

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Wall Meats Expansion

Reviving Local
Meatcutting in
New Underwood
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Meeting Updates



Tim O'Leary
General Manager

I started off last year's newsletter article at this time talking about the weather and this year is no different as we experienced snow and wind at the end of March. We were able to avoid the mixed precipitation and ice this time and the distribution system held up as we experienced no outages during the storm. We did have to move our board meeting by a few days, but our crews avoided having to be out during the bad weather conditions. We aren't always that lucky as we have had several storms over the last couple of years that have caused significant damage to the distribution system.

We recently visited St. Paul to visit with our locally elected representatives: Representatives Chris Swedzinski and Joe Schomacker and Senators Gary Dahms and Bill Webber. We visited with each of them, along with other area electric cooperative leaders, about the importance of fixing language in the current property tax bill that affects cooperative's that serve within incorporated city limits, permitting reform, allowing for the discussion of nuclear energy to meet the carbon free mandates implemented in last year's Carbon Free by 2040 bill. We continued our visits by letting them know that we continue to oppose new mandates that were being discussed by the majority party during this year's session. We continue to believe that local control/democracy allows us to meet what our members want and not what legislators in St. Paul believe we want. Our discussions went well, and we appreciate all of them for taking the time to meet and listen to our concerns.

By the time you get this newsletter, the cooperative will have held its yearly district meetings. Dave Flatebo - 1362900. The district meetings allow us to have a short business meeting in each district where the members of the district vote on director candidates to represent the district on the annual meeting ballot. Once that is complete, staff give a short presentation on

happenings at your local electric cooperative. There was plenty to talk about as the cooperative is having it's first rate increase in 7 years, so we spent a great deal of time reviewing the cooperative's financials and background behind the need for an increase.

One other item that was covered is the opportunity to vote by mail ballot. The mail ballot option includes an application for the ballot, a certified mail ballot, instructions, and envelopes to return the ballot. The ballot would need to be returned to the office by the Tuesday before the annual meeting, which is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5th.

The board's goal is to provide all members with an opportunity to participate in the director election process by offering mail-in ballots, particularly for those unable 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.

Please save June 5th and join us for this year's annual meeting. Come for the delicious meal and stay for the election of directors, updates from staff, and prizes.

4 REASONS TO VOTE
IN CO-OP DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

- 1** As a member of the co-op, your input matters.
- 2** Directors represent you on important energy-related issues.
- 3** Director's decisions can impact electricity rates and future projects.
- 4** with convenient voting options available, it only takes a minute.

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 Summer
hours are 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Monday thru Friday

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Free 1-800-927-6276; Fax (507) 247-5508.

Jessica Gums, Editor

LLEC Director Obtains National Recognition Certificate

Mary Gunnink from Lyon-Lincoln Electric recently received the Board Leadership certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An everchanging business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Lyon-Lincoln Electric has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). Directors who have attained the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

Thank you to Mary for her dedication to the Cooperative and its members. Congratulations!



YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON JANUARY 2024

	Jan.- 2023	Jan.- 2024
Total Revenue	\$1,086,248	\$1,109,069
Cost of Power	\$431,542	\$636,137
Operating Expenses	\$376,482	\$455,523
Operating Margins	\$278,224	\$17,409
KWH's Purchased	11,192,510	11,157,651
Services in Place	4,124	4,129
Miles of Line	1,670	1,671
Revenue per Mile	\$650	\$664

Your Safety Matters

Prevent home electrical fires

Eight out of 10 fire-related deaths occur at home – the place that embodies comfort and security. That's why it's important to take steps to keep everyone safe.

Faulty or deteriorating electrical cords are a top cause of fires at home. Cords that become frayed or cracked can send sparks to flammable surfaces. Check your cords to ensure that they are in good shape, and replace any that are worn.

In addition, make sure you are not overloading circuits. If you've been in your home for more than 10 years, have your circuit breaker box inspected by a licensed electrician to tighten loose connections and check for overloaded circuits.



Homes with copper wiring need to be inspected every 20 years, and homes with aluminum wiring should be inspected every five years.

Check all Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets several times each year by pushing the test/reset button to be sure they are working properly.

If breakers are continually tripping or if fuses are blowing frequently, that's a sign of potential trouble. The cause could be old wiring unable to handle the load demand of today's modern appliances. If needed, ask a licensed electrician to install additional circuits for safety.

Use surge protectors and power bars to help prevent overloading an electrical outlet, plugging no more than three cords into the strip.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. We urge you to take the time and steps needed to lower the risks of electrical fires. Keep your family safe.



Stay Away from Power Lines

Weston Koistinen, Age 6

Weston Koistinen warns readers to be safe by staying away from power lines. Weston's parents are Dion and Stephanie Koistinen, members of H-D 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.

SUMMER CASSEROLES

BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 5 oz. package croutons,
any flavor
2 cup sharp Cheddar cheese,
shredded
1 lb. sausage, fried and
drained
9 eggs
1 can evaporated milk
1 tbsp. mustard

Method

Spray 9x13 pan with vegetable oil. Arrange croutons on bottom. Sprinkle cheese over croutons and put sausage over cheese. Combine eggs, milk and mustard. Beat to blend and pour into pan. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 package Chicken Stove Top
Stuffing mix
3 cups cooked cut up
chicken
1 can cream of mushroom
soup
2/3 cup milk
1 can cream of chicken soup
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups chicken broth

Method

Grease a 9x13 pan and put 1/2 of the stuffing mix in the pan. Cover with chicken. Combine soups and milk and spoon over chicken. Spread other 1/2 of stuffing over the top. Pour 2 cups of chicken broth over all and spread with beaten eggs. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Gail Lee
Brookings, S.D.

TACO CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
1 package taco seasoning
mix
1 can (16 oz.) pinto beans,
drained and rinsed
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
1 can (11 oz.) whole kernel
corn, drained
1 cup shredded Cheddar
cheese
1 cup coarsely crushed
tortilla chips

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brown meat in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Stir in seasoning mix, beans, tomato sauce and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spoon into 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and tortilla chips. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with assorted toppings, if desired.

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.

February Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, February 26, 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 January 22, 2024 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 December 31, 2023. The Board was provided with data concerning the 2023 Margin Allocation Estimates from East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc., reviewed the East River Margin Stabilization Return for January, 2024, and reviewed a letter provided by NISC concerning the approval of a cash retirement on unretired balances from 2000 and prior.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the January Outage Report. Mr. Lamote indicated that the linemen were doing the following work some of which had been completed and some were still in process: line patrol

involving three Townships, cutting trees on the east side of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s service area, changing out porcelain insulators, and reviewing and repairing some of the spots identified by EXACTER Turnkey Services showing potential problems on the system. Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, and General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, reviewed the 2023 Service Reliability Report with the board.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed his report with the board which included an update on the Basin/Operation RoundUp Scholarship Program in which the cooperative received 27 applications, approval of the Annual Co-generation Report, and reviewed the Distributed Energy Resource Filing Form that is filed with the State of Minnesota showing the applications that the Cooperative received from members for inter-connection of distributed generation resources.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, then gave his Manager's Report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: the Board reviewed the January 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, as well as the Basin Winter Manager's Meeting. Mr. O'Leary included a list of MREA's legislative that included property tax clarification, permitting

reform, ECO updates to streamline the process, repeal of the nuclear moratorium and opposition of more mandates.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:09 pm and reconvened at 12:40 pm and during the lunch period the Board reviewed The East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. monthly video report which included the Basin Summary.

The Board reviewed Policy 407 which described the Mail-In Ballot Policy for the members to be able to vote by mail at the meetings of the members. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Rokeh, seconded by Mr. Longtin, and carried to adopt Policy 407 effective immediately.

The Board then reviewed the January 2024 Cyber Security Program Report presented by East River Cyber Security Department dated February 7, 2024.

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 2:10 pm.

FEBRUARY OUTAGE REPORT 10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

No outages of the month of February.

Summer Savings



Jess Gums

Executive Assistant

One of my favorite things about summer is the opportunity for fresh, homegrown food, whether it's shopping at our local farmers' market or sharing the abundance of tomatoes and peppers from my garden with friends & neighbors. It's amazing how just a few seeds, some fertilizer, water (and large amount of patience) can turn into a bounty.

When I think about energy efficiency, I think about that bounty of food, and how with just a few simple actions, you can use less electricity and reap the rewards of energy savings.

You don't need to be a farmer or botanist to know that plants need water, just like you don't have to be a lineworker or engineer to know that adjusting the thermostat or turning off lights can reduce your monthly electric bill. In fact, if you read Lyon-Lincoln Electric's Cooperative Connection's regularly and follow us on Facebook, you know there are a lot of things you can do at home to save electricity and money.

Summer months bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. But why? Cooling your home accounts for a large portion of your monthly energy use, and the hotter it gets, the harder and longer your air conditioner works to keep you cool.

There are several ways you can manage energy use at home, and below we're providing a few tips that can help grow your summer energy savings, not only during the dog days of summer but throughout the year.

One of the great things about being part of Lyon-Lincoln Electric is that we're locally owned by you, our members. There are no investors making profits here. Just knowledgeable people with local jobs, working for our neighbors to ensure there is electricity available when you need it. Contact us, and we can work with you to find more ways to save energy — and money!

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

1. Raise your thermostat.

The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.

2. Install window coverings

like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.

3. Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.

4. Run ceiling fans for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.

5. Lower your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



Source: Dept. of Energy

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, Dulcey & Chad Magnussen & Andrew Lasnetski 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

Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices. With smart plugs, you can easily manage your coffee maker, lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. Smart plugs can help you manage devices through a smart phone app, your home assistant or voice control. By conveniently powering off or scheduling devices, you can save energy and money!

Source: energystar.gov



Patsy Besson helps package fresh cuts of meat at the Wall Meat Processing plant.
Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel

Wall Meats Revives Local Meatcutting in South Dakota Through New Underwood Expansion

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

A local meat processing plant is expanding its footprint in Pennington County in a way that will put more locally produced protein on dinner tables and bolster the local meat processing workforce throughout South Dakota.

The man behind this plan is local business owner Ken Charfauros, who owns Wall Meat Processing, which has locations in Wall and Rapid City.

Charfauros is currently raising funds through a capital drive campaign to finance the construction of a 30,000 square foot meat processing facility in New Underwood. The new facility will help train the next generation of meat processors through a partnership with Western Dakota Tech in Rapid City.

"We are at \$2.8 million in our drive. We also have the \$3.3 million USDA Rural Development grant, which is a meat and poultry expansion plan grant. We are about \$200,000 short of our goal," Charfauros said.

He added that the New Underwood processing plant will also use funding from the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program (MPILP), which according to the USDA's website "provides grant funding to intermediary lenders who finance – or plan to finance – the start-up, expansion, or operation of slaughter, or other processing of meat and poultry. The objective of the MPILP is to strengthen the financing capacity for independent meat processors, and to create a more resilient, diverse, and secure U.S. food supply chain."

Charfauros said he's still meeting with potential investors and has a financial team focused on creating relationships with local ag producers.

"After we get our capital drive, the plan itself will be about \$21 million," he added. "And then we start the project. The groundbreaking is going to happen in about a year and the facility will begin operations six months after that."

Charfauros said he expects to purchase the property to site the new plant this spring.

Returning to a Passion

Wall Meats Processing opened for business 57 years ago, but

Charfauros took ownership over the facility in 2017. His passion for meat cutting began when he was a teenager while working for a local meat plant in Delaware.

“It was my high school job and I loved it. After I graduated high school, I felt that my country needed me, so I joined the Air Force and did 30 years. But I always missed that part of my life,” Charfauros recalled.

“A guy that taught me how to cut was like my second dad, and I always wanted to come back to it. My son had just graduated from South Dakota State University, and I had retired from the Air Force. That’s when we decided to buy a plant.”

His son manages the store in Rapid City while Ken’s three nephews help run the family’s businesses in Wall, which include Wall Meats and the Red Rock restaurant.

Supporting Local Producers

Building the new facility has been a challenging venture that’s been years in the making.

“We started building this plan about four years ago, then COVID hit and got in our way. Then, we were lucky enough to get those grant awards last year, and ever since we have been working diligently to get the format right,” Charfauros said.

“I have drawings. I have an equipment list all put together — everything is ready to go except for this capital drive that we are undergoing.”

Charfauros said he has been meeting with both potential and locked-in investors daily over the last year to produce the required financing.

“We have met with over 600 people with 99 percent of those people being producers, because this is all for them. This plant offers them premium pricing above the market rates,” Charfauros said.

While the cattle market is high now, Charfauros remains realistic that the market can change for the worse.

While he hopes the market remains high enough for producers to survive, his partnership with producers will serve as

added security. That means the partnership must be tightknit.

He knows he cannot do it alone.

Reviving a Dying Art

“Meat cutting is a dying art, and we teach meat processing at our store in Rapid City to bring that art back. We’re trying to fight for that industry as it is,” he said.

Three meat processing students are currently being taught at the Rapid City facility through a partnership with Western Dakota Tech, which recently began offering the two-year program.

Pam Stillman-Rokusek, director of communications and marketing at Western Dakota Tech, said three students are currently enrolled in the Meat Processing program. Of those three, two will graduate in May.

But the college is still working on more outreach.

“Enrollment has been a bit low in the program, so the plan is for a hiatus this fall. They’ll revamp the curriculum. Then, we will certainly do additional outreach. We have done advertising, gone to the schools. We have reached out to 4-H

groups and done some traveling, but we need to turn it up a notch to produce more students in the program. That is our goal,” Stillman-Rokusek said.

Despite the Meat Processing program being put on hiatus, the school will still ensure that the remaining student completes the program while actively working on developing the program and outreach methods.

“There’s such a high need for meat processors and we’re looking at different ways to fill that gap. It’s something we’re committed to doing,” she added.

The goal is to enroll at least five students in the following school years when the program restarts.

The learning center that will be built within the New Underwood facility will also teach producers, in addition to students, the art of meat cutting.

“We are trying to bring that industry back to what it should be—regionally processed protein,” Charfauros said.

“That means we must build the environment to spark that passion. In anything you do, you need to learn how to do it the right way.”



Wall Meat Processing plant, established in 1957. Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel



Rural Electric Cooperative Leaders Gather

Minnesota Rural Electric Association's 83rd Annual Meeting Recap

Pictured: Blois Olson, Fluence Media (center), moderated a legislative panel with (L-R) Rep. Chris Swedzinski, District 15A, Rep. Patty Acomb, District 45B,, Rep. Nick Frentz, District 18 and Sen. Jason Rarick, District 11.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) held its 83rd annual meeting with the theme "Powering Tomorrow Together" at the St. Paul River Centre in late March.

In his presentation, MREA CEO Darrick Moe warned of threats to reliability in Minnesota if the state doesn't proceed carefully with legislation relating to providing Minnesota's ongoing electricity needs. MREA works in a bipartisan manner, working with both parties to shape legislation impacting cooperatives.

"Reliability and affordability cannot be taken for granted in the face of the policy pressures that are underway," Moe said. He also provided highlights of a new line worker apprenticeship skills training and testing program that MREA initiated in 2024 to enhance the safety capacity of Minnesota's cooperatives.

Moe also highlighted the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Program that is sending line workers from Minnesota and Iowa to Guatemala to help electrify rural villages in June. The International Program has connected 160 million people in 48 countries since the 1960s. Minnesota cooperatives are contributing the funding to make this effort possible.

MREA's Board Chair Wes Waller spoke about

MREA's accomplishments over the last year. He talked about the positive state of programs at MREA and highlighted the improvements in safety and communications. He thanked the staff for everything that was accomplished over the last year.

MREA's management team provided updates on safety programs, communications, events and finances.

During the legislative day, held the day before the business meeting, members received a legislative update from Jenny Glumack, MREA's director of government affairs, and heard a robust discussion between legislators during the panel discussion.

A special thank you to legislators on the panel: Sen. Nick Frentz, District 18; Rep. Patty Acomb, District 45B; Sen. Jason Rarick, District 11; and Rep. Chris Swedzinski, District 15A; along with moderator Blois Olson, CEO of Fluence Media. The discussion among these energy committee leaders presented a lively cross-section of views relating to Minnesota's energy policy.

The event concluded with an inspiring message from Tom Thibodeau of Viterbo University, who discussed the amount of fatigue Americans face today and encouraged the group to sustain their important efforts.

Powerline Safety

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. Eyvonne Johnson - 1495600. 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. 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

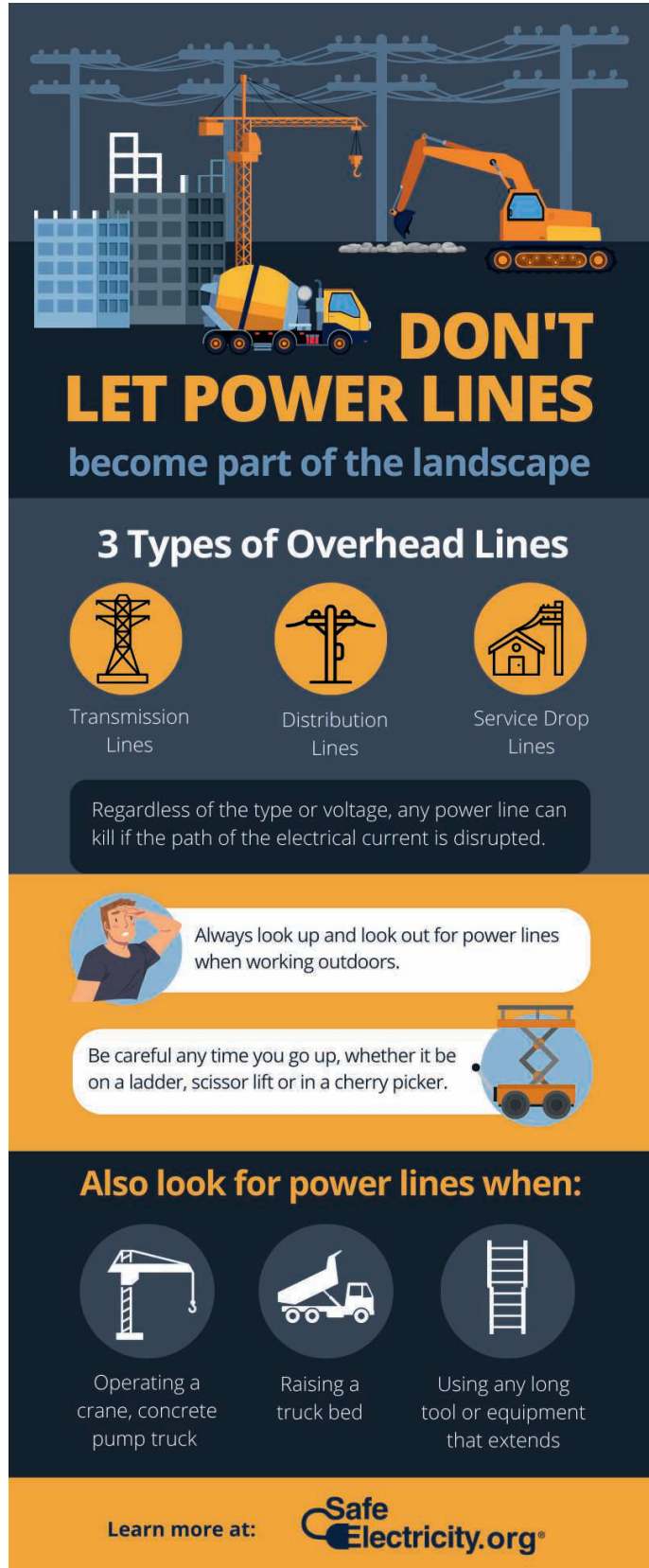
When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- 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.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).





DON'T LET POWER LINES become part of the landscape

3 Types of Overhead Lines




-  Transmission Lines
-  Distribution Lines
-  Service Drop Lines

Regardless of the type or voltage, any power line can kill if the path of the electrical current is disrupted.

 Always look up and look out for power lines when working outdoors.

Be careful any time you go up, whether it be on a ladder, scissor lift or in a cherry picker. 

Also look for power lines when:

-  Operating a crane, concrete pump truck
-  Raising a truck bed
-  Using any long tool or equipment that extends

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)



CYBERSECURITY ON THE GRID

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Imagine sitting at your desk on a typical Monday morning. You have logged into your computer with coffee in hand, ready to tackle the day. But as you begin, your computer displays an ominous message: “Your files have been encrypted. Pay a ransom to regain access.” It’s not just your computer; your co-workers have received the same message. Overnight, the entire office has fallen victim

to a ransomware attack that has locked away critical data. Your office computers will remain unusable until a payment is made.

This scenario, among others, has become a primary concern for workplaces everywhere, including electric cooperatives. As a result, local co-ops are taking action in the cybersecurity space to prevent bad actors from disrupting the critical goal of delivering power that is safe, affordable and reliable to their members. Electric co-ops are focused

on enhancing cybersecurity resilience and readiness to defend against potential cyber threats.

Co-ops are routinely monitoring and managing cyber risks, working with federal and local law enforcement agencies and the North American Electric Reliability Corp. to protect critical infrastructure. By working as a network, co-ops are enhancing grid resilience, ensuring reliable electricity for their members.

According to an FBI Internet Crime Report, the U.S. reported more than \$12.5 billion in annual losses in 2023 due to cyberattacks like the one described. A significant number of these attacks target the elderly and vulnerable. When breaking down the losses by age group, individuals aged

20 to 29 accounted for \$360.7 million of the total losses, while those 60 and older incurred losses of \$3.4 billion in 2023 alone.

And it's not just about the money. These attacks also have the potential to undermine the stability of entire systems, including the electrical grid. This year, directors of the FBI, NSA, and CISA testified before Congress about Chinese Communist Party hacking groups that had gained access to the electric grid and other critical infrastructure to "wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities."

"Many cyberattacks are conducted by criminals trying to steal money or collect a ransom," explains Chief Security and Compliance Officer Daniel Graham of Basin Electric Power Cooperative. "Nation-states

target electric utilities for different reasons. Some nation-states want to steal intellectual property. Others want to be able to disrupt our electric grid."

So how is it done? To execute their schemes, bad actors employ a long list of complex strategies and techniques, such as phishing, data breaches and malware to adversely impact their targets. Business email compromise, one of the most common techniques, occurs when an impostor poses as a legitimate business contact, seeking to steal sensitive information such as credit card numbers, bank account information or login credentials.

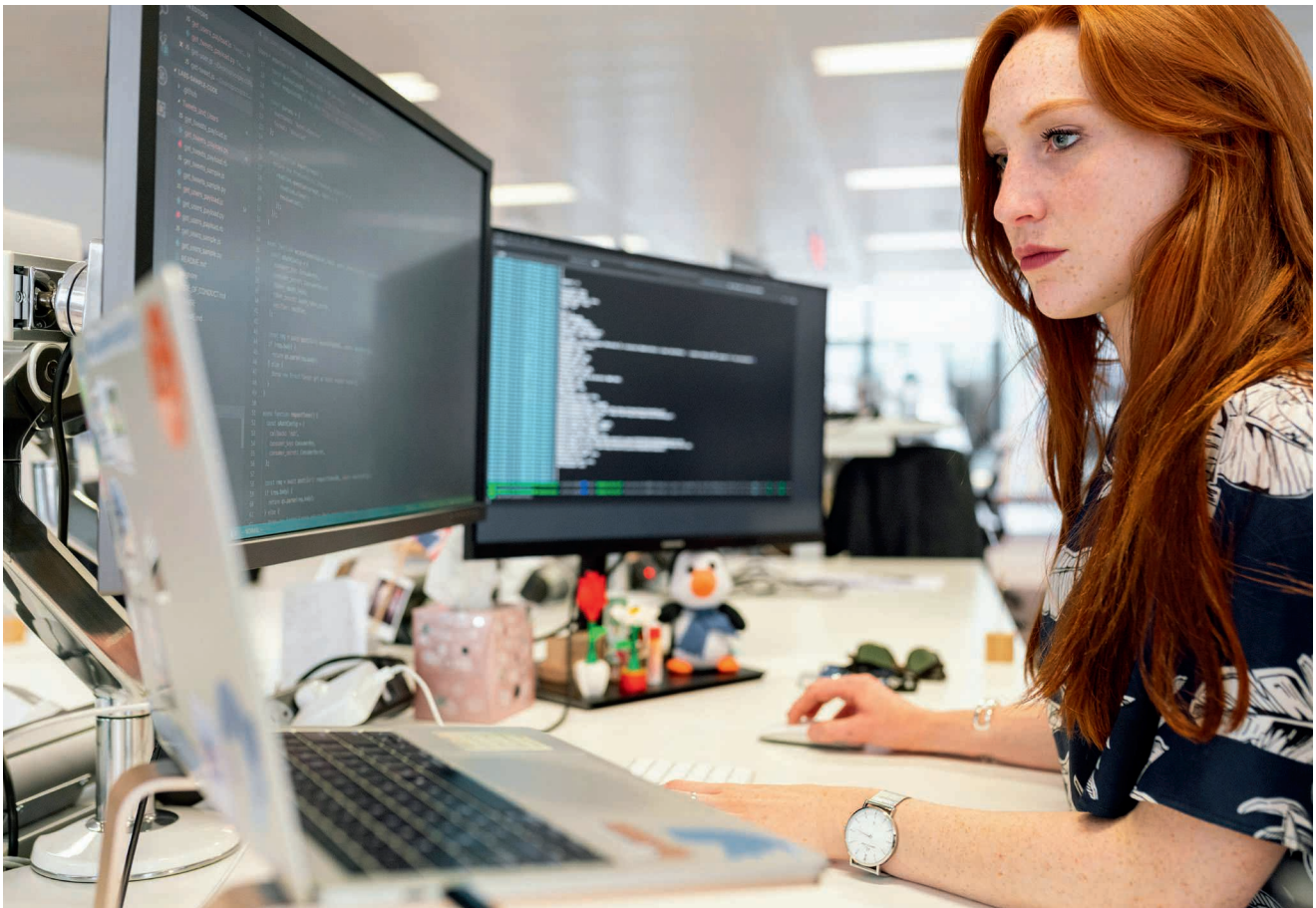
Luckily, co-ops are implementing a variety of tools, policies and training to help mitigate attacks and secure the grid. Programs like NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals Program help co-ops build fundamental cybersecurity

measures, such as employee training, developing cyber incident response plans, and regular self-assessment. These strategies help co-ops reduce the risk of a successful cyberattack in the ongoing battle against cybercrime.

"Additionally, co-ops can conduct cybersecurity exercises to determine the effectiveness of current defenses and practice responses," Graham says.

Despite these efforts, the threat of a successful cyberattack persists, making vigilance an essential component of effective cybersecurity.

"If you see something suspicious, report it to your cooperative," explains Graham. "Electric co-ops are an essential part of our country's critical infrastructure. We can best protect our electric grid by working with each other."



Power Up Your Lawn Care

The landscape of lawn and garden care is evolving, and electric equipment is at the forefront of this change. While electric lawn tools aren't new, advancements in technology and more options mean prices have become more competitive, making electric equipment an accessible option for many consumers.

Benefits of Electric Equipment

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way since the days of extension cords tethering you to an outlet. Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Battery life was once a major drawback to making the switch to electric lawn tools. But today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more reliable, cost-effective and efficient. For most consumers, electric lawn tools can get the job done just as well as gas-powered models.

Many electric mowers offer push-button starts, and because they are lighter, they are easier to maneuver around tight turns. Improved batteries provide longer run times to tackle larger spaces. Like their gas-powered counterparts, electric mowers are available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind and riding models. And there's no need to refill gas cans or change oil and air filters, resulting in less hassle and maintenance.

Like mowers, electric blowers, string trimmers and chainsaws have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance and are quieter. Because electric tools are generally lighter in weight, they're also more ergonomic and easier to maneuver. This feature is especially handy for projects that require tools like chainsaws for precise work.

Choose Electric Equipment to Meet Your Needs

Electric lawn tools have some limitations, so the size and terrain of your outdoor space are important considerations when purchasing new equipment. When comparing gas-powered and electric mowers, consider the torque rating—this is the driving force behind a blade's rotation. On average, electric lawnmowers generate less torque than gas mowers. If you have a challenging outdoor space that includes overgrown brush, tall grass, or hills and dips, torque is a key factor.

Choosing the right type and size mower is particularly important for spaces larger than half an acre. If you have a large property, consider purchasing an extra battery to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

Many manufacturers offer interchangeable batteries and chargers, providing flexibility and convenience. Choosing a single brand can ensure charging compatibility across your lawn tools and streamline charging.

While both gas and electric lawn tools can get the job done, electric equipment generally requires less maintenance, is less expensive to operate and is kinder to the environment.



Considering electric lawn equipment to maintain your outdoor space?

Check out the benefits of electric and considerations before making the switch.

Benefits of Electric Equipment

- Battery- Powered equipment produces zero emissions
- No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil
- Quieter and more reliable than gas powered equipment
- Require less energy to do the same amount of work as gas-powered tools

Considerations before Going Electric

- Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging
- Consider the size of your property and battery run time
- Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties
- Electric equipment is pricier up front

Source: Consumer Reports





MARCH 2024 GRANTEES

Prairie Home Hospice

\$925.50 towards CPR Manikins, AED Trainers, & Manuals

TeenPact Leadership Schools

\$1,000 towards TeenPact Minnesota State Class

Lincoln Co. Horticultural Society-

\$500 towards the Lincoln County Fair Flower Gardens

Wheels Across the Prairie

\$1,000 towards the Log Cabin Project

Marshall Food4Kids

\$2,000 towards Food Program for Marshall Area Students

Balaton Fire Department

\$2,500 towards the Purchase of New Turnout Gear

Minneota Post Prom Committee

\$200 towards after-prom food, games, and activities for students

RTR Post Prom Committee

\$200 towards after-prom food, games, and activities for students

HOW OPERATION ROUNDUP WORKS

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.

MARCH BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Trust, Inc. was held March 4, 2024. The board reviewed applications and grant requests were approved. A motion was carried to allocate \$5,000 towards 2024 Operation RoundUp Scholarships based on the number of students that applied. Then, thank you notes and final reports from grant recipients were reviewed. The next meeting will be held June 3rd, 2024. Applications for grants can be found at www.llec.coop under the "Your Cooperative" tab.

The next round of applications will be due May 22nd, 2024.

2023-2024 BOARD MEMBERS

- Heidi Fier, President
- Michelle Williams, Vice President
- Ann Longtin, Secretary/Treas.
- Diana Nielsen, Director
- Katy Vos, Director
- Judy Hayes, Director
- Kayla Werkman, Director
- Greg Kohler, Director
- Deb Belaen, Director



MAY 11, 2024
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 Falls Park
 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.

MAY 4
Consignment Auction
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 5
Opening Day
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

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

JUNE 1
Miss Prairie Village/Miss Prairie Princess Pageant
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 6
14th Annual Ag Women's Day
 GracePoint Wesleyan Church
 1420 Orchard Dr.
 Brookings, SD

JUNE 6
"Wild Race Car Night"
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 8
"Challenge Cup XXII"
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 8
Antique Tractor Pull
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 9
Brookings Car Show
 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Pioneer Park
 Brookings, SD
www.brookingscarshow.org

JUNE 13
IHS Health Fair
 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Fort Thompson, SD

JUNE 15
1st Annual CheeseFest
 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
 Farm Life Creamery
 Ethan, SD

JUNE 21-23
Scavenger's Journey
 Yard sales, farmer's markets & specialty shops
 Wall to Wagner
www.scavengersjourney.com

JULY 20
S.D. MCC Relief Sale
Food Court, Bake Sale, Live Auction & Silent Auction
 Free Admission & Parking
 Pioneer Hall
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-7009

JULY 20-21
Charles Mix Saddle Club
 SDREA Rodeo
 Geddes, SD
 605-680-2763

JULY 26-28
Bruce Honey Days
 Facebook & Instagram
 Bruce, SD
 605-627-5671

JULY 31-AUG. 3
4-H & FFA Livestock Shows
Carnival Rides & Games
 Pipestone, MN

AUG. 9
Northern Bull Riding Tour
Finals & Bull-a-Rama
 Geddes, SD
 605-680-2763

AUG. 17
"Harvest of Champions"
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

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