

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Keeping the Lights On

**One Lineman's
Community Outreach**

Pages 8-9

**Commercial
Motor Vehicles and
Public Safety**

Pages 12-13

Member Meeting Updates



Tim O'Leary
General Manager

This month's article will focus on updates from the director nominating committee, information on mail in ballots, and a reminder about upcoming cooperative meetings.

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee met for the second time on February 27th and nominated the following candidates in their prospective districts:

District 1 – Mary Gunnink

District 2 – Joel Buyck

District 3 – Jared Dritz & Richard Hemish

There is still an opportunity for those interested in becoming a candidate in their district through the petition process. The petition process allows a member to collect the signatures of 10 other members in the district to become a director candidate. Please let us know if you would like a petition form or if you would like to learn more about the petition process.

If you would like to serve on the nominating committee in the future or would like your name to be considered as a future candidate, please let us know so we can contact you in the future.

District Meetings

Members will vote on the director candidates at the upcoming District meetings. The candidate that receives the most votes at the district meeting will be listed first on the annual meeting ballot for each district.

Each of the meetings will start at 7pm and are scheduled at the locations below:

Mail Ballots

The board has decided to implement mail in balloting for those that aren't able to make it to the Annual Meeting to vote in person. The process will be guided by a new board policy that was approved at the February board meeting. The policy indicates that a member may submit a paper application by mail or in person to the Cooperative for a mail in ballot at least four (4) weeks prior to any meeting of the members. In this case, the board approved mail in ballots for director elections at this year's annual meeting. We will have applications available to mail, via our website, or via email if you want us to email an application out to you.

Once it is determined that the individual requesting the mail in ballot is a member and entitled to vote, the Cooperative will provide them with a mail in ballot. We will have to wait until after the district meetings before we can mail out any ballots to make sure that we have the candidates listed on a certified ballot.

We will have a secrecy envelope for the ballot and a pre-addressed envelope for the member to return the ballot to the office. The ballot must be received back to the cooperative by 4:30 pm the day prior to the Annual Meeting. With the Annual Meeting being held on June 5th, the ballot would need to be received by the office by June 4th to be counted. Mail in ballots will be given to the tellers and counted with the in person ballots that are voted on at the annual meeting.

The board is hoping that mail in ballots provide an opportunity for members to participate in the director election process that may not have the opportunity to vote in person at the annual meeting. We will be monitoring and looking for ways to improve this process, so please let us know what you think.

**DISTRICT MEETING DATES
2024**

District 1 - Monday, April 8th at 7:00 p.m.
Tyler, MN - Lyon-Lincoln Electric Headquarters

.....

District 2 - Tuesday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m.
Russell, MN - Russell Community Center

.....

District 3 - Thursday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m.
Hendricks, MN - Gatsby's Banquet Room

**NEW
LOCATION**



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

Board of Directors

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

Staff and Personnel

Tim O'Leary – General Manager
Lyle Lamote – Line Superintendent
Kristi Jensen - Finance Manager
Brian Jeremiason – Manager of Marketing & External Relations
Rochelle Borresen – Accountant
Lisa Hauswedell – Billing Clerk
Jessica Gums – Executive Assistant

Staff and Personnel

Journeyman Linemen:
Ross Birath
Dan Tutt
Tyler Blomme
Tyler Sand
Nathan Pavek
Trent Skjefte – Apprentice Lineman
Sam Rohde – Apprentice Lineman
Wade Thooft – Operations Staff Assistant
Alan Fischer – Warehouse Coordinator/Work Order Clerk

www.llec.coop

Lyon-Lincoln Electric hours are
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM Mon. thru Fri.

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, 205 W. Hwy. 14, PO Box 639, Tyler, MN 56178. Electric co-op members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Tyler Post Office, Tyler, MN 56178 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 639, Tyler, MN 56178; Telephone (507) 247-5505; Toll Free 1-800-927-6276; Fax (507) 247-5508.

Jessica Gums, Editor

Thank a Lineman



America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 8, Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. will honor the dedicated men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

"Our linemen are the first responders of our workforce, and they're always ready to get the job done, day or night" said Tim O'Leary, General Manager. "Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical infrastructure for our electric system, linemen are at the heart of everything we do."

Seven men maintain 1,670 miles of line in Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative Inc.'s service territory. Every day, these lineworkers face immense risks. Carrying heavy gear, they regularly scale 40-foot poles near high-voltage power lines—often in the wake of Mother Nature's worst when their communities are at their most vulnerable. It's no wonder the profession is among the 25 most dangerous jobs in the country.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. invites members to take a moment and thank a lineman for the work they do. Use #thankalineman to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

Safety comes first

Lineworkers spend numerous hours in safety training each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations. Protective clothing is required to shield lineworkers since they work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work quickly to restore service to customers.

Although everyone at Lyon-Lincoln Electric works hard to provide reliable service, we salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority. *Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

Break Dirt Without Breaking the Law

As the warmer spring temperatures cause the ground to thaw, contractors and homeowners alike are likely to begin on projects that require some sort of digging.

By law, anyone who is digging in South Dakota needs to call 811 and have a locate ticket in their hand before moving any ground. If you're not the one that's digging and you've hired a landscaper to do the work instead, that landscaper should have a ticket in their name.

When someone calls 811, the call goes through a center in Dallas, Texas. That call center then notifies utilities in the area, according to South Dakota 811 Executive Director Codi Gregg.

An excavator or digger has to allow 48 hours for the utilities in the area they plan to dig into to come on site and mark the location of those underground utilities. On average, there are five to eight utilities notified per call.

If there's a potential loss of life or property, the allowed response time is shortened to a maximum of two hours during normal business hours.

"When the ticket goes in, the excavator is given a list of the utilities that are involved or are working or that are in that area where they're working," Gregg explained.

Those companies that own the utilities will make marks that identify the location. Those flags are also color coded according to the type of utility. As more and more overhead electrical lines are converted to underground lines, it's imperative that anyone who plans on doing a project that requires digging call 8-1-1 to avoid a dangerous and deadly situation.

"It's a free phone call for the excavator to make. There's no real reason for them not to make the phone call other than not being aware of it," Gregg said.

Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Chairwoman, echoed Gregg's comments, stating that making the call to 811 is the "most important and easiest call anyone can make before starting a digging project."

"This simple and imperative effort will help to prevent damages to vital underground utilities and safeguard critical services that our residents and economy depend on," Fiegen said. "During the 2024 construction season, I urge everyone to call 811 before you dig and protect all South Dakotans by abiding by our state laws and making safety our highest priority."

- Last year, there were 176,984 notices to the 811 Center of work occurring.
- South Dakota's 811 laws were established in 1993.
- In 2017, South Dakota 811 added damage reporting to our laws, stating if there was a damage, disturbance, or a dislocation of a utility – 811 was to be contacted to report the damage. It was also added that 911 was to be contacted first if there was a leak.
- Free accounts are offered upon request, allowing account holders to enter locate tickets themselves without calling an agent.
- A total of 1,944 utilities were reportedly damaged in 2023. Of that total, 375 excavators did not have a previous ticket.
- According to Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year and 60% of nationwide damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professional contractors not contacting 811 prior to digging.



Don't Fly Drones Near Power Lines

Lyndon Kaski, Age 8

Lyndon Kaski warns readers to stay away from power lines when flying drones. Great advice! Lyndon's parents are Jonathan and Amanda Kaski, members of Kingsbury 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.

SALSA SAVORY

FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4-6 med. to large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 med. onion, chopped
4 fresh jalapenos, seeded and finely chopped*
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tbsp. dried parsley or fresh cilantro to taste
1 tsp. salt

Method

*To prevent jalapenos from burning your fingers, lightly rub fingers with shortening, especially around fingernails.
Serve with tortilla chips.

Linda Hubbard
Rapid City, S.D.

LUANN'S FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper
1-2 tbsps. jalapeno or other hot pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
pepper to taste
1 tbsp. lime juice or red wine vinegar
1-2 tps. catsup
dash garlic powder
dash cayenne pepper
1-2 tps. sugar
cilantro (optional)

Method

Mix all ingredients. Serve with any tortilla or corn chips for dipping. Will keep approximately 1 week in the refrigerator.

Nancy Stenson
Fort Pierre, S.D.

TAMARIND PASILLA MANGO PINEAPPLE SALSA

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups diced fresh pineapple
1 large mango, pitted and diced (about 1 1/4 cup)
1 small red onion, diced
1 small red bell pepper, diced
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 med. jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
3 tbsps. fresh lime juice
1 tbsp. honey
4 1/2 teaspoons Tamarind Naturally Flavored & Pasilla Chile Seasoning

Method

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Stir before serving. Serve with tortilla chips or use to top tacos or nachos.

McCormick

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

January Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, January 22, 2024. Directors present: James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Scott Johnson, Dale Fier, Mike Longtin, Jared Dritz, Joel Buyck, Mary Gunnink and Galen Grant. Also present: 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 routine business was conducted including approval of the December 18, 2023 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Chris Swedzinski, House Representative, Jenny Glumack, MREA, and Chris Studer, East River Electric, attended the meeting. They reviewed with the Board legislation that had occurred in 2023, which included the Carbon Free 2040 Bill, energy issues, earned safe and sick leave, quality candidate recruitment, and energy issues that had been negotiated between various groups and the government.

Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, gave the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending November 30, 2023. The Board approved the Weighted Cost of Capital for 2024 and a Memorandum from East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. concerning the Renewable Energy Credit payment for Lyon-Lincoln Cooperative. The Board reviewed the rates to be charged

by Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. and carried to approve the updated Rate Schedules effective May 1, 2024.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the December Outage Report. He discussed the outages that occurred because of the Christmas Day storm. He also reviewed with the Board the December Safety Meeting which was held on December 6, 2023 concerning the topic of Annual Cyber Security Training. Mr. Lamote then indicated that the linemen were doing the following work some of which had been completed and some was still in process: cutting trees on the east side of the cooperative's service area, continuing to do line patrol and maintenance, and trucks were taken to Watertown, SD for their annual inspections.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed his report with the board which included a visit from RTR's Everything Local class, shared a discussion on how adding an electric vehicle and a home charging station to a home insurance policy would impact coverage and rates, and advised the Board on a potential rebate program and rate for Electric Vehicle charging.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:13 pm and reconvened at 12:30 pm and during the lunch period the Board reviewed The East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. monthly video report which included the Basin Summary.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, then gave his manager's report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: the Board reviewed the December

power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, and reported on the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. MAC Meeting. Mr. O'Leary advised the Board that he was able to confirm a Strategic Planning Session date in May, 2024 with Amanda Seger, Regional Vice-President, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

The Board then reviewed the December 2023 Cyber Security Program Report presented by East River Cyber Security Department dated January 9, 2024. The Board discussed the Absentee/Mail in Ballot procedure to be used in conformance with the Bylaws of the Cooperative and after discussion, General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, indicated that he would bring back to the Board a written procedure concerning the same, and Directors gave a report concerning the recent meetings they had attended and reviewed upcoming meetings and notices.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 2:21 pm.

JANUARY OUTAGE REPORT 10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

1/31/24- 13 consumers were off 2 hours and 25 minutes in Lynd Township. The cause was an underground fault.



Jenny Glumack

Director of Government Affairs,
MREA

The 2024 legislative session started on February 12, 2024. With a two-year budget enacted last session, no bills need to be passed this year to keep the state government operating. However, there is a projected budget surplus of \$2.4 billion, which will be used by Governor Tim Walz and the legislature to develop a supplemental budget for the 2024 legislative session. Minnesota Management and Budget will release an updated budget forecast in late February, at which time the governor and the legislature will adjust their budget proposals to match the updated amount.

With a smaller surplus than last year and the agencies buried under the work of implementing the extensive new programs and spending passed last session, we expect the focus of this session to be on a large funding package for public infrastructure needs across the state. Both legislative leadership and the governor have emphasized working on a capital investment bill as their main priority this session.

Other contributing factors to consider this session are the beginning of a \$730 million renovation and expansion of the State Office Building which houses all house members and staff. House members need to be out of their offices once session concludes in May for the project to proceed on schedule. It is also an election year which means legislators running for reelection will be especially attuned to campaign politics.

With the carbon free by 2040 bill passed last session, the energy committees will be focused on proposals to better align the permitting process with the demands of the clean energy transition mandated by the legislature. A stakeholder group was convened over interim that resulted in a report offering 35 total recommendations for making the permitting process more efficient.

We also expect the moratorium on building new nuclear facilities in Minnesota to be a discussion item. As utilities work out how to comply with the 2040 carbon free mandate, all clean energy generation sources should be on the table, including nuclear. We take the stand that we need all available tools in our toolbox when working to provide reliable power to Minnesotans.

More broadly, we will be focused on preventing any new mandates from being imposed. While some legislators would like to enact more prescriptive requirements for how utilities decarbonize the electrical grid, we firmly believe they need to let the experts at utilities decide how we will reach 2040 carbon free compliance.

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, Shawn Remme & Austin Sterzinger 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

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning.

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home. Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

Source: energystar.gov



Elliot and Janaye Rayman at their second annual Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser.

One Lineman's After-hours Outreach

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the state, linemen are charged with keeping South Dakota's power going. It's a big responsibility: troubleshooting electrical systems, operating heavy equipment, and maintaining power lines. These workers are frequently asked to navigate high voltage and confront dangerous challenges in all kinds of extreme weather. In the face of these challenges, it takes a truly community-minded individual to ensure the community's lights stay on. Many of these crucial workers demonstrate their commitment to their community daily, both during and outside of work hours.

Butte Electric Journeyman Lineman Elliot Rayman, who has been with the cooperative for seven years, serves as just one example of an electric cooperative employee who has pulled extra hours for his local community of Spearfish, S.D. In addition to his role as a lineman, Elliot wears many hats in his community beyond just the hard hat of a co-op employee. He is a veteran of the National Guard, having served a deployment overseas. Elliot and his wife, Janaye, are also deeply involved in their community as the owners of Barefoot Fitness, a gym in the Spearfish community. Janaye, a cancer survivor, operates the gym and is an integral part of their community efforts.

Janaye and Elliot purchased Barefoot Fitness in 2018, fulfilling Janaye's long-standing dream of owning a gym. Shortly after their purchase, the couple learned that Janaye's cancer, previously in remission, had metastasized into Stage 4 breast cancer.

"In 2020, I had reoccurrence everywhere – brain, lungs, liver, bones," said Janaye. "Since then, I have been on a mission every day to heal and recover. It's also been my goal to help others every single day, day in and day out, and that's

what keeps me going. That's my job and it's what I love to do, so I'm not stopping."

"My wife is an inspiration to many people," added Elliot. "She is the strongest person I know."

Undeterred, Elliot and Janaye decided to press on and use their gym as a platform to engage with their local community. Despite Janaye's ongoing battle with breast cancer, the two started a new Barefoot Fitness tradition – an annual Memorial Day fundraiser to benefit South Dakota's gold star families, the families of fallen soldiers.

"After a few years of owning the gym, we decided we needed to give back to the community, because the community had really been there for us through everything," said Elliot. "We knew we had the ability and the platform to give back to the community through Barefoot Fitness, so we settled on a Memorial Day fundraiser that would benefit gold star families in our state."

This May, Elliot and Janaye will host their fourth Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser. Like previous years, the event will feature local catering from Spearfish businesses, such as Spearfish Brewing Company and Timmons Market. The event will also include an optional community workout for all ages.

"We kick off our day with the National Guard leading the pledge of allegiance and national anthem," said Janaye. "We do a prayer, and then we do our Memorial Day workout. It's a team workout that people are encouraged to complete with their family or friends."

According to Janaye and Elliot, the team workout is about more than just breaking a sweat. Instead, it's about remembering those who gave their lives for this country.

"You always hear about people doing things for veterans, but you never hear about the story on the other side of

that – the families," Janaye said. "A lot of times the family is forgotten so we really want to honor the families that also made a sacrifice."

At the end of the day, Elliot and Janaye said none of their efforts would be possible without the support they have received from the Spearfish community, the veteran community,

and the electric cooperative community.

"Butte Electric and the co-op world have helped us out so much," said Elliot. "The culture of the co-op community is huge: there is brotherhood – it's the way people help each other out. You just can't ask for a better group of people, and that's the same way with the veteran world."



Janaye and Elliot lead a community workout session, challenging participants to complete 300 weighted ball throws.

IF THERE IS A DOWNED POWER LINE **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT**

An overhead power line can become damaged or fall due to a severe storm, car accident, public damage or other reasons. If you see a downed power line, take these actions:



Consider all power lines energized and deadly.



Stay at least 50 feet away.



Call 9-1-1 or the utility to report the downed line.



Do not approach it or try to move it with another object.



Do not get out of a vehicle or cab.



Do not approach the scene.



Warn others to stay away.



Turn around and go another way.

*Even if you do not see a downed line, realize one could be hidden by storm debris, water, snow or ice.

Other things to know



Energized downed lines spread voltage through the ground or nearby objects.



If you go near a downed line, you can become electricity's path to ground.



You cannot tell if a power line is live just by looking at it.



Even if a power line appears coated, it is never safe to go near it.

While transmitting and distributing power is typically safe, extreme scenarios like downed power lines are extremely dangerous. Never approach a downed power line.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Look Up, Look Out

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:

Home maintenance

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them. Andrew Lasnetski - 116360. Other safety tips include:

- Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof.
- Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.

Yard work

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- Do not trim trees near power lines; instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.
- Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.

Farming

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings. Equipment that could get too close or contact a power pole or line includes sprayer tips, tall equipment, dump trucks, augers and other extensions.

At work

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes, concrete pump truck extensions and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

Other reminders

Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away. Call 9-1-1 to report it.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Why do we trim trees?

Lyon-Lincoln Electric cuts and trims trees along the power lines to ensure reliability of power to our member-owners. Keeping trees and other vegetation safely away from power lines is crucial for our ongoing system maintenance.

Right of Way policy-

Trees are a leading cause of power outages, especially when the wind blows. Lyon-Lincoln Electric performs routine maintenance of trees and other vegetation on over 1,600 miles of rights-of-way. These routine vegetation management activities are essential to maintain reliable electric service to our members and to provide for the safety of your family and general public.

Vegetation management-

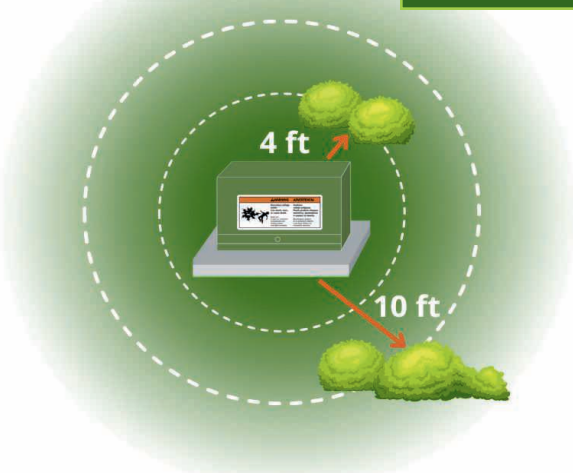
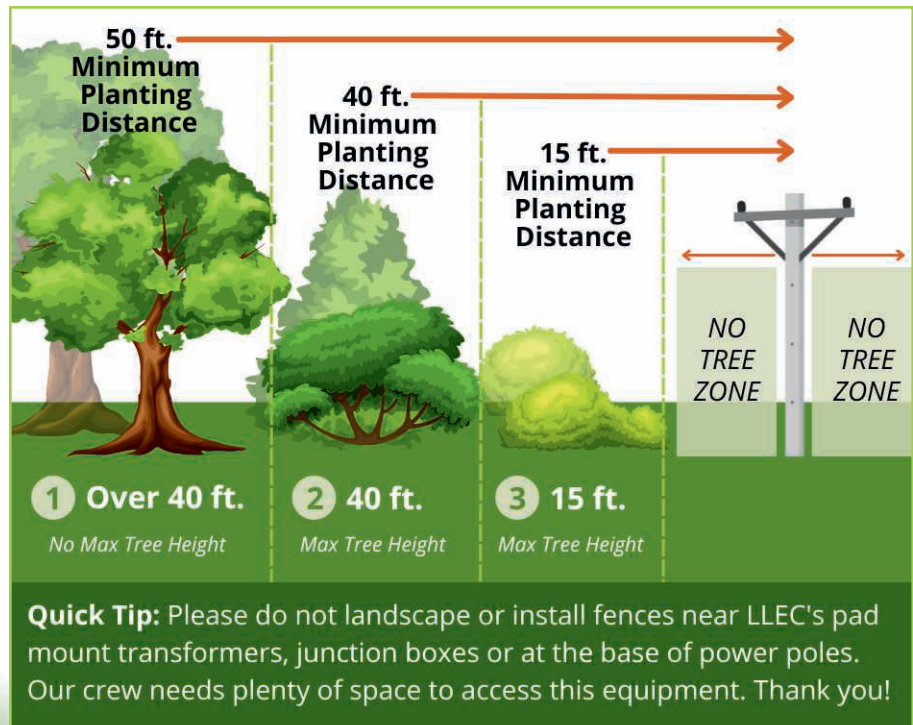
Vegetation management is the key to providing safe, reliable electricity to our members. If you have any questions or concerns regarding tree cutting or trimming near the cooperative's power lines call our office during business hours.

Planting Guidelines-

Landscaping is a great way to increase value of your property and save energy, but trees and shrubs planted too close to power lines and other electrical equipment can create both safety and reliability concerns. You can help maintain power line access and clearance by planning ahead before planting trees and shrubs. These guidelines help ensure a safe and reliable service for all Lyon-Lincoln Electric members.

Pad Mount Transformers-

Mature trees, shrubs, and plants need to maintain 10 feet of clearance in front of doors and 4 feet on all other sides of the box.



1 Trees over 40 feet

These trees must be planted at least 50 feet from electrical wires and no closer than 35 feet from buildings to allow proper root development and minimize root damage to buildings.

2 Trees under 40 feet

These trees may be planted 40 feet from electrical wires, but NO closer.

3 Trees under 15 feet

These trees may be planted 15 feet from electrical wires, but NO closer.



SDHP Trooper Megan Koch stands by her patrol vehicle. Koch works within the state's Motor Carrier Division. *Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel*

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

When commercial motor vehicles come into the state of South Dakota, it's the job of the South Dakota Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Division to ensure the drivers of those vehicles have the necessary paperwork, permits and documents.

The task is one of public safety.

Making sure the carriers are adhering to safe driving practices is just another way to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be while driving on the state's roadways.

South Dakota Highway Patrol

Trooper Megan Koch is one of the officers who works within the motor carrier division.

"Our main focus is making sure the motor carriers or trucks are safe on the roadways and keeping everybody else safe. It helps them perform their job of carrying their property or passengers across the state lines and within the state. We help make sure that they can do that job," Koch explained.

Mainly, Koch works specifically with commercial motor vehicles that carry over a certain weight or property of monetary value within the state or interstate.

"When we do an inspection on a driver, we're checking a bunch of different things. Weight sometimes is one of them, but not always. It just depends on the situation," Koch said.

"They have to have certain paperwork with them and they are required to follow certain rules. It depends on what they're doing."

The dependent variables include whether a carrier is traveling with goods within the state or going out of the state and how far away they are from the hub, or where they leave every day or go home to every day.

Koch also checks their paperwork to ensure the drivers are within compliance of state law.

"They have to follow certain hours that they can work so that they don't get tired while driving. It's a big thing that we follow for safety," Koch said.

"We also check things like

equipment violations, headlights, taillights, tires, you know, stuff that makes them safe on the roadway and keeps them safe. We'll also check for things such as bad driving behavior, if they're not staying within their own lane, using blinkers, not properly stopping at stop sign – stuff like that. So, if we see something like that, we can initiate an inspection."

Koch, a Plankinton native whose father was a truck driver, said the division is typically checking brake lines and lights.

In South Dakota, there are four main ports of entry. The ports are located along Interstate 29 in Jefferson and Sisseton, and along Interstate 90 in Sioux Falls and Tilford.

Each carrier is issued a "safety score," which is assessed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"That's based on whether or not they have the proper paperwork, if they're driving within their hours, if they have the proper equipment and whether or not they've received any driving or alcohol violations," Koch said.

If a driver has a high enough safety score, they aren't required by law to stop at a port for inspection.

Overall, it all comes down to keeping the roadways safe for everyone, regardless of what type of vehicle they are driving.

"These rules and laws are in place for a reason. They have to be extra alert and awake while they're driving and that all of their equipment works properly. If you're driving a very heavy, large vehicle, you need excellent brakes. You have to be able to stop in time. That is the main reason we're checking all these things. It helps everybody on the road."

The division also works

with rural electric cooperatives when oversized loads travel along the state's highway system, according to Lieutenant Austin Schmitz, District Four Assistant Commander with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Sometimes oversized loads require that overhead power lines be moved out of the way to let the carrier pass through.

"As a district we do work with a lot of the cooperatives such as East River Electric. We all get together when planning for oversized loads coming through our area," Schmitz said.

"They usually run the route first and let us know what lines they need to move."

That was the case when a massive generator was moved across the state. The generator was so heavy and huge that the truck carrying it could only travel 30 miles per hour. That truck was also equipped with over a hundred tires, Schmitz said.

"That generator came through Watertown a couple of years ago and we've got some more coming in two or

three years," Schmitz said, referring to the multi-million pound machines.

"The planning for those started last year. That equipment will be coming in through the Great Lakes on a ship. They'll pick them up there and then they'll move through our state then Wyoming, Montana, however they can go," Schmitz said.

The truck carrying the heavy equipment is too big to go across most bridges and overpasses, so finding a route that allows the machinery to snake across the country is tricky.

While moving huge pieces of machinery can be one of the more interesting parts of the job, it's the flexibility of the job that Koch enjoys most.

"I get to pick and choose where I want to go for the day. I get to do something a little bit different every day. Because, I mean, nothing is ever the same," Koch said.

"It's kind of nice to be able to do that and make the day what you want of it."



A SDHP officer has the latest technology at his or her fingertips to ensure trucks on South Dakota roads are operating safely. Photo Credit: South Dakota Highway Patrol

Shaping Our Energy Future Through Innovation

The energy industry is undergoing significant change driven by technology and the transition to more sustainable forms of energy. Innovation is essential in addressing these challenges and ensuring a continuous, reliable and affordable power supply.

Electric co-ops are no strangers to adapting to the needs of the local communities we serve. Lyon-Lincoln Electric has always leaned into change as we explore new ways to meet your energy needs.

Advanced Technologies

By using advanced equipment like drones that inspect our local grid, sensors that provide real-time data on the condition of power lines and satellite imagery used to monitor vegetation growth, we can pinpoint potential problems before they even occur and ultimately improve service for all.

Investing in smarter technologies also can enhance the monitoring and control of electricity flow so we can respond swiftly to changing needs. Smart electric meters remotely collect data on how electricity is being used. This helps in promptly prioritizing and dispatching crews during an outage, reducing restoration time during weather-related disruptions. Even before adverse weather is here, advanced analytics from our systems, combined with data on weather patterns and other information, allows us to be proactive in taking preventative measures to shore up our system.

Preparing for Increased Energy Use

Today, we depend on electricity more than ever before. From vehicles to farming equipment to home heating options, more products and appliances that we depend on run on electricity.

Interest in electric vehicles (EVs) is growing. Lyon-Lincoln Electric is available to help our members make informed decisions about EVs, including electric charging options and capacity requirements for the home.

Automakers are transitioning many or all new vehicles to electric-only models in the next 10 years. Lyon-Lincoln Electric, like all electric providers, must plan now to have the necessary infrastructure in place to meet future EV charging needs—without jeopardizing the ability to provide reliable power.

Additionally, we are exploring innovative technologies like large-scale batteries and new community solar projects to help address the increasing demand for electricity.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

You may not realize it, but Lyon-Lincoln Electric is part of a large network of 900 electric co-ops nationwide.

While we are locally-owned by you, the members of the co-op, we also have the advantage of working with co-ops across the country to share ideas and leverage the innovations our colleagues might have tried out first. As cooperatives, we're collaborators instead of competitors—it's a unique aspect of our business model, and we're stronger because of it.

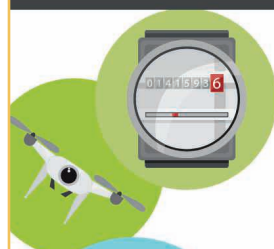
Our energy future will look different than it has in the past, but Lyon-Lincoln Electric is prepared to adapt for the members we serve. Our mission and commitment to you remain steady—to provide reliable power at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE

The energy industry is changing, but electric co-ops are known for adapting to their local members' needs.

As we plan for changes and challenges ahead, innovative solutions are essential.

Here are a few ways we're innovating for the future:



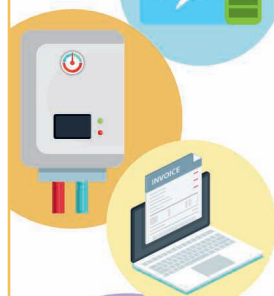
Use of Advanced Technologies

Drones aid in power line inspection and maintenance. Smart meters provide real-time data and help pinpoint service issues.



Preparing for Increased Energy Use

The demand for electricity is increasing as more technologies are electrified. Co-ops are exploring innovative solutions like battery storage to meet demand.



Energy Solutions for Members

Co-ops provide innovative efficiency services like appliance rebates and flexible billing options to help members manage their energy use.



Strength in Numbers

By working with and learning from other co-ops, we are uniquely positioned to improve service for our local communities.

There is a Difference Between Solar Companies

We've seen a stark difference in practices of the various solar companies that have worked with members in our service area.

Some of these companies use high pressure sales techniques to try and lock you into a long-term mortgage to finance the solar installation. Dulcey & Chad Magnussen - 1430401. Some over-size the system and promise unrealistic payback terms. Other companies have installed panels on northern or eastern roofs that get much less sunlight and produce less energy.

While there are some bad solar companies selling in our region, there are also some good ones. Rather than trying to attract you with complicated financing options, they'll help you work through grants and tax incentives to help fund the project. They'll also work through the Cooperative's interconnection requirements with you to make sure you understand the process.

No matter which company you choose to work with, we encourage you to contact the Cooperative before signing any contracts. Let us explain the requirements, costs, and paybacks you'll receive from the Cooperative. To the right are some important considerations for you to take into account as you explore whether solar is right for you.

YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

DECEMBER 2023

	DEC.- 2022	DEC.- 2023
Total Revenue	\$10,712,797	\$10,955,728
Cost of Power	\$5,961,395	\$6,179,764
Operating Expenses	\$4,456,548	\$4,430,457
Operating Margins	\$294,854	\$345,507
KWH's Purchased	103,420,530	101,796,503
Services in Place	4,123	4,128
Miles of Line	1,670	1,671
Revenue per Mile	\$6,415	\$6,556

SOLAR POWER
Stepping Towards Solar

Is it right
for my
home?



Consider All of the Costs

- ☐ Cost to purchase solar equipment
- ☐ Cost of installation
- ☐ Financing charges
- ☐ Additional insurance costs
- ☐ Solar equipment maintenance cost
- ☐ Loss of discount rates heat/AC

Consider These Before Purchasing

- ☐ LLEC Net Metering Policy
- ☐ Solar power is dependent on weather
- ☐ Do you have enough space for solar panels
- ☐ check with your insurance provider before construction
- ☐ Pick contractors with solar experience
- ☐ Review all contracts to insure all costs are included
- ☐ Request multiple bids from contractors and compare

Before Installing & Connecting

- ☐ Complete and submit a copy of the standard interconnection agreement
- ☐ Contact LLEC to schedule a site visit to commission the installation. Ensure array is tested and operational before LLEC arrives.

Single Phase General
Service Access Charge

\$40.00

LLEC monthly access charge still applies even if no electricity is purchased



Potential Benefits

- ✓ Monthly Bill Reduction
- ✓ Improve Home Resale Value
- ✓ Generate Your Own Power
- ✓ Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

30%

Federal Tax Credit Until 2034



1-800-927-6276



email@llec.coop



APRIL 5-7, 2024
PBR: Unleash the Beast
 Denny Sanford
 PREMIER Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

MARCH 30
BHEC Community Easter Egg Hunt
 10 a.m.
 Hermosa Baseball Fields
 Hermosa, SD

MARCH 31
Easter Sunday Sunrise Celebration
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore National Monument
 Keystone, SD

APRIL 2
Clay-Union Electric Ribbon Cutting & Open House
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
 31321 SD Hwy. 19
 Vermillion, SD

APRIL 5
A Night at the Races fundraiser for Safe Place of Eastern SD
 6:30 p.m.
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 5-7
71st Annual Hayes Play: Under a Cowboy Moon
 7 p.m.
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD

APRIL 12-14
The Farmer's Daughter 19th Anniversary Celebration
 Hill City, SD

APRIL 13
Front Porch 605 Shop Hop
 9 a.m.
 Groton, SD

APRIL 14
Hill City Senior Sunday Breakfast
 8 a.m.
 Hill City Center
 Hill City, SD

APRIL 20
Healthy Kids Day
 10 a.m.
 Liberty Center YMCA
 Box Elder, SD

APRIL 20
Groton Firemen's Spring Social
 7 p.m.
 Groton Fire Station
 Groton, SD

APRIL 21
Fiddle & Popular Song
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Hall
 Gayville, SD

APRIL 26
Mitchell Technical College Alumni Cornhole Tournament
 6:30 p.m.
 World's Only Corn Palace
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 27
66th Annual Lions Pancake Jamboree
 7 a.m.
 Masonic Hall
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 27
Spaghetti Feed & Silent Auction for Black Hills Raptor Center
 4:30 p.m.
 Canyon Lake United Methodist Church
 Rapid City, SD

MAY 5
Opening Day
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 11
Opening Day
 1880 Train
 Hill City, SD

MAY 18
Booth Day
 10 a.m.
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.