

## Cooperative Connections

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## A chance to connect

# Being powerless has benefits



**Alan Bishop**

President

**Having a power outage was inconvenient, but it was also a blessing.**

It was 7 p.m. on the last day of November and we had been without power for over six hours. It reminded me of one of the first years we lived in the Hermosa area and we experienced a spring storm that put us in the dark for three or four days. Because I was 6- or 7-years-old at the time, I was excited and thought of it as an adventure; telling my parents that we could “play pioneer!” Well, it’s not as much fun now as it was back then, probably because I now have a lot more responsibilities. Instead of playing pioneer or enjoying a candle lit cribbage tournament, I am concerned about family, friends, plumbing, a cold house, livestock and, oh yes, the safety of our lineman. These concerns can really suck the fun right out of an end of November blizzard.

However, I discovered that being held “powerless” has its benefits, too. Darkness was quickly descending at 4 p.m. and with it my wife, my dog and I found ourselves in a very quiet house. The need to find something to occupy us until bedtime brought out not only the cribbage board and cards but also a great opportunity to conversate. Yes...talk...and not just about who’s going where or what needs to be done or undone, but about how we feel, our dreams and hopes, our ideas; if not for ourselves then for our children and friends. As we talked and played cards (with light from a flashlight and an oil lamp) I was reminded how blessed we were to simply enjoy each other’s company, even though I lost four out of seven.

Having a power outage was inconvenient, but it was also a blessing. It helped me recall fond memories of childhood wonders and adventures and to appreciate the ever-present gift of nurturing relationships. It also brought to mind the dedication and commitment of our linemen and co-op staff who work through these storms to resolve problems and restore our electric power as quickly as possible. When it is dark and quiet and there are no distractions, one can really appreciate the wonderments of the world we live in and re-evaluate priorities.

After the storm, I visited with neighbors about their time without power. Many made memories with relatives, grandchildren, spouses and close neighbors. There was an expressed recognition that we had all been given a blessing, hard to put into words, but something to be thankful for. Some in the conversation had generators and, therefore, all the “comforts of home,” but as they listened, they felt a little cheated out of a true gift.

The linemen, office staff and partnering cooperatives restored power to most of our members before 9 p.m. that evening and the rest before daylight the next day. At our house, the lights came on shortly before it was time to turn them off to go to bed; I’d say just in time to say my prayers of thanks and get a good night’s sleep.



**Alan and Kerri Bishop enjoy a game of cribbage during a power outage in November.**

# Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections

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## Applications due for D.C. trip

One high school junior will win an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., this summer. The trip, sponsored by Black Hills Electric Cooperative, is open to students in the 11th grade who are dependents of Black Hills Electric Cooperative members.

To apply for the trip, send a one-page, double-spaced, typewritten essay on “How does Black Hills Electric Cooperative differ from an Investor-Owned electric utility?” to Washington Trip, Black Hills Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730. The deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, February 14.

In June, BHEC’s winner will join more than 1,500 other rural electric cooperative students from across the nation for a one week tour of Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area.

If you would like more information, call 673-4461 or e-mail [mchase@bhec.coop](mailto:mchase@bhec.coop).

## Scholarship applications due

Time is running out to apply for the Black Hills Electric Cooperative \$1,000 scholarship for graduating high school seniors.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens and a dependent of a Black Hills Electric Cooperative member. He or she must be planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

The recipient will be chosen based on a combination of ACT or SAT scores, overall grade-point average, a personal statement of career goals, a one page essay, and an adult appraisal. Applications are on-line at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop). Completed applications and supporting documentation must be returned to BHEC before 5 p.m. on Friday, January 31. The winner will be announced in April.

To request an application, call 673-4461 or 1-800-742-0085 or e-mail [mchase@bhec.coop](mailto:mchase@bhec.coop). The application form is also available at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop) by clicking on one of the three student photos or on the member services tab. Print the form and fill out and return to Mike Chase, Black Hills Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 792, Custer, SD 57730 prior to January 31.

## Area meetings schedule

### Oelrichs

Thursday Feb. 6, 6-7 p.m.

Oelrichs Community Hall  
Co-sponsor: Oelrichs Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Service

### Johnson Siding

Monday, Feb. 10, 6-7 p.m.

Rimrock Community Center  
Co-sponsor: Rimrock Community Club

### Hermosa

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 6-7 p.m.

Hermosa Elementary School Gym  
Co-sponsor: Battle Creek Fire District

### Whispering Pines

Monday, Feb. 17, 6-7 p.m.

Whispering Pines Fire Hall  
Co-sponsor: Whispering Pines Volunteer Fire Dept.  
Fire District Annual Meeting Follows

### Rockerville

Friday, Feb. 21, 6-7 p.m.

Rockerville Community Hall  
Co-sponsor: Rockerville Community Club

### Rochford

Friday, March 27, 6-7 p.m.

Rochford Community Hall  
Co-sponsor: Rochford Community Club

**We hope to see you at one of the meetings. Thank you for your support of the above organizations.**

# Space Heater Safety

Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the United States. More than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year. These fires result in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars in property damage.

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather. Unfortunately, they can pose significant fire and electric shock hazards if not used properly. Fire and electrical hazards can be caused by space heaters without adequate safety features, space heaters placed near combustibles, or space heaters that are improperly plugged in.



Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Here are some tips for keeping your home safe and warm when it's cold outside:

- Make sure your space heater has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully.
- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep, and don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.
- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.
- Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.
- Locate space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture, or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.
- Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use.

Source: esfi.org

# Getting Involved

The state legislatures of both Minnesota and South Dakota convened in early January. Need to contact your legislator while in Pierre or Saint Paul? Here's how:



## Contacting Members of South Dakota's Legislature:

Go to <http://sdlegislature.gov/> From there, you can search your senator or representatives, see the committees which they are assigned and send them an email. Need to reach them by phone? You can call and leave a message with the Senate at 605-773-3821 or with the House of Representatives at 605-773-3851. You can also send a fax to 605-773-6806.

## Contacting Minnesota Legislators:

**For contact information on Minnesota house members, visit:**

<https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members>

**For contact information on Minnesota senators, visit:**

<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/members>

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Don't let anything get near your extension cords!"**

**Sierra Staufacker, 9 years old**

Sierra is the daughter of Cory and Staci Staufacker, Balaton, Minn. They are members of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Tyler, Minn.

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.

# Bountiful Brunch

## Pineapple-Zucchini Bread

3 eggs	3 cups flour
2 cups sugar	1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla	1 tsp. soda
1 cup oil	1 cup crushed pineapple, drained
2 cups peeled and grated zucchini	

Beat eggs, sugar, vanilla and oil. Mix in zucchini and dry ingredients; stir well. Fold in pineapple. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour. Makes 2 loaves.

**Geraldine Dahlin, Beresford, SD**

## Apple Pie Breakfast Bake

2 cans refrigerated French bread	1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup butter, melted	1 tsp. apple pie spice
1 (21 oz.) can apple pie filling	1 tsp. vanilla

Bake loaves as directed on can; cool 20 minutes. Cut 1-1/2 loaves into 1/2-inch cubes to equal 7-1/2 cups. Reserve remaining 1/2 loaf for another use. Increase oven temperature to 375°F. In a 9x13-inch glass baking dish, evenly layer melted butter, apple pie filling and bread cubes. In a medium bowl, stir together milk, apple pie spice and vanilla. Pour over bread, pushing bread down to absorb liquid. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until deep golden brown and bubbly. Cool 15 minutes. Serve warm with maple syrup. (Note: You may also use day-old French bread cut into 1/2-inch cubes.)

**Jean Osterman, Wheaton, MN**

## Breakfast Casserole

1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls	1-1/2 cups shredded cheese
1 (16 oz.) pkg. bulk sausage, cooked and drained	8 eggs, lightly beaten
Diced onion, green pepper and mushrooms, optional	1/2 cup milk
16 to 32 oz. hash brown potatoes, depending on number of servings desired	1 pkg. country-style gravy mix, prepared according to package directions

Press crescent rolls in a lightly greased 9x13-inch pan. Spread with sausage crumbles and veggies. Layer hash browns on top. Sprinkle with cheese. Combine eggs with milk; pour over all. Spread on gravy. Bake at 325°F for 1 hour or until cooked through in the middle.

**Kim Jost, Agar, SD**

## Grilled Fruit with Cinnamon Oatmeal Crumble

6 T. butter, softened, divided	2 ripe peaches, halved and pitted
2 T. light brown sugar	2 ripe plums, halved and pitted
1 tsp. cinnamon, ground	
3/4 cup quick-cooking oats	

Mix butter, brown sugar and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Reserve 2 T.; set aside. Add oats to remaining butter mixture, stirring until well blended. Brush fruit with reserved butter mixture. Place cut-side down on grill over medium heat. Tent with foil or close grill lid. Grill 2 minutes or until grill marks appear. Turn fruit cut-side up; spoon oat mixture evenly on top of each piece. Return foil tent or close lid. Grill 3 minutes longer or until fruit is tender and topping is crisp. Serve topped with whipped cream or ice cream, if desired. Cooking over a campfire? Place grill grate over top of campfire. Grill fruit as directed, rearranging hot coals as needed to maintain even direct heat. Makes 4 servings

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 290, Total Fat 18g, Fiber 3g, Cholesterol 45mg, Sodium 137mg, Carbohydrates 29g, Protein 3g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Omelet in a Bag

2 large eggs	Green pepper, diced
Ham or bacon pieces	Mushrooms, chopped
Onion, chopped	Grated cheese
Tomato, diced	

Give each guest a quart-size Ziploc freezer bag and have them write their name on the bag with a permanent marker. Crack 2 eggs into each bag (not more than 2). Shake to combine them. Put out a variety of ingredients and let each guest choose what they want in their omelet. Shake the bag. Zip the bag after making sure to get all the air out. Bring a large kettle of water to a full rolling boil. Place the bags into the water. When the water begins to boil again, boil for exactly 14 minutes. You can usually cook 6 to 8 omelets at a time. For more, make another kettle of boiling water. Open bags and the omelet will roll out easily. Serve with fresh fruit and coffee cake.

**Roxanna Streckfuss, Mansfield, SD**

Please send your favorite seafood, appetizer and beverage recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Your Seven-Step Efficiency Upgrade Checklist



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

**Making your home more energy efficient can be done by taking one step at a time, or you can take it on all at once as a larger project.**

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

**Dear Pat and Brad:** I used to live in a newer, energy efficient home, but I recently moved into an older home that's definitely not as efficient. I want to make some upgrades, but I'm not sure how much work to do or what steps I should take. Can you offer any advice? – Katie

**Dear Katie:** Making your home more energy efficient can be done by taking one step at a time or you can take it on all at once as a larger project. Either way, it's helpful to have a plan in place before you dive in so you don't end up doing unnecessary work or repeating steps along the way.

Here's a seven-step checklist we've compiled to help you get organized.

**Step 1: Set goals and constraints.** Start by setting your primary goal. Are you mainly looking to save money on your home's energy bills, make it more comfortable, increase the resale value or help the environment? Then, set a deadline for when you need the project completed. This may affect whether you do some of the work yourself and which contractor you choose.

Last but not least, set your budget. How much is it worth to you to live in an energy efficient home? One way to look at this is to review your annual energy bills. If they're around \$2,000 per year, you might ask yourself how much you'd be willing to spend if you could cut that expense in half. Maybe you'd be willing to spend \$10,000 to save \$1,000 each year? That would be a 10 percent rate of return on your investment. Or, if your home is drafty and cold, how much are you willing to spend to make it more comfortable?

**Step 2: Educate yourself.** This step is crucial so you can weigh the costs and benefits of each potential improvement. There are many helpful lists of small and large energy efficiency upgrades available online. There are also some great resources like the Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR® and *Consumer Reports*. Your electric co-op may have a home energy advisor on staff or available literature that can help.

**Step 3: Schedule an energy audit.** An energy audit will help you prioritize so you can spend your money on the measures that will bring you the most benefit. And an energy auditor can help in other ways. My neighbors hired a contractor to do some major energy efficiency upgrades. They asked an energy auditor to take a look at the work before they paid for it and the auditor found it wasn't even close to the level agreed to in the contract. It took three or four return visits for the contractor to get the work up to the promised level of efficiency. So, the energy auditor saved the day!

**Step 4: Plan your projects.** Now that you have set your budget and priorities and have a sense of the work and costs involved, make a list of the items you want to include in your energy efficiency upgrades.

**Step 5: Are there tasks you can take on yourself?** Some work, like caulking windows or adding weather stripping to doors, can easily be done by the homeowner, especially with the help of online tutorials. Other work, like insulating an attic, can be dangerous and may require special equipment or know-how.

**Step 6: Identify and select contractors.** This can be challenging. You want a contractor who really knows how to do energy efficiency work. And you may need two or more contractors, such as one for your heating system and another for insulation. Maybe you'd like to find one who can do air sealing or duct sealing. In some rural areas, contractors may not specialize in the efficiency measures you are interested in. Are they willing to learn what they don't know?

Be sure to get several quotes if possible, as well as references from past clients. Create and sign a contract with guaranteed work and completion dates, with payments due only as work is completed and inspected.

**Step 7: Oversee the work.** The quality of the work makes a big difference in the amount of energy savings and added comfort you desire. Keep an eye on the project and don't be afraid to ask questions – lots of questions. Remember, it's your home and you're the one paying the bills!

# Congress Passes RURAL Act, SECURE Act and Cadillac Tax Repeal

The integrated campaign shaped by NRECA to carry the voice of electric cooperatives was heard in Congress! As one of the year's final legislative actions, the House and Senate passed –and the President signed – the RURAL Act and other major electric co-op priorities as a part of the 2020 spending package.

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said the legislation “preserves the electric cooperative business model, protects co-op members from unfair electric rate increases and provides certainty to co-ops that leverage federal and state grants to meet the needs of the communities they serve.” He thanked Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and Reps. Terri Sewell (D-Ala.) and Adrian Smith (R-Neb.) for leading the RURAL Act through Congress.

Louis Finkel, NRECA senior vice president of Government Relations, credited the strategic advocacy campaign by electric co-op leaders and NRECA for passing the legislation that protects electric co-ops' tax-exempt status when they receive federal and state grants for disaster relief, broadband deployment and economic development.

“None of this would have been possible without the tireless commitment of our membership to work together in carrying our message to Congress and the steadfast collaboration and leadership from our NRECA team,” said Finkel.

The effort included co-op leaders going to Capitol Hill, co-ops sharing stories on local impacts, grassroots messages and NRECA media and ads directly targeting lawmakers.

In addition to the inclusion of the RURAL Act, the final spending package includes several other electric co-op priorities.

- **SECURE Act:** The landmark SECURE Act (H.R. 1994), legislation to reform and promote retirement saving, will save co-ops in NRECA's Retirement Security (RS) Plan more than \$30 million per year in Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation insurance premiums. This premium reduction will help reduce the cost pressure on participating employers by offsetting to some extent future RS Plan cost increases that could be necessary. It also provides relief from IRS regulations for co-ops in the RS Plan, or in their own defined-benefit plans, that continue to provide benefits after being “closed” to new employees.
- **Cadillac Tax Repeal:** Eliminating the 40 percent Cadillac Tax on employer health plans will help protect health care benefits for all co-op employees, whether their co-op participates in NRECA's Group Benefits Trust or other providers. NRECA, a founding member of the leading coalition for the Cadillac Tax repeal, stressed that taxing any part of co-op employees' health care benefits would result in less comprehensive health coverage for families, and at a higher cost for many.
- **Parking Lot Tax Repeal:** The parking lot tax repeal helps an estimated one-third of tax-exempt electric co-ops. The law treated parking lots at tax-exempt businesses and organizations as employer-paid qualified transportation and parking benefits covered under a corporate tax on “unrelated taxable business income.” In addition to the tax, compliance costs were a burden for co-ops.



## BIG Idea Wins

High school students with big business ideas competed for \$30,000 in cash and scholarships during the BIG Idea Competition Dec. 11 at Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D.

Korbin Leddy of Milbank High School took first place with Korbin's Steak Express which aims to sell convenient meat grill packs to customers, such as active camping families for example. His prizes include a \$1,000 cash prize, a \$2,000 scholarship to NSU, a \$2,000 scholarship to Presentation College and a \$2,500 scholarship to the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

The 2019 BIG Idea Competition had 276 entries involving more than 389 students from 29 schools.

Second place went to The Urban Garden, by Megan Nash of Northwestern High School, which aims to provide the urban population with fresh, quality fruit through hydroponic and vertical farming techniques. Jordan Edwards and Paige Evans of Aberdeen Central High School also placed second with Smart Rides, which aims to help parents transport their children to and from school or extra-curricular activities while providing the children with a snack along the way. Second place prizes include \$500 cash and \$1,000 scholarships to Presentation College, NSU and SDSM&T.

Other finalists included Wild Yarrow Design by Elizabeth Wright from Rapid City Stevens High School, Hoffman Manure Hauling by Miles Hoffman from Leola High School, Vandy's Lawn Care by Paul VanDover from Milbank High School, CattleHome Fencing by Jessie Lux and Kodi Retzer from Eureka High School and New Home by Quentin Eck from Brookings High School. Each received \$100 cash and \$1,000 scholarships at Presentation College, NSU and SDSM&T.

Four category awards were given, with the winners in each receiving a \$500 cash prize and \$500 NSU scholarship.

- **Marketing Design winner:** Leeper Farms Custom Work by Phoenix Leeper of West Central High School.
- **Food Animal Agriculture Category winner:** Large Animal Immunization Robot (L.A.I.RA) by Liberty Thompson and Payton DeGroot, Brookings High School.
- **Wellness Category winner:** Romulus and Remus by Paul Wehrung of Spearfish.
- **Agriculture Innovation winner:** Feather-Lite Mix by Jacey Orthaus of Florence High School.

# ENERGIZING COMMUNITIES

We're led by members like you. Which means we're not out to make money. Instead, we're building communities by listening to your needs. We're shaped by the people we serve.

## REASONS TO LOVE YOUR ELECTRIC CO-OP

Delivering More than Just Electricity

**Brenda Kleinjan**

[editor@sdrea.coop](mailto:editor@sdrea.coop)

From reliable energy to community involvement, there are a lot of reasons why co-op members love their electric cooperatives.

### Co-Ops Are Local, Community-Focused Organizations

Co-ops have a rich history of serving their members and are facing the future with innovative ideas to help their members and grow their local communities.

Local people helping out. From billing clerks to line workers and every job in between, the people working at your local electric cooperative are the ones you'll see in your communities. They are serving on volunteer fire departments and as first responders, serving on school boards and county commissions, as ushers at church and as youth sports coaches.

Sioux Valley Energy employees get final instructions before embarking on their meal delivery routes.



Some cooperatives have launched employee community service days where local communities or organizations benefit from a day of service, whether it be a town clean up, restoring a rural cemetery, delivering meals to shut-ins or helping others in need.

### Keeping Members Informed

Whether it's through this magazine, which reaches members each month or through social media channels like Facebook and Twitter or mobile apps like SmartHub, cooperatives continually strive to inform their member-owners about events and issues that matter. From a quick post or tweet about why the power may have blinked or celebrating the achievements of area youth, co-ops are communicating with their members and connecting them to their community. As storms approach, co-ops offer helpful tips for preparing for inclement weather and how to deal with the aftermath of storms.

### Helping Members Save Money

Co-op demand response and load management programs have helped members save money for decades. And now, with interactive tools like SmartHub, an increasing number of co-op members are accessing information about their home's energy use right from their mobile device or computer. Several co-ops offer energy audits and other ways to reduce energy use.

Appliance rebates, loans for heating and cooling equipment and reduced rates for some energy use

are offered by some co-ops in the state. Check with yours to find out what programs could benefit you.

### Diversifying Energy Resources

Cooperatives have a history of using an all-of-the-above approach to meeting members' energy needs. The first utility-scale wind project in South Dakota was built by co-ops and several co-ops have solar demonstration projects to help members learn about solar grid interconnection and other aspects of the resource.

### Investing in Youth

When it comes to looking to the future, co-ops have the youth in their communities in mind. Each year, co-ops invest more than \$100,000 in scholarships for students pursuing further education at colleges or technical schools. Dozens of students have the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C., for the annual rural electric youth tour, courtesy of their local electric cooperative. Several co-ops in the state send students on the four-day Youth Excursion to North Dakota each summer to explore energy careers and cooperatives. And throughout the school year, Co-ops in the Classroom and other safety demonstrations visit schools across the region to help younger students learn about using electricity wisely and how so be safe around it.



# Sorry, closed for war

The board of directors met on April 20, 1942, for their regular board meeting.

Henry Barnes had been drafted in February and was no longer on the board. Project Superintendent H.H. Hawkins handed in his resignation as of May 16 for the same reason.

The board approved several bills, including to Carl Roseberry in the amount of \$1.50 for moving the safe to the office.

Charles Clinton, president, stated that “in view of recent developments of a local nature and information received from REA, it would be well to consider plans for the project for the duration of the war.”

Upon a motion by John Beckmann, seconded by Wintah Elliot, the following resolution was adopted:



Black Hills Electric Association was shut down in April of 1942 because of World War II. Above, December 7, 1941, “A day that will live in infamy.”

RESOLVED: - That development of the project be discontinued for the duration of the war or until material and labor become available and that H.H. Hawkins be designated to dispose of all supplies and equipment as far as possible with the

exception of the safe, at a price not less than the purchase price paid. The motion carried.

No one knew how long World War II would last but for now, people in the rural Black Hills were still without power.

## The Rural Electrification Act of 1936

*The Congressional Act that made it possible for Black Hills Electric Association to bring electricity to southwestern South Dakota was signed by the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1936.*

The Rural Electrification Act of 1936 provided federal low-interest loans for the installation of electrical distribution systems to serve rural areas of the United States.

The funding was channeled through cooperative electric power companies, most of which still exist today. These member-owned cooperatives purchased power on a wholesale basis and distributed it using their own network of transmission and distribution lines.

At the time the Rural Electrification Act was passed, electricity was commonplace in cities but largely unavailable for farms, ranches, and other rural places. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7037 on May 11, 1935, establishing the Rural Elec-

trification Administration. It was proposed by Representative John E. Rankin and Senator George William Norris. The act was signed into law by Roosevelt in 1936.



President Roosevelt set the stage for the act’s passage when he issued the executive order that created the Rural Electrification Administration. The REA was part of a relief package designed to stimulate an economy still in the grip of the Great Depres-

sion. On May 20, 1936, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act, making the REA’s promise of long-term funding for rural electricity a reality. In particular, the act permitted the president to appoint an administrator for the REA who was authorized and empowered to make loans in states and territories for rural electrification and the furnishing of electric energy to persons in rural areas who [were] not receiving central station service.

In the 1930s, the provision of power to remote areas was not thought to be

economically feasible. A 2,300 volt distribution system was then used in cities. This relatively low voltage could only be carried about four miles before the voltage drop became unacceptable. REA cooperatives used a 6,900 volt distribution network, which could support much longer runs (up to about 40 miles). Despite requiring more expensive transformers at each home, the overall system cost was manageable for the new utilities.

REA crews traveled through the American countryside, bringing teams of electricians along with them. The electricians added wiring to houses and barns to utilize the newly available power provided by the line crews. A standard REA installation in a house consisted of:

- A 60 amp, 230 volt fuse panel, with:
  - A 60 amp range circuit
  - A 20 amp kitchen circuit
  - Two or three 15 amp lighting circuits

A ceiling-mounted light fixture was installed in each room, usually controlled by a single switch mounted near a door. At most, one outlet was installed per room, since plug-connected appliances were expensive and uncommon.

## Winter Safety Tips

Working during winter feels more like survival of the fittest than an everyday challenge. The risks are even tenfold for people who have to work and drive outdoors. Here are some winter safety tips that should keep you safe during this trying season.

**1. Bring out those hands!**—Hold it! Don't remove those gloves or mittens yet. I mean, just think twice before walking outside with your hands in your pockets. Why? Keeping your hands in your pockets increases the risk of you falling or completely losing your balance in case you slip while walking on ice or snow.

**2. Mittens vs. Gloves**—Gloves sure look fashionable but donning mittens can actually save your life. With your fingers touching each other inside mittens, they generate more body heat than when they're inside gloves.

**3. Warm up before shoveling**—Before you get rid of all the snow and ice at your home or workplace, do some stretching exercises first. You can also march in place or walk for a couple of minutes. With your muscles all warm, not only will you work more efficiently, you also reduce the risk of injuring yourself.

**4. Rock salt + Kitty Litter = Safer walkways**—Have some rock salt and kitty litter on hand. Rock salt helps melt the ice on slippery surfaces. Kitty litter may actually give temporary traction.

**5. Tin can + Matches + Candle + Paper Cup + Snow = Drinking water**—Yes, you read the equation right. Before going on the road, you better prepare a tin can, candle, paper cup, and some matches. Should you get stuck in the middle of the road and run short on water, you can always melt some snow with the supplies above as part of your emergency kit.

**6. Report those damaged lines!**—And finally, after a winter storm, immediately report any downed power lines or broken gas lines in your area or workplace.

Call 673-4461 or 1-800-742-0085 to report an outage or downed power lines. Black Hills Electric Cooperative crews are on call 24-hours a day.

## Director Nominating Procedures

BHEC's 75th annual meeting will be Thursday, June 4, at the Ramkota Convention Center II in Rapid City. Three directors will be elected at the meeting—one from the Lawrence, Meade and Pennington Counties geographical area, where incumbent Al Perry is not seeking re-election; one from the Custer/Oglala Lakota Counties geographical area, where incumbent Alan Bishop is seeking re-election; and one from the Fall River County geographical area, where incumbent Dennis Quivey is seeking re-election. The qualifications of a director and nominating procedures, as set forth by Article IV, Sections 3 and 4 of the bylaws, are:

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative who has been employed by this or any other electric cooperative during the previous five years, or who is a close relative of an incumbent Director or of an employee of the Cooperative, or who has been convicted of a felony in any court of law in the United States of America, or who is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative and receiving service therefrom at his or her primary residential abode.

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or electric utility, or a business selling electric energy to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling distributed generation equipment such as wind turbines, solar systems, or fuel cells to, among others, the members of the Cooperative.

Upon establishment of the fact that a nominee for Director lacks eligibility under this Section or as may be provided elsewhere in these Bylaws, it shall be the duty of the Chairman presiding at the meeting at which such a nominee would otherwise be voted upon to disqualify such nominee. Upon the establishment of the fact that any person being considered for, or already holding, a Directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this Section, it shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to withhold such position from such person, or to cause him to be removed therefrom, as the case may be. Nothing contained in this Section shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board of Directors, unless such action is taken with respect to a matter which is affected by the provisions of this Section and in which one or more of the Directors have an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint not less than forty-five days or more than one hundred eighty days before the date of the meeting of the members at which Directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five nor more than eleven members who shall be selected from different sections so as to insure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on such committee. The committee, keeping in mind the principle of geographical representation, shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least thirty days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors which may include a greater number of candidates than are to be elected. Any fifty or more members acting together may make other nominations by petition not more than one hundred twenty days nor less than thirty days prior to the meeting, and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The Secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting or separately, but at least ten days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates, specifying separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations and also the nominations made by petition if any.

Applications are available at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop) or you may pick up an application at the office or ask to have an application mailed to you.

**Applications must be returned by Friday, February 14.**

# Nemo 500 Outhouse Races

NAJA Shrine  
Transportation  
Fund for Kids  
Benefits from  
Outdoor Event

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

**We called it the  
Nemo 500 because  
it sounded good.**

When one thinks of racing, cars, horses or motorcycles likely come to mind. But, in the Black Hills community of Nemo, outhouses – equipped with wheels, skis or both – are the vehicle of choice.

While each outhouse must be equipped with a seat with one hole, there are additional basic requirements in this competition designed to raise funds for the NAJA Shrine Kids Transportation Fund.

First, each outhouse will have a rider. And during the race, that rider will trade places with a teammate.

“There always has to be someone on the throne,” said Ervin “Red” Alspaw, a Shriner with the Oasis of Deadwood and one of the contacts for the race.

The outhouse must be at least five feet tall and the door (if there is one) has to stay open during the race.

The outhouse must have four walls and a roof and the team’s name must be on each of the walls.

“It’s a hoot,” said Alspaw.

Money raised at the event helps Shriners cover the transportation expenses of some 630 children in western South Dakota who seek care at Shriners Hospitals



A team prepares to race their outhouse in the 2017 competition.

nationwide.

“We called it the Nemo 500 because it sounded good,” said Troy Saye, race organizer and owner of the Nemo Guest Ranch where the event is held.

“We stepped it off a few years ago and it’s actually about 970 feet. You start at the restaurant and at midway everyone runs around the outhouse, retrieving a colored roll of toilet paper which must be placed in the correct order on a plunger.

Alliterations, euphemisms and creativity may make for memorable team names, but speed is the name of the game as the fastest team to complete the



Kids compete in the scoop shovel races.

## The Rules

### OUTHOUSE RACE RULES and STRUCTURE

- 1) Outhouse can only be human powered. No electric-, solar- or gas-powered assistance. The outhouse must have four walls, roof, doorway and seat with at least one hole. It may have a door, but the door must remain securely open during the race.
- 2) The outhouse must be a minimum of nine square feet at the base and a maximum overall width not to exceed six feet (including grasping or pushing devices). A minimum height of five feet from the floor to the highest point of the roof.
- 3) Any number and size of wheels or skis may be used.
- 4) Any device for pushing or pulling the outhouse may be used except ropes. All pushing or pulling devices must be secured solid.
- 5) Outhouses may be built from any material but glass and must be structurally sound.
- 6) Each entry must have an outhouse name that is to be displayed on each side of the structure. Sponsors' names may be displayed anywhere on the outside.
- 7) There will be three age divisions. (Age divisions will be determined by average team ages. Add all team members' ages and divide by the number of team members.)
  - Division 1: Ages 12 to 25
  - Division 2: Ages 26 to 45
  - Division 3: Ages 46 and over

### Good to know:

Teams consist of two to five people, one of which must ride inside the outhouse.

Safety gear including helmets are required for all members and ice cleats are recommended.

Outhouse passengers must be 12 years old or older. Handles or seatbelts are required for the outhouse passengers.

Teams' dress is to reflect the theme of their entry.

Teams make a mandatory pit stop at mid race for a fire-drill. Each member must run around the outhouse three times and the rider must switch places with one of the pushers. Each team member will be required to place a color-coded roll of toilet paper on a color-coded plunger in order of color scheme provided at race time. The race will be timed from start to finish, the objective is to get the lowest time to win.



The costumed Sesame Streak team poses with their People's Choice outhouse trophy after the 2016 race.

race is the winner.

Winners in each of the age divisions get an outhouse trophy hand-made by Troy and Willie Saye.

The Sayes created the event after a 2006 visit from Willie's cousin, shortly after they bought the Nemo Guest Ranch.

"He said he had to get home for an outhouse race. We didn't know what it was," said Troy. The couple researched the event and found that several other

states held races. They developed their rules for the Nemo event. Early races were held just for fun or to raise money for different organizations. The race has been a benefit for the NAJA Shrine Kids Transportation Fund for the last eight or nine years.

The creative names don't stop at the race team names. It takes a certain fortitude to dip a spoon into some of the entries in the chili cook-off contest where cooks serve up three gallons of chili with names like "Presidential Poopers Chili" and "Dave's Chunky Pork and Beef Chili."

Kids can compete in the Scoop Shovel Races, but competitors must provide their own scoop shovel.

If you're going, check-in for the three divisions is at 10 a.m. and race time is 1 p.m. Preregister your team by Feb. 1 to receive a T-shirt.

If you have a team but don't have

an outhouse to race in, contact the Nemo Guest Ranch to see if theirs is available.

Advice for first-time attendees? Arrive early, dress warm and be prepared for

a bit of a walk (late-comers have had to park a half-mile away from the event.)

Attendance at the event varies with the weather, Saye said. Crowds range from 1,000 people up to 2,400 people when the race time temperature was 53 degrees.

"You have got to see it to really enjoy it," said Saye.

"When we first started, we never imagined it would take off the way it did," said Saye.

Interested? Visit [nemo500.com](http://nemo500.com) for more information or contact the Nemo Guest Ranch at 605-578-2708.

**When we first started, we never imagined it would take off the way it did.**



Kianna Knutson and Shane Binger left their 2018 wedding reception with a sparkler send off.

# YOUTH TOUR SPARKS

## Participants Make Lifetime Connections

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sirea.coop

The annual Rural Electric Youth Tour is billed as a trip-of-a-lifetime, which it is for the thousands of teenagers who have participated since it began in 1963. But for a certain few, the weeklong trip filled with congressional visits, sight-seeing and co-op educational opportunities was more life altering than they possibly dreamed.

### Kianna and Shane, 2011

Kianna Knutson and Shane Binger participated in the 2011 trip. Kianna, from Philip, S.D., represented West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, S.D., while Shane, from Tulare, S.D., represented Northern Electric Cooperative in Bath, S.D.

During the week of travel, the two would talk some and share experiences. A visit to the Pentagon Memorial was particularly memorable for the two.

“For me, we hit it off right away on the tour,” said Kianna.

“But we went our separate ways. Whenever I’d head west, I’d try to stop in Philip and see her,” said Shane. “We kept in touch until we got to SDSU together.”

They started dating while attending South Dakota State University in Brookings, S.D. Shane graduated in December 2015 and Kianna in May 2016 and the two married in September 2018. They live in Redfield, S.D., and Kianna works in Aberdeen while Shane works in Tulare.

“The Youth Tour was one of my most favorite trips,” said Kianna. “It was a great way to meet people and make friends. It turned out one of them stuck for life.”

A sign at the Bingers’ wedding reception highlights the sparks that started with their 2011 Youth Tour.



For Shane, an additional outcome of the trip was that it sparked an interest in politics.

“It was an opportunity to see congress-people as actual people. That drove me to go back and intern with Sen. John Thune in 2015,” said Shane.

### Riley and Kailee, 2009

Riley Schwader and Kailee Koester attended the 2009 Youth Tour together. Riley, of Winifred, S.D, represented Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell, S.D., while Kailee of Redfield, represented Northern Electric.

They married in June 2014 on the heels of that year’s Youth Tour, which Riley’s sister participated (as did Kianna Knutson’s sister.)

The Schwaders live in Howard where they raise their two sons and where Kailee teaches fourth grade. The family was recently featured in a “ReEnergizing Rural” commercial talking about the Co-ops in the Classroom project.

### Doug and Roberta, 1973

Roberta Johnson, a 4-Her from Parker, S.D., chosen to represent Turner County and Doug Stuebner, a 4-Her from Olivet, S.D., selected to represent Hutchinson County, met on the 1973 Youth Tour as the delegates for Turner-Hutchinson Electric Cooperative (now Southeastern Electric Cooperative), based in Marion, S.D.

“We started dating on Thursday, Oct. 18, 1973, when he asked me to go to the Hobo Week street dance at SDSU,” said Roberta, noting that Doug often wondered how she could remember the date. “I told him it was easy to remember because it was two days before her sister got married.”

Things clicked for the two and they made plans to marry.

“If I hadn’t been the South Dakota Pork Queen, we probably would have been married in December of 1975. But I needed to be single to compete at the national level, so Doug was willing to wait until the national competition was held in March of 1976. When someone else was crowned the national pork queen, Doug and I moved forward with our wedding

## The Youth Tour was one of my most favorite trips.

plans and were married on Father’s Day, June 20, 1976. Even without the title of pork queen, I could still educate others about the nutritional value and versatility of pork when I became involved with the Porkettes.”

The two graduated from SDSU with majors in ag education and home economics education and were preparing to head to Marietta, Minn., when an opportunity to take over his grandparents’ farm came up.

“Entering farming had been a long-range goal, but when the farming opportunity arrived earlier than expected, we accepted. So, once again, Turner-Hutchinson Electric influenced our lives since they provided the electricity for our home and farming operation. We continued farming until June of 2006 when Doug had surgery for brain cancer. Initially, we were told the life expectancy for this type of treatable, but not curable, cancer was 18 months to two years. But by God’s grace and through hundreds of prayers, he has outlived that life expectancy by 11 years,” said Roberta.

The two moved into Menno in 2008 where Roberta continues teaching high school family and consumer sciences and middle school social studies.

### Ethan and Vanessa, 2012

Ethan Ryberg of Buffalo Lake, Minn., was selected to represent McLeod Co-op Power in Glencoe, Minn., on the 2012 Youth Tour, the same year that Vanessa Peterson of Rosholt, S.D., was selected to represent Traverse Electric Cooperative in Wheaton, Minn. The two traveled with the Minnesota Youth Tour delegation that year.

While the two lived three hours apart, they began dating that fall and in 2013, they attended North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D., together, majoring in pharmacy.

After their 2019 graduation, they have settled in the Bemidji area where they both work.

Electric cooperatives in South Dakota and Minnesota are once again taking applications for the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The 2020 participants might not find their future mate, but they will definitely have experiences of a lifetime.



The Schwaders live in Howard where Kailee teaches. They were recently featured in the electric cooperative “ReEnergizing Rural” campaign.

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**December 15-March 31**

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

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**January 24-25**

Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

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**January 31-February 2**

Winterfest, Lead, SD, 605-584-1100

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**January 31-February 9**

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

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**February 8**

8th Annual Polar Bear Chili Cook-off and Minnow Races, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tin City Masonic Lodge, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2365

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**February 9**

Monthly Sunday All-You-Can-Eat Breakfast, 8 a.m. to noon, Senior Center, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2365



**March 14:** 28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Lead, SD, 605-641-4963

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**February 8-9**

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Gun Show, Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 701-361-9215

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**February 10-16**

Frost Fest, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

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**February 15**

Lovers Leap Snowshoe Hike, 1 to 4 p.m., Lovers Leap trailhead, Custer State Park, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

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**February 14**

Snow Ball, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

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**February 15-16**

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Gun Show, Pierre, SD, 701-361-9215

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**February 20-25**

11th Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Various times and locations  
[blackhillfilmfestival.org](http://blackhillfilmfestival.org)

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**February 21**

Hermosa American Legion Auxiliary Mardi Gras Bingo Dinner, 4:30 to 6:45 p.m. meal, bingo at 7 p.m., Legion Hall, Hermosa, SD, 605-255-5977

## Area Meetings

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**February 6**

Oelrichs Area Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Community Hall, Oelrichs, SD, 605-673-4461

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**February 10**

Johnson Siding Area Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Rimrock Community Hall, Johnson Siding, SD, 605-673-4461

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**February 11**

Hermosa Area Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Elementary Cafeteria, Hermosa, SD, 605-673-4461

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**February 17**

Whispering Pines Area Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Fire Hall, Rapid City, SD, 605-673-4461

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**February 21**

Rockerville Area Meeting, 6-7 p.m., Community Center, Rockerville, SD, 605-673-4461

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.