

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is one of several hidden gems in the park system that are waiting to be discovered

Spotlight on State Parks

Hidden treasures
for you to discover
Pages 8-9

REED Fund fills
community needs
Pages 12-13

Cybersecurity & Protecting Your Information



Jeff Barnes
IT Specialist
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We had a member advisory committee meeting in January, and cybersecurity was heavily discussed. We thought this would be an excellent opportunity to let the rest of the membership know what we have in place to keep your sensitive information safe.

These are some examples of the current practices we've established to help protect member vulnerability.

- We follow the Payment Card Industry (PCI) rules and go through a yearly validation process. We do not store any credit card numbers in our office or on our servers. Credit card numbers are typed into a VeriFone device and encrypted to the credit card processor.
- We have encrypted Social Security Numbers in our database so only specific users with special access can see the whole number. When we run reports, it only displays the last four digits of the SSN.
- All our users do not have administrative rights on their computers. The IT department needs to log in with a specific account to get administrative rights on the computers & servers in our network.
- For the last four years, we have been testing our users with scam-type emails to help train what malicious emails can and will look like. Along with the emails that come twice a week, we also have cybersecurity training in our safety meetings about four times a year.
- We have implemented a Next-Generation antivirus across our network. What makes this next-generation, as the industry calls it, has to do with the additional functions provided rather than just scanning files for viruses. Our

antivirus will scan individual files and will also analyze user behaviors or software behaviors. If something behaves out of the ordinary, it will block this from running and alert IT. When the IT department looks at what was blocked, the antivirus will give a whole story of what happened. It will look at what file was clicked and which processes were launched. This is great for gathering research on what happened and if cleaning is needed. Yes, there can be false positives, but not many.

- We have partnered with our billing software vendor, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), to take advantage of a group buy for the vulnerability scanning and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) software from Rapid 7. This software allows us to monitor what software needs to be updated on a regular basis. It also includes a security operations center managed by Rapid 7. The operation center continually analyzes the information and events going through our network. If you have ever looked at the information that a SIEM provides, you will understand how it is a great benefit to expand on our one-person IT department.
- SmartHub® offers two-factor authentication to help keep your account secure. You may choose what contact method you would like to use after enabling the two-factor authentication on your account.



PASSWORD DOS AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

DO:

- Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

DON'T:

- Don't use common words or numbers like "password" or "1234."
- Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

BLACK HILLS ELECTRIC

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ROBERT MORGAN JR. EARNS JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN TITLE

Robert Morgan Jr., also known as Bob, began working for Black Hills Electric Cooperative in 2014. He started as a Right-Of-Way Technician and earned his Apprentice Lineman title in 2017. Bob worked through the criteria needed to become a Journeyman Lineman by completing a certified lineman apprenticeship program and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. Manager of Operations, Bill Brisk, promoted Morgan at the end of 2021.

Although a Journeyman Lineman is his official title, he brings so much more to the company. We are grateful to have him in our workforce for years to come.



Congratulations, Bob!



SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



REMEMBER:

Not all power strips offer surge protection.
Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.

Four shocking electrical dangers in your home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

1. Appliances. Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

2. Ladders. Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

3. Power tools. Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

4. Electrical outlets and extension cords. Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

WE'VE GOT CO-OP COUNTRY COVERED



We know you love to read your local edition of Cooperative Connections magazine, but you'll get more great content when you visit our video companion, Cooperative Connections Plus. Scan the QR code or search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus and you'll be treating yourself to an intriguing repository of videos on interesting events going on around our state. There's walleye fishing, rodeos, electric vehicles, curling, Christmas at the Capitol, the State Fair and much more. Visit us today!



Call 811 before digging

Amelia Swift Hawk

Amelia Swift Hawk knows that it's wise to call 811 before digging into the ground. Amelia and her parents, Michael and Alyssa Swift Hawk, are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.

SAVORY SEAFOOD

OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:
 1 onion, chopped
 6 T. butter
 2 tsp. minced garlic
 6 cup whole milk
 1 pint (2 cans) oysters - do not drain
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
 1/4 tsp. paprika
 1 tsp. parsley
 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

METHOD

Sauté onion and garlic in butter. Stir in undrained oysters. Cook at medium heat about 5 minutes until oysters curl at the edges. Stir in milk, red pepper flakes, paprika, parsley, and Tabasco sauce. Heat to serving temperature. Serve with oyster crackers.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

GRILLED SALMON

Ingredients:
 1 1/2 lbs. salmon fillet cut into 6 slices
 2 tbsp. olive oil extra virgin
 1 lemon or lime (juice of)
 1 tsp. smoked paprika
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. onion powder
 1 tsp. salt
 Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In a small bowl, add olive oil, lemon juice, smoked paprika, garlic and onion powders, salt, pepper. Whisk to combine. In a shallow flat dish with edges, lay salmon slices and brush with marinade. Marinate from 10 minutes to 24 hours. Longer marinating time, more flavorful salmon. Preheat grill to 450-500. Clean grill and oil grates with oil-soaked paper towel to avoid salmon sticking to the grill. Place salmon on the grill skin side up, close the lid and grill for 4-5 minutes. Check with spatula – if salmon has grill marks and comes off easy, flip it. Cook uncovered for another 3-4 minutes or until thermometer reads 125 degrees for medium rare or 140 for medium. Serve hot or cold on top of salad, mango salsa, guacamole, brown rice or quinoa.
ifoodreal.com

SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Ingredients:
 12 ozs. fully cooked andouille sausage, cut to 1/2-inch slices
 12 ozs. uncooked shrimp (31-40 per lb.), peeled and deveined
 1 med. green pepper, chopped
 1 med. onion, chopped
 2 celery ribs, chopped
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 tsps. Creole or Cajun seasoning (paprika, with cayenne pepper, oregano, dried sweet basil)
 1 can (14-1/2 ozs.) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, drained
 1 cup uncooked "instant" rice
 1 can (8 ozs.) tomato sauce
 1/2 cup chicken broth
 3 green onion sprigs chopped

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Divide mixture among six greased 18x12-inch pieces of heavy-duty foil. Fold foil around mixture and crimp edges to seal, forming packets; place on a baking sheet. Bake until shrimp turn pink and rice is tender, 20-25 minutes. Use caution when opening packets as they will be steamy. Consider adding jalapenos to taste and/or some chopped pineapple to cool the palate. Try serving for breakfast or brunch with sumptuous eggs and biscuits.

Shannon Collins/Taste of Home

Please send your favorite 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 December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Q: My HVAC system is a mystery to me. What can I do to maintain it and keep my home comfortable year-round?

A: For most people, the inner workings of the HVAC system are out of sight, out of mind. The system is ignored until something goes wrong.

Understanding the basics of how a heating and cooling system works will help you create a more efficient, comfortable living space. To get started, let's go over how it works.

If you have a forced air system, you have ducts. A forced air system consists of the equipment that heats or cools the air and the ductwork that moves it around the home. Your furnace, or air handler, has a fan inside that pushes the heated or cooled air through the supply ducts into the rooms. The return ducts bring air back to the furnace to be heated or cooled again and sent back through the home.

This continuous loop of supply and return is susceptible to inefficient practices and leakage.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your system running efficiently and maintain a comfortable living space.

Check your vent dampers.

Make sure the air you paid to heat or cool is freely moving through the home.

I wish vents were made without dampers because the feature creates the misconception they should be closed. Closing registers does not save energy. It can cause your system to work harder, shortening its lifespan and increasing duct leakage.

If you don't do anything else after you read this, do check that your supply register dampers are open and not blocked by furniture or rugs throughout your home. This is easy to do and costs nothing.

Seal your ducts.

If your ductwork travels through an attic, crawl space or other unconditioned - not

heated or cooled - space, it could have holes, cracks or gaps that cause duct leakage. This wastes energy and money by heating or cooling spaces you don't use.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates 20-30 percent of the air moved through duct systems is lost due to duct leakage. You could have the most efficient heating or cooling unit available, but if your ducts leak, you are wasting energy.

In addition to wasted energy, leaky ducts can cause air-quality issues. Leaks in the return ducts can pull air into the ducts from surrounding spaces, through the furnace and then deliver it into the home. This can introduce dust, dirt, insulation particles and other stuff that is in your attic, or walls.

Sealing ducts can be difficult because they are hidden behind the walls, floor and/or ceiling. Attics and crawl spaces can be hard places to work. You can hire a professional to test your duct system for leakage with specialized equipment and seal your ducts.

If you seal ducts yourself, do not use duct tape, which can dry out quickly and loses its adhesion. Seal with metal tape or duct mastic specifically designed for the job.

One relatively easy place to seal is where the duct meets the floor, wall or ceiling. Remove the registers and look for cracks or gaps around the edges. Remember to wear gloves.

Change your filter.

The filter is on the return side of the duct system. It could be in the return registers or in the furnace. Checking your system's filter regularly and replacing it when dirty can help you improve efficiency. Save by buying filters in bulk or set up auto ship for every three months.

In most cases, filters are designed to protect the furnace, not improve air quality. If you are worried about your home's air quality, getting the ducts cleaned and sealed can help. Add an air purifier if you need additional air filtration. Look for Energy Star-rated models.



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group



At more than 115 years old, Tyndall Bakery has been named “Best in South Dakota” and is also mentioned in a book by Webster native Tom Brokaw. Owners Ed and Carol Radack intend to keep the legendary establishment going strong.

Radacks keep Tyndall Bakery tradition alive

Billy Gibson

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The members of Danzig Baptist Church in Tyndall perk up when they see Ed and Carol Radack coming through the doors on Sunday morning.

They're grateful for all the faithful work the Radacks do for the congregation and the community. They appreciate the fact that Carol volunteers her time as a Sunday School teacher and Ed has served as a church trustee and always stays involved.

But they also know that when the Radacks come around, donuts can't be too far away.

For the past 15 years, Ed and Carol have been whipping up irresistible cakes and confections as owners of Tyndall Bakery. The establishment was opened by John Moser in downtown Tyndall in 1905 and has changed hands over the years. But during that time, the bakery has maintained its status as a go-to sweet shop. Two years ago, Taste of Home magazine proclaimed it “Best in South Dakota.”

The Radacks bought the business from Bob and Judy Rueb after Carol's employer, Chicago Rawhide, closed its doors. Looking for something different to do, Carol decided to go from building ball bearings to baking bismarcks. When it soon became clear Carol had her hands full with interminable shifts,

Ed left his job at the Department of Transportation to offer some help and the two have been baking shoulder-to-shoulder ever since.

While they learned the business on the fly, the couple remained committed to one thing: using the recipe that's been handed down for decades. And the regular customers make sure they stick with that plan.

“That's what keeps a lot of the old-timers coming back,” Carol said. “It's a good product, it's always home-made, and we always try to deliver the best service.”

On a recent Saturday morning there was standing room only as customers lined up for the apple fritters, long johns, kolaches, cinnamon twists and bismarcks. Most of them have called ahead to make sure their special orders are filled and they don't miss out on their favorite selections.

One of them was Mike Scheetz, owner of the bowling alley across the street. He got one armload of fresh-baked buns for his business and another armload for himself and his staff.

“They're the best around,” Scheetz said as he grabbed a bag of Bavarians. “They know what I like so they always have it ready for me.”

Scheetz turns to go get set up for local bowling league activities and the Radacks have slight smiles on their faces that seem to say, “Another satisfied customer.”

HIDDEN TREASURES

Despite its legacy as the site of an epic battle over good and evil, Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is a source of family fun for those who want to get away and enjoy the great outdoors. *Photos by SD Tourism.*

The State Park system has seen visitation increase with new programs in place to serve the public

Billy Gibson

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At first blush, Sica Hollow State Park might seem like someplace you'd want to avoid.

The area was named after a Dakota Sioux word used to describe something sinister and features a winding pathway called the Trail of the Spirits. There are maroon-colored bogs, sangria-tinged streams and brown foliage that reminded early tribes of the blood and flesh of their ancestors.

The undulating terrain is said to be the site of an ancient spiritual battle in which the land and the people were overcome by a malevolent force. Local legend has it that the restless souls of the dead manifest themselves as unexplained bursts of fire and light in the night, disturbing sounds of agonized wailing and the ominous beat of war drums in the distance.

Apart from the spooky stories and eerie lore, Sica Hollow turns out to be one of many "hidden gems" in the

State Park system that are found off the beaten paths.

Sica Hollow is located in the northeast corner of the state near Sisseton where you'll find rustic bridges, winding creeks, scenic waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers festooning the eight miles of hiking trails. The Trail of Spirits, which today is a self-guided interpretive foot trail, was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1971. The park also contains the Old River Warren and Coteau des Prairies, which have been named National Natural Landmarks.

With more than 60 facilities in its fold, the State Park system has lots to offer and includes several lesser-known destinations for families to discover such as Sica Hollow, Spirit Mound and Adams Homestead in the eastern part of the state and Shadehill, Rocky Point and Llewellyn Johns out west.

The Shadehill Recreation Area near Lemmon is situated on the shores of Shadehill Reservoir, which is one of western South Dakota's few large lakes.



At Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area, visitors will find a monument to Hugh Glass, a hunter who survived a vicious attack by a grizzly bear in 1823.

There are 85 campsites with seven camping cabins, a group lodge, and facilities for boating, fishing, canoeing, biking, archery and more.

Nearby is the much smaller Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area with just 10 campsites and an opportunity to enjoy

Approximate number of visitors

8,400,000

to South Dakota State Parks in 2021

a quieter and more secluded camping experience. There are points of historical interest close by as many historic figures have traveled through the area, including George Custer’s 1874 Expedition and Hugh Glass. According to first-hand accounts, in 1823 Glass was attacked by a grizzly bear, an event documented in the novel *Lord Grizzly* and recounted in the movie, *The Revenant*.

Nick Harrington, communications manager for Game, Fish and Parks, reports that the system is stronger and more popular than ever. Last year more than 8.4 million visitors passed through the parks, representing a 25 percent increase in visitation over the nine-year average. Custer State Park, the system’s most popular spot, saw a 3 percent increase in attendance with more than 2.3 million visitors.

Seventy-seven percent of visitors rated their camping experience as an A with 43 out of the 48 areas surveyed receiving the top rating.

To keep the momentum moving along, the State Park system has added 15 new facilities from a new Bison Center at Custer State Park to an improved boat ramp at West Whitlock Recreation Area.

And just in time for the spring and summer camping season there is a new and improved way of helping campers navigate the parks and outdoor facilities. Through www.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com, customers can secure a camping reservation or buy an annual park



Sica Hollow is one of the “hidden gems” in the state park system where visitors can commune with nature while learning about local lore.

entrance license while also purchasing hunting and fishing licenses all from the same transaction. A new mobile app provides 360 degree views of the more than 4,000 campsites in the system.

The Department of Tourism has also launched a free mobile pass called South Dakota Great Finds that helps users explore the state’s many attractions, including hidden treasures like Sica Hollow. The pass can be accessed at travelsouthdakota.com, and there is no app to download.

According to Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen, “This mobile experience allows us to better highlight what truly makes up the great state of South Dakota. It showcases rural America, unexpected businesses and parks, and gets people off the beaten path to discover something new.”

Search for “Go Outdoors South Dakota” to find GFP’s official mobile app for iOS and Android.

Top 10 most visited state parks in 2021

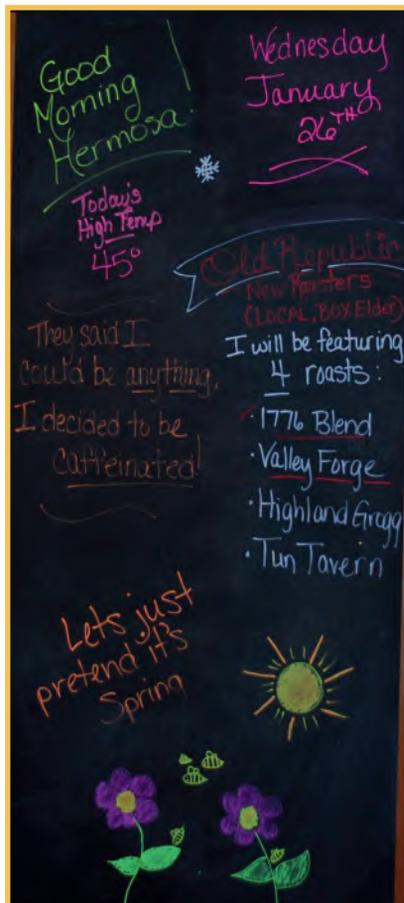
1. Custer State Park
2. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area
3. Spring Creek Recreation Area
4. Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
5. Cow Creek Recreation Area
6. Angostura Recreation Area
7. Roy Lake State Park
8. Farm Island Recreation Area
9. Springfield Recreation Area
10. Newton Hills State Park

Hermosa Coffee House

Valena Baker followed her dream of operating a coffee shop by opening her establishment in the summer of 2021. Valena grew up in Hermosa but eventually moved to South Carolina, where she graduated high school and went to college to become a Respiratory Therapist. She relocated back to the Hermosa area in 2004 after working as a traveling Respiratory Therapist. Valena reunited with a former classmate, Larry, and they wed in 2008. They have since added two daughters to their marriage. Valena said that her daughters are to the age of helping at the coffee shop as time and schedules allow.



Valena has repurposed the majority of the furniture in the coffee house. The table in the coffee nook shown above was her first epoxy project.



Valena has two employees that assist her in making delicious homemade menu items. The coffee shop also opens its facilities for local musicians and has an artist's corner where they can reserve their dates to display their talent and skills.

If you're in the Hermosa area, be sure to stop by and see her! She is located at 13 2nd Street off of Main Street. They are open Mon-Sat from 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

You can view their online menu at www.hermosacoffeehouse.com. They also have a Facebook page for upcoming events and specials.



Bronze sculptor, Jim Green, has this piece of art on display at the coffee house.

**"Every cup counts"
- Valena Baker**





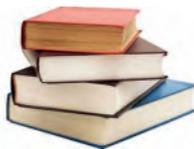
USTER COUNTY LIBRARY: HERMOSA BRANCH

Michelle Fischer
michellef@bhec.coop

I recently sat down with the Custer County Library director, Doris Ann Mertz, to see what the library had to offer. After learning about everything they provide to the public and Custer County residents, I was astonished. Doris Ann informed me that besides having the main library in Custer, they also have a branch in Hermosa that Roberta Phillip directs. The Hermosa branch is located at 234 Main Street #0238. They are open Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 12:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Some of the services and programs they offer are listed on the right of this page. A few services, such as study rooms and story-times, are only available at the main library in Custer. The Summer Reading Program is open to all children of the county, and they may sign up at either branch.

If you're a Custer County resident, you can sign up for a library card at no charge. Bring in proof of your residency to either office and they'll assign you a library card number. After setting up your account, they'll also provide information regarding what they offer, including access to the Black Hills Library Digital Consortium via the Libby or OverDrive apps. You will have access to hundreds of ebooks and audiobooks at your fingertips!



For more information on the Custer County Library, please call 605-673-4803 (Custer) or 605-255-5597 (Hermosa). You may also send an email to cuslib@gwtc.net. Both branches have Facebook pages that you can follow for more information and upcoming events.

Books
E-books & Audiobooks
Videos
Local Newspapers
Magazines
Interlibrary Loans
Printers/Copiers/Scanners
Computers
Free WiFi - 24/7
Meeting Rooms
Study Rooms
Reference Materials
Book Sale
Book Discussions
Story-time
Summer Reading Program
Online Catalog
Test Proctoring



REED FILLS THE NEED

Pictured at right, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power CEO DeeAnne Newville (left), presents a check to the local Community Center and Cougar Club daycare facility in Franklin, MN, through the electric cooperative REED Fund.

Electric cooperative REED Fund helps meet many needs for communities in South Dakota and western Minnesota



Billy Gibson

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Leaders of the Garretson community northeast of Sioux Falls had the vision for a much-needed expansion of the small town's non-profit daycare center. Since cobbling together two older structures in 2019 and taking in more tykes, it was apparent that the current white-hot demand for childcare was going to necessitate yet another expansion.

So they set their jaws, put together a plan and mustered up the will to make it happen for the sake of local families and the greater good of the community.

Now, all they needed was a miracle.

That miracle came in the form of a random conversation that took place between Blue Dragon Academy Board Member Kris Frerk and Sioux Metro Growth Alliance CEO Jesse Fonkert.

Frerk was in full fret mode over a lack of funding for the project, but it turned

out Fonkert had a fail-safe solution.

Through his contacts Angie Neises at East River Electric and Jay Buchholz at Sioux Valley Energy, Fonkert was aware of the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund, or REED Fund. He knew it was a valuable financial resource made available by electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota just for this kind of project.

Bottom line: Blue Dragon Academy will begin work in April with plans to complete the 3,500-sq. ft. project in November. Best of all, nearly 40 more families in and around the town of Garretson will have access to quality child care services.

While Frerk doesn't recall any trumpets blaring or harps playing in the background, she contends that her off-hand discussion with Fonkert was delivered by divine intervention.

"It's a pure miracle," she said. "We had been putting feelers out for funding because we have a big need in this area.

When I got that information from Jesse, it was just like a miracle. We jumped on it, we got accepted by the REED Fund Board and now we're ready to get the work done."

Blue Dragon secured a low-interest REED loan for nearly \$700,000. The non-profit organization is required to match \$239,000. Now Frerk and her crew are heavy on the fund-raising trail and have already received tremendous support from many donors in the community, she said. The Blue Dragon Board hopes to pay the debt off early with plans to hire five or six more workers once the project is complete.

For East River Electric Economic Development Director Eric Fosheim, it was another day at the office. His job is to match the money with the need, and he says many recipients respond with the enthusiasm and gratitude Frerk expresses when they receive funds.

He does fall just short of uttering the "M" word, however.

“It’s extremely satisfying to be in a position to help people solve problems and overcome challenges in their communities,” Fosheim said. “We try to work together with folks to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic impediments and come up with clever ways to get projects across the finish line. This is all made possible through the electric cooperatives and the fact that they take their responsibilities and obligations to their communities very seriously.”

The REED Fund has backed scores of projects and loaned out more than \$100 million since it was established in 1996. Fosheim sees it as the perfect tool for promoting local economic growth, improving infrastructure, enhancing community facilities and contributing to job, business and wealth creation.

Funds have gone to retail and service businesses, industrial parks and office facilities, fire protection projects, manufacturing firms, housing projects, health care facilities and more.

Approximate amount of money
\$100 million
 loaned through the electric cooperative REED Fund

Chris Larson, general manager at Clay-Union Electric in Vermillion, and his board tapped REED funds to support the Wakonda Heritage Manor assisted living facility. They also worked with the business to secure a zero-interest loan through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program.

“It’s truly an honor for us to have this tremendous resource available to help improve the lives of our members and the community at-large,” Larson said.

The real meaning of the REED program came to light when he and the board visited the place.

“We viewed the improvements they’d made, and heard from the people there about how it enhanced their quality of life. It really warms your heart to know you’re part of a co-op system that can have a positive impact on families and businesses. It just shows how much of a difference we can make when we all work together, pool our resources and get things done.”

East River cooperatives serving western Minnesota have also participated in the program. As with the Garretson community, parents in Franklin, MN, also had a need for a daycare center.



The Cougar Cub Child Care Center was launched with the help of REED funds obtained through Renville-Sibley Co-op Power after two of the town’s three daycare facilities closed.

Renville-Sibley CEO DeeAnne Neville said, “We were happy to help fill the gap. Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles. It’s an example of the city, school and economic development coming together for the good of the people in our rural communities.”

For more information about the REED Loan program, visit www.reedfund.coop.

CUTTING CARBON, SAVING CASH



Owned by H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake, this Tesla Model 3 has been used during the legislative session to educate lawmakers about the emergence of EV technology and beneficial electrification. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cooperatives promote the concept of beneficial electrification to help members cut carbon and save money

Billy Gibson

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Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

When that short snappy algorithm started appearing on the sides of shampoo bottles back in the 1950s, some said it simply encouraged people to practice good hygiene and do a more thorough job of scrubbing their tresses right down to the scalp.

More cynical observers took it as a thinly-veiled scam devised by some devious marketing firm to sell more shampoo and spin bathers into an endless cycle of washing their hair, breaking only long enough to go out and purchase more Prell.

Rare is the business that encourages customers to use less of its product. But that's the very approach that lies at the

heart of electric cooperatives and their guiding principles. Electric co-ops exist exclusively to deliver the power their members need, but they also go above and beyond by working to make sure their members don't pay a penny more than the cost of providing the service while helping them to better manage their consumption.

That basic formula has remained the same since the rural electric cooperative movement began back in the 1930s, even as new methods of generating, distributing and using electricity have evolved over the decades. Every step along the way, co-ops have stood at the forefront to help members make the best and most efficient use of whatever new development comes down the pike.

Enter the emergence of a concept

called beneficial electrification. This is a relatively new term that describes the pursuit of solutions that allow cooperatives to meet rising service demands while helping their consumers save money over time, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, fostering a more resilient electrical grid, protecting the environment and improving the quality of life for all.

Across the country, electric cooperatives are launching and embracing beneficial electrification programs and blazing pathways that lead to providing more value to members, their local communities and the environment.

Some of what falls under the heading "beneficial electrification" has been adopted by co-ops and their consumers for years, such as replacing older and inefficient gas furnaces and water heaters with more efficient electric heat pumps. More recently, cooperatives have implemented load management programs that enable the co-op to control devices in the home and help balance power supply and demand, resulting in more efficient consumption and potential savings for

the member. Or as it's known in more colloquial terms, a "double back scratch."

And even more recently, cooperatives have accelerated their adoption of renewable power and have gotten involved in programs to incentivize the use of electric vehicles and help build out a system of fast-charging stations across the state, region and nation.

All of these types of initiatives are called "beneficial" because they help members save money and also help protect the environment.

In his role as Manager of Beneficial Electrification at Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, Ben Pierson often works with members to give them what they've indicated through surveys that they want: more information about how they can use technology to reduce their energy consumption while saving money.

"As we get out in the community, we hear from our members all the time, especially as we discuss the benefit of EVs in particular," Pierson said. "We try to make it easier to integrate this emissions-reducing and money-saving technology by offering incentives for installing home chargers and a time-of-use plan that allows members to charge their cars overnight at a much lower cost."

Pierson said some members are taking advantage of the home-charger incentive even though they aren't yet among the nearly 500 South Dakotans who own an EV.

"They're just excited that we've made these programs available," he said. "They realize EVs are going to be a substantial part of our transportation future and they want to be ready to ease the transition for them and their families."

Robert Raker is manager of communications and public relations at West River Electric and works out of the co-op's Rapid City office. Raker sees a fertile field for promoting beneficial electrification as the Rapid City area experiences accelerated growth. Like Sioux Valley Energy and other co-ops around the state, West River Electric offers load management programs, rate structures and incentives

SAVE MONEY

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.



Did you know...
Replacing your HVAC system with an electric heat pump can **save you nearly \$1,000 per year** on your heating and cooling bills.¹



Did you know...
The average cost of **charging an electric car** is equivalent to **\$1.20 per gallon of gasoline**.²



Did you know...
Owning an electric vehicle can **save you over \$800** in annual maintenance.³

for electric appliances like water heaters and heat pumps.

He uses the cooperative's Nissan Leaf EV to demonstrate the advantages of this emerging technology and is also part of the effort to leverage government and private funds to build a reliable EV charging network.

As neighborhoods grow and businesses expand in his area, Raker collaborates with developers to promote beneficial electrification. He also sees value in encouraging residential members to make more beneficial use of electricity by converting lawn implements from gas to electric.

"We've seen a real shift in mentality toward carbon-free growth," he said. "Our job is to educate and inform our members about how they can continue to integrate technology into their everyday lives on any scale."

As spring and summer are just around the corner, he said, one way most residential members can help in the goal to curb carbon emissions is to convert lawn and garden equipment from gasoline to

electric/battery-powered.

Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products.

There are several electric lawn mower brands that operate without a cord, unlike the first generation of electric mowers. Typically priced in the \$200-\$500 range, electric mowers are powerful, low maintenance, and work well for lawns that are a half-acre or less.

Electric trimmers and leaf blowers are also catching up to their gas-powered competitors in performance and reliability.

Raker encourages members to do their research before investing in electric lawn equipment, citing consumerreports.org as a trust source of information.

He and Pierson agree that beneficial electrification is the way of the future and there's no better time for members to engage in this environmentally-friendly approach than the present.



March 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD

Photo by Travel South Dakota

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5
Making God Laugh
 Grand Opera House, Pierre,
 SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
The Music of John Williams
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 3-5
Pro Snocross Races
 Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
 Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826

MARCH 4-5, 10-13
The 39 Steps
 Orpheum Theater Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 4-6
Home & Garden Show
 Brown County Fairgrounds,
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-2055

MARCH 5
I Hate Winter Cornhole
Tournament
 Scherr Howe Arena,
 Mobridge, SD, www.mobridge.org/Corn-Hole-Tournament

MARCH 5
Mountain West® Whiskey
Festival
 Rushmore Hotel, Rapid City, SD,
www.mountainwestwhiskeyfestival.com

MARCH 5
Road 2 Destruction Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 5-8
2022 Summit League Men's
and Women's Basketball
Championships
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.thesummitleague.org/tickets

MARCH 10
Singing in the Rain: Dinner
& A Movie
 Goss Opera House, Watertown,
 SD, 605-753-0200

MARCH 10
TobyMac Hits Deep Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 10-13
Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.siouxfalls.sportshow.com

MARCH 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
& Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
 SD, www.28below.com

MARCH 12-13
Hill City's Antique and
Railroad Show & Sale
 440 Main Street, Hill City, SD,
 605-574-2821 or 605-877-6629

MARCH 12, 26
Live On Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch, Hill
 City, SD, 605-574-2810

MARCH 14
Harlem Globetrotters
 The Monument, Rapid City,
 SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 18-19
St. Patrick's Day Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

MARCH 19
St. Patrick's Day Celebration
 Various Locations, Watertown,
 SD, 605-886-5814

MARCH 26
Annual Ag Day
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

APRIL 1
BHEC Rochford Area Meeting
 Rochford Community Hall,
 Rochford, SD, meal will be
 served from 5:30-6:30 p.m.,
 605-673-4461

APRIL 23
Hermosa Relief Fund
Casserole Cook-Off & Bake
Sale
 Beef Building at the Hermosa
 Fairgrounds, Hermosa, SD,
 605-255-5977

JUNE 4
Sportsman's Bash: Banquet,
Silent Auction & Raffle
 Weston County Event Center,
 Newcastle, WY, 605-749-2205

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