

# Cooperative Connections



*The Annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park is one of many activities of interest for visitors to South Dakota*

**SD Tourism  
continues  
steady pace**

Page 8-9

**Anglers in hot  
pursuit of cold  
fish**

Pages 12-13

## Turning the page

# Chase retiring after 32 years



**Mike Chase**

Manager of Marketing and  
Member Services

***I want to thank the co-op members, directors and employees for making this part of my life so enjoyable and rewarding.***

My but life seems to fly by. When I was a boy growing up on my parents' farm near Batesland, S.D., I did not give much thought to how many years of playing and working I would have before retirement smacked me in the face.

Now, on the downhill side of life, I think back on my years here on earth and wonder where did all that time go?

My young bride, Patti, and I met in high school. I was a junior and she was a freshman, both at Bennett County High School in Martin, S.D. Cruising around town was big at that time and after Christmas dinner, I asked my folks if I could borrow the car to see what was going on around town. This beautiful young woman just happened to have the same idea and was walking downtown from her parents' home. I asked her if she needed a ride. That led to four years of dating before we were married in 1972 while I was a sophomore at the University of South Dakota.

In those days, it was not uncommon for people to marry at a young age. She was 17 and I was 20. What is becoming more and more uncommon, is a marriage that has lasted almost 50 years.

We waited for almost 13 years of marriage before thinking about children. Our three children were all born in the 80s. The oldest, Angela, was born late in 1984, an early Millennial. Our other two, Kristin and Eric, are both definitely Millennials. All have different ideas than their parents, but I am proud of each of them.

I spent 13 years in television after graduating from USD, two years working for Duhamel Broadcasting at their Hay Springs, Neb., station and 11 years in Houston working for 20th Century Fox. My young wife, who had never been away from her family followed me to Vermillion, Hay Springs and Houston, which meant we only saw our families once or twice a year.

After our two daughters were born in Houston, we decided that the city was no place to raise children and we moved back to Martin to be closer to our families and where I got into the electric cooperative world. With another child on the way, Lacreek Electric Association in Martin offered me a job as their member services advisor. Co-ops offer great jobs, usually located in small towns. I enjoyed my seven years at Lacreek and also got to help my dad and uncle with farming, often accompanied by my young son until he fell asleep on my arm in the cab of the tractor. Then his mom and sisters would come by and take him home to run with friends.



Chase with Jerry Woodward, who retired in 2006, during the April 2000 Easter storm.

In 1995, a great opportunity opened at Black Hills Electric Cooperative and I interviewed for the job. While I was at my interview, my family took in Flintstone Village and after the interview, we took the opportunity to tour the Hills.

(Continued on Page 3)

# Black Hills Electric

## Cooperative Connections

(ISSN No. 1531-104X)

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BLACK HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, 25191 Cooperative Way, P.O. Box 792, Custer, S.D. 57730-0792. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Black Hills Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop).

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## Retirement

(Continued from Page 2)

I was very fortunate to get the job at Black Hills Electric as manager of marketing and member services—a job that I held until my retirement 25 years later. My 32 years in the electric co-op world is not monumental but it is an indication that this job was right for me.

I have been blessed with a wonderful wife, three great kids, a super grandson, excellent co-workers and hundreds of great people who I have met over the years. Hopefully, I will have many more years to enjoy my kids and grandson and life on this beautiful earth.

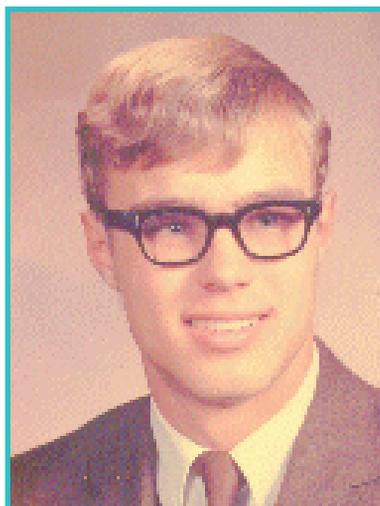
I want to thank the co-op members, directors and employees for helping make this part of my life so enjoyable and rewarding. My replacement will do things differently and probably better than I have, so I leave you knowing that my replacement and all the other great BHEC employees will be here to continue to provide you the best service possible and your directors will continue to watch your dollars closely. You own a great electric cooperative and can be proud of your directors and employees.

Thank you for your friendship and for allowing me to serve you for so many years and I hope to be able to continue those friendships for many, many years to come.



First day on the job at the co-op.

Photo credit: Dan Hutt



Mike's senior picture - class of 1970.

Magnificent  
 Incredible  
 Kind  
 Enchanted

# National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

If you resolved to spend less and save more in 2021, cutting back on a few regular expenses is a good place to start. Sunday, Jan. 10, is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day, so we've rounded up a few tips to help you trim your utility bills without making major lifestyle changes.

- **Cut heating and cooling costs.** We spend a great deal of energy heating our homes in the winter and keeping them cool in the summer, but are we really doing our best to minimize the cost of our comfort? A programmable thermostat can allow you to adjust the temperature when you're out of the house or sleeping. There's no reason to blast the heat when everyone is at work, and it's doubtful you need to sleep with the hot air on high. So program your schedule into your thermostat, and it'll do all the work for you.
- **Watch out for energy draining appliances.** Big appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers consume a lot of energy, so the next time you replace one of these appliances, upgrade to an energy-efficient Energy Star-certified model. These are designed to use much less energy than their older counterparts and often end up paying for themselves in savings over time. Keep these appliances clean and well maintained to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.
- **Pull the plug.** As we continue to be more and more "plugged in," it should come as no surprise that a greater proportion of our energy goes toward keeping our devices charged. To keep costs reasonable, plug electronics into a power strip and turn it off when they're not in use. This cuts off "phantom" usage and can save you a bundle. Some newer power strips even include an automatic shut-off feature.
- **Hit the lights.** As always, turn off the lights when leaving a room. You can also swap out light bulbs to increase your home's energy efficiency. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED versions for an easy and affordable way to save on electricity. Not only do LEDs last significantly longer, they also require much less energy.
- **Start with a simple home assessment.** Interested to know how your home's energy use compares to similar homes? Check out Energy Star's Home Energy Yardstick at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) to learn how much of your home's energy use is related to heating and cooling versus other appliance use, lighting and hot water.

## Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at [www.sdrea.coop](http://www.sdrea.coop). You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Watch Out for Downed Power Lines!"**

**Gracie Richter, 9 years old**

Gracie is a resident of Buffalo, S.D., and is the daughter of Jody Richter. They are members of Grand Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Warm and Cozy Soups

## Tomato-Tortellini Soup

2 - 14 ounce cans reduced-sodium chicken broth  
 1 - 9 ounce package of refrigerated tortellini  
 1 - 8 ounce tub cream  
 cheese spread with chive and onion  
 1 - can tomato soup  
 Fresh chives (optional)

In a medium sauce pan bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini then reduce heat to simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. In a bowl whisk 1/3 cup of hot broth into the cream cheese spread. Whisk until smooth. Pour contents into sauce pan. Stir in tomato soup and heat through. Serve with fresh chives, if desired.

Family Features/Better Homes and Gardens

## Slow Cooker Split Pea Soup

1 lb. dried green split peas (rinsed)  
 1 cup sliced carrots  
 2 stalks celery, diced, plus leaves  
 2 cups chopped onion  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 bay leaf  
 1/4 cup chopped parsley  
 6 cups chicken broth  
 salt and pepper, to taste

Layer ingredients in slow cooker in order given, adding broth last. DO NOT stir ingredients. Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 8-10 hours until peas are very soft.

Gail Lyngstad, Pierre, SD

## Baked Potato Soup

2/3 cup butter  
 2/3 cup flour  
 7 cups milk  
 4 to 6 baked potatoes, peeled and cooled  
 4 green onions chopped  
 6 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled  
 1-1/2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese  
 1 cup sour cream  
 3/4 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Melt butter, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and stir. Add potatoes and onion. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Turn to low heat immediately and add bacon, cheese, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir well. Makes 1 crockpot full.

Terri Halstead, Sioux Falls, SD

## Clam Chowder

4 slices thick bacon cut and fried  
 1 onion  
 1 cup celery  
 1/3 cup flour  
 1 tsp. pepper  
 4 cans 6.5 oz. minced clams (save juice)  
 1 15-oz. can chicken broth  
 2 potatoes  
 2 cups cream  
 1 bay leaf

Cut and fry bacon. Add diced onion and celery and cook about five minutes. Stir in 1/3 cup flour using the drained clam juice until slightly thick. Add 1 teaspoon pepper, one can broth, 4 cans clams, 2 diced potatoes and one bay leaf. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add cream. Enjoy!

Sharon Waltner, Freeman, SD

## My Mother's Tomato Soup

2 cups tomato juice or pureed canned tomatoes  
 1/2 tsp. soda  
 1 qt. milk  
 salt to taste  
 1 tbsp. butter

Combine tomatoes or juice with soda in a saucepan. Let froth up. Add milk, salt and butter. Heat and serve.

Doris Ekberg, Hamill, SD

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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# This Year, Organize Your Energy



**Pat Keegan**

Collaborative Efficiency

**If you plan to live in your home for many years to come, hiring an energy auditor may be the best investment you can make.**

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

**Dear Pat and Brad: Last year brought financial hardships, and with a new year ahead, I'm looking for new ways to save money. I know there are things I can do to save energy at home and lower my monthly bills. Can you share a few ideas on how to start the year off right by saving energy? – Amy**

Dear Amy: You bet! Here are a few simple tips to help you get organized and start an achievable path to saving energy. First, we'll take a look at three important steps when considering energy efficiency projects: information gathering, planning and taking action.

**Start by gathering information.** Begin by reviewing your 2019 energy bills. Knowing how and when you use energy can help you decide how ambitious your plan should be. If you have questions about your past bills or energy use, give your electric co-op a call - they're available to help you understand your energy bills. Your co-op may also offer a free app that can show you exact data about your home energy use.

Next, visit your electric co-op's website to see if they offer additional assistance, like energy improvement rebates, free energy audits or other special rates and programs.

Finally, the most important step is to schedule an energy audit, or conduct an online energy audit. (Remember: your electric co-op may offer free audits.) If you plan to live in your home for many years to come, hiring an energy auditor may be the best investment you can make. An energy auditor can tell you which energy efficiency actions will save you the most money or provide the biggest improvement in comfort. If you're looking for a faster, DIY (socially distanced) method, try an online energy audit like [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)'s Home Energy Yardstick.

**Develop a plan.** Now that you've gathered the information you need, you can develop a plan. It can be simple or more comprehensive. If your priority is cutting energy costs, you can select the measure that will deliver the most savings. Maybe you're already planning to do work on your home, such as roofing or renovating, and you can incorporate energy efficiency strategies into that project. To complete your plan, you'll likely need to check with local contractors or suppliers about costs.

**Take action.** Now that your planning is done, it's time to take action. If you're tackling any major energy efficiency projects that require a contractor, remember to do your research and hire a licensed, reputable professional.

In addition to energy efficiency projects and upgrades, there are other ways you can get organized to save energy:

- Replace filters regularly. A clean filter can improve the performance of your heating and cooling system, and reduce the electricity needed to pump air through your ductwork. Replace the filter now if it's been a while, then set a reminder on your phone, online calendar or paper calendar for the next replacement. Filters should be replaced every month if you're using an inexpensive filter, or every three months if you're using a higher-quality filter. A better filter will do a better job and last longer.
- Program your thermostat. Heating and cooling your home account for the most energy use, so setting your thermostat to match your lifestyle can make a major difference. If you don't have a programmable or smart thermostat, get in the habit of manually adjusting your thermostat throughout the day or setting it to the most energy efficient setting when you're away.
- Label the circuits in your breaker box. It may not reduce your energy use, but it's an easy way to get organized and will save a lot of headaches down the line!

We hope by taking a little time to complete these steps, you'll be well on your way to a more energy efficient 2021!

# Indigenous Front Man Mato Nanji Eager to Get Back on the Road

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Mato Nanji is too gentle of spirit to be compared to a lion looking to leap out of a cage.

But ever since the blues and rock guitarist was blocked from touring by COVID-19 restrictions, he's been positively itching to get back out on the road.

Nanji, the front man for the band Indigenous, was reared on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. And that's where he's been sidelined since the coronavirus disrupted the highly popular Experience Jimi Hendrix tour last spring.

The soulful guitar slinger was in his prime element traveling around the country playing with some of his heroes, including former Hendrix bandmate Billy Cox, David Hidalgo of Los Lobos and Louisiana-born blues legend Buddy Guy. But last spring he returned to southeast South Dakota and has been spending ample time with his wife and collaborator, Leah, and their five children.

One of those children is 20-year-old Evan, who has joined Indigenous on rhythm guitar, along with Nanji's childhood friends Curt Olsen on drums and Justin Cournoyer on bass. They've been composing new songs, working on developing their sound and plan to do some touring of their own after the pandemic subsides.

"It's been great being here and being back home with family," said Nanji, 46. "I've been out playing since I was 18, so it's good to have a break. But I can't wait for the next opportunity to get out on the road. It's in my blood."

Music really is in Nanji's blood. He was inspired to pursue music by his father, who introduced him to the work of artists like Otis Redding, Jimmy Reed and Carlos

Santana. A big source of inspiration was the late Stevie Ray Vaughn and his band Double Trouble.

When on tour with the Experience Hendrix show, Nanji often finds himself sharing the stage with Double Trouble bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris "Whipper" Layton.

"Chris and Tommy are great guys and very talented," Nanji said. "I remember I was about 15 when Stevie Ray came through Sioux Falls, but I didn't get to see him. He inspired thousands of players. My dad brought home the album 'Couldn't Stand the Weather' and said, 'Check this out.' It blew me away. He had such a great feeling and vibe. It's an honor for me to play with members of his band and try to capture that tone. It's very inspiring for me."

Vaughn died in a helicopter crash not long after that Sioux Falls tour stop.

Along with getting Indigenous back into top form and headlining some of the Native American fair and festival events around the country, Nanji said he also has another goal to have the Experience Hendrix tour make a stop in South Dakota next year.

"It's an incredible show and I feel honored to play with such outstanding musicians," he said. "It's a special event and it's something I want to bring to the fans in



Indigenous front man Mato Nanji is eager to get back on tour with his band Indigenous in 2021. Photo courtesy of Experience Hendrix Tour.

South Dakota. I think it's something they'd really enjoy. It's good to come back home and be around people you grew up with."

In the meantime, Nanji will continue composing, collaborating and co-writing with Leah. They grew up together on the Yankton Reservation - which he calls his "base" - and were high school sweethearts. Leah typically comes up with a melody and then Mato fills in with the musical hooks, themes, tempos and riffs.

More than anything, he's grateful to be able to integrate his musical pursuits and the closeness of his family.

"Evan is a great kid. He's talented, and it's a thrill to have him in the band," he said. "Leah is also a great talent and always has new and refreshing ideas. A lot of musicians are into going out to parties after the show. I like going out, playing, and then coming home to my family."



Tourism in South Dakota has remained robust despite the impact of the global pandemic. Photos courtesy of the SD Tourism Department.

# SD TOURISM GOING STRONG

## Tired of Being Shut In: Visitors Flock to South Dakota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Probably the last time a member of the Husted family was worried about going broke, it was back in the 1930s.

Ted and Dorothy Husted had just purchased a small drug store in Wall and were having a hard time getting the business to grow in the middle of a severe drought and the Great Depression.

The business that went on to become known as Wall Drug has been named one of the busiest tourist attractions in the northern part of the country. The prospects of the Husteds going broke have been very slim since the store hit its stride.

That is until last March.

Third-generation owner Rick Husted won't lie: he was downright worried that Wall Drug might bite the dust when COVID-19 prompted lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The entire operation – the stores, the restaurants, the galleries and even the free ice water – came grinding to a stop for 71 days just as the travel season was about to kick into gear.

“I was afraid we might go broke and we might not make it. They're projecting that half of the restaurants out there are going to close down permanently,” Husted said. “We were closed that whole time and had to cut back on our employees because we felt that trying to ‘flatten the curve’ was the right thing to do.”

The business reported losses through the summer, but returned to the black in August due in part to traffic from the Sturgis motorcycle rally. Husted reported that September and October also showed considerable increases over 2019 numbers.

“People just got tired of being shut in and they got in their cars and on their motorcycles and their RVs and came to South Dakota,” he said, noting that even President Trump made his way to Mount Rushmore for a Fourth of July gathering.

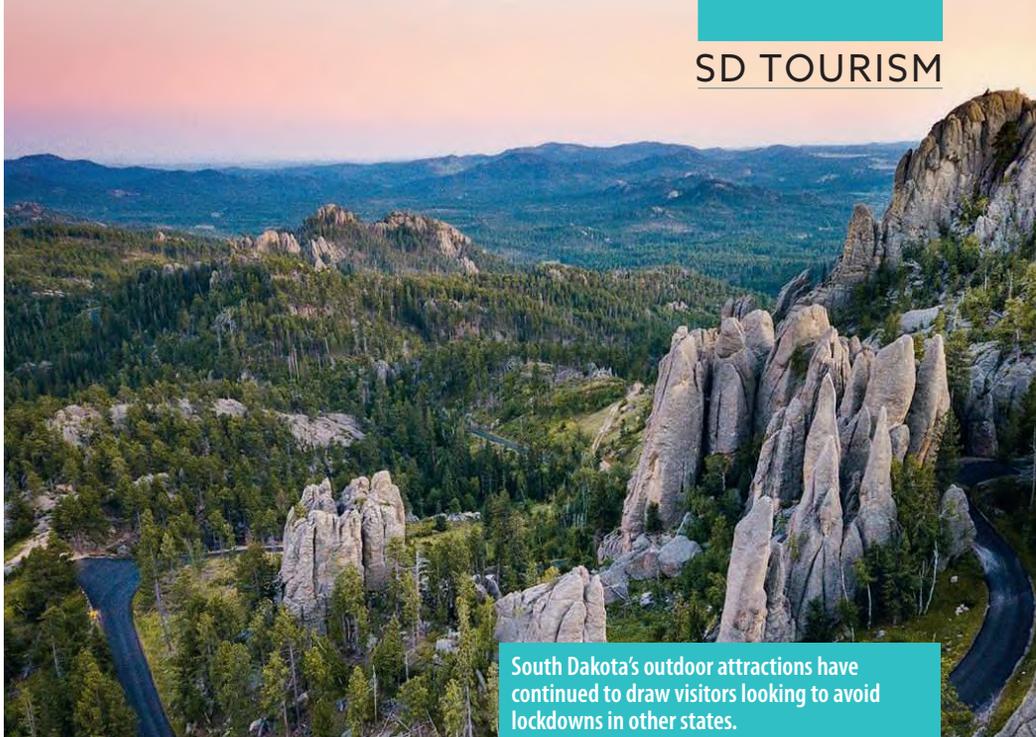


The annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park continues to attract visitors from throughout the country.

## The Thing I Love Most about Living in South Dakota is...

What do you love most about living in South Dakota? Share your thoughts with us (200 words or less) and you could win a \$25 gift card!

Send your response to editor@srea.coop by Jan. 4, and don't forget to include your contact information.



South Dakota's outdoor attractions have continued to draw visitors looking to avoid lockdowns in other states.

Hustead said he took public safety measures such as installing Plexiglas barriers, posting hand-sanitizer stations and requiring that employees wear masks. He said no employees have been known to contract the coronavirus. The bottom line also received a boost from some federal relief money.

Once the financial fog lifted, Hustead called his mother Marjorie – who is in a care facility in Rapid City but is “still involved in the business” – and told her he felt Wall Drug was going to make it through the crisis after all.

“I told her, ‘Mom, I think we’re going to make it.’ And that made her happy,” Hustead said.

He was quick to heap praise on the South Dakota Office of Tourism and leader Jim Hagen.

In assessing the state of tourism in South Dakota, officials paint a picture similar to Hustead. While many annual events have been canceled or postponed to a later date, outdoor events and activities such as Sturgis, walleye fishing, pheasant hunting and the many outdoor tourist attractions have led to a healthy industry performance and outlook.

Hagen's office has also taken the initiative to develop innovative programs to ensure that South Dakota stays top-of-mind when people throughout the region and nation make their travel plans.

The department recently launched an on-line learning program for children and their families to learn more about South Dakota and experience the attractions of the state from the comfort of their homes or in a classroom setting. There are eight virtual pages that allow site visitors to learn more about the icons, wildlife, people and history of the state, each featuring games and activities for the entire family to explore.

“These online lessons provide an opportunity to educate children and adults alike about our state's Great Faces and Great Places,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We hope that they are used as a tool to engage families

and inspire them to explore our great state.”

The department also partnered with Badlands National Park to promote its virtual Junior Ranger program. Once the virtual exploration is complete, kids can become official Badlands National Park Junior Rangers.

Last summer, the department teamed up with tourism officials in Wyoming to develop a program called “Black to Yellow” to entice travelers to explore scenic routes that wind from the Badlands National Park to Wyoming's iconic Yellowstone National Park.

To help travelers plan their trip, the states put together itineraries that explore their most well-known attractions and lesser-known gems. From taking in roadside stops, like Wall Drug and Wyoming's Devils Tower, to exploring the scenery of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Badlands National Park, travelers were encouraged to explore the beauty of the states' wide open spaces, unparalleled wildlife and the freedom of the open road.

State tourism leaders will meet in Pierre on Jan. 20-21 for the 2021 Governor's Conference on Tourism. There will be limited in-person engagement as well as an online attendance option. The theme for this year's meeting is, “Onward!” While 2020 could have been worse, leaders are hoping that travel will continue to be a significant economic driver in the state.



Wall Drug shut down for 71 days last spring but rebounded to have a successful 2020.

# Accepting Scholarship Applications for 2021-2022

Black Hills Electric Cooperative is offering college scholarships to graduating high school seniors. Basin and Rushmore Electric are the Generation and Transmission cooperatives.

### Available scholarships for dependents of BHEC members:

- \$1,000 Black Hills Electric
- \$1,000 Basin Electric
- \$500 Rushmore Electric

### Requirements:

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Has to be a dependent of a BHEC member
- The graduating senior must be planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or technical school.

### The recipient will be chosen based on:

- A combination of SAT or ACT scores
- Overall grade-point average
- Personal statement of career goals
- One page essay
- An adult appraisal

You can find the application online at [www.bhec.coop](http://www.bhec.coop), or you can request an application to be mailed or e-mailed to you. Completed applications and supporting documents must be returned to BHEC before 5 p.m. on Friday, February 5th. The winner will be announced in April.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Michelle Fischer at 800-742-0085 or 605-673-4461.

## Past Winners

Year	Student	Town
2010	Dustin Swanson	Hill City
2010	Sarah Boschee	Rapid City
2011	Austin Wright	Rapid City
2011	Kiefer Haug	Rapid City
2012	William Hendricks	Rapid City
2012	Melissa Bucknall	Rapid City
2013	Samantha Sleep	Spearfish
2013	Jori Broberg	Rapid City
2014	Gina Elmore	Hot Springs
2014	Renaey Dykstra	Rapid City
2015	Erin Broberg	Rapid City
2015	Geena Carlson	Custer
2016	Grace Baumgarten	Rapid City
2016	Leo Dykstra	Rapid City
2017	Dalton Lund	Hermosa
2017	Cooper Timm	Hill City
2018	Bailee McMillin	Hermosa
2018	Aspen Stover	Hot Springs
2019	Joel Broberg	Rapid City
2019	Taleigh Adrian	Hill City

## Kids Corner Safety Poster Winner



Left, Luke Welsh is holding his prize that he received from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Luke is a resident of Oral, S.D., and is the son of Ryan and Rachel Welsh.

**Kids can send their electrical safety drawings to BHEC PO Box 792, Custer, SD, 57730.**

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 or guardians.

## Youth Tour

The 2021 Washington Youth Tour has been canceled due to the COVID pandemic. We are hoping to be able to offer this again in 2022.

Thank you for understanding!

## Capital Credit Retirement

The board approved a return of more than 1.4 million dollars of the Cooperative capital credits during November's board meeting. Your share of that amount showed up in the upper right corner of the bill you received in December. The total is the retirement of all 1994 - 1996 Cooperative capital credits, plus approximately 6% of the total BHEC capital credits.

You may recall an early retirement of our Generation & Transmission capital credits earlier this spring in response to the COVID pandemic. The two allocated capital credit returns total more than 2 million dollars.

In order to continue to receive capital credit retirements, it is important to keep the cooperative updated on any address changes you may have.

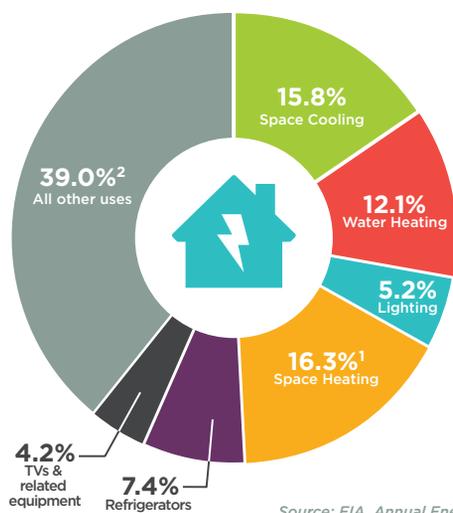
Having ownership of your electric cooperative is another advantage of being a Black Hills Electric Cooperative member.

If you have capital credit questions or need to update your address, please contact us at 605-673-4461 or at [bhec@bhec.coop](mailto:bhec@bhec.coop).



## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020

<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.  
<sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.



## Our office will be closed:

December 24 at noon

December 25

December 31 at noon

January 1

Call 673-4461 or 800-742-0085  
to report an outage.

## Chase's Comedy Corner

Everyone who knows Mike Chase knows that he has a great sense of humor. Please enjoy some of these latest laughs from him.

- I accidentally started down the up escalator and I tripped. I fell for an hour and a half!
- Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- My mind not only wanders, sometimes it leaves completely.
- Age doesn't always bring wisdom; sometimes, age comes alone.
- I bought a box of animal crackers and it said on it, "Do not eat if seal is broken." So I opened the box, and sure enough...



Ice fishing is a pursuit that's enjoyed each winter by South Dakotans of every stripe.

## Guys, Gals and Castles on Ice

### South Dakotans Stay in Hot Pursuit of Cold Fish

**Billy Gibson**

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What happens if you hold an ice fishing tournament and it turns out there's no ice?

You improvise.

That's what organizers of the annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament had to do 10 years ago when Mother Nature refused to cooperate and left them scrambling to come up with a Plan B.

At that time, the tournament was just gaining traction as a main winter attraction for Mobridge. No one dreamed that what started as just a handful of anglers vying to win an ice auger has grown into a field that's capped at 525 two-person teams arriving from 16 different states.

Jeff Jackson is owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge and one of the founders of the tournament marking its 20th anniversary this year. He remembers a bit of panic setting in when hundreds of fishermen were scheduled to descend on Mobridge and the ice on the Missouri River wasn't thick enough to ensure the safety of competitors. Fortunately, the organizing committee had scheduled enough attractions and activities around the one-day tournament that there was plenty for the eager visitors to do.

"We got the word out that the competition was canceled, but 420 out of the 450 teams that were registered showed up anyway," Jackson recalls. "They wanted to come and have a good time."

Those non-angling activities included raffles and prize drawings, an expo featuring all the latest fishing gear, gizmos and gadgets, and according to Jackson, lots of libations.

"People keep coming back year after year," Jackson said, noting that the town's population doubles in the second week of each January. "We've had to limit the number of participants so we have an Ebay auction for three spots that can go as high as \$3,000, and we have another lottery drawing for 26 spots where we usually have up to 800 names."

Instead of a simple ice auger as a grand prize, today the tournament gives away roughly \$225,000 in prizes, including Ice



Hundreds were in attendance at the Dakota Anglers Fishing Expo in Sioux Falls. Photo provided by Dakota Angler.



Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, \$5,000 worth of Scheel's gear, \$3,000 in Runnings gear, clam shacks and more.

The tournament is a boon for Mobridge, bringing an economic impact of \$500,000. According to Jesse Konold, chairman of the town's tourism committee, over the past four years proceeds paid for South Dakota's first climate-controlled indoor fish cleaning station, ADA compliant bathrooms, improvements to the town's rodeo grounds and more than \$100,000 in donations to local non-profits. This year's tournament will be held Jan. 7-9 at the Sherr-Howe Center in Mobridge.

**Not Everyone is Hooked**

Among the state's population of electric cooperative linemen, there are many who look forward to chasing walleye in winter. In Josh Lemburg's case, the term "chasing" walleye would be close to accurate.

Lemburg, operations foreman at Moreau-Grand Electric who lives in Timber Lake, prefers to stay on the move when he fishes on the ice. Eschewing the "ice castle" approach that calls for staking out a spot and staying put for the weekend, Lemburg uses a portable flip-over shack and keeps his auger close at hand.

"Ice castles are fun, but I'm not afraid to move around and dig holes," he said. "If I'm not catching fish in an hour, I'll 'run-and-gun' til I find them."

Even with his "move-and-groove" approach, Lemburg has failed to get his entire family sold on the merits of ice fishing. Even hooking a lunker walleye didn't

convince his son to swear a life-long oath to ice fishing.

Several years ago, Lemburg took his dad and his elementary-age kids, Landon and Kendal, out on the ice. His dad and daughter were in one shack and he and Landon were in the other. After a few hours, just as Landon was getting bored and ready to call it a day, a walleye snatched his bait.

"Landon had his line in the water and I saw a big mark on my Vexilar," Lemburg recalls. "I told him he had a big fish on the line but he just gave me his pole and said he wasn't interested. I kept trying to get him to reel it in, but he kept giving me the pole back. Finally, I got the fish to the surface I looked in the hole and there was nothing but fish. My dad reached down in the water to his armpits and it was a 12-pound walleye."

Brent Reilley is an electrician at Selby-based Cam Wal Electric, which serves the Mobridge area. Over the past 20 years, he has only missed the tournament twice - once when he had to decide between ice fishing and a week in Cancun.

He and his wife, Tandy, have actually both claimed titles at the prestigious Mobridge tournament. One particular year the husband-and-wife duo were on separate teams. Brent was on the first-place team and Tandy and her partner placed second. But Tandy believes she has her



Above, hundreds attend the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year. Below, "ice castles" bring comfort and convenience to the sport.



husband beat: her second-place finish was clinched by reeling in a 25-inch walleye while she was six months pregnant.

The two have always had pretty good luck with the raffles and random prize drawings as well. Tandy won a side-by-side one year and a family friend has won two four-wheelers.

"We just love being outdoors in the winter when there's nothing else to do," Reilley said. "You can get outside and enjoy the fresh air. It gets cold, but it beats sitting inside and it's something great to do with the family. My son is addicted. He'd love it if all he could do is fish all day."



Seasonal Affective Disorder impacts roughly 10 million Americans each year. Experts are anticipating a rise in cases after many months of dealing with COVID-19.

## BEATING SAD

### Here's How to Treat and Beat Seasonal Affective Disorder

Billy Gibson

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

For years, the mental disorder now known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) was given about as much credibility as Big Foot and the Loch Ness monster.

It was common folk knowledge that certain times of the year brought on what was passed off as the “winter blues” or the “winter doldrums.” But through considerable study and extensive research over the course of time, the psychiatric community eventually determined that SAD is not only a real affliction related to clinical depression, but according to the National Institute of Health it impacts an estimated 10 million Americans each year.

Women are more likely to contract the condition than men, and in most cases symptoms can begin appearing in early adulthood. Those with pre-existing mental conditions such as bipolar disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorder and others are also at significantly greater risk.

And while so much attention has been given to the coronavirus since the spring of 2020, SAD is yet another health risk that continues to afflict the U.S. population and especially those residing in northern regions of the country.

Mental health professionals share a concern that those who are susceptible to SAD will experience an even greater struggle in

2021 and have more difficulty managing their symptoms during the winter months after nearly a year of dealing with the forced shutdowns and isolation caused by COVID-19.

Both employees and members of South Dakota’s electric cooperative system are prone to experiencing the impact of SAD as the winter season sets in, according to Mark Patterson, Director of Safety and Loss Control at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) in Pierre.

Patterson and his accredited safety team at SDREA provide a variety of field and workplace training programs for the state’s cooperative network, and they advise everyone to be aware of the signs and symptoms of SAD and to seek treatment if needed.

“These long South Dakota winters can be harsh,” Patterson said. “But in order for our cooperative employees to be at their best

and perform at the top of their game, we need to make sure we’re mindful of our risk of experiencing not only physical ailments that can limit our capabilities but mental ailments as





Tracy Romey: "The good news is that SAD can be treated."

well. That also goes for all of our cooperative members that we serve. If you're feeling the onset of depression and having difficulty coping, don't hesitate to reach out and find the help you need."

The most commonly reported symptoms associated with SAD include significant fatigue, pervasively sad mood, loss of interest in activities, sleeping more hours than usual, difficulty concentrating and eating more starches and sweets.

Experts also point out that the "seasonal" in SAD doesn't necessarily refer to winter, although symptoms occur most commonly in January and February. Clinical depression can also occur in the spring and summer months, a condition known as summer-pattern SAD.

For winter-pattern SAD, a gradual decrease in photoperiod – or daylight - is the primary trigger and the strongest predictor of daily mood swings in individuals. Researchers have identified a direct relationship with the number of cases that rise and fall depending on available sunlight and change in temperature in a particular year. Sunlight prompts the body to produce hormones, which has a direct impact on a person's mood. For instance, inconsistent levels of the neurotransmitter

## Signs and Symptoms of SAD

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Experiencing changes in appetite or weight
- Having problems with sleep
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having low energy
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates

serotonin can alter moods while changes in melatonin levels can interrupt sleep cycles.

Mental health providers are bracing for an anticipated increase in cases of SAD this year due to the pandemic and lockdown. Those with underlying mental conditions who are especially sensitive to stress could face severe challenges.

According to Tracy Romey, a board certified psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner in Hot Springs, those susceptible to SAD should not despair; many forms of treatment are available.

"This is the time of year we start seeing more cases of SAD. Anxiety can be a component of SAD, which negatively impacts everyday functioning," she said. "The good news is that it can be treated and usually improves when spring arrives."

Romey added that treatment is often

tailored to the individual and can be directed toward certain prevailing symptoms.

"There is no specific test for SAD, however, the same treatments prescribed for a major seasonal depressive disorder may be effective for seasonal affective disorder, including light therapy, vitamin D replacement therapy and medications. Other options include spending more time outdoors and exercise. I encourage anyone who is negatively affected by seasonal change to see your mental health provider and receive an evaluation."

Those who find themselves in immediate distress can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline toll-free at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the toll-free TTY number at 1-800-799-4TTY (4889). Also available is the Crisis Text Line (HELLO to 741741) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

## Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."



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

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**November 27-December 27**

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD  
605-574-9000

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**December 4-25**

Fort Sisseton Drive Thru Christmas Light Display, Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD  
605-448-5474

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**December 5-January 1**

Custer State Park Festival of Trees, Custer, SD  
605-255-4515

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**December 5-January 6**

Garden Glow, McCrory Gardens Education & Visitor Center, Evenings From 5-8 p.m., Brookings, SD  
605-688-6707

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**December 16-19**

Lakota Nation Invitational, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

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**December 19**

Cirque Dream Story, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

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**December 24-25**

Black Hills Electric Cooperative office closed the afternoon of Dec. 24 and all of Dec. 25 for Christmas.

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**December 31-January 1**

Black Hills Electric Cooperative office closed the afternoon of Dec. 31 and all of Jan. 1 for New Year's.



Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo, Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 2021

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**January 9**

Dakota Ridgetop Toy Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD  
712-261-0316

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**January 15-17**

BH Rapid Winter Classic Indoor Soccer Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

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**January 16**

Annual Burning Beetle Festival, 5 p.m., Pageant Hill, Custer, SD  
605-673-2244

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**January 18-25**

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD  
605-717-9294

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**January 29-February 6**

Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-335-3861

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**January 29-30**

Pro Snocross Races, Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**January 29-31**

Winterfest, Lead, SD  
605-335-3861

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**February 5-6**

Mardi Gras Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**February 10-13**

Watertown Winter Farm Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD  
605-886-5814

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**February 18-25**

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual,  
605-574-9454

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**February 20-27**

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

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**March 13-14**

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD  
605-859-2280

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.