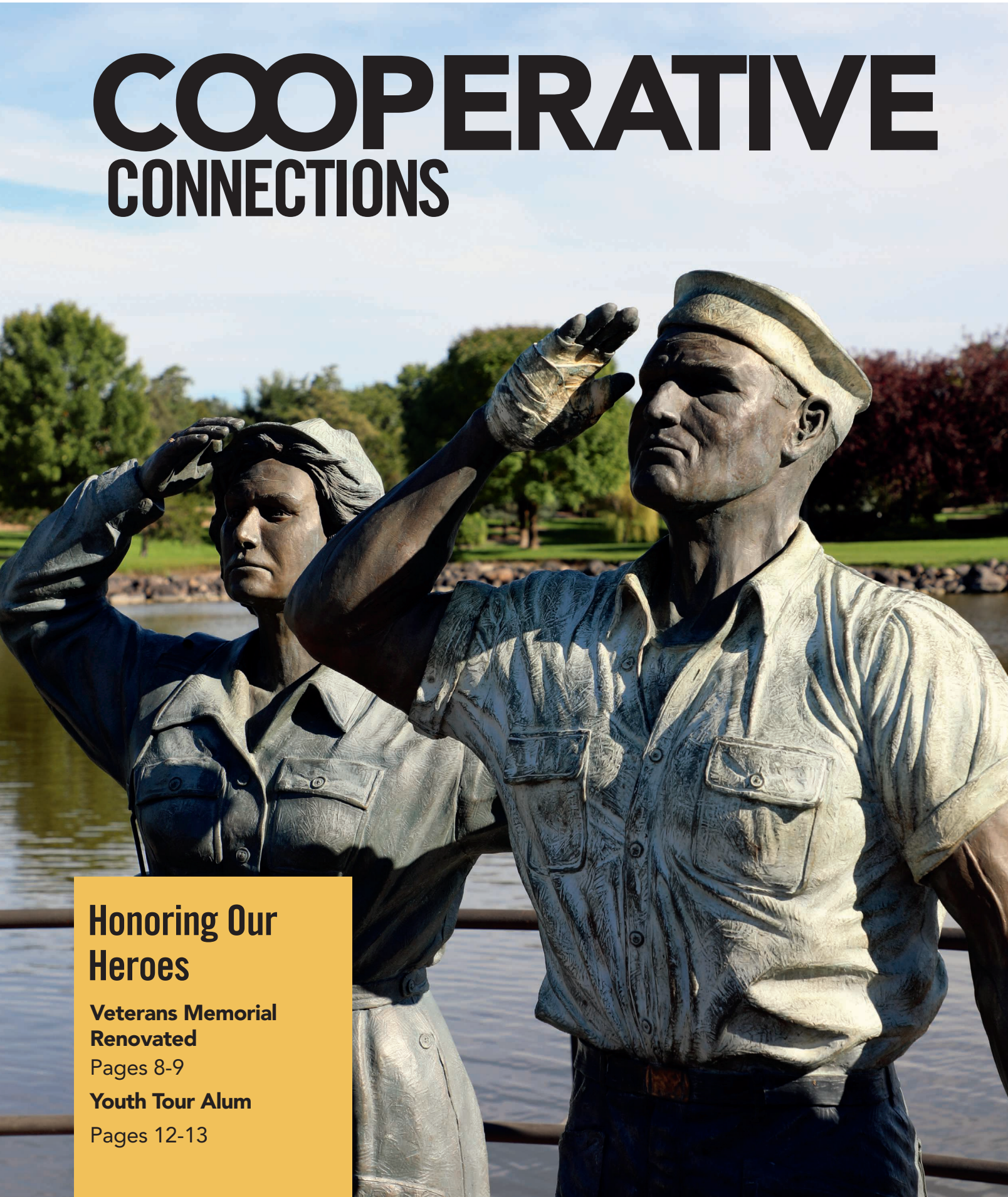
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC
NOVEMBER 2026 VOL. 25 NO. 11

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Honoring Our Heroes

Veterans Memorial Renovated
Pages 8-9

Youth Tour Alum
Pages 12-13

Looking Ahead to 2027



Tim O'Leary
General Manager

As we move into the final months of the year, there are several important projects and planning activities taking place at Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative. We are finishing projects from our current construction work plan, developing our next four-year work plan, and working through the details of the 2027 budget. Each of these areas plays an important role in maintaining the reliable electric service our members expect.

Completing Our Current Work Plan

We continue to work through the final year of our current construction work plan, and the weather has allowed us to complete several large projects this year. These projects included replacing overhead lines with new underground lines and replacing existing underground cable with new cable.

We have approximately 50 miles of three-phase underground line and 7 miles of single-phase underground line that still need to be replaced. We expect to address the majority of these lines in our next four-year work plan. We will continue working with our consulting engineer to identify and prioritize projects that will provide the greatest benefit to the cooperative and our members.

Planning for the Next Four Years

Once we settle on the amount of work to include in the next work plan, we will turn our attention to completing our construction work plan loan application with the Rural Utilities Service. This process takes time because the application requires approval from several offices in Washington, D.C. Some streamlining has been done in the process, which we appreciate, but it still takes time to work through the various steps. We expect to complete the process before the end of the next government fiscal year.

Preparing the 2027 Budget

Another major focus as we approach the end of the year is completing the 2027 budget. We have been informed that Basin Electric's board of directors has approved a 7.6% increase in wholesale power costs for 2027. Basin provides approximately 85% of the cooperative's power supply, with the remaining 15% supplied by the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA).

These initial power supply costs are used by East River Electric Power Cooperative in developing its budget, which then determines the final wholesale power cost to Lyon-Lincoln Electric. The initial information we have received from East River indicates that our wholesale power costs could increase approximately 6% in 2027. We expect to receive final numbers in early October. Purchased power costs make up approximately 60% of the cooperative's total cost to serve, so they are a significant part of our budgeting process.

Managing Costs for Our Members

We understand that rising costs are affecting our member-owners in nearly every part of their daily lives. Groceries, insurance, fuel and other household expenses have all placed additional pressure on family budgets. We recognize that an increase in electric rates adds to that pressure, and we do not take that responsibility lightly.

Before determining what a rate adjustment needs to look like, we will continue looking for ways to manage and reduce the costs we control. Staff and the board will look at our operations, expenses and financial plans to make sure we are spending member dollars responsibly while maintaining the reliability our members depend on. We will continue to look for operational efficiencies and ways to control costs without sacrificing the quality and reliability of the electric service we provide.

As a member-owned cooperative, these decisions are made locally by a board of directors who are members just like you, and many of our employees are also members. We are committed to being transparent about the challenges we face and will provide information well in advance of any rate changes.

We will continue to provide updates in the coming months as we finalize the 2027 budget and learn more about the size and timing of any rate changes. Our goal is to make responsible decisions that balance the rising costs of providing electricity with our commitment to serving our members and maintaining a reliable electric system.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

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Kathleen Schreurs, Tyler – Sec./Treas.
Joel Buyck, Garvin
Jared Dritz, Porter
John Wiese, Russell
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Alan Fischer – Work Order Clerk/ Warehouse Coordinator
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Tyler Sand – Journeyman Linemen
Nathan Pavek – Journeyman Linemen
Trent Skjefte – Journeyman Linemen
Sam Rohde – Journeyman Linemen

www.llec.coop

Lyon-Lincoln Electric hours are 8:00 AM–4:30 PM Monday thru Friday

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Jessica Gums, Editor



AUGUST 2026: OUTAGE REPORT

10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

8/6/2026- 149 consumers were off for 1 hour and 15 minutes in Lyons, Coon Creek, Shelburne and Island Lake Townships. The Cause was a rock pushing into the old underground cable as the new underground cable was being plowed in.

8/7/2026- 53 consumers were off for 50 minutes in Clifton and Stanley Townships. The Cause was unknown.

8/21/2026- 275 consumers were off for 1 hour and 50 minutes in the City of Russell. The Cause was a bird on a transformer that blew up a cutout and arrestor which knocked power out to the substation.

8/26/2026- 25 consumers were off for 3 hours in Fortier and Florida Townships. The Cause was a bad OCR.

YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON: JULY 2026

	July - 2025	July - 2026
Total Revenue	$5,912,839	$6,557,377
Cost of Power	$3,380,524	$3,894,893
Operating Expenses	$2,701,147	$2,659,616
Operating Margins	$(168,832)	$2,868
KWH's Purchased	50,935,746	49,851,051
KWH's Sold	48,289,199	47,357,646
Members	3,952	3,960
Miles of Line	1,670	1,668
Members per Mile	2.37	2.37

KEEP SAFETY AT THE HEART OF YOUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

The holiday season, stretching from late November through mid-January, is widely considered the most joyous time of the year. Families gather, festive parties fill our calendars, and a spirit of generosity warms our homes. However, alongside the cheer comes a significant spike in travel, home decorating, and large-scale cooking. Consequently, preventable accidents and injuries dramatically increase during these months. To ensure your family and friends remain safe and injury-free throughout the festivities, keeping safety top of mind is crucial. Below is a comprehensive guide of tried-and-true advice to help you navigate the season securely.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared and Alert

For millions of people, the holidays mean hitting the road to visit loved ones. Unfortunately, car travel during this busy period carries the highest fatality rate of any major transportation form. Hundreds tragically lose their lives in crashes on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day alone. Alarmingly, alcohol impairment contributes to approximately one-third of these fatal incidents.

To stay safe on the roads, follow these essential guidelines:

- Winterize your vehicle: Prepare for harsh weather and keep a well-stocked emergency kit in your trunk.
- Rest up: Get plenty of sleep before departing to avoid the severe dangers of drowsy driving.
- Plan ahead: Leave early and anticipate heavy traffic to eliminate the dangerous temptation to speed.
- Buckle up: Ensure every passenger is properly restrained, regardless of the trip's length.
- Eliminate distractions: Put your cell phone away; it remains the primary driving distraction today.
- Designate a driver: Always use a completely sober driver. Alcohol and medications cause severe impairment.

Decorate with Caution and Care

Decking the halls instantly puts families in a holiday mood, but hospital emergency departments treat thousands of decorating-related injuries annually. Remember these safety tips:

- Keep poisonous seasonal plants, like mistletoe and holly berries, strictly out of the reach of children.
- If utilizing an artificial tree, verify it is clearly labeled as "fire resistant."
- For live trees, cut two inches off the trunk for better water absorption. Water daily and remove it when dry.
- Place your tree at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters.
- Discard and replace light sets featuring broken sockets, frayed wires, or loose electrical connections.
- Turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

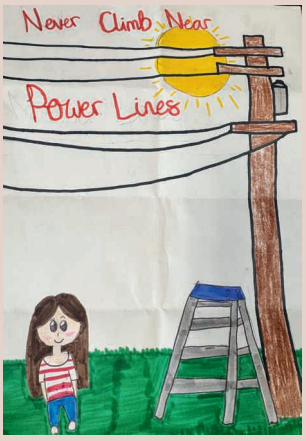
Watch Out for Holiday Fire-Starters

The glow of candles and fireplaces is a holiday staple, but combined with combustible decorations, house fire risks skyrocket. The National Fire Protection Association notes candles cause 46% of December home fires.

- Place candles in sturdy holders away from curtains and curious children.
- Store matches and lighters in a locked, high cabinet.
- Consider battery-operated flameless candles as a very safe alternative.
- Never burn pine branches or wrapping paper in fireplaces; they can cause flash fires.
- Use a protective screen for burning fires and never leave lit candles unattended.

Be highly alert to the extreme dangers of turkey fryers. Hundreds of fires and severe burns are linked to these devices. Consider using oil-less fryers or purchasing fried turkeys from professionals. If you must fry your own, strictly follow all U.S. Fire Administration guidelines.

By taking these simple, proactive steps, you can protect loved ones and ensure your holidays remain merry, bright, and safe.



"Never climb near power lines."

Penelope Poppen

Penelope warns readers to never climb near power lines. Thank you for sharing, Penelope! Penelope's parents are Brett and Megan Poppen, members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

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



THE FAMILY TABLE

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 lb. hamburger
1 medium onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
1 can (10 oz.) enchilada sauce
6 tortilla shells
1 cup shredded cheese
1 can pinto beans

Method

In a glass baking dish, put the browned hamburger, onion, pepper, beans and sauce in shells and roll up. Layer with shredded cheese on top. Bake 20 minutes in oven.
Optional: Use 1 cup of sliced black olives on top of cheese

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside.
Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing, and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted.
Makes a 9x13-inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

BEEF TERIYAKI

Ingredients:

1lb. boneless beef sirloin steak
2 tbsp. cornstarch
14 oz. beef broth
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
3 cups broccoli florets
1 1/2 cups rice
1 2/3 cups water

Method

Cook the rice in water according to the directions on the bag.
Slice beef in very thin strips. In a large skillet, saute the beef strips until browned and the juices evaporate.
In a mixing bowl, combine cornstarch, beef broth, soy sauce, brown sugar and garlic powder. Mix thoroughly.
Add the liquid mixture and broccoli florets to the beef. Cook until mixture boils & thickens to a desired consistency, stirring frequently.
Serve over the cooked rice.

Karen Soulek
Charles-Mix 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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture from Shutterstock.

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 house- holds 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
1-507-694-1452

Southwest Health & Human Services, Marshall, MN Office
1-507-537-6747

Prairie Five Community Action Council Inc., Canby, MN
1-507-223-5471

United Community Action Program, Marshall, MN
1-800-658-2448

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 homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median annual income ($73,969 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)

August 2026 Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, August 24, 2026. The following directors were present: Jared Dritz, Scott Johnson, Mary Gunnink, Joel Buyck, Mike Longtin, Dale Fier, and James Rokeh. Absent: Kathy Schreurs and John Weise. Also present at said Board Meeting were General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, Kristi Jensen, Finance Manager, 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 July 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 June 2026. The Board reviewed information that had been received from NRTC concerning the Member Equity Summary. Josh Vierhuf- 1535800.

The board viewed the July 2026 Outage Report prepared by Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent. The Board was advised that there was safety meeting held on July 15, 2026, concerning the topic of Customer Service Review conducted by Shawn Marthaler from MREA. There was also a July Safety Meeting held on July 29, 2026, concerning the topic of Hazard Recognition conducted by Troy Dahl from Federated. Mr. Lamote also advised the Board of various projects and other matters that the linemen had been working on in the month of August.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, provided the Board with his report: Mr. Jeremiason indicated that he worked at the Touchstone Energy Cooperative's Booth at Farmfest on Wednesday, August 5, 2026 and provided an update on attendance, he met with Marketing and Member Services Managers from 7 neighboring cooperatives to discuss various programs, challenges and opportunities that the Cooperatives were all experiencing, and he was recently nominated and approved to join the Brand Strategies Advisory Committee for Touchstone Energy.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave his General Manager's Report and was as follows: reviewed the July 2026 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, reviewed upcoming meetings and notices, and reviewed the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s Cyber Report for July 2026 which was prepared by East River Cyber Security Department.

There was discussion concerning CFC Director Election/Delegate.

General Manager Timothy O'Leary updated the Board on plans for the cooperative's building project, including discussion of the building's size, financing, and the use of Contegrity Group, Inc. as a construction management advisor. The Board reviewed and approved an agreement with Contegrity Group and authorized its signing. President Dale Fier also established a Construction Committee to help oversee the building project.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:10pm, during which members viewed East River Electric Power Cooperative's monthly video report and Basin Summary. The meeting reconvened at 12:25pm.

Vice-President, Mike Longtin, and Director, James Rokeh, discussed with the Board what had taken place at the Basin Annual Meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 12:40pm.

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, Shirley Wendland and Dale Sovell 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

Adjust your water heater settings to save energy. As cooler weather arrives, your water heater may be working harder to keep up with longer, hotter showers. Check its temperature setting and consider lowering it to 120°F, which the U.S. Department of Energy recommends for most households. Lowering the temperature can reduce energy use while also helping prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

Source: Dept. of Energy



HONORING OUR HEROES

Veterans Memorial Undergoing Revamp

The WWII memorial on Capitol Lake shows soldiers saluting the American flag after battle. Later, after the Korean and Vietnam soldier statues and walls were added beneath the flag, the WWII veterans appear to salute them too. *Photo by Jacob Boyko*

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Lee Leuning's father was about 80 when he sat in his son's sculpting studio to become the sailor at South Dakota's World War II memorial.

For three days, Leuning studied his face and shaped his features. His father slowly began talking about the war. After 50 years, the experience still weighed heavy.

Today, more than 25 years later, Leuning's father stands immortalized in bronze on the shore of Capitol Lake in Pierre, representing sailors like himself who served in World War II.

He stands among five other slightly larger-than-life statues representing members of the U.S. armed forces. The display, called "Why We Fought," depicts the service members in tattered uniforms saluting toward the American flag.

"It's soldiers in each individual moment stepping out of battle and recognizing the flag and what they fought for," Leuning said.

A member of Northern Electric Cooperative, Leuning created the figures with fellow sculptor Sherri Treeby. Visitors to Pierre will find their work throughout the city, including statues along the Trail of Governors and a relief plaque commemorating the Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge. At Capitol Lake, their sculptures honor veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Several of the World War II figures have family connections. Leuning used his mother's likeness for the army corps mechanic – she served as a plane mechanic in WWII – and his sons as models for the pilot and Marine. Treeby's father, an Army veteran, provided the face of the Coast Guardsman.

The WWII memorial was the first memorial unveiled, dedicated by Gov. Bill Janklow just four days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Leuning recalls being amazed by the turnout – thousands of visitors were at the Capitol for the dedication.

He remembers one Navy veteran watching the dedication parade from a hospital bed with an attendant.

"Every time a flag came by with an honor guard … that guy would have his aide get him out of the bed, and he'd snap to attention," Leuning said. "That, to me, showed this really means something to them."



Recent renovation improved water drainage. Previously, water under the granite tiles caused loosening. The tiles have since been replaced with sod grass. The stream bed was also replaced. *Photo by Jacob Boyko*

Subsequent dedications for the Korean and Vietnam memorials during Gov. Mike Rounds' administration attracted even more visitors. The state estimated 32,000 people attended the two-day Vietnam dedication in 2006. Some veterans watched the ceremony from pontoon bridges on Capitol Lake.

Unfortunately, years of exposure have taken a toll on the site. Trapped water beneath the granite tiles caused some to loosen and crumble, explained Leah Haugan, Special Projects Coordinator for the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources and Administration.

"Try as we might to keep it in great shape, you can't keep up with deteriorating stone," Haugan said.

Over the summer, the state began work on a renovation project for the memorials, which will bring some changes to the site.

Sections of granite have been replaced with grass. The military seals embedded in the walkway were lifted out and placed on pedestals. The stream from the Artesian well remains, but it's now bordered by a concrete curb. The granite tiles around the fountain were upgraded from ¾ inch thick tiles to 2 inch thick tiles, and the fountain enclosure was remade with concrete and granite tiles around the top.

Restoring the site is part of the state's commitment to honoring veterans and their service, Haugan said.

"Words are words, but when you build something like that that memorializes their efforts and their sacrifice, I think that shows them there's proof positive that we recognize and honor them," Haugan said.

The renovation does not bring back the Flaming Fountain's flame. Methane rising from the artesian well that feeds Capitol Lake kept the flame burning for decades, but it went out around 2015 when the flow could no longer sustain it. Haugan said a more ambitious fountain project is among the ideas for the site, depending on funding.

A separate proposal would honor Native American code talkers who served in World Wars I and II using their native languages to transmit messages that enemy forces were not able to translate. Funding for that memorial also remains unresolved.

Visiting the memorials, Leuning has seen what that recognition can mean to a family. The day after the Vietnam memorial dedication, he returned to take photos and was approached by a woman asking him to take her picture. He obliged, and the lady went up to the bronze statue and hugged it.

"She said, 'That's my Davy. It looks just like my Davy.'"

Then she pointed to her husband's name on the wall.



Leuning's Vietnam War memorial.
Photo submitted by Lee Leuning



Sculptor Lee Leuning with his dad, Donald Leuning, at the World War II Veterans Memorial dedication Sept. 15, 2001, in Pierre.
Photo submitted by Lee Leuning



An estimated 32,000 people attended the Vietnam War Memorial dedication in 2006.
U.S. Airforce Photo by 1st Lt. Carrie L. Kessler

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Each year, as part of maintaining our periodicals mailing privileges, Lyon-Lincoln Electric must file a completed copy of the Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (PS Form 3526) with our local U.S. Postmaster by October 1st.

We also publish this form in the first issue of our Co-op Connections after the October 1st deadline, which is why you are seeing it in our November issue.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® **Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

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Jessica Gums, PO Box 639, 205 W. Highway 14, Tyler, MN 56178

Managing Editor *(Name and complete mailing address)*

10. Owner *(Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)*

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Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
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National Rural Cooperative Finance Corp.	2201 Cooperative Way, Herndor, VA 20171

12. Tax Status *(For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)*

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☑ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months

☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months *(Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)*

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* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership

☑ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the November 2026 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner	Date
Jessica Gums, Executive Assistant	09/30/2026

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

GIVING STARTS CLOSE TO HOME

As the holidays draw near, we often think about the people who make our communities feel like home: the neighbor who checks in after a storm, the volunteer who gives up a Saturday morning, or the family that lends a hand when someone needs it. Here in southwest Minnesota, generosity often looks like people showing up for one another.

At Lyon-Lincoln Electric, that spirit is part of what it means to be a cooperative. Our members are the reason we're here. We work every day to provide reliable electricity, but our concern for community reaches beyond the power lines. It guides how we support the places where we live, work and raise our families. Cyndi Wenninger - 1360200.

Operation RoundUp is one way our members put that principle into action. Participating members round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar, contributing a little at a time to help local organizations carry out their work. One rounded-up bill may seem small, but joined with thousands of others, it can help turn a good idea into a project that serves our neighbors. On the opposite page, you'll find this fall's Operation RoundUp report and a closer look at where those dollars are going.

The best part of this program is seeing what happens after a grant is awarded. An organization can move a project forward, reach more people or purchase something it has needed for a long time. Our members make those moments possible together, one small contribution at a time.

As temperatures drop, heating costs and holiday expenses can put pressure on a household budget. If you're concerned about your electric bill, please reach out. We can help you understand your energy use, share practical ways to save electricity and talk through payment options that may be available. You don't need to have all the answers before you call. We're here to listen, answer your questions and help you find a path forward, not just during the holidays but throughout the year.

This November, we're especially thankful for the generosity we see across Lyon-Lincoln Electric's service area. It lives in the small contributions, the hours volunteered and the care people show their neighbors. Our members make this more than a place to get electricity. You make it a community that looks out for one another.

From all of us at Lyon-Lincoln Electric, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.



OPERATION ROUNDUP

Turning Coins into CHANGE



Operation RoundUp® is a program made possible by Lyon-Lincoln Electric members who round up their monthly electric bill to the next dollar. The extra cents go directly into a Trust that is administered quarterly in grants to community organizations. A board of trustees adheres to specific guidelines to ensure your dollars are spent wisely.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Trust, Inc. was held August 31, 2026. The following directors were present: Glenda Werkman, Deb Belaen, Ann Longtin, Michelle Williams, Ken Schiller, Greg Kohler, Jane Steffes, James Johansen, and Deb Olson. Also present from Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was Timothy O'Leary. The board reviewed the Trust Funding Policy and Guidelines and applications received. After discussion, grant requests were approved. Then, thank you notes and final reports from grant recipients were reviewed. **The next meeting will be held Monday, March 1st, 2027.**

Do you know a nonprofit organization in our service territory that would benefit from a grant from Operation RoundUp? Community organizations and nonprofit groups may apply by completing and returning an application form. Applications for grants can be found at www.llec.coop under the "Your Cooperative" tab.The next round of applications will be due: February 15th, 2027.

Tracy Area Medical Foundation

New Security System, Blanket Warmer, Lounge Chair

$500

Prairie Home Hospice

Portable Oxygen Concentrator/ Battery Pack

$1,000

Lyon Co. Fair

Disability Awareness at the Fair

$1,500

Junior Achievement of Lincoln County

Junior Achievement Curriculum

$1,000

Hendricks FFA

National FFA Convention

$200

Hendricks Community & Senior Center

AED for the Center

$500

Hope Harbor

Educational Program for At Risk Youth

$1,000



How a Youth Tour Friendship Changed Marty Larsen's Life

The 1969 South Dakota Youth Tour group. Marty Larsen is pictured in the top row, seventh from the right. John Nordlie is pictured in the top row, fifth from the left. *Photo courtesy from the SDREA Archives*

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

When Marty Larsen earned a spot on the 1969 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., through Turner-Hutchinson Electric Cooperative, he had every reason to believe dairy farming would remain at the center of his life. Turner-Hutchinson, a predecessor of today's Southeastern Electric Cooperative, served the area around his family's dairy farm seven miles west of Hurley.

Youth Tour gives high school students sponsored by their local electric cooperatives the chance to spend a week in Washington, D.C., visiting historic sites, learning about government and electric cooperatives and meeting students from across the country. South Dakota began sending students on the trip in 1963. Larsen went just six years later.

Back then, Turner-Hutchinson Electric selected its Youth Tour delegates through 4-H, rewarding young people for their accomplishments. In 1969,

Larsen placed eighth at the national 4-H dairy judging competition in Ohio. The accomplishment earned him the cooperative's Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

But before Larsen could make the trip, an Army recruiter threw a wrench in his plans, warning him that he was likely to be called for service soon. Rather than wait to be drafted, Larsen chose to enlist, expecting to head to basic training and then Vietnam.

Not long after, Larsen received an induction notice, but first he had to complete a military physical. Larsen, who is hard of hearing, failed the hearing test and was disqualified from service. Had he passed, he said he would have left for basic training about a week before the 1969 Youth Tour departed.

"Somebody upstairs was looking out for me," he said.

With the Army no longer standing in the way, Larsen was going on the trip. To prepare, his mother bought him new clothes and a new pair of shoes. Even still, he returned home with the soles nearly worn through. At the Washington Monument, he and a small group of students climbed 897 steps rather than wait in the long elevator line, then rode the elevator back down.

Near the end of the trip, the group ate at a seafood restaurant along the Potomac River. Larsen persuaded the chaperones that the students ought to try lobster, something many of them had never eaten before. When the waitress brought lobster bibs to the table, Larsen passed his around and asked everyone to sign it.

His mother later saved the bib in the scrapbook she kept of his childhood, alongside years of 4-H ribbons, judging cards and other keepsakes. Larsen still has the scrapbook today.

The students took an evening cruise on a multilevel paddlewheel-style boat on the Potomac, complete with live music. South Dakota Youth Tour students continue the tradition of a river cruise today aboard the Cherry Blossom.

For Larsen, though, the most important part of Youth Tour was the people he met. One of them was John Nordlie of Sioux Falls, a young photographer who worked with the Argus Leader and later attended Augustana College.

The two became friends during the trip and stayed in contact after returning home.

"We stayed friends after we got back," he said. "I was in his wedding party when he got married. He was in my wedding party when I got married."

For the next several years, Larsen stayed close to the life he knew, working in dairy and welding. Nordlie, meanwhile, developed an interest in pipe organs. In 1983, he called Larsen and asked if he wanted to come work for him building organs for cathedrals and music halls.

Larsen agreed, bringing his experience as a welder, machinist and mechanical problem-solver into a trade he had never expected to enter. He spent the next 20 years working with Nordlie and became deeply involved in the mechanics of organ construction.

His work eventually went far beyond basic fabrication. Larsen built components, developed specialty tools and designed machinery for organ builders. One machine he created transformed a wire-bending process that had taken workers several minutes per piece, allowing them to produce several pieces per minute. Other tools he built ended up with organ companies elsewhere in the United States and overseas.

The work also took Larsen far beyond southeastern South Dakota. Over the years, he traveled throughout the country and to Japan, worked on historic instruments and helped construct and restore pipe organs in churches, museums and other settings. More than four decades after entering the trade, he is still involved in restoration work.

Looking back, Larsen can draw a direct line from the Youth Tour trip to the career that followed. Without the trip, he may never have met Nordlie. Without that friendship, the call inviting him into organ building may never have come.

"It meant a lot to me to be able to go on that trip," Larsen said. "It changed me from a dairy farmer to a pipe organ builder."

More than 50 years later, Larsen still has the scrapbook his mother kept from the trip, along with the signed lobster bib awnd other reminders of that week in Washington. But the most lasting thing he brought home was the friendship that, years later, opened the door to a life he never could have planned.



Marty Larsen and his wife, Barbara.
Photo by Frank Turner

Interested in attending Youth Tour?
Contact your local electric cooperative to learn more about the application process.



A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Volunteers cook hundreds of meals for community members in Marshall, Minn.
Photo submitted by Teri Hively

Thanksgiving Meals Bring Neighbors Together in Marshall and Murdo

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the Midwest, Thanksgiving has a way of becoming a community project. By late November, church kitchens, senior centers and fellowship halls fill with volunteers roasting turkeys with all the fixings for neighbors who need a meal or simply somewhere to spend the holiday. Nearly every town seems to have its own version. In Marshall, Minn., and Murdo, S.D., community Thanksgiving meals have lasted for decades.

Marshall, Minnesota

In Marshall, a community Thanksgiving dinner has grown from 35 meals served out of crockpots into an annual event that reached more than 900 people last year. Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative member Teri Hively of Balaton, Minn., has been involved from the beginning and now leads the meal through Grace Life Church in Marshall.

The dinner started 35 years ago when Hively's late mother-in-law, inspired by God's vision, began to prepare a Thanksgiving meal for the community. Her idea came with a standard that still guides volunteers today: serve great food for a great community.



Kelly Deutz, left, and Teri Hively coordinate the Thanksgiving community meal in Marshall, Minn.
Photo submitted by Teri Hively

That standard means real turkey, real potatoes and a home-cooked meal served on glass plates with real silverware.

"I want it to be a home-cooked meal," Hively said. "I want it to feel like you're at home."

The Thanksgiving dinner requires months of planning and a network of volunteers. Hively and Kelly Deutz begin organizing in August, lining up cooks, servers, donations and the smaller jobs that need to be finished before Thanksgiving Day. Deutz helps organize all the volunteers and delivery routes.

The cooking begins days before anyone sits down to eat. Volunteers arrive at the start of the week to peel fresh potatoes while another group handles setup the day before Thanksgiving. When the big day arrives, even more volunteers fill the kitchen to set up serving lines, dessert tables and a proper dining area.

Some volunteers cook turkeys at home. Others donate pies or pans of bars, while local businesses and private donors provide ingredients and money. Hively estimates that more than 200 people contribute to the dinner each year.

"I could never do it alone," Deutz said. "It takes many hands to make that happen. I just happen to be the piece that helps drive it forward."

Luckily, feeding a crowd is familiar work for Hively, who spent more than 12 years working in catering.

Service is familiar to Hively, too. She has been an EMT for 37 years and a firefighter for 32 years, including volunteer service with the Balaton Fire Department, Balaton Ambulance and Tyler Ambulance.

In 2014, Hively's mother-in-law told her she was ready to step back and pass leadership of the dinner to Teri. Soon after, Hively's mother-in-law passed away unexpectedly, and Hively took over the following year in her memory.

"I took the lead role, not knowing I was going to be in charge without her," Hively said. "But I wasn't worried because I had been there every step along the way, so I knew what the meal entailed from beginning to end."

Today, the meal remains open to anyone, regardless of income or circumstance, and volunteers also deliver meals to older residents and those who are homebound. Some people need the food, Hively explained, while others simply need somewhere to spend Thanksgiving.

Hively's children grew up helping with the dinner, and now her grandchildren are taking part. She finds jobs for families with young children so they can help, too.

"Be the hands and feet of Jesus," said Hively.

Murdo, South Dakota

In Murdo, the Thanksgiving dinner began about 20 years ago with Joe Connot, who worked at West Central. When Connot retired, the Murdo Lions Club took over and continued serving the meal at the local senior center.

The club sponsors the dinner, and members cook the turkeys and help serve. The senior center provides the space and prepares the rest of the meal. Murdo Lions Club President Travis Van Dam said about 75 people usually attend, not including those who receive deliveries.

Van Dam joined the Lions Club after watching his father volunteer with the organization and wanting to do the same for Murdo.

"There's not a lot to do in our little town, so it's just something that we can do to provide for the community," said Van Dam.

The dinner is meant for people who do not want to cook, cannot cook or may not have family nearby. Volunteers also deliver meals around Murdo, including to employees at businesses that remain open on Thanksgiving.

Last year, Van Dam used Facebook to collect meal requests and organize deliveries.

"Just helping – it just feels good to help somebody and give them a meal," he said.

Freewill donations collected at the dinner help fund local service projects. Much of the club's fundraising supports Caring and Sharing, which helps people facing illness pay for travel, medical care, food and hotel stays.

Club members also help with community cleanup, sponsor a movie day for students, collect eyeglasses and volunteer at school sporting events.

"As long as we keep getting the turnout and people appreciate it, we'll keep doing it," he said.

In Marshall and Murdo, volunteers keep showing up to cook, serve and make sure their neighbors have a place around the Thanksgiving table.



Bruce Vennard (left) and other volunteers with the Murdo Lions Club serve a Thanksgiving meal for their local community.
Submitted Photo

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. 7
Wine, Cheese & Chocolate Stroll
Deadwood, SD
www.deadwood.com/events/

NOV. 1
Kadoka Holiday Festival
10 a.m.-4 p.m. (MST)
Lunch 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Kadoka City Auditorium
Kadoka, SD
605-488-0151

NOV. 6-8
Hill City Girlfriends' Weekend
Hill City, SD

NOV. 7
Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Dakota Christian School
Corsica, SD

NOV. 7
Black Hills Meat Fest
Free Admission
Central States Fairgrounds
Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall
Rapid City, SD
Facebook.com/BlackHillsMeatFest

NOV. 7-15
Rustic Designs & More Christmas Country Show
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
41450 264th St.
Ethan, SD
605-770-2411

NOV. 8
32nd Annual Lutefisk, Meatball & Lefse Supper
4-7 p.m.
Trinity Lutheran Church
Chamberlain, SD
605-730-0553

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

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

NOV. 14
Lake Campbell Lutheran Church Lutefisk Supper
Seatings: 4:30, 5:45, 7 p.m.
Volga, SD
Reservations: 605-690-4868

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

NOV. 14-15
Zonta Holiday Craft & Vendor Show
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Ramkota Hotel
Pierre, SD

NOV. 16-21
Yelduz Shrine Festival of Trees
Mon.-Fri. 4-7 p.m.
Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
802 S. Main St.
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-4841
Yelduz.com

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

NOV. 21
Lille Norge Fest
8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Canyon Lake Activity Center
2900 Canyon Lake Dr.
Rapid City, SD
borgundlodge.org

NOV. 27-28
Sip, Shop & Stroll
Viborg, SD

NOV. 28
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Gregory Memorial Auditorium
Gregory, SD
605-830-9778

DEC. 4-5
Christmas in the Hills
Mueller Civic Center
Hot Springs, SD
951-591-2335

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.