

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Bringing the Light

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# Safety first

## Public Contacts

Our insurance company, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange (Federated), provides monthly updates on public contacts. Federated provides this information and reminds us that we should make every effort to educate our members, local emergency responders, and local contractors about the dangers of working around power lines and electrical safety. We use



**Tim O'Leary**  
General Manager

our newsletter to get our safety message out to our members and we hope that you share this message with friends and family to help them stay safe as well.

Working with and around electricity in a safe manner is important and the information that Federated shares with us monthly drives this message home. Federated's September update indicated that there were 14 new public contact claims, with two fatalities across their nationwide membership. The fatalities were a result of a farmer contacting an overhead

power line with an auger and a cable contractor contacting an overhead line when they were stringing new cable.

The non-fatal claims resulted from: an electrician contacting lines when installing solar panels; three fiber contractor incidents while they were stringing fiber lines; a concrete pumping truck operator contacting a line with the boom; a contractor contacting a line while building a new shed; a telecommunication contractor digging into an underground line; a line construction contractor contacting a line while replacing a pole; a member receiving a shock after touching a downed power line; a tree trimming contractor contacting an overhead line; a line construction contractor contacting a line while stringing new wire; and a cable contractor digging into an underground line. All of these public contacts could have been avoided by remembering to call 811 to locate underground cables, being aware of your surroundings to identify where overhead lines are and treating all downed power lines as though they are still energized.

We will continue to provide safety messages in our newsletter. Please give us a call to see if we can help your group get the safety message out about working with and around electricity.

## Electric Rates

We continue to work on our 2024 budget and the budget will let us know when we will need to make a change in our current electricity rates. It's been 7 years (January 1, 2017), since our last rate increase and it is looking like we will have to make a change in the very near future.

There are many drivers behind the need for the increase, but two of the bigger drivers are inflation and increasing power costs. Everyone has been dealing with inflation over the last few years and your cooperative is no different. Inflation impacts the cost of materials, which impacts the amount of dollars that need to be borrowed to upgrade and maintain the 1,670 miles of electric distribution lines, the dollars that are being borrowed are being borrowed at a higher interest rate and the higher cost of materials lead to higher distribution plant values which leads to higher depreciation amounts and this all leads to higher costs to serve our members with reliable and affordable electric services.

The same costs that are affecting Lyon-Lincoln Electric Co-op (LLEC) are affecting our power suppliers and this is leading to higher purchase power costs. LLEC has received notice that it's purchase power rates will go up approximately 4% in 2024. Purchase power costs account for around 58% of all costs at the cooperative, so this will play a large role in the need to raise rates in 2024.

We will know more about when and how much we will need to raise rates after we complete the budget process and we will inform the membership as soon as a decision is made. We will send out a letter, update the membership at our yearly district and annual meeting and we will look to our social media pages to share this information as well. The one thing that we want to avoid is waiting to long before we take action and make the change in rates. By taking action early, we are able to keep the increase to a minimum while maintaining the financial health of the cooperative.

Please continue to read the newsletter as we work through the budgeting process to determine the size and timing of any rate changes.



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

#### Board of Directors

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Joel Buyck, Garvin  
Jared Dritz, Porter  
Galen Grant, Russell  
Mary Gunnink, Lake Benton  
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Lyle Lamote – Line Superintendent  
Kristi Jensen - Finance Manager  
Brian Jeremiason – Manager of  
Marketing & External Relations  
Rochelle Borresen – Accountant  
Lisa Hauswedell – Billing Clerk  
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#### Staff and Personnel

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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](http://www.llec.coop)

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

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Jessica Gums, Editor

# Avoid the "Big Green Box"

Pad-mounted transformers, those big green utility boxes commonly seen near your yard, serve the purpose of lowering high voltage to standard household voltage used to power electronics, appliances, and lighting. These transformers are not protected in the way overhead lines and substations are. Though they may appear safe to use as workbenches and climbing obstacles, electrical equipment can still pose a risk to anyone who may come in contact with it. Members should always use caution and keep a safe distance.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric crews also need safe access for repairs and maintenance. Barriers, such as landscaping and fencing, should be kept clear of electrical equipment. While it may be tempting to "camouflage" transformers with landscaping, please remember our cooperative crews need at least 10-feet of clearance at the opening of a pad-mounted transformer and four-feet at the rear and sides of the housing. The distance allows crews to safely use tools required for working with energized equipment. Jeffrey Citterman - 1099800. It also ensures crews have the ability to move about safely should problems arise.

These transformers are connected to primary high voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend from the transformer in several directions underground. Remember this before planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems or digging anywhere near a transformer. You should always dial 811 before you dig to ensure lines are located so your project doesn't disrupt utility service, cause serious injury or worse.

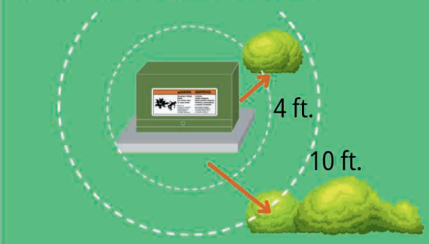
By respecting all utility equipment, including pad-mounted transformers, you can help keep the power on and your local utility workers safe. Also alert children that they should not sit on, open, or play around the green boxes.

**Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers (the big green box). While safe, they are not meant for touching, sitting, climbing, or playing. Pad-mounted transformers carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities.**

Never touch, climb, or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks, or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



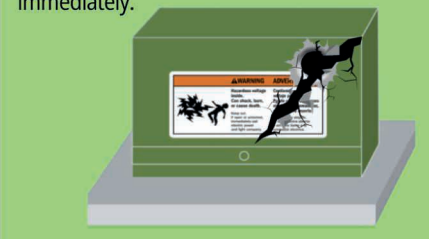
Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformers clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service.



Report problems. If you notice anything amiss, like an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact LLEC immediately.



# Be Prepared for Winter Driving

### Prepare Your Car for Winter

In addition to annual maintenance, here are some tips to winterize your car:

- Test your battery; battery power drops as the temperature drops
- Make sure the cooling system is in good working order
- Have winter tires with a deeper, more flexible tread put on your car
- If using all-season tires, check the tread and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch
- Check the tire pressure; tire pressure drops as the temperature drops
- Check your wiper blades and replace if needed
- Add wiper fluid rated for -30 degrees
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze

Remember to keep your car's emergency preparedness kit fully stocked, too.

### Before You Start Out

- Clean your car's external camera lenses and side mirrors
- Remove dirt, ice and snow from sensors to allow the assistive-driving features, like automatic emergency braking, to work
- In frigid weather, you may want to warm up the car before you drive
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in your garage – even with the garage door up
- If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm; if you must travel, share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave

### How to Avoid a Crash

AAA offers the following driving tips:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions
- Steer in the direction of a skid, so when your wheels regain traction, you don't have to overcorrect to stay in your lane
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds
- If possible, don't stop when going uphill

If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road to a safe place and do not drive until conditions improve.

Avoid pulling off onto the shoulder unless it is an absolute emergency. Limited visibility means other vehicles can't see yours on the shoulder.

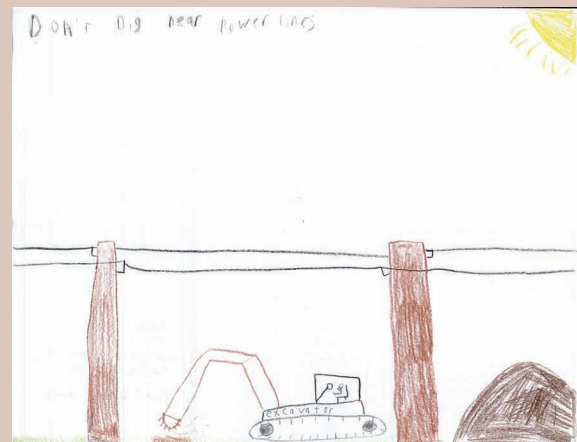
### Know Your Car's Capabilities

**My Car Does What?** is a national campaign to help educate drivers about the safety features built into vehicles. Search for your car and find out what safety features are already built in.

Traction control is now standard on most new vehicles. This function helps your vehicle gain traction on snowy, icy or wet surfaces, particularly when accelerating from a stopped or slowed position, or when trying to make it up a slippery hill.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) helps you steer in emergencies by restoring traction to your tires and is standard on most new vehicles. ABS may vibrate or pulse when engaged. This is normal. Continue to press and hold pressure to the brake pedal.

Remember, you are your car's best safety feature. Take precautions to ensure you arrive safely at your destination. If you become stranded in an unfamiliar area, do not leave your car. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud or objects.



### Don't Dig Near Power Lines

#### Hayes Schomp, Age 10

Hayes Schomp cautions people to be careful where they dig. Hayes is the son of Thad and Devan Schomp from Eklton, S.D., members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

# HOLIDAY FAVORITES

## OYSTER STEW

### Ingredients:

- 1 qt. medium/large oysters
- 1 medium onion (diced)
- 2 qts. half and half
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 lb. real butter (no cheating here)
- 3 tbsps. Worcestershire Sauce

### Method

Before you know it, Christmas Eve will be here so get ready the traditional Oyster Stew. In a saucepan, saute onions and oysters with the butter. Simmer until the oysters crinkle. In a crock pot, add half and half, cream of mushroom soup, and Worcestershire Sauce. Then, add the oysters, onion and butter. Season to taste with fresh ground black pepper and salt. Simmer for six hours on low heat (high heat will curdle the milk). Serve with oyster crackers.

Kari Larson- Reder  
Warner, S.D.

## BETTER THAN CANDY PIE

### Ingredients:

- 1 nine in. chocolate ready crust
- 1 cup sliced bananas
- 1/4 cup chopped, dry roasted peanuts
- 1 small pkg. instant butterscotch pudding
- 2/3 cup dry milk
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 2 tbsps. peanut butter
- 3/4 cup whipped topping
- 2 chocolate graham crackers, chopped

### Method

Mix together dry milk, pudding, and water with wire whisk. Add peanut butter. Cover bottom of pie crust with bananas. Spread pudding mixture over bananas. Spread whipped topping next. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and chopped graham crackers.

Janet Ochsner  
Box Elder, S.D.

## CHRISTMAS CRACK BARK

### Ingredients:

- 1 sleeve saltine crackers, (about 35 crackers)
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp. sea salt
- 1 1/2 tpsps. pure vanilla extract
- 1 pkg. (10 - 12 oz.) chocolate chips, semi-sweet, milk or dark chocolate

### Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Spray lightly with no-stick cooking spray. Arrange crackers on baking sheet in single layer so that the edges almost touch. Heat butter and brown sugar in two-quart saucepan on medium heat. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring frequently. Simmer two to three minutes. Remove from heat; stir in salt and vanilla. Pour caramel sauce over crackers and spread to evenly coat crackers. Bake six minutes. Remove pan from oven. Sprinkle chocolate chips over caramel layer. Let stand five minutes. Spread chocolate chips into an even layer on top of caramel. Refrigerate 2 hours or freeze 30 to 45 minutes or until firm. Break or cut into pieces to serve. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to one week.

[McCormick.com](http://McCormick.com)

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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# September Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, September 25, 2023. Directors present: James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Jared Dritz, Mary Gunnink, Galen Grant, Scott Johnson, Dale Fier, Mike Longtin and Joel Buyck.

Also present at the meeting were General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, and Attorney, Michael W. Cable.

The Board and others in attendance stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance. President, Dale Fier, then called the meeting to order and routine business was conducted including approval of the August 28, 2023 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, gave the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending August 31, 2023. Ms. Jensen then reviewed with the board the following items: a memorandum that had been received from East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. concerning the subject of Environmental Attributes Sale Proceeds Distribution and the Marketing Pool Total RECs Proceeds for mid-year distributions, Patronage Capital Disbursement Selection Confirmation

that had been received from National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, and a draft of the 2022 Form 990 which had been completed by Eide Bailly Auditors.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave the August Outage Report because Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, was not in attendance. Mr. O'Leary also advised the Board that there was a Safety Meeting held on August 9, 2023 concerning Poisonous Weeds which was presented by Shawn Marthaler from MREA. Mr. O'Leary then advised the Board of work that had been completed by the linemen and work that still was in process: linemen put in 10 URD taps to get out of the trees, started replacing OCRs out of the Ghent Substation for the yearly maintenance, and the Cooperative has received State Permits for East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.'s Ivanhoe to Marble tap rebuild.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed his report with the board which included the following: On-going solar project updates, submission of a support letter for the City of Russell's infrastructure improvement projects for their drinking water, wastewater and storm water systems, and provided up-to-date electric vehicle statistics.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, then gave his manager's report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: the Board reviewed the July power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, reported on the CEO's fall Conference, East River's Annual Meeting, Regional Meetings 5 and 6, and then shared with the board upcoming meetings, events, and notices.

Directors gave a report concerning the recent meetings they had attended and reviewed upcoming meetings and notices. The Board then reviewed the July Cyber Security Program Report presented by East River Cyber Security Department dated September 7, 2023.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:05 pm and reconvened at 12:29 pm. There was discussion concerning the Budget Meeting date and then the board reviewed the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. Wage & Salary Report dated July, 2023 which was prepared by EleCo Solutions, LLC.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 12:59 pm.



# Scholarships Available for 2024

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative and our generation and transmission cooperative, Basin Electric, are once again investing in area youth as we enter the new year. Applications are now being accepted for the Basin Electric and Lyon-Lincoln Electric scholarship programs.

Basin Electric is headquartered in Bismarck, ND, and operates the power plants and generation resources that provide electricity to more than 140 member co-ops across 9 different states, including Lyon Lincoln Electric Cooperative. Every year, Basin Electric awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a high school senior or college student from each of its member co-ops. Lyon-Lincoln Electric is a member cooperative of Basin Electric and has been offering this \$1,000 scholarship to students in our service territory for the past 31 years. Basin Electric has awarded more than 5,000 scholarships worth more than \$5 million since the scholarship program began three decades ago.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric has also offered its own scholarship in conjunction with the Basin Electric scholarship program. Lyon-Lincoln Electric offers a \$500 scholarship to

each of the schools in our service area, through our Operation RoundUp Program.

**Your local co-op offers scholarships because it is the cooperative way.**

Locally owned and operated electric cooperatives were created by members of our local communities to serve our communities. Scholarships are a way for cooperatives to invest in the students who will be the future leaders of our co-ops and our communities. Applying for both scholarships is easy. Students simply need to complete one Basin Electric scholarship application to be eligible for both scholarships. The scholarship application can be found on the Lyon-Lincoln Electric website by visiting:

<https://llec.coop/llec-scholarships>

Applications can also be requested from the co-op office or through your high school guidance counselor. The application deadline is February 9th, 2024. We would encourage students to consider applying for these scholarship opportunities in 2024. There is no better way to kick off the new year than with some free money from your local electric cooperative!

## Win Money

**Find Your Name & Member Number and Win \$**

The tradition of listing member names and numbers in the newsletter continues in the Cooperative 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 Cooperative Connections, the hidden member's names were Paul Hennen and Kurt & Nadine Weedman. Once again, there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck!

## Energy Saving Tip

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away.

For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR® label.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



**Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**Deadline: Feb. 9th, 2024**

**Now Accepting Scholarship Applications**

The scholarship application can be found on the Lyon-Lincoln Electric website by visiting <https://llec.coop/llec-scholarships>

Applications can also be requested from the co-op office or through your high school guidance counselor.

## LIGHT PARADE



# BRINGING THE LIGHT

## Electric Cooperatives Spread Holiday Cheer

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdrea.coop)

While Santa's elves are hard at work at the North Pole, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are working to bring their own magic to their local neighborhoods, illuminating local parades with festive lights. Black Hills Electric Cooperative is just one of many examples of how a co-op can not only bring light but also creativity to their community.

Every December, Black Hills Electric crafts an exceptional float for the annual Custer Parade of Lights. For Bill Brisk, the manager of operations at Black Hills Electric, the parade isn't merely an event – it's a cherished tradition for their co-op.

As the parade approaches, the Black Hills Electric workshop bustles with

activity, mirroring Santa's very own workshop. Guided by a design from Brisk, linemen and staff assemble their unique Christmas float – crafting, welding and fabricating many of their designs from scratch.

“Just a few nights before the parade, we host a family night where we bring out the families of our employees,”





said Brisk. “The co-op provides food and drinks and we all work together to finish the float.”

In just two weeks, the co-op repurposes discarded equipment and scrap parts into creative masterpieces. One year, the co-op created an oversized shopping cart from old pipe laying around the shop. The next, they used retired meter loop pipes, guy wires, and meter covers to create palm trees and coconuts for a beachside Santa scene. Even Willie Wirehand, the co-op’s safety mascot, has been outfitted for a festive float. Despite being fabricated from old parts, the end result is always something worthy of a debut at the North Pole.

“Most everything we do is built in our shop.” said Brisk. “We do all

of the fabrications ourselves, and we haven’t had a flop yet.”

Luckily, the co-op’s efforts haven’t gone unnoticed. Since 2015, they’ve clinched an award every year at the Custer Parade with the only exceptions being 2020 and 2021 when the pandemic halted festivities. Their trophy collection holds a wide range of awards, boasting awards like the Rudolph’s Choice Award, Best Light, Best Music and most recently, the Custer Fruit Cake Award.

Dawn Murray, the executive director of the Custer Chamber of Commerce, expressed her admiration. “They really go all out. Beyond the parade, they even participate in our scarecrow decorating contest. I remember one year they had a scarecrow up in a

bucket truck, which was really cool.”

Yet, for Black Hills Electric, Custer is just the beginning. The co-op has grand visions for a broader festive footprint. With a service area that stretches from just south of Terry Peak to Nebraska, Brisk sees even more opportunities to shower communities with holiday cheer.

“It’s a festive time of year and something that we want to extend out to different towns in our service territory,” said Brisk. “Seeing the kids’ eyes brighten when we light up our float for the first time really makes the whole thing worth it, and if we can spread that to more of our members, all the better.”



# Guard against utility service scams, other forms of fraud & identity theft

It is the world we live in today – the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry. The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else! (Or else their service will be shut off, they threaten.) This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold. However, utilities typically send initial disconnection notices in writing.

**Utility scams: How they get you:** Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do not provide any information (including your utility account number) or agree to immediate payment; instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Utility bills that double the amount due may be a utility scam. Utilities are closely regulated and may not have the right to raise prices substantially. Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.



Do not provide any personal information or agree to immediate payment via phone; Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim's identity.

**Protect personal info:** When supplying your utility (or any business or person) with sensitive information such as a social security number, proof of address or death certificate, do not email the information. Additionally, do not give out sensitive information to anyone who calls you. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.

**At your door:** Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer's cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house without a pre-approved appointment.

**Scams in general:** The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

**Caller ID can fib:** Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds; do an internet search for the fraud watch network to learn more.

**Scams are everywhere:** Non-utility-related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons when cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password bot scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the "chip in the middle attack," and scammers get ahold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/servicer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim's identity.

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers.

# Serving up savings

The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking, and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, it is a good time to remind Lyon-Lincoln Electric members of a few efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

## Be festive without breaking the bank-

Some of us insist that we bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights adorning your home for well over a month, decide to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Maria CiFuentes - 1248700. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

## Cook up energy savings in the kitchen-

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

We hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

*From your friends at Lyon-Lincoln Electric,  
we hope you have a wonderful Holiday Season.*





Garretson Childcare helpers are getting ready to help grow their daycare.

# REED FUND

## Powering Your Community

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@srea.coop

The community development financial institution powered by rural electric cooperatives in South Dakota is about to reach a major milestone.

The (Rural Electric Economic Development) Fund's total dollar amount in projects impacted is anticipated to reach \$1 billion by the end of 2023, according to Eric Fosheim, Economic Development Manager for REED.

REED also exceeded 10,000 in jobs impacted (created or retained) since its creation in 1996.

"Currently, we sit at just over \$998 million in total projects impacted," Fosheim said in October.

The REED Fund is a 501(c)3

corporation and operates as a revolving loan fund that provides financing for economic development projects in rural areas.

Those projects that receive REED Fund dollars must promote growth and be a catalyst in creating more business, wealth and job opportunities within the rural community. The projects are also expected to improve infrastructure and economic base in rural areas.

The REED Fund provides financing from the federal government and other lender, in addition to revolving interest payments collected over the years. The REED Fund does not use money generated by electric rate charges.

Fosheim said that as of September 30, REED has issued 401 loans for a total of \$125.26 million.

"This includes \$104,174,418 in loans made using REED dollars and \$21,082,793 from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program," Fosheim said.



Central Electric General Manager Ken Schlimgen, left, delivers REED funding to Mitchell Technical College.

Fosheim said it isn't entirely surprising that the \$1 billion was hit this year.

"REED has seen steady growth over the years, but typically sees higher than normal application volume in times of rising interest rates. In addition, costs are rising as well, so total project costs for each individual project have been higher as well.

Dakota Energy General Manager Chad Felderman has been on the REED Fund board since 2018.

He said the impact the REED Fund has on local communities is unique, noting that the businesses the fund helps aren't necessarily ones that Dakota Energy provides electricity to, but are ones that help our communities, "which in turn helps our members where they live," he said.

"It is gratifying to help our hospitals, fire departments, and schools purchase equipment so our small communities can provide those essential services," Felderman said.

One of those projects funded by REED is the Huron Regional Medical Center dialysis building.

"We are proud to support HRMC in sustaining and expanding local access to critical medical services right here in our community," Felderman said.

Douglas Electric Cooperative General Manager Jay Spaans echoed Felderman's sentiment, noting that the REED Fund is special because co-ops get to loan money to businesses that they don't always serve.

"For us, it is just about making

improvements in the community. Sure, we would like to serve the load, but even if the new load doesn't reside in our territory, we still will fund the loan," Spaans said. "It is all about the greater good for our communities."

West River Electric CEO Dick Johnson also serves on the REED Fund board. He's one of the first board members to represent a co-op in the western part of the state. The REED Fund was originally set up by co-ops in eastern South Dakota. After two decades of successful growth and development, the REED Fund decided to allow co-ops in western South Dakota to join in 2017. Johnson said West River Electric was one of the first western co-ops to be accepted into the REED Fund.

"It was one of the best things we could ask for. We were struggling with our own revolving loan fund but we had primarily loaned to government entities, no businesses," Johnson said.

"When we became members of REED that gave us another tool in our toolbox to offer our members who were interested in our area or needed to expand their businesses or infrastructure."

West River Electric hasn't had many loans, but Johnson is still encouraged by what he's seen as a board member.

"Sitting on the Board and seeing the applications and the impact we are having on the economy of small towns all over South Dakota is phenomenal," Johnson said.

Johnson had high praise for the folks at the REED Fund office in Madison, calling

them a "class act" who really understand the region's rural areas.

"They work hard to say yes and somehow make it work. The fact that the local co-op board can help make the decision to move a project forward is unheard of – real boots on the ground who are in the communities we serve and understand what is needed to thrive," Johnson said. "It is a unique model just like the cooperative business model."

## Did You Know

From 2018 to 2022, electric cooperatives in South Dakota spent \$5.7 Billion on capital investment, operations, and maintenance activities and retired \$102.8 Million in capital credits paid to consumer-members.

Through these expenditures, co-ops drive economic benefits in their local communities and throughout the state.

Over the five-year period, electric co-ops in South Dakota are responsible for:

### STATEWIDE IMPACT

- \$4.2 Billion to South Dakota's Gross State Product (GSP)
- An average of 5,848 jobs in South Dakota each year
- \$2 Billion in labor income in South Dakota
- \$194.1 Million in federal taxes
- \$423 Million in state taxes
- \$418.4 Million in local taxes

All of these impacts occur in counties where electric cooperatives operate, showcasing the substantial local economic benefits that co-ops provide in the communities they serve.



Participants celebrate the groundbreaking for the National Music Museum in Vermillion.

# BE AN ENERGY WARRIOR



Do you feel like your home is under attack from energy waste? Now is the time to fight back. Arm yourself with a few simple tools and some time and you can make your home more efficient and send your energy bills into retreat.

Gaps in windows can be an unwelcome source of energy loss. Sealing them will save money and make your home more comfortable. All you need is exterior caulk, a scraper, a utility knife, and a caulking gun.

## CLOSING THE GAPS

1. Look where the window frame meets the side of your house to see if there's a gap. If the gap is less than half an inch, you can seal it with foam backing and caulk.
2. Make sure the area is clean and dry. If there is any existing caulk, scrape it out.
3. Choose the right type of exterior caulk – your best bet is silicone or siliconized caulk.
4. Cut the tip of the caulk at a 45-degree angle and load it into the caulking gun.
5. Run the tip slowly and evenly along the base of the crack. Finish by running a damp finger along the bead to smooth it out.



**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!**

## September Outage Report (10 or more consumers)

9/28/23 - 37 consumers were off 2 hours and 15 minutes in Grandview and Fairview Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

## Energy Assistance Program

To learn more about the Energy Assistance Program or to apply for assistance contact your county EAP service provider.

### UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

Marshall, MN  
Ph. #(800)658-2448



### PRAIRIE FIVE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL INC.

Montevideo, MN  
Ph. #(320)269-7976



### SOUTHWEST HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Ivanhoe, MN Office Ph. #(507)694-1452  
Marshall, MN Office Ph. #(507)537-6747



## YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

	August- 2022	August- 2023
Total Revenue	\$7,189,865	\$7,265,660
Cost of Power	\$3,892,394	\$4,045,059
Operating Expenses	\$3,047,751	\$2,959,928
Operating Margins	\$249,720	\$260,673
KWH's Purchased	67,295,844	67,665,211
Services in Place	4,121	4,125
Miles of Line	1,670	1,671
Revenue per Mile	\$4,305	\$4,348

# YOUR REGIONAL COOPERATIVE NETWORK

Here is how your regional cooperative network delivers electricity to you.

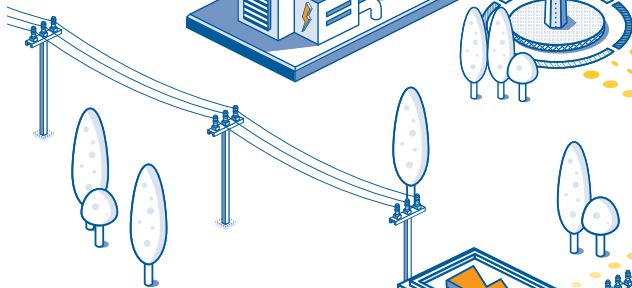
**Basin Electric Power Cooperative**  
Generation & Transmission Cooperative



**Western Area Power Administration**  
Hydropower from Missouri River dams



Western Area Power Administration



**Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**Your Local Touchstone Energy Cooperative**  
Your local co-op is 1 of 24 distribution co-ops that receives power from East River Electric to deliver to their co-op member-owners.



**East River Electric Power Cooperative**  
Power supply co-op that receives the power and delivers it to local co-ops.



**POWERING COOPERATION**

Learn more at [yourcoopower.com](http://yourcoopower.com)



**Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**Dec. 14-17**  
**Christmas at the Cathedral**  
 521 N Duluth Avenue,  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-988-3765

**DEC. 2**  
**Tabor Parade of Lights**  
 Vendor Fair  
 4 p.m.  
 Parade of Lights  
 5:30 p.m.  
 Ham Drawing  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Tabor, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**Julefest Scandinavian Christmas Festival and Bazaar**  
 8 a.m.  
 Our Saviors Lutheran Church  
 Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 3**  
**Hartford's Hometown Christmas**  
 7:30 a.m.  
 Hartford, SD

**DEC. 8-9**  
**Alexandria's Winter Festival**  
 5 p.m.  
 Alexandria, SD

**DEC. 8-9**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**DEC. 9**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 Wessington, SD

**DEC. 10**  
**Hill City Senior Saturday Breakfast**  
 Hill City Center  
 Hill City, SD

**DEC. 17**  
**Christmas Cantata**  
 3 p.m.  
 Hermosa United Church of Christ  
 Hermosa, SD

**NOV. 24**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 7 p.m.  
 Dakota Avenue  
 Huron, SD

**NOV. 25**  
**Mid-Winter Fair**  
 Gregory Auditorium  
 Gregory, SD  
 605-830-9778

**NOV. 30**  
**Christmas on the Prairie**  
 5 p.m.  
 Miller, SD

**NOV. 30-DEC. 3**  
**Hatchery Holidays**  
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery  
 Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 1-2**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
 Hot Springs, SD

**DEC. 1-30**  
**Trees and Trains Exhibit**  
 SD State Railroad Museum  
 Hill City, SD

**DEC. 1-30**  
**Holiday Express and Holiday Express Spiked**  
 1880 Train  
 Hill City, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**Rapid City Garden Club's 62nd Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale**  
 8 a.m.  
 Central States Fairgrounds  
 Rapid City, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction**  
 4 p.m.  
 Olive Grove Golf Course  
 Groton, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 6 p.m.  
 Redfield, 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.

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