

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Building Communities

REED Fund Helps
Support Local Growth
Pages 8-9

DERs and the
Electrical Grid
Pages 12-13

Dave Eide, right, presents a check to Jason Foster, left, fire chief of Garden City Fire Department. Through the REED fund, the department secured a loan to renovate the fire hall.

Proposed Changes to Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws



DeeAnne Norris
CEO
320-826-2593 or
800-826-2593

Same Article as last month with updated information in **RED**.

As mentioned in last month's article by your Board Chair, Roger Manthei, updating the address for our new facility provided an opportunity for the board and leadership team to propose broader changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

These recommendations align with Minnesota Statute 308, which governs cooperative operations. A full marked-up version of the proposed changes is available on our website at www.rscpa.coop/articles-incorporation-and-bylaws. These changes will also be discussed at the 2025 Member Informational Meetings during the first week of March and presented alongside ballots for director elections.

One additional change to language for clarity purposes was suggested by the leadership team and approved by the Board of Directors for inclusion at the December 19, 2024, board meeting. The Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association Board of Directors and leadership team support these proposed revisions.

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact me directly. You are welcome to visit the office, call us at (800-826-2593), or email dnorris@rscpa.coop.

Summary of Proposed Changes as of **December 2024:**

Address and Language Updates

- Update the Cooperative's address to reflect the new facility location.
- Revise language for gender inclusivity, clarity, spelling, and consistency without altering the original intent of the Articles or Bylaws.
- **Added clarity to the capital credit language by including "discount method (if any)" when describing capital credit retirements.**

Notice:

There will not be a January 2025 board meeting.
The February board meeting will be held on Tuesday,
February 25 at 8 a.m.

Directors and Officers

- Allow the Board of Directors to remove a board member or officer for cause, with due process.
- Permit exceptions to meeting attendance rules by majority board vote.
- Increase educational requirements for serving as an officer on the board.

Annual Meeting Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather

- Notify members promptly.
- The Board will decide at the next monthly meeting whether to reschedule within the year or combine business with the following year's meeting.
- Voting for directors and other matters will proceed via mail or electronic means, with a minimum 10-day extension for submitting votes.
- Results will be published via the Association website, newsletter, special mailings, or other electronic means.

Bad Debt Recovery from Capital Credits

- Permit the use of unretired capital credit allocations to address bad debts.
- Apply the same discounted rate used for Estate Retirements when making adjustments.
- Include a "capital credit write-off" policy in Board Policy to ensure alignment with financial practices and accounting standards.

Arbitration

- Disputes unrelated to payment for electricity or services must be resolved through binding arbitration.
- For disputes over \$100,000, there will be three arbitrators; for disputes under \$100,000, one arbitrator will suffice.
- Arbitration will occur near Danube, Minnesota, per Minnesota's Uniform Arbitration Act (Chapter 572B).
- Costs of arbitration will be shared equally.
- All disputes must be arbitrated individually, not as part of a class action.
- Members agree to these arbitration terms by virtue of their membership, and this agreement survives membership withdrawal or termination.

Stay tuned to upcoming newsletters for more information about the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the member informational meetings, and the annual meeting.

Thank you for your continued engagement in our cooperative!

December Board Meeting Highlights

The December board meeting was held on Thursday, December 19 at 9 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Amy Ervin, and Carren Frank.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the November 26 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of November
- Safety Report for December
- Capital Credits to Estates
- Schedule A – Standard Pricing Guide

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Capital Credits Transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:

- o High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through November (unaudited)
- o Organization activities
- o East River update
- o Basin Electric update
- o NRECA update
- o Mid-West Electric Consumers Association update
- o MREA update
- o Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
- o Accounts Receivable
- o Christmas Open House
- o Member Informational Meeting Schedule
- o ESST/Time Off Procedure

Please contact the Renville-Sibley office if you would like more information regarding the board meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 27, 2025

Renville-Sibley's 87th Annual Meeting will be held on March 27, 2025 at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. More annual meeting information will be provided in upcoming newsletters.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

Board of Directors

Roger Manthei – Chair
 Whitey Hinderman – Vice Chair
 Wayland Zaske – Secretary/Treasurer
 Jeff Boersma
 Gary Eekhoff
 Vicky Firl
 Alan Neyers
 Gary Peterson
 Helen Ruebel

Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Alex – Line Superintendent
 Brian Athmann – Journeyman Lineman
 Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief
 Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman
 Brad Braulick – Crew Chief
 Nick Bruns – Technology Manager
 Anthony Carruth – Journeyman Lineman
 Amy Ervin – Executive Admin and HR
 Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman
 Carren Frank – Cooperative Support Specialist
 DeeAnne Norris – CEO
 Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman
 Marc Snyder – Cooperative Analyst
 Jill Woods – Member Services Professional

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Web site: www.rscpa.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Fire Safety

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths.

Minimize Your Risks

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

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

- Be alert; if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or stovetop
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food
- When simmering, baking or roasting, check the food regularly, remain in the kitchen while cooking and use a timer
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop

Heating is the second leading cause of home fires.

Follow these tips:

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

Other top causes of fire include smoking, electrical problems and candles. To minimize risks:

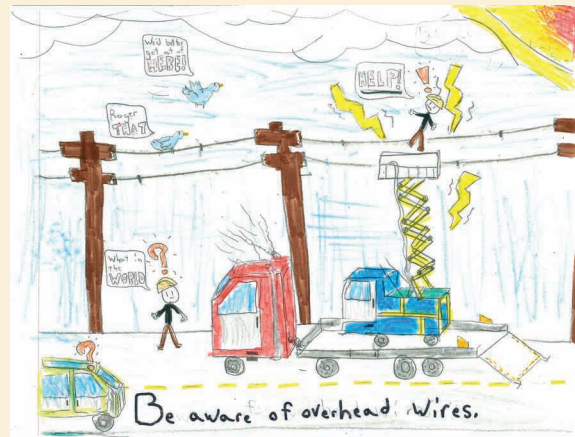
- Institute a "no smoking" policy in the house
- Check all cords and replace any that are frayed or have bare wires
- Switch to flameless candles
- Keep matches and lighters high and out of children's reach in a locked cabinet

Working Smoke Alarms Are a Must

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

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas on the ceiling or high on the wall
- Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms
- Use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for people who are hard of hearing or deaf
- Test smoke alarms monthly
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector annually
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old

Source: National Safety Council



"Be aware of overhead wires."

Vance Claeys, Age 11

Vance Claeys cautions readers to be careful when working around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Vance! Vance's parents are Jake and Bridget Claeys, members of Lyon-Lincoln Electric.

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.

SOUP

Sensation

BROCCOLI CHEESE SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1 large pkg. frozen broccoli
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 tbsps. margarine
- 10 oz. package corn
- 1/4 cup chopped carrots
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Cook the above and add
 3 cans cream of potato soup
 3 cups milk
 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
 Stir until melted

LaVonne Schmidt
 Sioux Falls, S.D.

NORWEGIAN FRUIT SOUP

Ingredients:

- Bring 1/2 gallon water to a slow boil.
- Add 1 pkg. of sweetened dried cherries, banana chips, apricots, prunes, 2 apples (all cut into pieces)
(Optional to use any dried fruit you wish)
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup regular raisins
- 2 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 cup sugar (you can use Splenda)

Method

Boil slowly for one hour add 3 tbsps. tapioca and a large pkg. of cherry jello.
 Refrigerate and serve with whip cream.

Kari Reder
 Warner, S.D.

CABBAGE SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1-2 tbsps. vegetable oil
- 1 pkg. (14 oz.) smoked sausage, sliced 1/4 in. thick
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 small green cabbage, cored and shredded (about 8 cups)
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 1 can (14 1/2 oz.) petite diced tomatoes
- 1 1/2 tsps. salt
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 4 cups chicken stock or broth
- 1 can (15 1/2 oz.) white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp. white wine vinegar

Method

Heat oil and cook sausage, until browned. Remove from skillet. Add onion and tomato paste; cook and stir until onions are slightly softened and tomato paste has darkened. Add cabbage and carrots to stockpot. Cook, stirring frequently, about 30 minutes or until cabbage has softened and begins to caramelize. Stir in tomatoes, salt and spices. Cook 10 minutes longer or until cabbage is very soft. Return sausage to pot. Stir in stock and beans. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in vinegar. Serve hot, sprinkled with freshly grated Parmesan cheese, if desired.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



Utility scams in this age of AI: How to spot and avoid fraud

Someone calls claiming to be from your utility company. They say your service will be cut off if you don't pay them immediately. Real utility companies don't do this. But scammers want to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they're telling you. And scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to craft frauds that are difficult for consumers to detect. Learn how to protect yourself.

Beware of these common scam tactics

- Disconnection threats: Scammers claim your service will be cut off without immediate payment.
- Caller ID spoofing: Fraudsters use software to make their calls appear legitimate.
- Overpayment claims: They may say you've overpaid and ask for personal or banking information to issue a refund.
- Smishing: Scammers send fake text messages that seem to come from your utility company.
- Phishing attempts: Beware of emails that look like bills; always verify the sender's email before clicking links.

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call your utility company using the customer service phone number on their website.

Watch for the following red flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings and suspicious email addresses.

AI use enhances utility scams

By leveraging AI-powered techniques, utility scammers can create sophisticated and convincing frauds that are hard for consumers to recognize and avoid.

- AI helps scammers craft convincing emails that appear to be from legitimate utility companies and include the use of company colors and logos.

- Scammers use AI to create realistic-looking utility company websites that are nearly indistinguishable from legitimate ones.
- AI technology can clone the voices of utility company representatives, making phone scams convincing.
- AI analyzes victims' online presence and social media to create highly personalized spam related to your utility services.
- Scammers create geographically targeted online ads that appear when users search for keywords related to their energy bills.
- Scammers use AI to launch large-scale utility scam campaigns quickly and efficiently.

According to Kathy Stokes, AARP Director of Fraud Prevention Programs, "the ability of AI to improve and scale scam tactics is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution for fraud criminals."

Protect yourself

- Take your time: Don't rush into payments or action.
- Verify any communication by calling your utility company directly using the number on your bill.
- Never share personal information. Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification.

If you suspect a scam, report it to your utility company and the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud).

Remember, legitimate utilities will provide multiple notices before disconnection and will not pressure you for immediate payment. If you are in doubt, let your utility company know so they can take proactive measures to both protect you and others from becoming victims.

Learn more at: 



Renville-Sibley Co-op's rebates and incentives can save you money.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power 2025 Rebates and Incentives

Non Commercial Electric Heat Rebates:

(replacement incentive offered after 10 years)

- \$800 Geothermal Heat Pump
- \$800 Air-to-Air Heat Pump
- \$300 Ductless Air Source Heat Pump

Electric heating systems must meet the DOE manufacturing standard for HSPF efficiency. DOE standard in 2025 is 8.8. Ductless system must be new, under 2 tons, electrical ductless equipment and meet the DOE manufacturing standard for HSPF efficiency. Contact the office for commercial, industrial or agricultural rebate information.

Special Discount Rates:

Separately metered electric heat is only 6.5 cents/kWh! Contact the office for details. – There is a \$4.00 per month charge for all discount meters.

Electric Water Heater Rebates:

(replacement incentive offered after 10 years)

- \$6/gallon – Marathon® Lifetime Warranty Units
- \$100 bonus rebate for new home or fossil fuel conversion
- \$6.50 monthly credit for controlled electric water heater

Renville-Sibley has 100-gallon grid enabled water heaters available. Please call the office for more details on this program.

Nonresidential Efficient Lighting Replacement Program:

Renville-Sibley offers a rebate of \$.20/watt saved for the replacement of inefficient lighting systems in nonresidential installation. The maximum rebate amount is \$1,000 per member per calendar year and a maximum of up to 50 percent of the total project cost. The minimum rebate is \$50.

Energy Star® Rebates:

- \$100 – Refrigerator *(requires proof of disposal of existing unit)*
- \$200 – Central Air-Conditioner
- \$50 – Dishwasher
- \$50 – Clothes Washer
- \$50 – Clothes Dryer
- \$100 – Freezer
- \$25 – Dehumidifier
- \$25 – Room Air-Conditioner
- \$5 – LED Light Bulb *(bulb must be a minimum of 8 watts, maximum of 20 bulbs per location)*
- \$35 – Disposal rebate for refrigerator or freezer currently in service *(requires proof of disposal)*

(ENERGY STAR® Rebates are capped annually; contact the office to verify status of program.)



All rebate forms can be found at www.rscpa.coop
For more information, please contact us at 800-826-2593 or 320-826-2593.



Pulse of Life Kids Center in Vermillion, S.D.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

REED Fund Helps Support Local Growth

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Small towns and rural communities are the backbone of electric cooperatives, with many co-op members relying on their small towns for shopping, childcare, entertainment and other basic needs and services.

That’s why co-ops are working to help keep – and expand – services and job opportunities in small towns using the co-ops’ Rural Electric Economic Development Fund, or REED.

REED is a non-profit organization launched by the electric cooperatives in 1996 to finance community-focused projects across small towns in South Dakota and Western Minnesota where affordable financing can be harder to secure.

REED has multiple sources of funding, but one of the main sources of funding over the years has been the United States Department of Agriculture. REED has utilized both the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) and the Intermediary Relending Program (IRP), which together have amounted to more than \$30 million.

Through the REDLG program, REED

can fund eligible projects at a 0% interest rate. Through the IRP program, REED applies for low-interest loans and then re-lends the money at a rate slightly higher than the USDA rate – but still less than traditional lending sources. This adds money to the fund and perpetuates it for future projects.

Since the fund’s inception, it’s been used to support more than 400 community-focused projects.

East River Electric Business Development Director Mike Jaspers says it’s in co-ops’ best interests to make rural living just as feasible as living in a larger city.

“It comes back to our principle of commitment to community,” Jaspers explained. “REED ensures our membership has their vital needs met, and they can enjoy the amenities of life in a rural setting when they’d otherwise have to go to a larger city to access some of those services.”

Eric Fosheim, East River Electric’s economic development director in charge of the REED fund, said the \$130 million lent by REED has impacted more than 10,000 jobs and amounted to over \$1 billion of economic impact throughout

South Dakota and Western Minnesota.

“Our \$1 million investments help spur \$10 million projects, which means for every \$1 REED invests into a project, it roughly has a \$9 or \$10 impact,” he explained.

As a supplemental lender, REED won’t finance a project alone; organizations still must secure funding from other sources. However, REED’s low interest rates and community focus can be just what a project needs to catalyze it over the finish line.

As members of the REED fund, co-ops can impact economic development projects while letting REED take on the financial risk.

“The co-ops aren’t on the hook and aren’t guaranteeing the loans here,” Fosheim explained. “REED is doing that.”

Pulse of Life Kids Center – Vermillion, S.D.

Pastors Glenn and Angela Pulse had a vision and a calling. Pulse of Life Foursquare Church, which they hoped to start on Vermillion’s Main Street inside an old medical clinic, had the ability to serve a greater need in the community, where the wait lists for childcare sometimes exceeded three months. They had the faith — they just needed some resources.

The church council worked with First Bank & Trust to secure a loan to create the Pulse of Life Kids Center, but the bank couldn’t lend them the entire amount they needed.

“New daycare centers have a high rate

of failure, so we couldn't qualify for all of the money that we needed through bank loans," Angela explained. "Instead of saying no, the bank manager suggested we go about it in a different way. That's how the conversation about the REED fund came up."

Clay-Union Electric Manager Chris Larson said supporting the Pulses, who are members of the co-op, made sense for Vermillion, where challenges from workforce shortages and the lack of childcare options are prevalent.

"It fills a need in our community," Larson said.

Fosheim agrees.

"Workforce challenges have really been an issue in recent years and one way we try to help with that is by investing in daycares," he said. "Daycares don't always look that good on paper from a financial standpoint, so a lot of these organizations have a hard time getting adequate financing."

With the REED fund's \$245,000 loan, the Pulses' vision finally took shape and the Kids Center opened in 2023. Today, the center offers faith-based daycare with a capacity for 43 of the community's children.

"It's encouraging because it puts more options on the table to make these new things possible," Angela said. "There's no way we could have done this without the REED fund."

Fire Station – Garden City, S.D.

In Garden City, a small community northwest of Watertown, a dilapidated fire hall sat rotting into its own footprint.

"It was just in a state of disrepair," said Scott Campbell, treasurer at the Garden City Fire Department. "The walls were pushing out and we had to put plastic over the doors. It was cramped and old. The truck was parked over a basement area, and being heavy and full of water it caused some concern."

Options were narrowing; Garden City would have to act fast or lose their fire station and rely on surrounding communities during an emergency.

Codington-Clark Electric Director



Nursing home expansion in Philip, S.D.

Russel Foster, who also volunteers for the fire hall, approached his co-op's manager, Dave Eide, in 2022 about using REED to breathe new life into Garden City's fire hall.

Eide agreed and helped with the application process, championing the fire hall as a vital need for Garden City, the co-op and co-op members.

"Everybody needs fire protection," Eide explained.

Through REED, the fire hall secured a \$230,000 loan. The new hall features a community room, which Scott said filled a desperate need.

"We had no place to vote, no place for birthday parties," Campbell said. "Township meetings were in houses at kitchen tables."

For Eide, the REED fund is just another example of what co-ops are supposed to do – serve communities.

"It's an extension of what co-ops are in the first place," he said. "We sell power to members and that's one way we help and serve our communities. The REED fund is just another extension of that."

Elder Care – Philip, S.D.

In rural Philip, limited options for elder care had some long-time locals facing tough decisions.

"Our nursing home for a lot of years was not big enough," said Cindy Pfeifle, business manager at Philip Health Services. "Members of our community were having to leave the area when they needed nursing home care."

After applying for a REED loan in 2022 through West Central Electric and securing funding from other community sources, Philip Health Systems renovated and expanded the nursing home, increasing occupancy from 30 beds to 42 beds.

West Central Electric CEO Jeff Birkeland said access to the REED fund is essential for rural areas without much population growth.

"We need to keep our people from moving away and keep our businesses local," Birkeland said. "The best way to do that is by giving them access to very low-interest financing. Saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest costs makes projects much more feasible."

Pfeifle says the community support was essential to initiate the project and applauds REED for helping bring opportunities back to small towns.

"It sends a message of support and cooperation and that they understand how important it is to keep services in rural areas for people who live here," Pfeifle said.

The nursing home project was the first in West Central Electric's territory to use the REED fund, but Birkeland hopes many more projects are to come.

"We are a cooperative, so job number one is to take care of our members and do everything we can to help our communities," Birkeland continued. "If somebody comes to you or you see a need in our communities, we're all in."

Are You Interested in a New Adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is beginning to plan for the 87th Annual meeting of the membership that will be held on March 27, 2025 at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a 3-year term.

The First District, consisting of the townships of Cornish, Severance and Moltke in Sibley County; the townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County; and the townships of Cairo, Wellington, Martinsburg, Camp, Bandon and Palmyra in Renville County is represented by Alan Neyers, Whitey Hinderman and Vicky Firlle. Whitey Hinderman's term will expire in 2025.

The Second District, consisting of the townships of Honner and Delhi in Redwood County; and the townships of Beaver Falls, Flora, Henryville, Birch Cooley, Norfolk, Melville, Bird Island and Kingman in Renville County is represented by Helen Ruebel, Wayland Zasko and Jeff Boersma. Wayland Zasko's term will expire in 2025.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County; Rheiderland in Chippewa County the townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County is represented by Gary Eekhoff, Gary Peterson and Roger Manthei. Gary Eekhoff's term will expire in 2025.

As stated in the Renville-Sibley by-laws, the following is the Qualifications and Tenure for the position of Director:

Each director shall be a member

of the Cooperative and shall be elected by the members within their respective district at the annual meeting of the members for a term of three years. No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative who is not a bona fide resident in the area served by the Cooperative, or who is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or space heating/cooling appliances, fixtures, or supplies to the members. When a membership is held jointly by two or more persons, including husband and wife, only one of such joint tenants may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither one shall be eligible to become a director, unless all shall meet the qualifications herein set forth.

Director qualifications required for service to the cooperative shall include:

- A. Must be an individual and must be at least 18 years of age.
- B. Must be competent and able to execute a contract.
- C. Must not have been convicted of a felony or gross misdemeanor during the preceding 5 years prior to becoming a director for the Cooperative or during the period while serving as a director.
- D. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- E. Must make a reasonable

effort to become and remain knowledgeable about special issues regarding electric cooperatives by attending training, workshops and seminars.

- F. Must attend at least three-fourths (3/4) of all monthly scheduled board meetings during any twelve (12) month period.

Upon becoming a candidate for and/or to remain a Director, an individual must complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure form, approved by the Board of Directors. All Directors and/or Director candidates must comply with or meet the following conflict of interest qualifications:

- A. Shall not be a close relative of an existing Director, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative other than an existing Director who will cease being a Director upon the candidate assuming office;
- B. Within 5 years immediately prior to becoming a Director, shall not have been a Cooperative Officer, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative or any subsidiary or affiliated company;
- C. Shall not be employed by, materially affiliated with, nor share a material financial interest with any current Director;
- D. Shall not be engaged in any business, nor employed by, nor materially affiliated with, nor have a material financial interest in any individual or entity that:

1. Is regularly, directly, and substantially competing with the Cooperative or any other entity that the Cooperative controls or in which the Cooperative owns a majority interest (Cooperative Subsidiary).
 2. Is regularly selling goods and services to the Cooperative or the Cooperative Subsidiary.
 3. Possesses a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or the Cooperative subsidiary.
- E. A former Director is ineligible for employment by the Cooperative for 5 years following the end of the tenure as a Director.

As a Director, the member agrees to:

- Abide by, promote and uphold the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, both of which can be found on our website, and Policies of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.
- Attend regular and special Board meetings of the Cooperative.
- Attend, when appointed, committee meetings of the Cooperative.

If anyone should decide to seek candidacy for the board of directors, there are many rewards to be enjoyed when elected. A director has the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership quality and increase their knowledge within the cooperative business environment and the electric industry. As a director, this person could play a significant role in the future development of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

A director also has a very important responsibility which is to uphold and abide by the bylaws of the cooperative.

Directors are to act as the trustees for the assets of the cooperative and are assigned the duties of formulating, approving and reviewing the policies that provide guidelines for the cooperative.

The board is responsible for sending representatives to the affiliated association meetings that often include voting requirements. They include East River Electric Power Cooperative, Minnesota Rural Electric Association, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, National Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, CoBank, Cooperative Network and the National Rural Electric Association.

Directors attend seminars and meetings of several organizations to learn about the industry. Directors are asked to lobby and remain informed on legislative issues that could impact this industry and/or the cooperative way of doing business. The Board meets monthly and reviews financial reports, work plans, annual audits, planning documents and evaluates the cooperative operations while approving budgets and purchases.

Most of all, a director should be available to visit with their constituents and have a genuine spirit of helping others at all times.

Board meetings are typically held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in December, January and February and beginning at 8:00 a.m. the rest of the year. Board meetings will be held in person or via Zoom. The estimated time needed to be committed annually is approximately 30 days which includes monthly meetings and committee assignments. Directors are compensated per diem for their time as well as all personal expenses.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Renville-Sibley Board of Directors, contact the Renville-Sibley office at 1-800-826-2593 before January 6th for further information.

FOR SALE:

Grass fed, grass finished beef. Burger-Individual cuts-Quarters-Halves when available. Call for pricing.

Dave Pastoors
Olivia, MN 56277
320-522-4851

Wood Pile - Various Lengths
Jerome Jahnke
Redwood Falls, MN 56283
507-640-1092

NOTICE

The Renville-Sibley office will be closed on the following holiday: February 17th in observance of Presidents' Day.

OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

Date: 11-14-24
Time off: 9:46 AM
Time on: 11:21 AM
Substation: Henryville
Cause: Other Prearranged

Date: 11-21-24
Time off: 9:00 AM
Time on: 11:18 PM
Substation: Troy
Cause: Other Prearranged

Please contact Renville-Sibley's office for more details about these power outages.



The Waxdahl's solar array and hog farm, east of Flandreau. *Submitted Photo*

DISTRIBUTED ENERGY

Understanding the Impact of DERs to the Electrical Grid

Frank Turner
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Farming has always been a way of life for fourth-generation producers Matt Waxdahl and his brother, Ben. Growing up just outside of Flandreau, the brothers spent their childhood lending a hand on their grandfather's and father's farms.

Over time, Matt and Ben started their own operation. As the market evolved, so did the brothers. In 2009, they expanded into hog farming, building their first barn. Their success led to the addition of two more barns, the most recent constructed in 2022.

According to Matt, raising hogs comes with one major benefit: temperature-controlled barns.

"It's all under one roof, and it doesn't matter if it's 100 degrees outside or -20, it's always T-shirt weather," said Matt.

However, keeping their hogs on a permanent tropical vacation requires a significant amount of energy. During the summers, industrial fans and a stout ventilation system keep the barn cool, while powerful heaters maintain a comfortable environment in the biting South Dakota winters.

Two years ago, the brothers tackled this energy-intensive challenge by installing a 30-kW solar array. With guidance from Sioux Valley Energy, their local electric cooperative, they determined the project would financially benefit their operation due to availability of tax credits and grant funding.

"We saw that the majority of our power usage was always during the day," Matt explained. "We did some number crunching, and it penciled out."

Distributed Energy Resources

The Waxdahl brothers' decision to invest in a solar array reflects how farmers and ranchers across the state are utilizing Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) like solar panels and on-site wind turbines. While some producers use solar panels to power remote water pumps, others invest in larger systems like solar arrays to offset the energy demands of their farms.

According to Ben Pierson, energy services manager at East River Electric, DERs are not common across the state. However, Pierson noted there are situations where DERs make sense: in remote areas where connecting to the electrical grid is too costly, for businesses or individuals looking to leverage tax credits and grant funds, and

for individuals who want to produce their own energy as a personal or environmental choice.

“The most successful applications of DERs that I’ve seen have been for agricultural operations like hog and dairy farms, where the producer has been able to secure both grant funding and tax incentives,” said Pierson. “It makes sense economically because they are using most their energy during the day when solar is producing.”

Even in the best-case scenarios, DERs still face challenges. Without existing tax breaks and grant funds, the energy savings from Waxdahls’ solar array would not have justified the expense. “It wouldn’t be economically efficient at all without the tax credits and grant funding,” Matt said.

The array has also not been as efficient as the Waxdahls had hoped. While the panel installers projected a return on investment within seven to 10 years, the reality after two years of operation suggests it may take closer to 12 to 15 years for the panels to pay for themselves.

Despite the challenges, Matt considers his solar array a successful addition to his hog operation. “If I had another barn the same size, I would make the same decision to add a solar array,” he said.

The Electrical Grid

While DERs offer renewable energy options at the local level, South Dakota’s electrical grid already incorporates significant contributions from renewable energy sources at a wholesale price.

In fact, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a generation and transmission cooperative serving South Dakota’s electric cooperatives, began purchasing energy from the Wild Springs Solar Project in 2024. Located near New Underwood, the 128-megawatt facility is the largest solar farm in the state. Basin Electric is set to purchase 114 megawatts of the project’s output, marking its first step into utility-scale solar generation.

The benefits of this project are already underway, said Pierson.

“Building a large-scale solar array is much more economically feasible than

a smaller-scale solar array,” said Pierson. “It lets us implement renewable energy into the portfolio in a cost-effective way.”

According to Pierson, power providers are continually working to implement renewable energy where it makes sense while providing reliable energy at an affordable price.

Connecting to the Grid

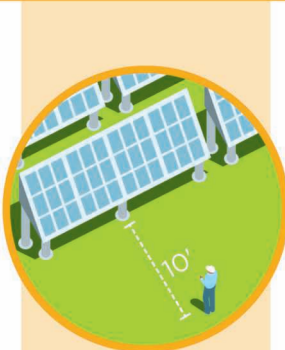
When considering the addition of DERs such as solar panels or an on-site wind turbine, Pierson encouraged members to contact their local electric cooperative to ensure the system is properly sized and safely connected.

When implementing a DER, there are often safety requirements in place to protect both the DER owner and the grid operators.

“Especially if you are talking to a third-party vendor, please reach out to your local utility to discuss the pros and cons – and realities – of implementing DERs,” said Pierson. “Utilities can offer unbiased information regarding the expected output and proper sizing of a DER.”

SAFETY NEAR SOLAR

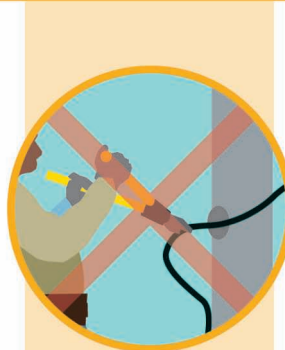
Like any other source of electricity, solar panels can pose potential hazards. Keep these safety tips in mind when you’re near solar panels.



Stay at least 10 feet away from the installation.



Never walk on solar panels.



Never cut any wiring to the solar panels.



Never touch broken or damaged solar panels.

Scholar of the Month

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, congratulates Caele LeGare on being selected as the December Scholar of the Month. Caele, currently a senior at RCW, was nominated because he is a responsible, mature, and hard-working person. He is an excellent student-athlete and strives to do his best on the basketball court and in the classroom. Two of Caele's best attributes are his ability to problem solve and communicate. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Caele LeGare as the December Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Month!



WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month RSCPA member did not find their member number in the newsletter. The value of the energy credit will be increased to \$30. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 3rd of February, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2025 to please contact the office as soon as possible. In order to complete these projects on time, material may need to be ordered well in advance as often there is extended lead time to get the appropriate material. In addition, crew time will be scheduled in the order projects and materials are received.

OPERATION ROUND UP

Since the inception of the Operation Round Up program in June 2019, Renville-Sibley's membership and employees have made an impact on our local communities through their participation. Renville-Sibley has collected a total of \$57,792.27 in contributions. To date, with your generosity, we've given \$48,800.00 back to 46 organizations.

Applications for donations can be found at rscpa.coop/operation-round. Contact the office at 320-826-2593 for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Art Nyquist on being selected as the winner of the \$50 prize energy credit at our Holiday Open House! Thank you to all who came to our Open House. We look forward to celebrating with you again next year!

Comparative Report

	Current YTD	One Year Ago YTD	10 Years Ago YTD
Average # of Consumers	1,881	1,879	1,914
kWhs purchased	21,162,391	18,852,635	21,308,326
Cost of purchased power	\$1,382,306.09	\$1,183,246.64	\$1,153,551.41

FREE Want Ad Service

Members can submit ads for the following categories: Giveaway, For Sale, For Rent, and Wanted. Ads should be or are limited to no more than 15 words and must be received by the first of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Renville-Sibley reserves the right to edit content or exclude ads due to space restrictions. Ads will be run one time only unless resubmitted. Please complete the following information and mail it to the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Ad to be placed (limit of 15 words per ad)

Type of ad: Giveaway For Sale For Rent Wanted

Scholarships to be Awarded

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association will be offering \$6,000 in scholarship money to students in this region. The scholarships are for the 2025 – 2026 school year. 994900

Renville-Sibley is allocated a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric to be awarded at the discretion of the cooperative. Another \$1,000 scholarship is from Renville-Sibley.

A committee of Renville-Sibley Board members, as well as an employee of the cooperative, will select the recipients of the \$1,000 Basin Scholarship and the \$1,000 Renville-Sibley Scholarship. These scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, the personal statement of career goals and the written recommendation by a third party. Additional consideration will be given to applicants interested in a position related to the electric industry for the Renville-Sibley scholarship.

The remaining four \$1,000 scholarships are distributed from uncashed capital credit checks and are awarded by a random drawing at the annual meeting from the remaining completed applications.

All scholarship applicants must be U.S. citizens and a dependent of a member of Renville-Sibley Cooperative. They must be a high school senior who plans to enroll as a full-time student in an undergraduate

course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school. Applications will be accepted until February 13, 2025. Winners will be announced to the public at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting on March 27, 2025.

Renville-Sibley participates with other Minnesota electric cooperatives in sponsoring the continuation of the Jay York Scholarship. Mr. York was a Lake Wilson farmer who dedicated his life to the rural electric program and to education in rural Minnesota. He was the first Minnesotan to serve as president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Scholarships are available each year from this program and are selected by random drawing. Each participating cooperative may submit one candidate's name for the drawing. The amount of this scholarship is determined based on the number of cooperatives that participate in the program. Over the past 20 years, Renville-Sibley has awarded 13 Jay York scholarships.

Only one completed application is required for an applicant to be considered a candidate for any of the available scholarships. Incomplete applications will be excluded. For more information and a scholarship application form, contact Renville-Sibley at 1-800-826-2593 or 826-2593. Application forms are also available at our website www.rscpa.coop.

Mission Statement

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association will provide safe, efficient, reliable electric energy and services to enhance the quality of rural living.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Member Informational Meetings

Each year, Renville-Sibley holds Member Informational Meetings throughout the service area. These meetings are held at various days and times with the hope that if one day or time doesn't work for a member, another day or time might. All members are encouraged to attend these meetings to learn more about Renville-Sibley and the electric industry. This year, the schedule is as follows:

March 1, 2025 @ 9:30 a.m. – Saturday – Danube, RSCPA Boardroom

March 3, 2025 @ 9:30 a.m. – Monday – Fairfax Community Center

March 4, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m. – Tuesday – Redwood Community Center

March 6, 2025 @ 1:30 p.m. – Thursday – Sacred Heart Community Center

A light snack will be provided at each of the meetings. We look forward to seeing you at the Member Informational Meetings in March.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a Blackstone electric grill!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



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.

FEB. 1
James River Gobblers Wild Turkey Banquet
5 p.m.
Highland Conference Center
Mitchell, SD
605-999-3208

FEB. 2
Hot Dish Competition Lake County Museum Fundraiser
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
St. Thomas School Gym
Madison, SD
605-256-5308

FEB. 8
Polar Bear Chili Cook-Off
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Main Street
Hill City, SD

FEB. 8
Dad & Daughter Dance
6-8 p.m.
Joy Ranch
Florence, SD
www.joyranchofsd.com

FEB. 8
ALL Ability Skate Day
Disability Awareness & Accessibility Committee
1-3 p.m.
Main Street Square
Rapid City, SD
605-390-4434

FEB. 14-17
11th Annual Frost Fest
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Brookings, SD
605-692-7444

FEB. 15
Sioux Empire On Tap
Sioux Falls Convention Center
Tickets available online
www.siouxempireontap.com

FEB. 22
Knights of Columbus Ice Fishing Derby
Waubay Lake
Registration 9-10 a.m.
605-881-5075

FEB. 22
Bellator Titans Charter Casino Night Fundraiser
6-11 p.m.
316 2nd St.
Aberdeen, SD

FEB. 28-MARCH 1
Mardi Gras Weekend
8 p.m. Fri.-10 p.m. Sat.
Main Street
Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

MARCH 8-9
Philip Area Annual Gun Show
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
American Legion Hall
Philip, SD
605-859-2135

MARCH 14-15
Badlands Quilter Weekend Getaway
Fri. 5 p.m.
Sat. 8 a.m.
Community Center
Wall, SD
605-685-5718

APRIL 4-5
Annual Schmeckfest
German Heritage Celebration
748 S Main St
Freeman, SD
605-925-4237

APRIL 11-12
Junkin' Market Days Spring Market
Fri. 4-7 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$5 Admission
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
Sioux Falls, SD
www.junkinmarketdays.com

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