

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Dokken's Dogs

Training Dogs to  
Hunt  
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Touchstone Energy  
Anniversary  
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**Tim O'Leary**  
General Manager

We are sharing a recent article from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson to start this month's newsletter. The article continues the discussion on affordability and reliability issues as they pertain to statewide and national energy policy. The article focuses on a new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that was proposed in May. The rule relies on promising, but unproven, technology and will force early closure of always available power plants while making it harder to permit, site, and build critical new power plants. As Mr. Matheson says at the end of his article, we must continue to prioritize reliable electricity for all consumers and that is what co-ops will continue to do for its member-consumers.

## Growing Reliability Threats

Jim Matheson, CEO, NRECA

American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford. But that's no longer a guarantee. Nine states saw rolling blackouts last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply.

**This is no longer a theoretical conversation. And unless policymakers change course, it's going to get worse.**

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a rule to regulate power plant emissions. This proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation. And it is just the latest instance of EPA failing to prioritize reliable electricity as a fundamental expectation of American consumers.

It shouldn't have to be this way. When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. But instead of putting down the shovel, EPA wants to bring in an excavator.

But don't take my word for it. Warnings about the threat of reliability challenges have snowballed in recent months. The North American Electric Reliability Corp.'s 2023 Summer Reliability Assessment recently high lighted that more of the country is at risk of blackouts than last year. And NERC says that the EPA proposal will accelerate the reliability challenges facing the nation.

In May, several FERC commissioners warned the U.S. Senate about threats to reliable electricity. And in March, PJM CEO Manu Asthana said that the regional transmission organization needed to slow the pace of generation retirements to avoid reliability problems by the end of the decade.

America has a reliability problem. And with the help of co-op leaders across the nation, NRECA has been a leading voice in sounding the alarm. Today's energy decisions will determine if there are sufficient resources to keep the lights on tomorrow.

First lawmakers need to acknowledge the problem and identify the threats. Five issues are currently impacting the reliable delivery of electricity across the nation:

1. Increasing demand for electricity as new sectors of the economy are electrified.
2. Decreasing electricity supply due to the disorderly retirement and insufficient replacement of existing generation.
3. Permitting delays that prevent new electric infrastructure from being built and connected to the grid.
4. Supply chain challenges.
5. Problems with natural gas availability.

None of these challenges will be easy to address, but we can start by asking ourselves this question: Is this what America is supposed to be? Should the threat of rolling blackouts be a permanent facet of U.S. energy policy? The answer to both of those questions is an obvious and resounding no for electric co-ops and the communities we serve.

**The long-term solution requires policymakers and regulators to recognize the need for time, technology development and new transmission infrastructure. These are the essential ingredients for an energy future that prioritizes reliable electricity for all consumers, including the 42 million Americans served by electric cooperatives.**

*Reprinted from the Article "closing Thoughts" in the July 2023 issue of RE Magazine.*

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**LYON-LINCOLN  
ELECTRIC**

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**Jessica Gums, Editor**



**Preparation and Awareness:**

Keys for Farm Electrical Safety

Farming is among the more dangerous occupations for several reasons, including potential for encounters with electrical hazards. Before taking to the fields, the Safe Electricity program urges farm workers to be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment and extensions far away from them.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative along with Safe Electricity encourages farm managers to share this information with their families and workers to keep them safe from electrical accidents.

- Start each morning by planning your day’s work. Know what jobs will happen near power lines and have a plan to keep the assigned workers safe.
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions, at all times. Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of a grain truck. It can be difficult to estimate distance, and sometimes, a power line is closer than it looks. Use a spotter to make certain you stay far away from power lines.
- Always lower equipment extensions, portable augers, or elevators to their lowest possible level, under 14 feet, before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground, shifting weight, or other conditions can cause you to lose control of equipment and make contact with power lines.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path. If power lines near your property have sagged over time, call your utility to repair them.
- Don’t use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment, such as ladders, poles, or rods, into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay, will conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.
- If you are on equipment that contacts a power line, do not exit the equipment. When you step off the equipment, you become the electricity’s path to ground and receive a potentially fatal shock. Wait until utility workers have de-energized the line and confirmed it is safe for you to exit the vehicle. If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. Hop as far from the vehicle as you can with your feet together. Keep your feet together to prevent current flow through your body, which could be deadly.

Electrical work around the farm can also pose hazards. Often, the need for an electrical repair comes when a farmer has been working long hours and is fatigued. At such times, it’s best to step back and wait until you’ve rested.

# October is Fire Safety Month

Is your workplace or home fireproof? Each year, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) celebrates National Fire Safety Month in October. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2016, there were 88 occupational fatalities as a result of workplace fires or explosions. This is down from 2015, in which there were 121. While the statistics show that the number of fatalities due to fires or explosions in the workplace is on a downward slope, any number other than 0 is unacceptable and demands the attention from management, safety professionals and employees in every company. Not only do fires present a severe life safety hazard, they also can be detrimental to business success due to the possible destruction of business equipment and facilities. This campaign serves as a reminder to us all of the importance of fire safety awareness in both the workplace and our home lives.

The safety reminders communicated in the workplace can be easily translated to fire safety in the home. Establish a family emergency action plan, discuss escape routes with family members, and locate fire extinguishers in your home. Additionally, conduct a mock fire drill with your family members to ensure you and your loved ones know how to get out safely. During this drill, outline meeting places that are at a safe distance from the home. Designate a neighbor to contact for help in the event of an emergency. Simple exercises such as the aforementioned could mean the difference maker in your family making it out alive in the event of a fire in your home.

Below are key components to ensuring your workplace and home are fireproof:

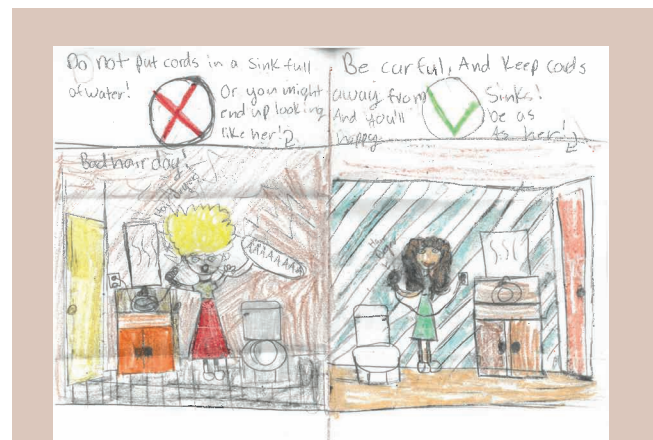
- **Eliminate Clutter** – Exercise good housekeeping. Clutter can easily become a fuel source in the event of a fire, allowing a fire to spread quickly. Furthermore, clutter can restrict access to emergency equipment and exit routes.
- **Fire Extinguishers** – Maintain the appropriate type and number of fire extinguishers. Conduct monthly and annual extinguisher inspections to ensure they are in good, working condition. Provide training for employees on the correct use of fire extinguishers.
- **Chemical Safety** – Use and store chemicals safely. Read hazard warning labels and safety data sheets

to determine flammability and other fire hazards. Ensure your chemical storage areas provide adequate ventilation for the storage of chemical or other hazardous substances.

- **Waste Control and Storage** – Limit the accumulation of flammable or combustible materials and residues as to prevent the risk for such materials contributing to a fire emergency.
- **Exits** – Ensure emergency exit route diagrams are posted and accessible in all areas of the facility for all employees to easily view. Additionally, ensure means of egress are well-lit with regulated exit signs and free from debris or clutter.

Remember it is always better to be proactive rather than reactive and it is best to alleviate hazards or hiccups in times of peace than in times of chaos. Utilize the above tips to reduce the risk for catastrophe or at least minimize the damage.

Source: Safety Resources, Inc.



## Keep cords away from water!

### Maddy Pannell, Age 12

Maddy Pannell advises people it's not safe to plug in appliances around water. Maddy is the daughter of Scott and Kim Pannell from Sioux Falls, S.D., members of Southeastern 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.

# PASTA PERFECT

## ITALIAN SPAGHETTI

### Ingredients:

1-8 oz. can tomato sauce  
 1-6 oz. can tomato paste  
 1 1/2 paste cans water  
 1 small onion, chopped  
 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
 1 tsp. garlic salt  
 1/2 tsp. chili powder  
 3 shakes cayenne pepper  
 1/8 tsp. black pepper  
 1 tsp. basil  
 1 tsp. oregano  
 1/2 to 1 lb. ground beef

### METHOD

Combine all ingredients except ground beef. Cover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Brown beef and add to sauce. Serve over cooked noodles. May add green peppers or mushrooms.

**Gail Keating**  
**Flandreau, S.D.**

## GARDEN HARVEST PASTA SHELLS

### Ingredients:

2 tbsps. vegetable oil  
 2 medium zucchini, shredded  
 1/2 cup finely shredded carrots  
 2 cups chopped fresh broccoli  
 1 small onion, chopped  
 Salt and pepper  
 1 lb part-skim ricotta cheese  
 2 cups shredded mozzarella  
 1 egg, lightly beaten  
 1/4 cup grated parmesan  
 1 tbsp. dried basil  
 27.5 oz. jar pasta sauce  
 12 oz. pkg jumbo pasta shells, cooked and drained

### METHOD

Heat oven to 350. In a large skillet heat oil, then saute broccoli, zucchini, carrots, and onions until tender. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside. In a large bowl, thoroughly combine ricotta, mozzarella, egg, parmesan, and basil. Add vegetables and stir to combine. Spread 1 cup of the pasta sauce evenly in a 9" x 13" baking dish. Fill pasta shells with the vegetable and cheese mixture and arrange in the baking dish. Spoon the remaining sauce over the shells. Cover and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake another 10 minutes or until bubbly.

**Faye Chambliss**  
**Murdo, S.D.**

## CREAMY CHICKEN AND BACON PASTA

### Ingredients:

8 oz. spaghetti  
 1 1/2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 3/4-inch chunks  
 2 tbsps. flour  
 4 slices bacon  
 1 cup milk  
 4 oz. (1/2 package) cream cheese, at room temperature  
 1 1/2 tsps. basil leaves  
 1 1/2 tsps. garlic powder  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1/4 tsp. coarse ground black pepper

### METHOD

Cook spaghetti as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, toss chicken with flour. Set aside. Cook bacon in large skillet on medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Set aside. Remove all but 1 tbsp drippings from skillet. Add chicken; cook and stir 4 minutes or until golden brown. Stir in milk, cream cheese and seasonings until well blended. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cut bacon into bite-size pieces. Add to skillet. Place spaghetti in serving bowl. Add chicken mixture; toss well. Serve immediately.

[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.

# CO-OPS GROW



## COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month. As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

## Electric Co-ops grow for the communities they serve

### October is National COOP Month

Lyon-Lincoln Electric is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric co-ops, including Lyon-Lincoln Electric exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

**Co-ops Grow Communities:** Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement, and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do.

**Co-ops Grow Together:** Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

**Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders:** Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Larry & Bonita Grussing - 615800. Whether through school demonstrations, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

**Co-ops Grow for You:** At Lyon-Lincoln Electric, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!



## Playing it safe online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Lyon-Lincoln Electric, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Lyon-Lincoln Electric is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

**Want more tips to improve your cyber hygiene?  
Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org)**

**1**


### Implement Multi-factor Authentication



- also known as two-step verification on your accounts.
- The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information.
- Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

**2**

### Update Your Software



- This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data.
- When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it.
- Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

**3**

### Think Before You Click



- Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email.
- Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing.
- Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

**4**

### Create Strong Passwords



- use long, unique and complex words or phrases.
- Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.



## 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, Lars & Lena Johansson spotted their names and will receive an energy credit. Once again, there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck!

## Energy Saving Tip



Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use. For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

*Source: energy.gov*



# FOR THE LOVE OF HUNTING DOGS

Source: Travel South Dakota

## A Successful Hunt May Depend on Your Dog

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

With numerous television appearances and A-list clients under his belt, Day County resident and Lake Region Electric Cooperative member Tom Dokken has become one of the premiere hunting dog trainers of our time.

But you won't hear the modest pro brag about himself. Instead, Dokken gives credit to the hard work and the innate capabilities of the dogs themselves.

The 70-year-old Minnesota native has been professionally working with dogs over the last 50 years at his training facility, Dokken Oak Ridge Kennels, Inc. in Northfield, Minnesota.

It's one of the largest gun dog training kennels in the region.

His love for hunting alongside a canine

companion harkens back to his teenage years when he'd tag along to go hunting throughout the country with his friend and his friend's Labrador Retriever, Charlie.

"We were probably 16 years old when we started hunting together. He had a lab and I didn't have one. We hunted with that dog just about every weekend."

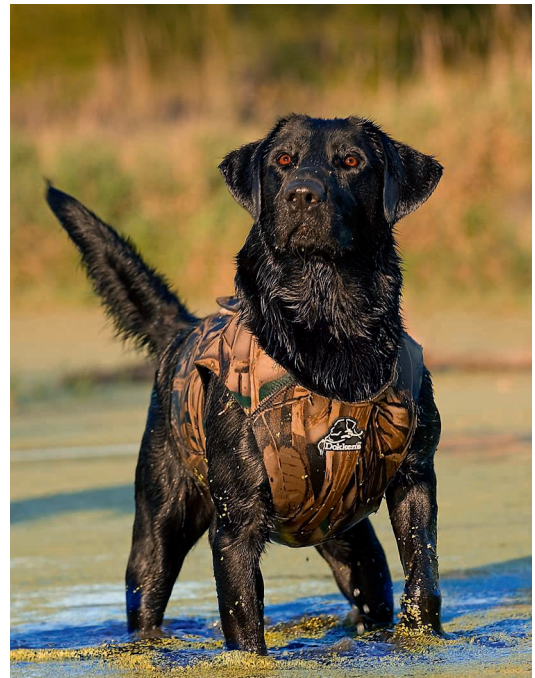
After a few years, Dokken decided it was time to get his own dog.

And to that dog goes all the credit, in Dokken's eyes.

"I started training her then I started running field trials. I did really well, not because of me, but I had a good dog who did

really well on a national level," he recalled.

After that, Dokken was hooked and knew training dogs was what he wanted to do for a living. He's since established



An adult black lab out hunting



himself as one of the top hunting dog trainers in the world, even bolstering a line of dog training products – Dokken Dog Supply – which is carried in sporting good stores across the country.

“That’s just as a result developing products we wanted for training themselves,” Dokken said of his supply company.

Some of the dogs Dokken has trained have hunted under some big names, including President George W. Bush and country music legend Hank Williams, Jr., along with many major professional athletes.

But it takes some prying to get that kind of info out of the humble Dokken, and he’s quick to emphasize that everyone that he does business with is treated the same, no matter what.

“Every customer is important. One person doesn’t get treated different than the other,” Dokken said.

His facility employs four full-time trainers, as well as office staff.

When Dokken isn’t training one of the 350 hunting dogs that come to his Minnesota training facility each year, he’s at home with his wife, Tina, in Day County.

“My wife and I live north of Webster. That’s our connection with the area. I’ve hunted down in the Lily area for years. We’ve had our place here 18 years or better,” Dokken explained.

“My mom’s family homestead is down in the Selby area, so as kids we’d be back on the farm for a good portion of the summer,” he added.

Dokken said his business trains pretty much any of the sporting, pointing and flushing breeds. But in the Upper Midwest, the more popular breed tends to be the Labrador Retriever.

Dokken has a special place in his heart for labs, which he described as a hardy breed able to withstand the punishing winter conditions known to challenge hunters in South Dakota during pheasant season.

And in South Dakota, pheasants are

king, according to Dokken.

“As far as population of pheasant – up in our area the weather sometimes knocks them back a little bit. Last year we had rain in December, which is a little bit of a factor when it comes to pheasant numbers,” Dokken said.

“The further south and west you get, the population changes too. Regardless, South Dakota numbers will always be top in the U.S.”

Hunters who have a dog in their arsenal have a much greater advantage over those who do not. For one, they can flush birds out of thick cover and, unlike the average human, have an absolute blast doing so.

“Without a dog – if you’re a pheasant hunter – you’re not going to have the ability to get the birds up and get them out of higher and denser cover. Finding birds that you’ve shot is going to be a real challenge as well. A dog is a great conservation tool as well,” Dokken said.

From a training standpoint, Dokken advises dog owners to start teaching their hunting partners good habits when they’re really young.

The earlier the training begins, the more success you’re setting the dog up for down the line.



Dokken with two adult labs

“Try to buy the best bloodlines that you can because if you do, in most cases your success rate just gets higher.”

Dokken says it boils down to three things: teaching, repetition and reinforcement. For the human, practicing patience is crucial.

“A majority the time the dog is not in the wrong, it’s that the dog can’t understand what you want,” he said.

The entire job is a dream for Dokken and his team, and one he hopes to continue for decades more to come.

“It’s what we do,” he said. “It’s a labor of love.”



Source: Travel South Dakota

# July Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, July 24, 2023. Directors present were James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Jared Dritz, Galen Grant, Mary Gunnink, Scott Johnson, Dale Fier, Mike Longtin and Joel Buyck.

Also present at the meeting were General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, 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 June 26, 2023 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending May 31, 2023. Due to Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen being absent. The Board then reviewed information that had been provided concerning RESCO's Patronage Refunds for the fiscal year 2022.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the June Outage Report to the Board. He indicated to the Board that there was a Safety Meeting held on June 6, 2023 concerning the topic of Annual Federated Insurance review and Hazard Recognition. The training was presented by Chad Knutson from Federated Insurance.

Mr. Lamote then indicated that the linemen performed the following tasks and jobs: finished all underground for the North Shore Drive Project on Lake Benton Lake and completed installation of underground line near Lake Benton Substation.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed his report with the board which included the following: Informed the Board that the Cooperative has 7 solar projects at various stages of completion. The Cooperative participated in a display at the Lincoln Co. Fairgrounds, sponsored by the Farm Bureau of Lincoln Co., of key innovations that have occurred in the region over the past 150 years, the Cooperative focused on the four key principles of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives-Innovation, Integrity, Accountability and Community. The Cooperative has received the F-150 Lightning, Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, has been using it as his fleet vehicle since then. The Cooperative is working on wrap and logo options and will have that completed in the near future.

General Manager Timothy O'Leary then gave his manager's report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: the Board reviewed the June power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, reported on East River's monthly MAC meeting that he attended, and then shared with

the board upcoming meetings, events, and notices.

The Board then reviewed the June Cyber Security Program Report presented by East River Cyber Security Department dated July 3, 2023.

The Board recessed for lunch at 11:44 A.M. at which time the Board viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. video report and General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, gave the Basin Summary because the Basin Summary in the video was not available. The Board reconvened at 12:16 P.M.

There was discussion concerning what Board Member would be nominated to serve on the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Board and after discussion a motion was made and carried to propose Vice-President, Mike Longtin, as the representative to the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Board from Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. There was general discussion concerning the committee that is contemplating a change in the format for the District Meetings and the Annual Meeting with no action.

Directors gave a report concerning the recent meetings they had attended and reviewed upcoming meetings and notices.

There being no further business, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 2:03 P.M.

# Cooperatives work with their members

Let us answer your questions about cold weather shut-off protection for our members



## What is the Cold Weather Rule?

The Cold Weather Rule protects some members from having their electricity shut-off due to non-payment between October 1 and April 30.

## Can my heat be shut off in the winter?

Yes. The Cold Weather Rule allows electricity to be shut off for non-payment. You will only be protected if electricity provides your primary source of heat AND you have done ALL of the following things:

- Your household income meets the state guidelines (at or less than 50 percent of the state median household income)
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from LLEC.
- You have a payment arrangement with LLEC for which you make reasonably timely payments.

## Will you disconnect me without my knowledge?

No. You will receive a "Notice of Disconnection". There will also be a list of rights and responsibilities for you as well as the Cooperative and a list of agencies that may help you.

## Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income (\$43,750 for a family of 4) to qualify for benefits.

### To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/energy-assistance/>
- Contact your county EAP service provider (See listing)

If you receive a Notice of Disconnection, you MUST take the next step and call us and the agency that serves your county to see if they can help you.

We will not disconnect electricity without first notifying you by letter. We also attempt to make phone calls if we have correct phone numbers. We will not shut off electricity on a Friday, a weekend, or the day before a holiday.

**We don't want to shut off anyone's electricity. We will work with you to set up a payment arrangement or help you to see if you qualify for shut-off protection. Below is a list of providers that can help with your energy bills. It is up to you to contact them for help.**

## What must I do to receive shut-off protection?

If you are behind in your electricity payments, your first step is to call or email Lyon-Lincoln Electric. Please call (800) 927-6276 or email@llec.coop.

## If my electricity has been disconnected, how can I be reconnected?

In order to re-establish power, contact Lyon-Lincoln Electric for the total balance due, which will include additional fees and a deposit.

## Meeting Your Payment Obligation

Please contact our office if you find that you cannot pay your electric bill. We will work with you to set up a payment schedule during the cold weather months if you think you will be unable to pay your bill on time. It is your responsibility to call our office to arrange a payment schedule

Failure to Respond to a Disconnect Notice May Lead to Shut-off of Service, Even in Winter.

Our members are important! We'd rather work with you to set up a payment plan than shut off your electricity.

If you are in need help, don't delay! call today: 800-927-6276

## Military Shut-off Protection

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment or for a change of permanent duty station, utility disconnection is restricted. Minnesota law protects these military households from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

If the member and Lyon-Lincoln Electric cannot agree on a payment plan, members have the right to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Lyon-Lincoln Electric will not disconnect electric service during the appeal process.

## EAP service providers

Southwest Health & Human Services  
Ivanhoe, MN Office  
(507)694-1452

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

Prairie Five Community Action Council Inc.  
Montevideo, MN  
(320)269-7976

United Community Action Program  
Marshall, MN  
(800)658-2448



## Touchstone Energy Celebrates 25 Years with Commercial Debut

**Frank Turner**

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Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is encouraging member electric cooperatives and their member-owners to pop some popcorn, settle in, and join them in celebrating the organization's 25th anniversary on Nov. 29, when they'll debut their

newest line of 2024 commercials.

The historic milestone will commemorate a quarter-century of Touchstone Energy's drive to establish a universal brand – seen on t-shirts, logos, and even soaring hot air balloons – for co-ops nationwide. Select commercials from the lineup, which will feature on the Touchstone Energy website, will highlight the local South

Dakota prairie landscape and local co-op employees with Sioux Valley Energy.

Touchstone Energy Board of Directors President and Sioux Valley CEO Tim McCarthy said he is glad to see South Dakota being represented on a national scope. "We are excited to be celebrating this historic milestone," said McCarthy. "Touchstone Energy continues to be an invaluable resource for co-ops in South Dakota and throughout our nationwide network."

Touchstone Energy's journey began 25 years ago when a group of movers and shakers recognized the need for an outward-facing organization that would connect the image of

co-ops across the nation. Although individually small, cooperatives from all around the nation believed a unified brand would broaden and strengthen their presence. Together, these co-ops owned and operated more distribution lines than any other sector in the electric utility industry and served more than half of the American landmass. On Nov. 26, 1998, 17 founding co-ops established Touchstone Energy, powering through a time of regulatory uncertainty.

“In the late ‘90s, there were some revolutionary things happening in the energy industry,” said Jana Adams, executive director of Touchstone Energy. “The cooperatives really wisely said: as individual entities we are small, but if we come together and create a recognizable brand, we will have a better opportunity to compete in this evolving energy landscape.”

From the start, Touchstone Energy was set on making an impression. By purchasing six iconic Touchstone Energy branded hot air balloons and sponsoring notable events such as the famous NASCAR Talladega 300 race, Touchstone Energy quickly transformed into a nationally recognizable brand.

To date, Touchstone Energy’s membership has grown to nearly 700 co-ops, which now reaches more than 30 million member-owners across 46 states. Along with this remarkable growth, Touchstone Energy has enhanced its services, including advertising, social media management, and web development, among others. Over time, Touchstone Energy’s wide range of services, said Adams, have become a crucial communication resource for their membership.

“Our first national ad was in the early 2000s, and to this day, we run advertisements in every single zip code served by a Touchstone Energy cooperative,” said Adams. “We are

constantly innovating and giving our cooperative members the opportunity to highlight the great work they do and the achievements they have.”

Looking back on the last quarter century, Adams said Touchstone Energy is thrilled to connect to its original roots and celebrate its longstanding service to co-ops across the country.



Touchstone Energy celebrates 25 years while producing new commercials in South Dakota.



“We encourage everybody to join us on Nov. 29 for our 2024 national ad premier and to celebrate the 25 years behind us, but more importantly the many years ahead of us where we continue to work together,” she said.

# Teen Driver Safety Week: October 15-21

## Share information that saves lives

Nine people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October, which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines.

### Distracted driving

Each year, approximately 3,000 people lose their lives to car accidents resulting from distracted drivers. This accounts for between 8% and 9% of all fatal motor vehicle collisions on roads across the United States.

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Many drivers do not realize how far they can travel even when distracted for a brief period. The reality is, motorists can drive the equivalent of an entire football field blind if they take their eyes off the road for just five seconds when they are traveling at 55 mph. Tracy & Curt Baune - 1018200. With so much ground covered, it's not a surprise that the risks of a crash are high when motorists lose focus. Other distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage or using an app.

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.
2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel.
3. Do not eat while you drive.
4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.

### Downed power lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.
- If you walk or run from one voltage "ripple" to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).
- If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).
- Your body becomes electricity's path to ground, when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

### What to do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 9-1-1 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other electrical safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



# July Outage Report

(10 or more consumers)

7/19 - 54 consumers were off 1 hour & 30 minutes in Fairview, Grandview and Lake Marshall Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

7/27 - 24 consumers were off 1 hour & 15 minutes in Coon Creek and Island Lake Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

7/29 - 35 consumers were off 5 hours & 5 minutes in Ash Lake and Shaokatan Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

## YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

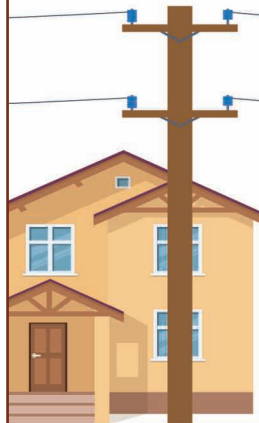
	June- 2022	June- 2023
Total Revenue	\$5,469,512	\$5,494,256
Cost of Power	\$2,883,011	\$2,946,148
Operating Expenses	\$2,308,811	\$2,314,012
Operating Margins	\$277,690	\$234,096
KWH's Purchased	52,252,452	52,421,363
Services in Place	4,134	4,122
Miles of Line	1,670	1,671
Revenue per Mile	\$3,275	\$3,288



## Think Before You Climb

Before you rush into a job that requires you to use a ladder, take precautions before you climb.

### Electrical Safety



1. **Look up** and around for power line locations before using a ladder.
2. Keep a minimum **10-foot distance** from a power line or other electrical equipment at all times.
3. The minimum distance rule includes you (any part of your body) or **any object you are holding**, such as a ladder or tool.
4. Always **be aware of power line locations** when you are elevated.
5. Sources of elevation include, but are not limited to, a **ladder, rooftop, boom lift or scaffolding**.

### General Ladder Safety

1. Use a ladder on a **stable, level surface**.
2. Maintain **three-point contact** on the ladder when climbing.
3. Three points of contact mean **two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand**.
4. Keep your body **near the middle of the step** and face the ladder when climbing.
5. **Do not use the top step/rung** of a ladder unless designed for that purpose.
6. For a stepladder, make sure the base is **fully open** and the spreaders are **locked**.



Learn more about electrical safety:



Sources:  
OSHA,  
American Ladder Institute



**Oct. 7-8**  
**Fort Pierre Horse Races**  
 Stanley County Fairground  
 605-223-2178

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.

**SEPT 22-23**  
**Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair**  
 9 a.m.  
 Davison County Fairgrounds  
 Activity Center  
 Mitchell SD  
 605-359-2049

**SEPT 22-24**  
**Coal Springs Threshing Bee**  
 Meadow, SD  
 605-788-2229

**SEPT 23**  
**German Fest**  
 Webster, SD  
 605-380-0588

**SEPT 23**  
**Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival**  
 9 a.m.  
 Springfield Community Building  
 Springfield, SD

**SEPT 24**  
**Annual Bazaar & Fall Fest**  
 4-7 p.m.  
 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
 Wagner, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**Day of Wellness**  
 10 a.m.  
 Sturgis Armory  
 Sturgis, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**Mission Quilt and Bake Sale**  
 Zoar Lutheran Church  
 Revillo, SD

**SEPT 29-30**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
 Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-941-4958

**OCT 6-7**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vendor Show**  
 Philip, SD  
 605-441-1060

**OCT 7**  
**Spirit of Dakota Award**  
 Huron Event Center  
 Huron, SD  
 605-352-6073

**OCT 12-19**  
**"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibition & Silent Auction**  
 Vermillion Public Library  
 Vermillion, SD

**OCT 14**  
**Oktoberfest**  
**Leo Lonney Polka Band**  
 6 p.m.  
 Menno, SD  
 605-660-1839

**OCT 19-21**  
**Fall Fundraising Rummage Sale**  
 Spearfish Senior Center  
 Spearfish, SD  
 605-642-2827

**OCT 21**  
**Fall Festival**  
 11 a.m.  
 18473 U.S. HWY 83  
 Onida, SD  
 605-788-2229

**OCT. 28-29**  
**Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association**  
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-731-9155

**NOV 11**  
**Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza**  
 Sisseton, SD  
 605-698-7425

**NOV 12**  
**Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball**  
 4-7 p.m.  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Chamberlain, SD  
 605-730-0553

**NOV 24**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 7 p.m.  
 Dakota Avenue  
 Huron, SD  
 605-788-2229

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