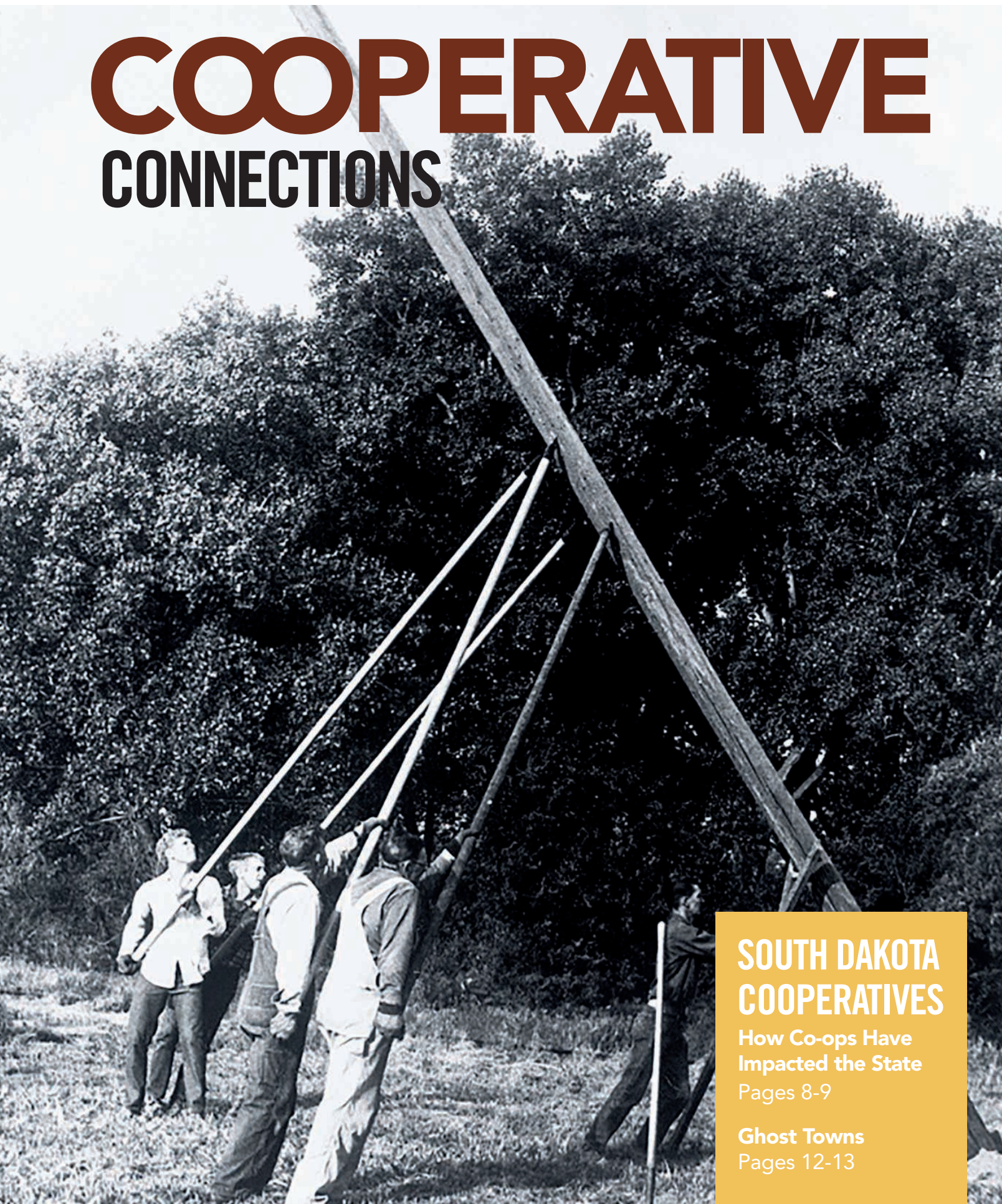


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **SOUTH DAKOTA COOPERATIVES**

**How Co-ops Have  
Impacted the State**  
Pages 8-9

**Ghost Towns**  
Pages 12-13



# COOP Month



**Tim O'Leary**  
General Manager

October is National Co-op Month and Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.

Co-op Month has been nationally recognized since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota Governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month. The State of Minnesota has played a key role in recognizing the importance of the cooperative business model.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LLEC) serves 3,300 member-owners over 1,671 miles of distribution line, but when you combine our numbers with the other 49 not-for-profit, member-owned rural electric cooperatives in Minnesota, electric cooperatives serve 1,700,000 members over 135,258 miles of electric line and supply 22.9% of the electricity consumed in the state. Cooperatives are guided by the 7 Cooperative Principles which are: 1) Voluntary and Open Membership, 2) Democratic Member Control, 3) Members' Economic Participation, 4) Autonomy and Independence, 5) Education, Training, and Information, 6) Cooperation among Cooperatives, and 7) Concern for the Community.

This October more than 300,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. The month gives us time to reflect on what sets the cooperative business model apart from other types of businesses and it provides us the opportunity to celebrate the power of co-op membership within our local communities. It is within this community that we celebrate the sense of belonging and ownership in the co-op business model.

LLEC is "owned by those that we serve" and we do our best to make decisions based on the needs of the entire co-op membership. In fact, our mission is to provide reliable electricity and services to enhance the quality of life in our rural communities. We aren't just focused on delivering reliable electric service, our directors and employees are equally invested in our local communities. They are invested because we live here, too. We serve on local boards, support local economic development projects through the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund, volunteer to coach youth

programs, provide scholarships, provide grants to local projects through our Operation RoundUp fund, and other programs that make our communities a better place to call home.

As we celebrate October as Co-op Month, we would like to recognize the crucial role cooperatives play in various business sectors through Minnesota and the U.S. Cooperatives impact our communities in terms of economics, social dynamics, and cultural identity. Farm co-ops, lumber co-ops, food co-ops and credit unions are important components of our daily lives. Across our state and nation, member-owned cooperatives are applying cooperative values and principles to enhance the quality of life in our communities.

The other item that comes with October is the start of our budgeting process for the upcoming year. We are starting to hear from our power suppliers that they are looking at rate increases for 2025, and we will see how changes in wholesale power rates will affect our local budget. Please continue to read our newsletter to get updates on the budgeting process and for informative articles on co-op activities. In this month's issue, you can read more about what you should be asking solar installers when they come knocking on your door. You can also reach out to the office and visit with Brian Jeremiason to learn more about the application/installation process and questions to ask while you are going through your decision-making process.

## YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON JUNE 2024

	June- 2023	June- 2024
Total Revenue	\$5,494,256	\$5,254,687
Cost of Power	\$2,946,148	\$3,023,102
Operating Expenses	\$2,314,012	\$2,461,515
Operating Margins	\$234,096	\$(229,930)
KWH's Purchased	52,421,363	47,443,745
Services in Place	4,122	4,126
Miles of Line	1,671	1,671
Revenue per Mile	\$3,288	\$3,145

## 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  
Sam Rohde – Apprentice Lineman  
Wade Thooft – Operations Staff  
Assistant  
Alan Fischer – Work Order Clerk/  
Warehouse Coordinator

**www.llec.coop**

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

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56178; Telephone (507) 247-5505; Toll  
Free 1-800-927-6276; Fax (507) 247-5508.

**Jessica Gums, Editor**

## Cybersecurity: Tips for a Safer Digital World

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too. When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety. Visit [staysafeonline.org](https://staysafeonline.org) to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.

### Enable Multi-factor Authentication



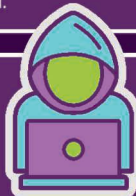
- also known as two-step verification on your accounts.
- The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information.
- Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

### 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.

### Spot Phishing Attempts



- Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing to lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment.
- Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.
- If you spot one, report it as soon as possible and don't forget to block the sender.

### Create Strong Passwords



- When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity.
- Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols.
- Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

# FIRE SAFETY

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths. **Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12, 2024)** is the perfect time to review and practice fire safety.

### Minimize Your Risks

The good news: Deaths from home fires in the U.S. have trended downward since the 1970s, according to Injury Facts, but even one death from a preventable fire is too many. While fire doesn't discriminate by age, it is the third leading cause of death for children 1 to 14.

**When cooking, make fire safety a priority by keeping these tips in mind:**

- Be alert; if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.

**Heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow these tips:**

- Keep all flammables, like paper, clothing, bedding, drapes or rugs, at least three feet from a space heater, stove or fireplace.
- Never leave portable heaters and fireplaces unattended; turn off heaters and make sure fireplace embers are extinguished before leaving the room.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, nonflammable surface, like ceramic tile, not on a rug or carpet.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- When buying a space heater, look for models that shut off automatically if the heater falls over.

### Working Smoke Alarms Are a Must

About three out of five fire deaths happen in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan providing early warning to reduce your risk of dying in a fire. The National Fire Protection Association recommends you:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas on the ceiling or high on the wall.
- Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms.
- Use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for

people who are hard of hearing or deaf.

- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.

### When and How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Always put your safety first; if you are not confident in your ability to use a fire extinguisher, get out and call 9-1-1. The American Red Cross cautions you to evaluate the situation and ensure:

- Everyone has left or is leaving the home
- The fire department has been called
- The fire is small, not spreading, and there is not much smoke
- Your back is to an exit you can use quickly

### Remember the acronym PASS:

**P**ull the pin.

**A**im low at the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the handle slowly.

**S**weep the nozzle side to side.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Power Line Safety "Watch Out for Power Lines!"

#### Archer Rindels, Age 7

Archer Rindels warns readers to be careful around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Archer! Archer's parents are Kyle and Rochelle Rindels, 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.



# Delicious CHICKEN

## CHEESY CHICKEN BUNDLES

### Ingredients:

1 (11 oz.) can condensed cream of chicken soup  
1/2 cup milk  
3/4 cup Velveeta, shredded or cubed  
1 (10 oz.) can chunk chicken, drained and flaked  
1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls

### Method

Combine soup, milk and cheese. Heat until melted and smooth. Pour into a 7x11 inch pan that has been sprayed with vegetable oil.

Separate crescents into 8 triangles. Place 2 tbsps. of chicken on wide end of crescent roll. Pinch to seal. Place on top of sauce.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 25 minutes and until golden brown. Serve with sauce on top.

Yields eight chicken bundles or four servings.

**Janet Ochsner**  
Box Elder, S.D.

## CROCKPOT CHICKEN PARMESAN SOUP

### Ingredients:

3 boneless chicken breasts  
1 tbsp. minced garlic  
1 can crushed tomatoes (28 oz. can)  
1 can tomato sauce (15 oz. can)  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. ground black pepper  
2 tsp. Italian seasoning  
4 cups chicken broth  
1 cup parmesan cheese (freshly shaved)  
1 cup heavy whipping cream  
8 oz. rotini pasta (uncooked)  
1 1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella

### Method

Add the chicken breast, minced garlic, crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning and chicken broth to the Crock-Pot.

Cover Crock-Pot with lid and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Shred the chicken. Stir in the shredded parmesan cheese, heavy whipping cream and rotini pasta. Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes.

Top the individual soup servings with mozzarella cheese.

**Kayla Beaner**  
Centerville, S.D.

## BUTTER CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

4 tps. Garam Masala blend  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. ground ginger  
1/2 tsp. ground turmeric  
1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper  
4 tbsps. butter, divided  
1 can (14.5 oz.) petite diced tomatoes  
1 med. red onion, chopped  
1 1/4 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
1/2 tsp. sea salt

### Method

Mix Garam Masala, garlic, ginger, turmeric and crushed red pepper in small bowl. Heat large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Toast seasoning mixture 1 min. or just until fragrant, stirring constantly. Add 2 tbsps. of the butter to skillet, swirling to melt. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 mins. until softened. Stir in tomatoes; cook 5 mins. Carefully transfer mixture to blender container; cover. Blend until smooth, scraping sides as needed. Return pureed sauce to skillet. Bring to simmer on med.-low heat. Add chicken; cook 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked though, stirring occasionally. Stir in remaining butter, cream and salt until well blended. Simmer on med.-low heat 2 to 3 minutes until sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in additional crushed red pepper to taste and serve with hot cooked basmati rice or warm naan bread, if desired. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves, if desired.

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

# Teen Driver Safety

As a parent, you're in the driver's seat.

Parenting teens can be challenging. While some battles aren't worth fighting, protecting your teen behind the wheel is.

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Protecting your teen behind the wheel is crucial due to their inexperience, which makes them more susceptible to crashes. Car accidents are a leading cause of death for teens in the U.S., with the highest risk in the first year of driving. Common hazards include additional passengers, speeding, drowsy driving and using phones.

Distracted driving is a major issue, with 3,308 people killed in distracted-affected crashes in 2022, including 2,613 teens, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. That's approximately seven teens per day.

Teen drivers often lack the skills and experience needed to avoid fatal crashes, and distractions such as texting can be particularly dangerous. For example, reading a text at 55 mph is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. For this reason, many states have laws against texting, talking on the phone and engaging in other distractions while driving.

Teen drivers report pressure from families and friends to use phones while driving. Many drivers continue to use phones even when they are aware of the crash risk. Technology can help avoid phone use while driving. Use built-in features on your smartphone or blocking apps to prevent distractions. For the greatest safety benefit, change your phone settings to block hands-free and calls and text messages.



### Stay safe around power lines

Ensure your teen knows what to do if they encounter downed power lines: stay in the vehicle, call 9-1-1 and stay at least 50 feet away from the scene if they witness an accident.

Make sure they realize that downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless yet still be energized. They do not have to be sparking, moving or sizzling (like you often see in movies) to be energized.

For more safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org) and consider downloading a Parent- Teen Driving Agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### There are three types of driving distractions to discuss with your teen:

- Visual, when you take your eyes off the road.
- Manual, when you take your hands off the wheel.
- Cognitive, when you take your mind off driving.

### To prevent distracted driving, teach your teens (and emulate) these tips:

- Do not text while driving.
- Block texts and keep your phone out of sight.
- Avoid eating while driving.
- Use playlists instead of searching for music.
- Set up navigation before driving or have a passenger navigate.



## July 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, July 22, 2024. Directors present James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Scott Johnson, Dale Fier, Mike Longtin, Jared Dritz, Joel Buyck, Galen Grant, and Mary Gunnink. 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 June 24, 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 May 31, 2024. Matthew & Emily Boerboom - 1517000. The Board also reviewed the Summary Report concerning sales, expenses, interest, and other capital credits & patronage. Ms. Jensen reviewed with the Board a letter and a check that had been received from RESCO concerning the 2023 RESCO Patronage Dividend Allocation Summary for Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. and reviewed the draft Form 990 for the Board's information.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the Outage Report for the month of June, 2024. He also indicated that the linemen were doing the following work some of which had been completed and some was still in the process: replacing 3-phase lines in parts of Lyon-Lincoln's service territory and doing clean up. Mr. Lamote also indicated that utility pole inspections will start in the first week of August.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, gave his report as follows: the Board was advised that Wolf River Electric is back in the trade area of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. concerning their promotion of solar

panels. The Board was advised that the Cooperative has had a few more inquiries about electric vehicles and chargers. Mr. Jeremiason reminded the Board that the Cooperative would have a sponsorship presence at the Lyon County and Lincoln County Fairs in the coming weeks.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, 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 the East River MAC Meeting, and provided a review of upcoming meetings and notices.

General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, then advised the Board of the Minnesota Department of Commerce seeking proposals from eligible utilities throughout Minnesota for the BIL-40101(d) Strengthening the Reliability and Resiliency of Minnesota's Electrical Grid Grant Program ("40101(d) program").

The Board reviewed the June 2024 Cyber Security Program Report presented by the East River Cyber Security Department. General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, brought to the Board's attention a report that had been completed concerning the Phishing campaign.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:06pm and reconvened at 12:37pm. During the lunch break the Board viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. monthly video report which included the Basin Summary.

Vice-President, Mike Longtin, discussed with the Board the meeting he had attended for East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.

The Board reviewed Policies 101-106 with no changes.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President, Dale Fier, adjourned the meeting at 1:28pm.

## 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, Allan B. Winter and Mark & Shannon Pedersen 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!

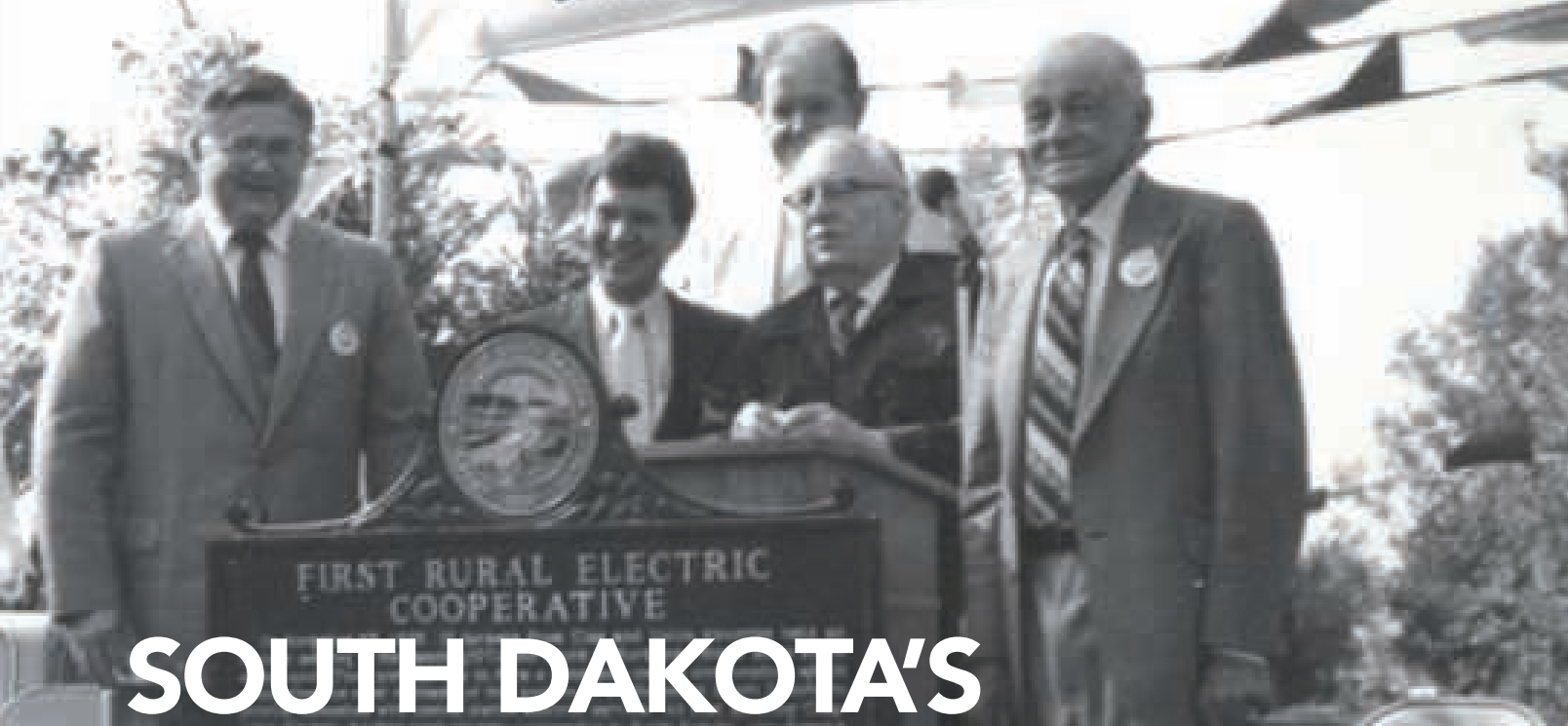
## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency improvements to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save money on energy efficiency improvements and upgrades.

Homeowners can save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%. A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you completed an upgrade this year or you are considering one, visit [www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](http://www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify for a tax credit.

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



# SOUTH DAKOTA'S COOPERATIVES

**Jacob Boyko**

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

Picture life in rural South Dakota 100 years ago. Each morning, families woke before dawn to work by the flicker of kerosene lamps, hand-pumped water to fill a gas-powered wringer-washer, and retrieved breakfast ingredients from a dripping ice box. Looming in the backs of producers' minds were fears that the market would trend downward and they may not be able to cover their debts, or even harvest their fields.

Today, South Dakota's rural farmers and ranchers enjoy virtually all of the accommodations of modern living their suburban counterparts enjoy. Past luxuries like running water, full-time electricity, internet and telephone are now standard, and many farmers enjoy stronger economic security compared to the past's tumultuous markets.

That's because for over 100 years, rural South Dakotans have pooled their resources by forming cooperatives that level out some of the disparities between rural and urban life. Thanks to members' ingenuity, rural America is not just a viable, but a thriving place to live and work.

## The First Cooperatives

The first cooperatives in South Dakota were agriculture-focused. Far too often, an

oversupply of goods led to price crashes, resulting in farmers unable to economically harvest crops or market livestock. This led to tremendous waste and crushed livelihoods.

As producers grew weary of the uncertain market, they organized to collectively market and distribute their products: they coordinated, shared risk and pooled resources.

South Dakota's earliest farm supply and marketing cooperatives started popping up a little after the turn of the 20th century. The South Dakota Secretary of State's office lists Lake Andes Farmers Cooperative, formed in 1909, as the oldest ongoing cooperative in the state.

During this early period, cooperatives operated in a legal gray area. Since producers working collectively in a cooperative setting could be viewed as monopolistic or collusive, they were under careful watch by the Federal Trade Commission as well as their larger competitors.

That changed in 1922 with the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act.

"Capper-Volstead allowed producers to come together and market their products and not be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act," explained Brenda Forman, South Dakota Association of Cooperatives executive director. "[Cooperatives] were not considered to be a monopoly as long as they were a cooperative association formed

Clay-Union Electric Corporation was the first electric cooperative in South Dakota.

by producers, owned by the members, one member gets one vote in cooperative elections, etc."

The presence of ag cooperatives surged in the 1930s as producers looked for stability during the Great Depression, the South Dakota Farmers Union says. With effectiveness proven, the cooperative strategy has stuck around since.

Today, there are 63 farm supply and marketing cooperatives serving over 130 South Dakota communities, Forman said.

Those same visionaries who established the first ag cooperatives identified another need that was not being met. Using the same cooperative model that changed their lives once already, farmers would bring power to the prairie.

## Electricity

Before energy infrastructure was widespread, many small towns in South Dakota relied on local power plants. However, with distribution lines only serving the city, living even a mile or two out of town was the difference between flipping a light switch and carrying a lantern.

Despite requests from farmers to run lines to their homes – some of whom even offered to pay installation costs – most municipalities and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) refused because undertaking the effort didn't lead to any meaningful profit.

Even many of the state's elected representatives seemed resigned to the idea



that the future of energy for their farming constituents was tied to on-site generation, like the modest Delco-Light plants that could power a few small appliances and light bulbs. To them, it seemed laughable that there was any feasible way to run lines in a state where the service would average out to a sparse 2.2 customers per mile of line, and for many, that was the end of the conversation.

The narrative changed when President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded his New Deal programs to modernize rural America, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to finance ambitious projects.

The profit-minded IOUs were largely uninterested in expanding into sparse territory for measly returns, and little progress was made toward Roosevelt's vision.

In 1936, once it was apparent IOUs wouldn't be making the foray into rural territories as farmers had hoped they would, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act. Now, cooperatives could organize and receive REA loans while the IOUs idled.

A group of 17 farmers from Clay and Union counties jumped at the opportunity to finally bring their homes into the modern age. Just months after the REA was established, and at a time when just 5% of South Dakota farms had power, the group hatched out a plan to secure an REA loan for their newly-formed Fairview Rural Electric System, today Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

Going door to door and collecting \$5 sign-ons from neighbors ranging from ecstatic to skeptical, the cooperative finally got the REA's green light and received a \$70,000 loan to build 67 miles of line that would serve about 300 members, according to a 1936 Argus Leader report.

The success of South Dakota's first electric cooperative brought hope to still more than 90% of South Dakota farmers without power. It wasn't long before dozens more newly-formed cooperatives were each going door to door collecting sign-on fees to secure their own REA loans.

## Serving Everyone

In 1946, roughly 10 years after the state's first electric cooperative debuted, rural farmers and ranchers from the state's

remote northwest corner met in Lemmon to form their own cooperative. The board understood securing a loan from REA to serve such a vast and sparse territory would be a big ask, so they opted to charge members a \$10 monthly minimum, which was twice the minimum rate of most South Dakota cooperatives, and equal to about \$170 today.

Even so, would-be members agreed to the terms of the longshot project and paid their \$5 membership fee. Despite federal hesitation about the feasibility of such a project, the REA loan was approved.

Grand Electric Cooperative received more than \$1.8 million over two loans that would build 1,127 miles of line and serve 948 members. The investment amounted to one of the REA's largest and riskiest yet in the state, but proved to be a success.

Cooperative members did the impossible; the wires in northwest South Dakota had finally been energized. Board members then eyed another ambitious goal – bringing telephone to Northwest South Dakota.

West River Cooperative Telephone Company was formed as a separate entity, but in the spirit of cooperation, the telephone and electric cooperative would be jointly operated. The two would, and still to this day, share a building, staff and infrastructure.

"Up here, we cover almost 8,000 square miles and have 4,000 miles of wire, but we only have 1,800 members," explained Eric Kahler, the cooperatives' joint general manager. "When you look at the economics of this type of service territory, if you're in the business to make money, you're not going to be too successful here. The cooperative model is really the only model that could work here."

And the community knows that fact and is grateful for their cooperative, says Patricia Palmer, who has spent much of her last 63 years working in Grand Electric and West River Telephone's member services.

"They're thankful," she said. "Very thankful. We have a terrific telephone work crew and line department. At times, they work tirelessly in horrible weather conditions... You can't believe the thank you notes that we get."

Growing up on a farm near McIntosh, Palmer has a firsthand account of the impact

of cooperatives. And she says it's one she will never forget.

The night she watched her family's farmhouse light up for the first time was also the beginning of a new chapter, she recalled. A chapter with an automatic washer, a refrigerator and a toaster.

As times change, cooperatives continue to be at the forefront of bringing service that might otherwise be out of reach.

"When I came to the cooperative, it was just telephone and electricity, and now we have high-speed internet and TV," Palmer said. "Over the years, the cooperative has really grown!"

## Other Applications

The cooperative model is also used in many other sectors; there are 34 South Dakota credit unions that offer member-owners better interest rates and reduced fees compared to for-profit banks.

Even some rural water systems, while not wholly cooperatives themselves, borrow some of the cooperative fundamentals to make serving large areas more practical.

"Cooperatives are pretty significant in the impact they've had," Forman said. "And the other cooperatives we have – there are daycare co-ops, food co-ops, education co-ops – there's a number of different structures that the cooperative model has been used for, because of that ownership and one member, one vote."

Today, there are 141 cooperatives in the state, providing more than 78,500 jobs, \$2.8 billion in worker salaries and \$3.9 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), according to a South Dakota State University study titled *The Economic Impact of Cooperatives in South Dakota*.

That means cooperatives contribute almost 13% of South Dakota jobs, more than 11% of salaries, and 6.2% of the state's entire GDP.

"In a cooperative, your board is local," Forman said. "[The co-op board and employees] support and participate in sports functions, 4-H barbecues, you may go to church with them, or they may be at family dinner. Which means when something is a concern or challenge, you have somebody to go to and you have contacts close that know you and understand the system."



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL

# CO-OP MONTH

## Co-ops Power Communities with Purpose

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on physical distance, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging. Lyon-Lincoln Electric is deeply committed to our consumer-members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

During October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For Lyon-Lincoln Electric, our mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Lyon-Lincoln Electric, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

- Open and Voluntary Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members' Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

**This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people—the local communities we're proud to serve.**



# 7 COOP PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. Let's reflect on these principles that have not only stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future.

1

## VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services, and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.



4

## AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



2

## DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (Directors) are elected among members and are accountable to them. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). Cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



5

## EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION

Education and training for members, elected representatives (Directors), CEOs, and Employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, help boost cooperative understanding.



3

## MEMBERS ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute, equably to, and democratically control, the capital, of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate it for any and all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting a reserves setting; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with a cooperative; and supporting other activities, approved by the membership.



6

## COOPERATION AMONG CO-OPS

By working together through local, national, regional, and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs.



7

## CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policy, supported by the membership.



# GHOST TOWNS

## South Dakota's History Remembered

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Scattered across open fields and through narrow mountain gulches, a careful eye can spot many of South Dakota's nearly 250 long-lost prairie villages and prospecting towns.

Many of these communities were once thriving outposts, railroad hubs, farming villages and mining towns, but were dealt their final blows by the hardships of the dust bowl, changes to railroad systems and the depletion of natural resources.

Most of the towns are long forgotten, their existence marked only by the rotted shell of an old wood barn or a crumbling foundation poking up from the ground.

Thanks to the work of local historical societies who have pieced together the history of the communities' "booms and busts" through old newspaper clippings, plat maps and land records, we can get a glimpse into the lives of the first rural South Dakotans and learn about the communities that once bustled with life.

### Galena

Unique among a cavalcade of abandoned Black Hills gold-rush towns, Galena's roots are in its silver. The town was settled in the late 1870s after prospectors Patrick Donegan and John F. Cochran discovered layers of lead and silver ore near Bear Butte Creek while searching for gold deposits.

The U.S. government removed the two men from the area in accordance with Native American treaties. However,

their exile turned out to be short-lived. Donegan and Cochran returned shortly after to mine their claim as more and more gold-hungry settlers tested the increasingly unenforceable treaties.

The claim, which would later become the Sitting Bull mine, turned out to be a mother lode, according to Galena Historical Society member Jeff Jacobsen.

Over the next several years, other mining operations popped up in the gulch as the miners' families made Galena their new home. The town soon had multiple houses, a hotel, restaurant, stores, a catholic church, cemetery and school, attracting new settlers through its peak between 1881 and 1883.

Arriving from Chicago in hopes of expanding his fortune, Col. John Davey soon became a Galena mining heavyweight, buying up claims along the Bear Butte Creek, including the Sitting Bull claim.

Davey's more than 125-man operation was running smoothly until trouble arose from a claim dispute. The owners of the nearby Richmond claim suspected Davey was digging too far into the hill and mining their silver. Davey claimed he was following the path of the ore, which according to mining law, he was allowed to follow onto another claim. The Richmond claim owners said the law didn't apply to a horizontal blanket formation of ore, like the one in Galena.

A lengthy court battle ensued, and the judge shut down the Sitting Bull mine

until the ruling. Galena was suspended in controversy as many of the townsfolk found themselves out of work.

Thus began Galena's rocky "boom and bust" cycle, Jacobsen explained.

"The boom time was when Col. Davey and other mines were producing, and then the lawsuit shut that down and you have a bust," he said.

The judge ruled against Davey, and the operation never recovered. Galena would never again be the bustling town it was in the early 1880s.

"In 1892, some more people came into town and tried to start up again, so that was a boom, and then they went bankrupt, so there's a bust," Jacobsen continued. "There's like three or four cycles like that in Galena."

By the mid 1930s, the town had seen its final bust. The mining wasn't comparable to the riches of the past, and interest in the gulch slowly started to fade. The tracks were removed and the school house closed in 1943.

Today, Galena is the best-preserved Ghost Town in South Dakota. On the second Saturday of each June, visitors can tour the town, visit the maintained graveyard and go inside the newly-restored schoolhouse, courtesy of the Galena Historical Society.

"It just kind of stands out," Jacobsen said. "Galena is just one of the very few silver mining areas in the Black Hills when almost everyone else was trying for gold."



Galena School  
Photo Credit: Galena Historical Society



## Did You Know

In 1947, Deadwood resident Ollie Wiswell came across an orphaned coyote pup while he was out on a hike. He gave the pup, named Tootsie, to Fred and Esther Borsch of Galena. Tootsie gained fame as the mascot for the Borschs' Deadwood liquor store, famously appearing on the store's sign. Fred taught Tootsie to howl along to his singing, and the two recorded the album "South Dakota Tootsie."

Tootsie, at this point a South Dakota mascot, rode through parades, was featured in an airline advertising campaign, and even embarked on a nationwide tour where she visited the White House and performed for President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon.

Gov. George Mickelson, a fan of Tootsie himself, signed legislation in 1949 making the coyote the state's official animal. Tootsie died in 1959 and is buried near her home in Galena.

## Argonne

About nine miles northwest of Howard, just off state Highway 25, lay the remains of the ill-fated farming community, Argonne.

Marked by a blue historical sign, travelers-by can catch a glimpse of the town's massive cement bank vault with its swinging iron door, an old silo bearing the town's name, several concrete foundations, and a house falling into its own footprint.

The town's founder, Dr. Louis Gotthelf, was a Prussian-born physician who emigrated to the United States in the aftermath of the Prussian revolution. Gotthelf staked his claim in 1881 and established the townsite in 1886.

The town was originally called St. Mary's, named after Gotthelf's daughter, and was strategically positioned along the Chicago and North Western railroad, with the streets running parallel to the railroad rather than the traditional east-west layout. Confusion with another St. Mary's led to the residents voting to change the name to Argonne in 1920, which was chosen to honor local soldiers who had served in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I.

Despite having what should have been a prime location, Argonne failed to grow to Gotthelf's satisfaction, and he left with his family for Parker in 1889.

A 1919 land boom in South Dakota finally turned things around for Argonne, Miner County Historical Society member George Justice Forster said.

"Most of the growth that happened initially was when it kind of took off as a

trade center," he explained. "Suddenly the town had a railway depot, lumberyard, farmer's cooperative and general store."

In the early 20s, Argonne's population boomed to about 100 residents, and the town offered new amenities including a school, blacksmith and post office.

Argonne's peak was short-lived, and by 1930 the population had fallen to about 65 residents.

When Doug Jerlow moved to town in 1953, much of what was built in the town's prime was left abandoned, and most of the businesses that did remain were struggling.

"It was past the peak," Jerlow recounted. "One general store closed when the post office inside it closed, and that was an elderly lady who ran that and lived in a house by herself. The Haxby family's store was open for maybe a year or two after that."

Though the town was facing a bleak outlook, there remained one huge point of pride for Argonne: high school basketball.

Delbert Gillam, also known as the

Argonne Ace, led the Argonne Arrows to a 10-1 start in his junior year in 1953. Gillam also broke the state record for the most points scored by a player in a single game, making 31 field goals and 10 free throws, scoring 72. Argonne still holds this record.

The high school closed in 1956, but the community limped on for a few more years before the grade school closed in 1970 when the railroad picked up and left.

Doug Jerlow's family, the last residents of Argonne, left town that same year.

Jerlow pointed out that while many other communities along the rail line like Unityville, Canova, Carthage, and Esmond struggled to recover from the abandonment of the line, for Argonne, it was the death blow.

Now, Forster and other members of the Miner County Historical Society are working to preserve the history of Argonne.

A historical marker will soon be placed east of Argonne on state Highway 25 that will tell the story of Argonne from its founding to its final household.

Though Jerlow now lives near Madison, he still farms near Argonne and owns most of the former townsite. As the unofficial mayor of Argonne, as Jerlow sometimes calls himself, he wants to keep the memory of his childhood hometown alive.

"It was just a nice community to grow up in," he said. "Those small communities, I think it's becoming harder to find them anymore."



Argonne Arrows

Photo Credit: Miner County Historical Society

### HEATING SEASON REMINDER



Heating season is just around the corner. If you have a heat meter, you can start getting heat credit with your October reading. Be sure the breaker to the heat meter is on. We encourage you to leave these breakers on year-round. Without power, the automatic meter reading can't detect trouble or report readings.

### JULY OUTAGE REPORT 10 OR MORE CONSUMERS

7/10/24- 61 consumers were off 2 hours and 5 minutes in Fortier, Florida and Norman Townships. The cause was unknown.

7/17/24- 61 consumers were off 1 hour and 30 minutes in Fortier, Florida and Norman Townships. David & Samantha Groenhoff - 1532200. The cause was an OCR that was set to 1 shot operation.

7/20/24- 26 consumers were off 1 hour in Coon Creek and Lyons Townships. The cause was a bat on an overhead transformer.



There are several reasons that a homeowner may look to install solar panels on their property. Some do so in hopes of reducing their carbon footprint, while others look to reduce their energy bills to put more money in their pockets. While the promise of clean, renewable energy is appealing, there unfortunately is a darker side to some companies in this industry.

From encounters with relentless door-to-door salesmen pushing questionable contracts to tales of shadowy dealings and unethical practices during the sales and financing process, the solar installation industry has, for some, transformed into a realm of uncertainty. Mishaps and oversights during the installation, ranging from shoddy workmanship to outright incompetence, have left homeowners grappling with unforeseen challenges. Perhaps even more unsettling are the stories of post-installation ghosting, where customers find themselves abandoned and unsupported once their solar panels are in place.

Most of the complaints we've heard typically revolve around one specific company that uses high-pressure sales tactics. There is no need to sign anything until you're ready and have all the information you need to make an informed decision. We've heard from some members that have been pressured into signing an agreement with this company and have had their panels installed before they even contact the utility to see if they can interconnect.

Installing solar panels is expensive, and it's not something homeowners should undertake without a lot of consideration and research. But there's also a rush to speed adoption and help states meet their renewable energy goals, and the solar industry as a whole has not shown much interest in policing the bad actors, for fear of slowing down the good.

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

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



# SOLAR POWER

Stepping Towards Solar

## Is it right for my home?



### Consider All of the Costs

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

### Before Installing & Connecting

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

### Consider These Before Purchasing

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

Single Phase General  
Service Access Charge

# \$41 .00

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

### Potential Benefits

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

# 30%

Federal Tax Credit Until 2034



1-800-927-6276



email@llec.coop

**SEPT. 14-OCT. 27**  
**Mazing Acres Fall Festival**

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
30851 433rd Ave.  
Yankton, SD  
605-760-2759



**SEPT. 27-29**  
**Coal Springs Threshing Bee and Antique Show**

Meadow, SD  
605-788-2299

**OCT. 4-5**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest and Vendor Show**

Philip, SD  
605-441-1060

**OCT. 4-5**  
**25th Annual Pumpkin Fest**  
Webster, SD  
<https://webstersd.com/home>

**OCT. 5-6**  
**Run Crazy Horse Marathons**  
Crazy Horse  
[www.runcrazyhorse.com](http://www.runcrazyhorse.com)

**OCT. 5-6**  
**Magic Needlers Quilt Show**  
Codington County Extension  
Watertown, SD  
605-881-3273

**OCT. 5-6**  
**Marshall Gun Show**  
Red Baron Arena  
Marshall, MN  
Sponsored by Lyon County  
Pheasants Forever  
507-401-6227

**OCT. 6**  
**Giant Pumpkin Festival**  
Bentley Memorial Building  
Bison, SD  
Enter Pumpkins by 11:30 a.m.  
605-244-5475

**OCT. 10-11**  
**Rural Women in Agriculture Conference**  
Oct. 10 from 1-9 p.m.  
Oct. 11 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.  
The Lodge of Deadwood  
Deadwood, SD  
[SouthDakotaWomeninAg.com](http://SouthDakotaWomeninAg.com)

**OCT. 11-12**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-941-4958

**OCT. 19**  
**Buffalo County Fall Ball**  
Live Music and Food  
8 p.m.  
Fire Hall  
Gann Valley, SD

**OCT. 25-27**  
**Forest of Fears Haunted Trail**  
7 p.m.-10 p.m.  
Reclamation-Ranch  
40787 259th St.  
Mitchell, SD

**OCT. 26**  
**Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival**  
Hill City, SD  
605-574-2368

**OCT. 26**  
**Hartford Women of Today Fall Craft Fair**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
West Central Becker Center  
Hartford, SD  
605-359-2049

**OCT. 26**  
**Owl-O-Ween**  
Noon-5 p.m.  
Black Hills Raptor Center  
Caputa, SD  
605-391-2511

**OCT. 31**  
**Treat Street**  
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.  
Main St.  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656  
[MilbankSD.com/Chamber](http://MilbankSD.com/Chamber)

**NOV. 2**  
**Fall Fling Craft Show**  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Dakota Christian School  
Corsica, SD  
605-366-7940

**NOV. 2**  
**Reliance Christmas Carousel**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Legion Hall  
Reliance, SD  
605-730-0553

**NOV. 22-23**  
**Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show**  
Davison County Fairgrounds  
Mitchell, SD  
605-359-2049

**NOV. 30**  
**A Hometown Christmas Market**  
2 p.m.-6 p.m.  
Main St.  
Elk Point, 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.**