



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

RENVILLE-SIBLEY
JUNE 2026 VOL. 27 NO. 2

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



River Power Renewed

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The Fort Randall Dam is retrofitted
with new generating units.
Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

www.ksrenew.com

2026 Rate Increase: A Message from the Board



**Whitey
Hinderman**
Board Chair

At Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA), we are committed to providing you with reliable electricity and being transparent stewards of your cooperative's resources. As we look ahead to May 2026, the Board of Directors has carefully evaluated the financial requirements to meet our mortgage covenants while keeping rates as affordable as possible.

To ensure we can continue meeting our operational needs and cover the rising costs of wholesale electricity, a rate adjustment will go into effect in May 2026. You will see this increase reflected on the electric bills you receive in June 2026.

The Wholesale Power Connection: Basin and East River

The energy that powers your homes, farms, and businesses is generated and transmitted to us through two other cooperatives you own: Basin Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Cooperative. These organizations are vital to our operations. The cost of the power they provide is our single largest expense.

To provide transparency into how your money is spent, we look at every dollar collected from our members. Currently, just over 72 cents of every dollar you pay goes directly to our wholesale power providers to cover the cost of the electricity itself.

We have received wholesale power cost increases for three consecutive years, and another significant increase is forecasted for 2027. Although we held member rates steady in 2025, we will need to pass along a portion of the nearly 20 percent increase in wholesale power costs received over the past two years.

Where Your Dollar Goes

Beyond the 72 cents for wholesale power, the remainder of your dollar is carefully allocated to keep our local grid safe and efficient:

- 16.5¢: Local Operating Expense.
- 6.3¢: Depreciation.
- 4.6¢: Interest.
- 0.2¢: Margins.

2026 Rate Summary

At member informational meetings and at our annual meeting we announced up to a 10 percent overall average rate increase to members beginning in May of 2026. The board took action at their April board meeting on an overall average rate increase of 7.66 percent. The following adjustments, in addition to utilizing deferred revenue, are necessary to meet our obligations to our wholesale power cooperatives.

Residential Impact

- Monthly Service Charges:
 - o General Service: Increasing from \$48 to \$54.
 - o Small 3 Phase: Increasing from \$98 to \$104.
 - o Program Monthly Meter: Increasing from \$4 to \$5.
- Energy Charges:
 - o General Service Single Phase/Small 3 Phase: Increasing from 12.02¢ to 12.5¢ per kWh.
 - o Electric Heat: Increasing from 6.5¢ to 7.5¢ per kWh.
 - o Controlled AC & Grain Drying: Increasing from 9¢ to 10¢ per kWh.

Commercial Impact

- Peak Demand Charges:
 - o Small Demand & Energy/Large 3 Phase: Increasing from \$13.50 to \$14.00 per kW.
- Commercial Energy Charges:
 - o Off Peak Irrigation: Increasing from 6.3¢ to 6.7¢ per kWh.
 - o Large 5/7: Increasing from 4.4¢ to 5.2¢ per kWh.

- o Small 5/7: Increasing from 6.3¢ to 7.0¢ per kWh.
- o Small Demand & Energy: Increasing from 6.3¢ to 7.0¢ per kWh.
- o Large 3 Phase: Increasing from 5.9¢ to 6.6¢ per kWh.

Our Continued Commitment to you, our members

Decisions regarding rate increases are never easy, but they are essential for the long-term stability of your cooperative. Thank you for your continued support as we power our community together.

Single-Phase General Service Rate	
Monthly Customer Charge	
Previous	New
\$48 / month	\$54 / month
12.02 cents / kWh	12.5 cents / kWh

Small 3-Phase Rate	
Monthly Customer Charge	
Previous	New
\$98 / month	\$104 / month
12.02 cents / kWh	12.5 cents / kWh

Electric Heat, Controlled AC, and Controlled Grain Drying		
	Previous	New
Heat Energy	6.5 cents / kWh	7.5 cents / kWh
Controlled AC and Controlled Grain Drying	9.0 cents / kWh	10.0 cents / kWh
Program Monthly Meter	\$4.00 / month	\$5.00 / month

Commercial Rates Energy Increase		
Peak Demand Charges:		
	Previous	New
Small Demand & Energy/Large 3 Phase	\$13.50 / kW	\$14.00 / kW
Commercial Energy Charges:		
Off Peak Irrigation:	6.3 cents / kWh	6.7 cents / kWh
Large 5/7:	4.4 cents / kWh	5.2 cents / kWh
Small 5/7:	6.3 cents / kWh	7.0 cents / kWh
Small Demand & Energy:	6.3 cents / kWh	7.0 cents / kWh
Large 3 Phase:	5.9 cents / kWh	6.6 cents / kWh

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

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 Roger Manthei – Vice Chair
 Vicky Firlé – Secretary/Treasurer
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 Alan Neyers
 Gary Peterson
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 Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman
 Brad Braulick – Crew Chief
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 Anthony Carruth – Journeyman Lineman
 Amy Ervin – Executive Admin and HR
 Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman
 Carren Frank – Finance Specialist
 DeeAnne Norris – CEO
 Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman
 Marc Snyder – Cooperative Analyst
 Bryon Stilley – Operations Manager
 Jill Woods – Member Services Professional

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Web site: www.rscpa.coop

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NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH: PLUG INTO WHAT MATTERS

Safety is a word that shows up in mission statements, meetings and job sites across every industry. At its best, it reflects preparation, awareness and responsibility.

That's where the difference shows.

Electricity doesn't leave room for shortcuts. It demands attention, consistency and respect every day. For your local cooperative, that responsibility is built into the work.

The job goes beyond delivering power. It protects the people who build and maintain the system and the communities who rely on it. Reliable and affordable electricity matters, and so does making sure every crew member goes home at the end of the day.

That outcome takes focus, repetition and a culture where doing things right matters more than doing them fast.

Built on the Right Habits

Linework is demanding and, at times, dangerous. It's also highly structured. Crews follow national standards designed for utility work. Protective equipment isn't optional. Procedures aren't suggestions.

Before a job begins, it's planned. Crews walk through the work, identify risks and make sure everyone is aligned. Communication stays constant.

What happens after the job matters just as much. Near-misses are tracked, reviewed and discussed to understand what happened and prevent it from happening again. Over time, those lessons build a stronger, more prepared workforce.

Everyone is expected to look out for each other. If something doesn't look right, it gets said. That accountability turns policies into habits.

Contractors working alongside cooperative crews are held to those same expectations.

Extending Beyond the Jobsite

The work doesn't stop at the edge of a right-of-way. Because crews live in the communities they serve, that responsibility carries beyond the job.

Your local cooperative shares electrical safety information through schools, events and outreach. It's simple advice that helps prevent accidents.

June is National Safety Month. Most electrical injuries are preventable, and small decisions matter.

Leave electrical work to qualified professionals. Don't overload outlets. Stay clear of downed power lines and report them. If something looks off, whether it's a damaged transformer or an open substation, say something.

Take the Extra Moment

Electricity is easy to take for granted. But the systems behind it, and the people maintaining them, depend on careful decisions.

When a task involves electricity, take a moment. Look twice. Think it through.

That pause can make all the difference.



"Be safe, lineman!"

Renn Ronning, age 8

Renn urges the line crew to stay safe on the job. Thank you for sharing your picture, Renn! Renn's parents are Justin and Katrina Ronning from Elk Point, S.D.

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.

Easy & Delicious FAMILY MEALS

TACO SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. hamburger, cooked and drained
- 1 28 oz. can red or kidney beans
- 1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes
- 1 14 oz. can corn
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning

Method

Put all ingredients into bean pot. Microwave for 20 minutes. Serve with shredded cheese and corn chips. Do not drain liquids.

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

QUICK PORK CHOP DINNER

Ingredients:

- 4 pork chops
- 2 tps. prepared mustard
- 2 tbsps. flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt or Mrs. Dash
- Dash of pepper
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1 10 oz. can of chicken rice soup or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup water
- Add onion, potatoes, carrots, garlic powder to taste

Method

Spread mustard over pork chops and sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper. Brown thoroughly in fat or oil in pressure cooker. Add chicken soup and water. Add vegetables and cover. Set control at 10 and cook 12 minutes or 35 minutes if you add vegetables. Cool pan for 5 minutes, then reduce pressure.

Ruth Konechne
Central Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

- 12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
- 1/4 cup horseradish sauce, optional
- 12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
- 6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you have 24 squares of cheese)

Sauce

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 2 tbsps. brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tps. poppy seeds
- 1-1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese, replace roll tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. *These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald and Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture by Shutterstock.

Do Not Overlook Overhead Power Lines

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:

Home maintenance

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them. Other safety tips include:

- Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof.
- Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.

Yard work

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- Do not trim trees near power lines; instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.
- Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.

Farming

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings. Equipment that could get too close or contact a power pole or line includes sprayer tips, tall equipment, dump trucks, augers and other extensions.

At work

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes, concrete pump truck extensions and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

Other reminders

- Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away. Call 9-1-1 to report it.
- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to safeelectricity.org.



Keep equipment far away from
OVERHEAD POWER LINES.

If your equipment makes contact with a power line:

- Stay on the equipment unless, in a very rare case, it's on fire.
- Call emergency and utility services.
- Warn others to stay away.
- Do not leave equipment until a utility professional has told you it is safe to do so.
- If equipment is on fire, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to "bunny hop" with your feet together to safety.

 Safe
Electricity.org

Kill-A-Watt Device

Have you ever wondered how to identify how much energy an appliance in your home is using? Renville-Sibley Cooperative has a tool called the Kill-A-Watt electricity usage monitor that lets members see how energy efficient their appliances actually are.

These units are small, lightweight and easy to use. Just plug the unit into any outlet and then plug the appliance into the Kill-A-Watt monitor to view how much power is being consumed, whether the appliance is on or off.

The monitors are especially handy for members who have older appliances because the unit will help them decide if it might make economic sense to buy more efficient models that can save on annual energy costs.

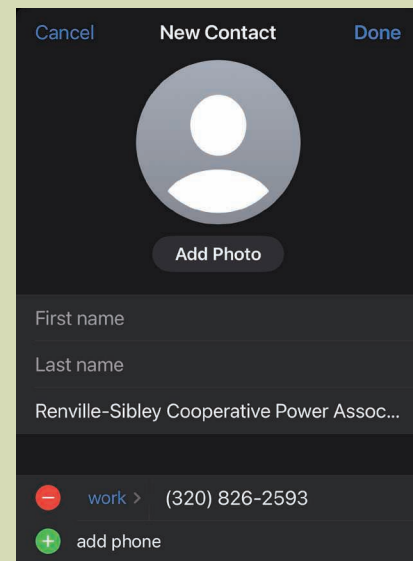
The cooperative has these units available for members to borrow on a first-come, first-serve basis. To check one out, call our office at 800-826-2593. We will let you know availability and when you can pick the unit up. There is a \$30 deposit required to check the units out, which will be returned when the unit is.



In Case of a Power Outage

Here are the steps to follow if you are out of power:

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your home, including those on the meter pole, to see if they have blown or tripped. Make sure your entire farm site is without power and not just one building. Members may be billed a service call if the trouble is caused by the member's own fuses or equipment.
2. Call your neighbor. If their power is also off, then it is probably a line outage.
3. Report your power outage. Have your member number available to assist with a prompt response.
4. Call the Renville-Sibley Office number: 320-826-2593 or 800-826-2593. If you call at a time other than the regular business hours, the phone will be answered by the Cooperative Response Center (CRC). CRC will dispatch a crew to your location.





The rotor is lifted out of the generator unit using two cranes. This component of the generator will be reused once other parts are replaced.
Photo Submitted by USACE

RENEWING RIVER POWER

Fort Randall Dam Undergoes Multiyear Renovation

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

A 72-year old hydropower dam in southeast South Dakota is the first of the state's four mainstream Missouri River dams to undergo a substantial retrofit to improve the facility's efficiency and reliability.

Fort Randall Dam, which began operating in 1954, was built near Pickstown, South Dakota, through the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program. The program was included in the Flood Control Act of 1944 by Congress to dam the Missouri River at multiple points to improve the region's water management, irrigation, flood control and navigation while also generating much-needed hydropower. (See Pages 12-13 for more on how the program came to be.) A marvel at the time of its construction, the two-mile-long rolled-earth dam holds back 5.4 million acre-feet of water in Lake Francis Case. The dam's eight turbine generators have a maximum generating capacity of 320 megawatts – enough electricity to power about 245,000 homes.

Now, more than seven decades later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is looking to boost those numbers and revitalize the aging dam with state-of-the-art, 21st-century technology to ensure the facility keeps up with the region's modern energy demands.

Overseeing the multi-year project is Maintenance and Operations Manager Michael Schenkel, who's spent the last 14 years at the Fort Randall Project overseeing the facility's maintenance, operation and planning. Schenkel says while the dam's eight original 72-year-old generators and turbines have served reliably, a renewal will improve the project's operation.

"Like many aging public assets, it's time for reinvestment," Schenkel said. "The turbine-generator units were installed in the

1950s and are beyond their expected service life. We're replacing them to ensure long-term energy and infrastructure resilience."

He pointed out that the USACE got its money's worth with the original generators, saying how rare it is for a generator to last over 70 years without needing a rewind – referring to the process of replacing the stators, or the copper windings and insulation that help convert the turbine's rotation into electricity. Over time, heat, vibration and age can weaken that insulation and increase the risk of failure. Schenkel noted that Fort Randall is the only Missouri River dam in South Dakota that has retained its original stators up to this point.

The scale of the units pose a significant challenge – each unit is 40 feet tall and weighs more than 400 tons, necessitating piece-by-piece transport, assembly and installation. Voith Hydro North America, the company awarded the contract to manufacture and install the new turbine runners and generator stators, began the decommissioning and replacement of the first generator in July of 2025. USACE expects that generator to be offline until November 2026 after installation is complete and engineers can inspect it for any issues. Once the first unit is back online and clears inspection, engineers will give the contractor the green light to proceed. To keep up with hydropower demand and allow adequate flow downstream, USACE's goal is to keep six units operating and two units offline for renovation at a time until the project is wrapped up in 2031.

Schenkel explained how the upgrade solves two problems at once: it replaces aging components in the dam and provides the opportunity to install new, highly efficient generators and turbines to produce more power with the same amount of water.

Fort Randall's original turbines generate hydropower most efficiently with 103 feet of head – the vertical distance between the water levels above and below the dam, determining the pressure at which water moves through the turbine. At 103 feet of head, each generator will produce about 31 megawatts of electricity.

However, due to the region's fluctuating power demands, water

management and other factors, operating in the efficient middle ground isn't always ideal. Schenkel says USACE often operates Fort Randall at 40 megawatts and 119 feet of head – about 4% below peak efficiency.

To solve this problem of lost efficiency, the new turbines being installed are highly-efficient, rated for 52 megawatts at 119 feet of head. This change raises the facility's total generating capacity from 320 megawatts to about 400 megawatts – enough electricity to power more than 300,000 homes.

“We expect to recover roughly 10% more energy output from the same water volume,” Schenkel said. “Essentially free power beyond the capital investment once the upgrade is complete.”

As part of the renovation, USACE also completed as-needed updates to the switch yard, which is the infrastructure that routes power to transmission lines for transport across the region.

Electricity generated at the Fort Randall Dam is managed, transported and sold by the Western Area Power Administration under the U.S. Department of Energy.

As a co-op member, part of your utility's energy mix is hydropower from the Missouri River dams, including Fort Randall, “so this work directly affects co-op members,” Schenkel added.

Looking at the dam's age and efficiency profile – and also being the only dam in South Dakota possessing its original stator windings – Schenkel said Fort Randall was the clear priority. The USACE has begun planning a similar renovation project for the Oahe Dam.

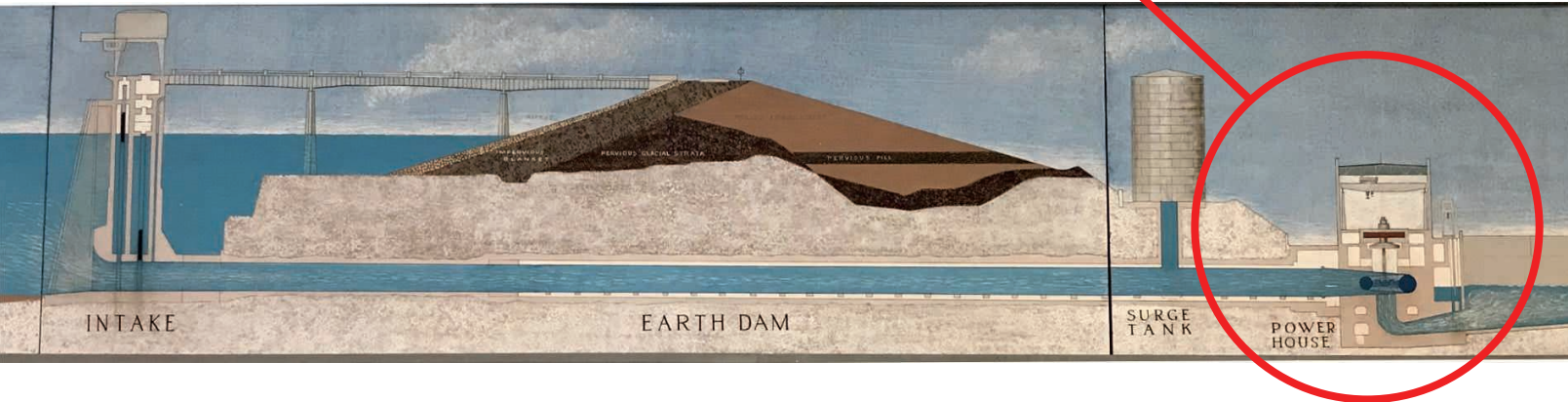
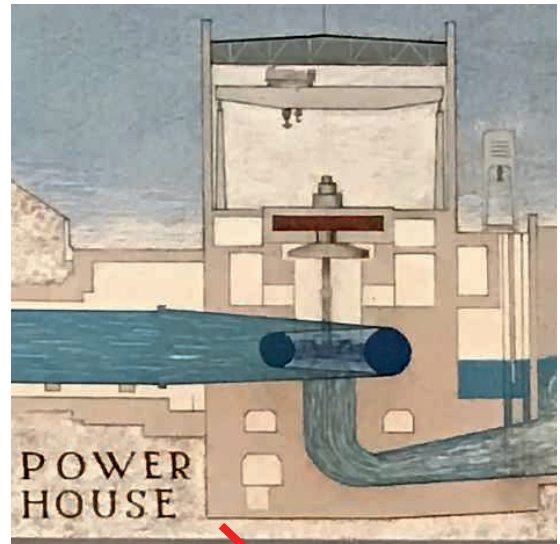
Work at the Fort Randall Project is scheduled to wrap up in 2031 once all eight generating units are replaced.



Above: The Fort Randall Dam is equipped with eight turbines. Unit 6 turbine is shown being removed for the first time since it went online in 1955.

Below & Right: A visual of Fort Randall Dam. Water flows into the powerhouse via the intake tunnel. As the water passes through, it spins the turbine. The rotor, connected to the turbine, spins inside the stator. As the rotor spins inside the stator, its magnetic field passes through copper windings and produces electricity.

Photos Submitted by USACE





Thank you to Scott Tedrick for allowing us to share the article he recently published in the Renville County Register.

"If You Steal My Sunshine"

Scott Tedrick

Rolly and Larry Rauenhorst, lifelong mechanical engineers and farmers in Olivia have taken their fight to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and civil court in a present-day complaint centered squarely on what they call a clear violation of state net-metering laws.

At the heart of the dispute are ten towers standing 12 feet above the ground holding a total of 80 solar electric generation panels. The brothers designed and installed the elevated 37-kilowatt system themselves. The panels allow crops to grow underneath while powering an on-site charging station for an electric tractor used in seeding, tilling, and harvesting. The project is part of ongoing research with the University of Minnesota Morris to measure crop loss from shading and the value of electricity generated for farm operations.

The system is fully operational and able to track the sun for more than a year. However, it remains disconnected from the grid, producing nothing while the Rauenhorsts await a resolution. The brothers said they invested more than \$80,000 in the equipment while also performing much of the installation work themselves (including building a specialized hammer of Larry's design fashioned out of old highway road graters. The machine creates

300,000 pounds of thrust to drive the poles into the ground... and do so with precision. The estimate they have already lost about \$12,000 in forgone production.

In filings before the PUC and in Renville County District Court, the pair allege that Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is unlawfully refusing to credit their exported power at the full retail rate required by Minnesota Net Metering Statutes. The project was deliberately sized under 40 kW to fall under the provision "The law is the law," Rolly Rauenhorst said. "I don't see a compromise. What is there? They either pay the retail rate or not. The law is clear."

Rolly notes that other installers have completed hundreds of similar projects without this level of pushback. If the co-op purchased the electricity at retail, the system could pay for itself in six to eight years.

In a written response, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association CEO DeeAnne Norris said the 1,564 cooperative's member-owner utility offered interconnection and purchase at the avoided-cost rate from its wholesale provider, then proposed a compromise rate. When those offers were declined, the co-op extended mediation — agreeing to cover 90 percent of the mediator's cost under its 2018 dispute-resolution rules. The Rauenhorsts instead chose to file legal action.

Norris emphasizes that at the crux of the cooperative's stance, is equitable responsibilities to all members.

"The cooperative's position is that the project at issue does not meet the intended purpose of net metering because the solar project was placed in an empty field without a pre-existing service to net against," she says. As a not-for-profit with razor-thin margins — under \$54,000 in 2024 and projected below \$30,000 in 2025 — the co-op cannot absorb costs that would be passed on to its members.

Stated Norris, "Compensation structures that require the cooperative to pay retail rates for energy generated in an empty field... result in costs that are unfairly shared by all members."

University of Minnesota Humphrey School associate professor Gabriel Chan—a renewable-energy expert who has collaborated with both the Rauenhorts and Norris on tours, seminars, and innovation initiatives—offers a perspective that identifies with both parties of the dispute. Chan commented that he saw the case as unusually complex yet illustrative of broader tensions.

"I've talked with both sides quite a bit about this, and I understand where folks are coming from," he said.

Chan praises the Rauenhorts' agrivoltaics innovation: combining active crop production with solar generation on the same land, with no meaningful trade-off in yields.

"You don't have this trade-off between producing essential agricultural crops... and building local clean energy," he said, before also acknowledging the co-op's real constraints as one of the state's smallest utilities already carrying a high level of distributed generation.

Chan argues the deeper issue is that policy has not kept pace with technology.

"We're in the middle of an energy transition where the cost of clean energy has come down so dramatically... But our policy system hasn't kept up with the changing economics."

With net-metering rules written decades ago, Chan said they never anticipated projects like this on working farmland "The big question is: How do you move forward? How do you understand the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law, and make sure things are fair?"

The brothers see their project as far more than one installation. Their partnership with the University of Minnesota continues to provide valuable information while publicity has come from coverage such as that by Twin Cities PBS Almanac. According to Rolly if just 30 percent of U.S. corn-soybean rotation ground adopted this model, it could generate more electricity than the nation currently consumes, and then at 50 percent coverage—more energy than all fossil fuels, nuclear, hydro, and wind combined—and without taking any land out of agricultural production.

The PUC and civil-court proceedings now focus on jurisdiction, bylaw changes (including recently added mandatory arbitration language), and the proper interpretation of Minnesota's net-metering statute. The Rauenhorts maintain the law applies to and protects small producers like them. The cooperative, meanwhile, asserts its statutory right to self-governance once it has adopted the required dispute-resolution process.

For now, the elevated panels reach toward the sun in silence awaiting a break in the weather.

OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

None to report this month

SCHOLARSHIP THANK YOU

I would like to sincerely thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the Basin Electric and Scholar of the Year scholarships. I am very grateful for your generosity and for the support you provide to students like me. As I work toward my goal of becoming a veterinarian, this scholarship will have a meaningful impact on my academic journey. Thank you again for your kindness and generosity. I truly appreciate this opportunity and will carry your support with me as I continue my education.

– Kalleigh Wertish

Thank you for supporting a scholar program for area students. This shows community commitment and support and is appreciated. Thank you for the nice banquet also.

– Amber Brouwer,
Central Minnesota Christian School

FOR SALE

Tractor Tires – 2 – 14.9x28 tires and rims, 60% tread, rims from Allis Chalmers WD45. \$350

Elizabeth & Daniel Marcus
Clara City, MN 56222
320-212-1828

Free Range Chicken Eggs for Sale

Pete & JoJo Schmoll
Bird Island, MN 55310
320-579-0098

THE PICK-SLOAN PLAN

Taming North America's Longest Waterway

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyok@sdrea.coop

In the 1930s, both the upper Missouri River and its home in rural America looked notably different than they do today.

That was a period in which electricity was still a luxury enjoyed by townsfolk lucky enough to have a municipal or investor-owned utility serving the community. As rural neighbors founded electric cooperatives to serve their homes, the once-primitive prairie quickly began to light up. And with that step into the modern age came the growing need for more electricity.

At this same time, the 2,300-mile-long Missouri River passing through seven states in the region was proving to be an untamable, destructive force for the communities and agriculture producers on its banks.

The floods would wreak havoc on riverside cities like Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Mississippi River communities like Memphis and New Orleans during swells, disrupting economic activity and trade. During low-flow years and toward the end of summer, the low water levels made navigation extremely difficult for barge traffic.

These problems had been ongoing. All the way back in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal constructed the Fort Peck Dam near Glasgow, Mont. There, the nearly 4-mile-



long and 250-foot high rolled-earth dam created Fort Peck Lake, stretching 134 miles across eastern Montana and generating up to 185 MW of electricity. Even so, the federal government understood more work was needed to fully rein in the power of the Missouri.

Competing Visions: Pick vs. Sloan

Lewis A. Pick, an officer with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and William G. Sloan, an official with the Bureau of Reclamation, each had a vision for the future of the Missouri River Basin.

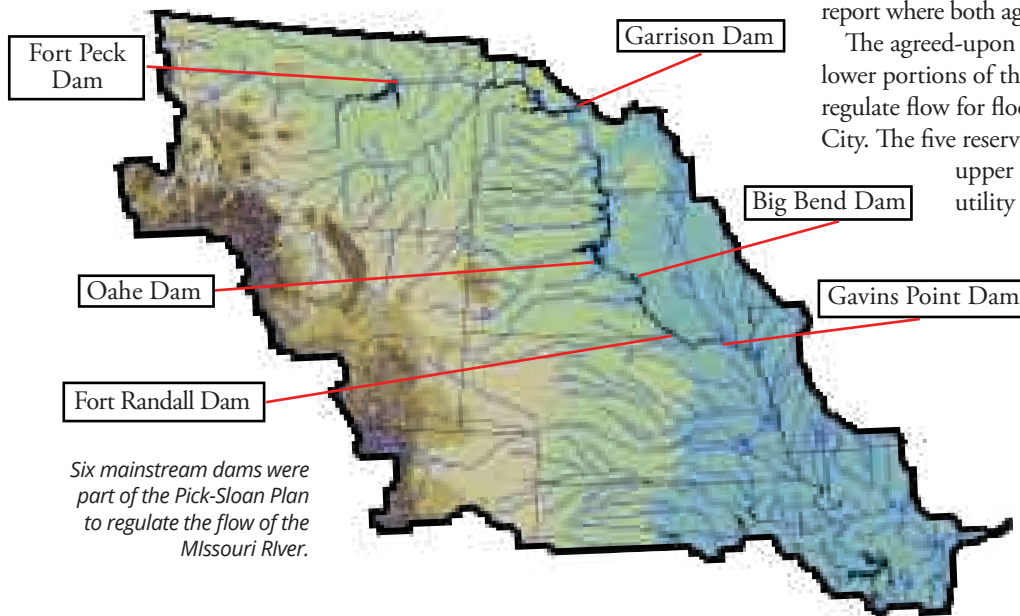
Pick envisioned large dams on the main channel of the Missouri River with a focus on flood control and navigation downstream in the lower Missouri River basin. His plan included five main-channel dams with levees from Sioux City, Iowa, to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sloan, on the other hand, wanted the projects to benefit the upper Missouri River basin, with a focus on water storage for irrigation and agricultural development. Sloan recommended dozens of smaller dams with hydro-electric power plants.

The battle between the USACE and DOR was contentious, but it became clear that no side could garner enough support on its own to pass a project with price tags of about \$1 billion each.

Finally, in 1944, USACE and DOR released a joint engineering report where both agencies' goals for the basin were represented.

The agreed-upon plan would benefit both the upper and lower portions of the basin, with five hydro-power dams to regulate flow for flood control and navigation past Sioux City. The five reservoirs would store water for uses in the upper basin, including irrigation, recreation, utility systems and hydropower generation.



Oahe Dam during construction in 1958. Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

Fort Randall Dam (1946-1954)

Location: Pickstown, S.D.

Length: 10,700 feet long – over 2 miles!

Height: 165 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 320 MW. (See pp. 8-9)

Completed in the 1950s, Fort Randall was the first of South Dakota's mainstream Missouri River dams to come online, generating hydropower for the region and changing the river from a threat into a resource. The Fort Randall Dam creates Lake Francis Case, named for South Dakota's US Senator and Pick-Sloan advocate Francis Higbee Case. The reservoir can store about 5.3 million acre-feet of water (enough water to flood 5.3 million acres at a depth of 1 foot).

Garrison Dam (1947-1955)

Location: Riverdale, N.D.

Length: 11,300 feet long – over 2 miles!

Height: 210 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 5 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 583 MW.

Garrison Dam creates lake Sakakawea, which stretches across western and central North Dakota. The reservoir is the largest on the Missouri River, holding more than 23.5 million acre-feet of water. The dam is named after the nearby town, Garrison. Controversially, the lake flooded the homes of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal nations.

Oahe Dam (1948-1963)

Location: Pierre/Fort Pierre, S.D.

Length: 9,360 feet long – about 1.8 miles!

Height: 245 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 7 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 786 MW.

Oahe Dam sits north of Pierre and Fort Pierre, forming Lake Oahe. The reservoir can hold about 23 million acre-feet of water. Oahe Dam has the highest generation capacity, producing enough electricity to power about 600,000 homes.

The dam and lake's name came from the Oahe Indian Mission established more than 70 years before. The mission's site, as well as other communities and tribal lands, were submerged beneath the reservoir.

Gavin's Point Dam (1952-1957)

Location: Yankton, S.D.

Length: 8,700 feet long – about 1.6 miles.

Height: 74 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 3 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 132 MW.

The farthest downriver dam on the Missouri, Gavin's Point is a dam essential for controlling the water levels for downstream barge traffic starting at Sioux City on the Missouri River and all the way down to New Orleans on the Mississippi River. The dam creates Lewis and Clark Lake on the South Dakota-Nebraska border, with a storage capacity of 492,000 acre-feet of water.

Big Bend Dam (1959-1966)

Location: Fort Thompson, S.D.

Length: 10,570 feet long – about 2 miles.

Height: 95 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 439 MW.

The final mainstream Pick-Sloan dam to be completed on the Missouri River, Big Bend Dam creates Lake Sharpe, holding about 1.7 million acre-feet of water.

The Good and the Bad

A lot of good came from the Pick-Sloan Plan: affordable hydropower for communities throughout the region and water storage to mitigate drought and reduce flooding.

However, a project of such magnitude will also naturally have downsides. University of South Dakota Professor David Swanson says the disruption of

natural patterns has affected ecology for riverside habitats.

Cottonwood seedlings need wet, sandy soil to germinate – without spring floods, it's hard for new trees to establish. Today, there are fewer young cottonwoods growing.

In addition, birds like the least tern that nest on sand bars struggle to find suitable ground, affecting populations.

The reservoirs also flooded more than 1 million acres of land along the Missouri River, some held by private landowners and tribes, and displaced about 6,000 people from land where their families had lived for generations.

In South Dakota, several former communities lay beneath Lake Oahe, including parts of Polluck and Forest City.

Between Chamberlain and Oacoma, American Island was once a statewide destination for boy scouts, with its miles of forest, camp with cabins and bathhouse, racetrack. Today, it sits below dozens of feet of water in Lake Francis Case.



American Island's locally-famous animal statues were moved before Lake Francis Case flooded the island. Photo Courtesy of the Cozard Memorial Library



Tribal leader George Gillette wipes tears as land is seized for the Garrison Dam. Photo Courtesy of National Archives

Operation Round Up

At the April Operation Round Up board meeting, the Board of Trustees awarded three (3) donations to local non-profit organizations. A \$500 donation was given to Renville County 4-H to help with costs associated with hosting a livestock training workshop to encourage and help build confidence in the beef, swine, and poultry projects at the county fair. A \$660 donation was given to the Renville County Master Gardeners which will help purchase soil for the raised garden beds gifted to the organization. The children will come each week to learn about gardening and will show their produce/flowers at the county fair. Lastly, a \$500 donation was given to RCW Post Prom to support their post prom activities. Funds will be used to provide food, prizes, and activities for a fun and safe place for students to spend the evening. 1008700

If your non-profit organization has a project or event that would benefit the community, Operation Round Up funds may be available to help your group reach its goal. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on July 14, 2026. The deadline for applications is July 1. Applications for donations can be found at rscpa.coop/operation-round. Contact the office at 320-826-2593 for more information.

Notice

The May board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

The June board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

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

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 \$75. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 1st of June, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck with your search!

REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2026 or 2027 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.

SAFETY NOTE:

If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab. Call 9-1-1 and the dispatched utility will de-energize the power so that you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Call 811 or go online to www.gopherstateonecall.org and file a locate request before you dig! Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166

April Board Meeting Highlights

The April board meeting was held on Wednesday, April 22nd 2026, at 8 a.m. Directors Eekhoff, Firlle, Hinderman, Manthei, Neyers, Peterson, Ruebel, and Zaske were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Attorney Jeff Whitmore, Nick Bruns, Bryon Stillely, and Amy Ervin.

All directors submitted Conflict of Interest Disclosures to Cooperative Attorney. Election of board officers was held with the following results:

- Chair – Whitey Hinderman
- Vice Chair – Roger Manthei
- Secretary/Treasurer – Vicky Firlle

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the March 25th, 2026, board meeting
- East River Director appointments
- Committee appointments
- 2027 Annual Meeting – Tuesday, March 23, 2027 at the Redwood Area Community Center
- Board meeting dates and times from May 2026 to December 2027
- Officer Appointments of the Cooperative
- Operating and disbursement reports for the months of March
- Safety Report for March
- Director Expenses
- Capital Credits to Estates

- 2026 Annual Meeting Minutes
- 2026 Rates
- Operation Round Up District 1 Board Member
- University of MN ECIC Donation
- CFC Cooperative System Integrity Fund Donation
- CFC Annual Meeting Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Capital Credit 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 March (unaudited)
 - o Organization activities
 - o New Members
 - o Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
 - o Accounts Receivable
- Basin Electric update
- East River update
- Area Co-ops Annual Meetings
- Director meeting reports

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

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.

The Renville-Sibley office will be closed on the following holiday:



MEMORIAL DAY
MONDAY, MAY 25





JUNE 19-20
77th Annual Tabor
Czech Days
 Food, Dancing, Parade
 Tabor, SD
taborczechdays.com

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.

JUNE 4-6
Black Hills Quilt Show
 Thurs. 5-8 p.m.
 Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Rushmore Hall
 at the Monument
 Rapid City, SD

JUNE 5
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 6
Bulls 'n' Pulls
Antique Tractor Pull
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 10
BFest Concert Series & Farmers Market
 Landree Wilson Performing
 Museum Park
 Bruce, SD
 605-627-5671

JUNE 12-14
South Shore 125th Anniversary Celebration
 South Shore, SD
 605-756-4130
www.southshore-sd.com

JUNE 13
Journey Into Uncovering Historic Pickstown
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Pickstown, SD
 605-487-7299

JUNE 13
Luce Pioneer Day
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Rope & Candle Making, Butter Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking
 Lake Herman State Park
 Madison, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 18-21
Hartford Jamboree Days
 City Park
 Hartford, SD
 605-941-0809
www.hartfordjamboreedays.com

JUNE 19-20
Estelline Rodeo Days
 5:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin'
 6 p.m. Rodeo (Both Days)
 Estelline, SD
www.estellinerodeo.com

JUNE 19-20
Farley Fest
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656
www.FarleyFest.com

JUNE 20
Grace's Gas Guzzlers
 Car Show & Vendor Fair
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 202 Second St. SE
 Watertown, SD
 605-237-8005

JUNE 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
 Bruce, SD
 605-627-5671

JUNE 24-27
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration at Mount Rushmore
 Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 8
Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour
 2-7:30 p.m.
 Lakes Area - Shetek, Sarah, Gavin
 Rain Date: July 9
 Tracy, MN
 507-629-3252
tracy.area.garden.quilts@gmail.com

JULY 11
40th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K
 Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD
 End: City Park, Spearfish, SD
 Register: www.nhcaso.org

AUG. 1-2
51st Annual Pioneer Power Threshing Show
 MN Machinery Museum
 Hanley Falls, MN
 507-828-5437

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Gilfillan Estate
 Morgan, MN

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.