

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The Days of '76 Rodeo

A Century of Grit and
Glory

Pages 8-9

Fort Meade Patriotism

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Line Crew Activities



Bryon Stilley
Operations
Manager

Greetings from Renville-Sibley! Spring has arrived, and with it comes a busy construction season here at Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA). Our crews have hit the ground running, picking up several projects that were started last year but paused due to frost conditions.

One of our primary efforts has been an overhead-to-underground conversion southeast of Olivia. Our team has made great progress, successfully completing the cutover to the new underground system and is now finishing the final retirement of the old overhead facilities. As part of this project, we identified an opportunity to enhance system reliability by adding approximately one mile of additional underground line. This addition provides increased redundancy and back-feed capabilities, helping us deliver more reliable service to our members. Our underground contractor is currently plowing in this section, after which our crews will install switchgear and complete terminations.

In the southern portion of our service territory, both Xcel Energy and Great River Energy are undertaking major transmission projects. As part of these efforts, RSCPA has been working to bury underground electric cables in several locations to improve both safety and reliability. This work is funded by Xcel Energy. Our contractor has completed the cable installation, and RSCPA crews are now working on final terminations.

We are also excited to share that RSCPA has been awarded funding through the U.S. Department of Energy to replace oil-filled and vacuum reclosers at the Emmet Substation. This project includes the installation of approximately 30 new units, with the majority of costs covered by the grant.

In addition, RSCPA has secured funding through another grant for a 10-mile system conversion project from overhead to underground. We are currently in the early design phase, evaluating the transition from overhead to underground construction. This project will primarily be served out of the Cairo Substation, located southeast of Fairfax, where approximately six miles will be completed. The remaining four miles will take place northeast of Fairfax, beginning at 660th Avenue and extending north along 550th Street.

Before beginning any excavation, always contact Gopher State One Call at least 48 hours in advance. You can reach them at 1-800-252-1166 or visit their website at www.gopherstateonecall.org. As a reminder, RSCPA utilizes a contracted locating service for underground utilities. If you've ever wondered why lines may not be marked in your yard, it's important to understand the distinction in ownership. RSCPA is responsible for lines from the distribution system to the meter, while members own any lines beyond the meter. It is the member's responsibility to locate privately owned lines, which should be coordinated through a qualified electrician.

Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable summer!

Minnesota's Extreme Heat Law

Minnesota Statute 216B.0975 requires that, "a utility may not involuntarily disconnect residential services in affected counties when an excessive heat watch, heat advisory, or excessive heat warning is in effect and has been issued by the National Weather Service." Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) will continue to make efforts to stall involuntary disconnection of our members' electric service for non-payment and will continue to provide our members with past-due account opportunities to work out a feasible payment schedule. However, in order to construct a payment plan, members must contact RSCPA ahead of time to make payment arrangements and to sign a payment agreement. RSCPA does not want to interrupt service to any member at any time, but in a cooperative, all members are affected by those whose electric bills remain unpaid.

To ensure fair and equitable rates for all our members, those members with past-due accounts that neglect to contact the office to make mutually agreed payment arrangements, or members who fail to meet agreed upon payment arrangements, will have their electric service disconnected once the excessive heat watch, advisory or warning has expired.

Minnesota Valley Action Council:
Mankato: 800-767-7139 or 507-345-6822

Prairie Five Community Action Council:
Montevideo: 800-292-5437 or 320-269-6578

United Community Action Partnership: 3 Locations
Marshall: 507-537-1416
Olivia: 320-523-1842
Willmar: 320-235-0850

Notice

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

The July board meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.



Digging? Click or Call 811 First.

Whether you're excavating at a job site or installing a new fence post, underground utilities could be at any depth below the ground's surface. Keep yourself – and those around you – safe by having the dig site located through your local contact center before you dig.

RED	Electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
YELLOW	Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials
ORANGE	Communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduit
BLUE	Potable water
GREEN	Sanitary sewers and drain lines
PURPLE	Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
PINK	Temporary survey markings
WHITE	Proposed excavation



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www.gopherstateonecall.org

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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(USPS 019-074)

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Web site: www.rscpa.coop

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BEFORE THE SMOKE: PROTECT YOUR HOME BEFORE WILDFIRE SEASON

Wildfires can move quickly, especially when dry grass, high winds and hot weather come together. In rural South Dakota, where homes, farms, shelterbelts, outbuildings and open grassland share the same landscape, preparation matters.

But there is one important point to make first: fighting a wildfire is not a job for homeowners.

If a wildfire is nearby, leave firefighting to trained professionals. Follow evacuation orders, call 911 to report a fire and stay away from downed power lines, smoke-filled areas and active fire zones. Cooperative members can do their most important work in advance, taking steps that make a property harder for fire to reach and easier for responders to protect.

One of the most effective steps is creating defensible space around the home. That does not mean clearing every tree or turning a yard into bare ground. It means reducing combustible material near houses, garages, sheds and other structures, while thinking about how fire could move from brush to trees to buildings.

Start closest to the house. Embers can collect against siding, under decks, in gutters or near steps. Remove dry leaves, dead plants, stacked lumber, cardboard and other combustible materials from next to the home. Gravel, rock, concrete, pavers and other hardscaping can be better choices near walls, decks and porches.

Gutters and roofs deserve attention, too. Leaves and needles can become dry fuel. Cleaning them before fire season can reduce the chance that embers find an easy place to ignite.

From there, look at the rest of the yard. Clear dead brush, tall grass and dried weeds, especially near structures. Keep grass mowed around homes, outbuildings, propane tanks and driveways. Trim and space shrubs and trees so fire cannot easily climb from grass to brush to tree canopies. Low branches can act like ladder fuels.

Do not overlook decks, porches and crawlspaces. Dry leaves, grass clippings and other materials can collect underneath. Cleaning those areas and using screening can help keep debris from building up.

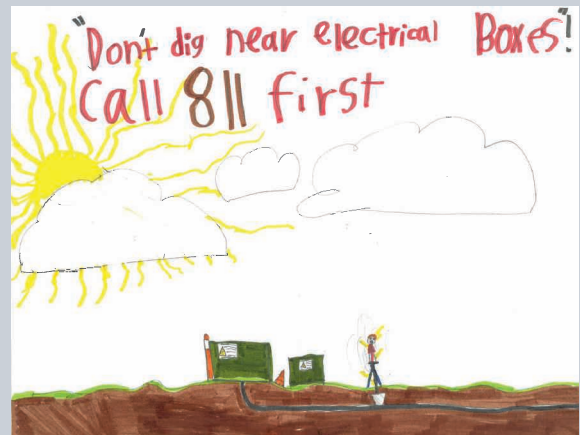
Access is part of preparation, too. Firefighters need to reach

a property quickly and safely. Keep driveways clear, make sure gates can open and trim branches that could block emergency vehicles. Clearly visible address signs can help responders find a home when visibility is poor.

Before making major landscaping changes, building fences, planting trees or adding new water lines, call 811. Underground electric, gas, water and communication lines may be closer than expected. A free locate request helps protect homeowners, utility crews and infrastructure.

Cooperative members can also make a plan. Know two ways out of the property or neighborhood. Keep important documents, medications and emergency supplies ready to go. Take photos or videos of buildings, equipment and belongings for insurance records.

Wildfire preparation is a seasonal habit, much like cleaning gutters, changing filters or preparing equipment for winter. The goal is not to fight the fire. That job belongs to firefighters and emergency responders. The goal is to give the home, property and responders a better chance before the fire ever starts.



**"Don't dig near electrical boxes!
Call 811 first."**

Caleb Blake, age 9

Caleb urges members to not dig near a pad-mounted transformer. Thank you for sharing your picture, Caleb! Caleb's parents are Peter and Stephanie Blake – members of West River 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.

Sweet on RHUBARB

RHUBARB CAKE

Ingredients:

White cake mix
4 cups rhubarb, diced
1 cup white sugar
2 cups heavy whipping cream

Method

Mix white cake as directed on the box. Pour in a greased 9x12 pan. Place 4 cups of diced rhubarb over the top. Pour 1 cup of white sugar over the rhubarb. Pour 2 cups of heavy whipping cream over the top. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

Jeanette Kleinsasser
Dakota Energy

RHUBARB SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups rhubarb, chopped
4 tbsps. water
1/2 cup sugar
3 oz. red jello
3/4 cup cold water
1 apple, diced
1 banana, sliced

Method

Combine rhubarb, water and sugar. Stir and cook until mushy. Add jello and stir until dissolved. Add 3/4 cup cold water. Cool until it begins to set. Stir in diced apple and sliced banana. Chill and serve.

Leanne Eich
Central Electric

RHUBARB CHEESE CAKE

Ingredients:

Rhubarb Filling

9" pie shell, unbaked
2 1/2 cups rhubarb, chopped
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. flour

Cheese Cake Filling

8 oz. cream cheese
2 eggs, added one at a time
1/2 cup sugar

Topping

3/4 cup sour cream
2 tbsps. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Method

Stir rhubarb with flour and sugar. Put in the unbaked pie shell and bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and lower temperature to 350° degrees.

Beat cream cheese, add 2 eggs one at a time, then add the sugar. Mix well and pour over hot rhubarb layer. Bake 30 minutes at 350° degrees.

Mix the topping of sour cream, sugar and vanilla well and spread over hot pie. Cool 3 hours or more before serving. The flavors blend better the longer it cools. Refrigerate leftovers.

Charles Lebeda
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 Sokor Space and Shutterstock.

At the Capitol: Working To Keep Your Power Affordable and Reliable

Jenny Glumak

MREA Director of Government Affairs

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session has wrapped up at the Capitol, and there's plenty for cooperative member-owners to know about how the session affected the energy that powers your home, farm or business.

It was a session shaped by divided government. With a tied House, a one-seat Senate majority and an election looming in November, every bill needed bipartisan agreement to move. Much of the Legislature's attention went to a supplemental budget, funding for Hennepin County Medical Center, tax conformity and a capital investment package, leaving less room for major policy changes elsewhere.

Even so, Minnesota's electric cooperatives made important progress on the issues that matter most to member-owners. The session delivered a meaningful step forward on nuclear energy and stopped several costly proposals before they could become law.

A step forward on nuclear energy

After three decades of standing still, Minnesota took its first real step forward on nuclear energy.

Lawmakers approved a state nuclear energy study, the most significant movement on the issue since Minnesota's nuclear moratorium was put in place in 1994. The moratorium itself remains on the books, but the study reflects a growing recognition at the Capitol that nuclear power deserves a serious look as the state works toward its carbon-free electricity goals.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives, working through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), helped lead this effort as a founding member of the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance. The Alliance brings together more than 60 organizations spanning utilities, labor, agriculture, business and environmental groups, and its broad reach helped move nuclear into the mainstream of Minnesota's energy conversation. 936900

The study itself will examine the costs, benefits and tradeoffs of nuclear energy in Minnesota, including its potential role in supporting affordability, reliability and emissions reductions. Its findings will give lawmakers a stronger foundation for deciding whether to lift the moratorium next year.

Holding the line on costly new mandates

Just as important as what passed is what didn't.

Several proposals introduced this session would have added new costs, new mandates or new layers of regulation onto Minnesota's electric cooperatives. None of them became law, and that outcome wasn't an accident.

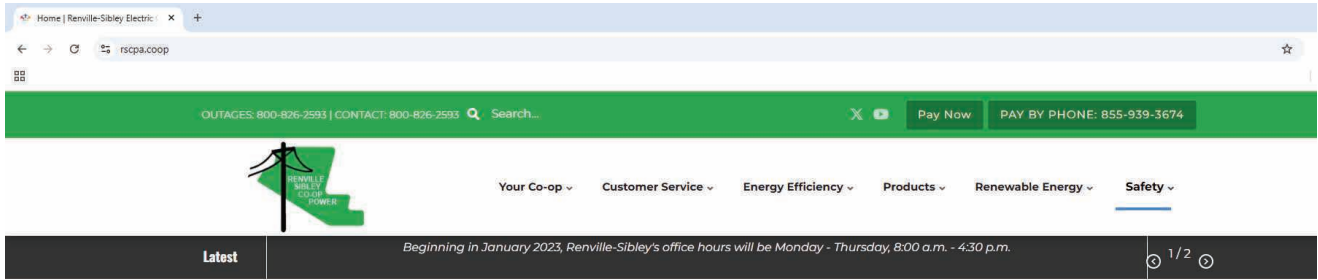
Throughout the session, Minnesota's electric cooperatives, through MREA and the advocacy of member-owners across the state, worked to educate legislators about how mandates from St. Paul affect locally governed, not-for-profit cooperatives differently than they do large investor-owned utilities. Bills touching on solar policy, affordability mandates and utility operations all stalled before reaching the finish line. Cooperative priorities like net metering reform also saw little movement, leaving important work for future sessions.

That distinction matters because cooperatives are governed by the members they serve. Decisions about your electricity are made by neighbors you can talk to, not regulators in St. Paul. One-size-fits-all mandates often raise costs, undermine that local democracy and add bureaucracy without delivering real benefits to member-owners. Stopping bad policy rarely makes headlines, but it remains one of the most valuable services MREA provides to cooperatives and the families and businesses we serve.

Looking ahead to 2027

The November election will reshape the makeup of the Legislature, and the political landscape next session could look very different. What won't change is the focus of Minnesota's electric cooperatives: advocating for affordable, reliable electricity and protecting the local, democratic governance that makes cooperatives unique.

Nuclear energy will likely return as a central conversation in 2027, alongside continued debate over mandates, affordability and the pace of Minnesota's energy transition. Net metering reform will also remain near the top of the cooperative agenda. Modernizing Minnesota's net metering rules is essential to ensuring all member-owners pay their fair share for the electric grid they rely on. Member-owners who want to lend their voice can sign up for alerts at <https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/>.



Variety of Payment Options Available to Members

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) members have a variety of options available to pay their monthly electric bills. Located on the top of the homepage of RSCPA's website www.rscpa.coop is the SmartHub Pay Portal. In the upper right-hand corner, you will find the PayNow option. The difference between these two options is the SmartHub application requires a username and password and will give more account information such as view and manage your usage tool, billing and payment history, the ability to manage the contact information, set up account notifications along with the option to make a payment or set-up autopay. Through SmartHub, members can select the payment source to be either a checking or savings

account or a credit card. The PayNow option can be accessed by entering the account number and last name. The only option available on this site is to make a payment on the account. Along with the traditional payment method of mailing or dropping off a check, RSCPA offers an automated pay-by-phone option which is available in both English and Spanish. Members can call 855-939-3674 to make a payment on the account, update the phone number or update bank draft information. More and more members are setting up their accounts for automatic payment on the 3rd. This convenient service can be set up by completing an in-house form that allows RSCPA to deduct the balance from either a checking or savings account on the 3rd of each month.

Also available to the membership is budget billing. Members on budget billing pay the budget amount, which is the average bill calculated over the past 12 months factoring in any rate increases for the next year if applicable. Budget billing is great for members who experience a higher electric bill during the winter months and want to level their payments throughout the year. All accounts in the budget payment plan must be paid in full each year with the August 3rd payment. The new budget amount begins with the next bill. Anyone interested in budget billing should contact the office to determine what their monthly budget amount will be and to get signed up for the program.



A CENTURY OF GRIT AND GLORY

The Days of '76 Rodeo

Photos by KSchurr Photography

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

In the historic gulch of Deadwood, S.D., the past isn't tucked away in books – it rides out of old wooden chutes every July at the Days of '76 Rodeo.

What began more than a century ago as a short weekend celebration has grown into a week-long rodeo and parade tradition that draws contestants and visitors from across the country. Yet, amid the growth and national recognition, the Days of '76 remains rooted in family, heritage and a deep sense of place.

Pat Roberts, longtime board member of the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "It started in 1924, and it actually wasn't a rodeo then. It was a celebration of Deadwood and its establishment in 1876 – hence where the name came from. It was started by the community just to promote the founding."

Those early celebrations featured parades, horses, fireworks and the kind of small-town pageantry that fits a frontier

community proud of its past. The full-fledged rodeo format came a few years later in the late 1920s, but the heart of the event hasn't changed: honoring Deadwood's origins and the Western way of life that built it.

Today, the Days of '76 Rodeo is marking its 104th year alongside other milestones – the 150th anniversary of Deadwood and the nation's 250th anniversary.

The rodeo boasts a total payout of roughly \$350,000 and typically draws 700 to 800 contestants, including top names like Rocker Steiner, Lisa Lockhart and rising stars such as Emily Beisel. During a week of performances, 25,000 to 30,000 spectators pack the grandstands, turning the arena into a sea of cowboy hats and hometown pride.

The events remain classic: bareback riding, steer wrestling, calf roping, team roping, barrel racing, saddle bronc riding, bull riding and breakaway roping. No frills, no gimmicks – just the timeless contests of skill and grit that define rodeo.

"We just keep it traditional," Pat said. "Just welcome everybody to Deadwood to enjoy the best cowboys and the best bucking stock that we can get."

For a town of about 1,200 people, the Days of '76 Rodeo has earned outsized recognition.

In 2011, the Days of '76 was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, a distinction the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) had not extended to a rodeo in many years.

Chris Roberts, son of Pat Roberts and fellow board member on the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "We won the PRCA Rodeo of the Year every single year that we were in the medium category until we surpassed into large. We've been nominated many times in the large category and won it once. To our knowledge, we're the only rodeo that's won Rodeo of the Year in each and every category."

In Deadwood, legacy still rides out of wooden chutes, year after year, drawing generational athletes. Rodeo here is a family affair. The Roberts family has been involved continuously since the event began.

"There's been a Roberts at every Days of '76 celebration since it started," said Pat.

Pat attended his first Days of '76 Rodeo when he was four days old and serves on the board with his son, Chris.

"I'm fourth generation," Chris said. "My great-granddad was there from year one, and we never missed a single year. Then his son – my granddad – followed in his footsteps, my dad and now me."

A fifth generation is already helping behind the scenes, continuing a family legacy that mirrors the rodeo's own endurance through the decades.

That kind of continuity isn't unique to the Roberts alone. Many contestants

arrive with stories of parents and grandparents who once competed in Deadwood.

"From a contestant perspective, I'd be willing to bet that no matter where you grew up, if you are a rodeo family, Deadwood was one that was always on the map," Chris said. "I hear it every single year – contestants talking about how grandpa or great-grandpa, grandma or great-grandma competed in Deadwood, and they've always wanted to be here. In the rodeo world, everybody knows Deadwood."

Mackenzi Gatzke, secretary of the board of directors, says her family story is similar. She currently serves on the Days of '76 board alongside both of her parents and noted two other families who have long served on the board promoting the event.

"Our board is all made up of people who were or still are locals to Deadwood, and we're all volunteers," she said. "We really do it because we love Deadwood, and we love the Days of '76 and the tradition behind it. We actually have four different families with multiple generations on our board, and we all just work together like one big family that just loves the community."

That focus on authenticity extends beyond the arena. The Days of '76 Museum houses the largest working



collection of horse-drawn wagons in the country, along with memorabilia from across the Black Hills dating back to 1876. During rodeo week, many of those wagons leave their resting place to roll through downtown Deadwood in historic parades – matching the sight of a 19th-century streetscape.

For Pat Roberts, rodeo's relevance in modern life is still significant and comes down to identity.

"It's tradition – it's the cowboy way," he said. "These cowboys and cowgirls are athletes...and the horses are too. They're bred to buck. We're not hurting anything by doing it – that's what they want to do. Just think of Deadwood and the West. Rodeo fits right in."



Co-ops in the Classroom



Amy Ervin
Executive Admin
and HR

This Spring, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) was excited to once again be welcomed into the elementary classrooms at area schools and bring electrical safety education through our Co-ops in the Classroom program. On May 21st, RSCPA lineman, Mike Benson, and Jennifer Gross with East River Electric joined St. Mary' and GFW schools to provide students with an engaging, hands-on look at electricity, energy conservation, and electrical safety.

Together, they helped students better understand how electricity is produced, delivered, and safely used in their everyday lives. While the demonstrations and activities are always a fun experience for students, the main goal of these visits is to reinforce the importance of respecting electricity and practicing electrical safety. Students also learned the partnership between RSCPA and East River Electric and the role each organization plays in providing safe, reliable electricity to the communities we serve.

Fourth-grade students participated in an interactive presentation covering the fundamentals of electricity, including static electricity, electrons, conductors, and insulators. One of the student's favorite demonstrations featured the Van de Graaff generator, where volunteers experienced static electricity firsthand and their hair stood on end and harmless shocks were passed between classmates. These demonstrations helped students see the difference between static electricity and the electricity that powers homes, schools, and businesses every day.

Students also explored how electricity is generated using a variety of energy sources, including hydro, wind, solar, natural gas, nuclear, and coal. A bicycle-powered generator gave students the opportunity to experience firsthand how much effort it takes to create electricity. As additional lights and appliances were connected, pedaling became more difficult, helping demonstrate how increased energy use requires greater power production. This activity also encouraged discussion about the importance of conserving electricity and being mindful of daily energy use.

To wrap up the presentations, students discussed what to do if they ever come in contact with a downed power line while inside a vehicle or tractor. They learned the safest action is to stay inside the vehicle, call 911 immediately, and wait for emergency responders unless the vehicle is on fire. If exiting the vehicle is necessary because of a fire, they were taught to jump clear with both feet together and hop away without lifting their feet apart for approximately the length of a school bus.

With summer activities approaching, this important safety reminder is especially timely. RSCPA appreciates the opportunity to partner with our local schools each year and thanks them for welcoming us into their classrooms. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Jennifer and East River Electric who helped make these presentations both educational and enjoyable for our students. We look forward to getting Co-ops in the Classroom in the upcoming 2026-2027 school year!



Mike Benson helps a student put on Personal Protective Equipment.



A student experiences the static electricity from the Van de Graaff generator.

OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

Date: 4-15-26
Time off: 9:00 AM
Time on: 10:14 AM
Substation: Troy
Cause: Other Prearranged

Date: 4-15-26
Time off: 9:00 AM
Time on: 9:52 AM
Substation: Troy
Cause: Other Prearranged

Date: 4-20-26
Time off: 2:00 PM
Time on: 3:15 PM
Substation: Crooks
Cause: Farm Equipment

Date: 4-29-26
Time off: 11:38 AM
Time on: 12:27 PM
Substation: Birch Cooley
Cause: Excavating Contractor



Jennifer Gross, East River Electric and a student demonstrating the bicycle-powered generator.

SCHOLARSHIP & SPONSORSHIP THANK YOU

Thanks for the scholarship. This will help me pay for my education at SDSU. I appreciate being given this opportunity. Thank you.

- Carson Lee

Thank you so much for the funds for our after-prom party at GFW. It was very much appreciated.

- GFW After Prom

Renville-Sibley Co-op – Thank you so much for sponsoring our Livestock Level Up event. We appreciate it!

- Renville County Ambassadors



Mike Benson and a student with their Personal Protective Equipment.

FORT MEADE & THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

How South Dakota Set the Stage for a National Anthem

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

This month – July of 2026 – the United States of America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when the Founding Fathers declared the end of Great Britain’s role as their colonial overseer.

No patriotic song captures the sacrifice and resilience of the American experiment quite like the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” However, the anthem is not from the American Revolution, nor was it immediately adopted as the nation’s official song. Its story unfolded over more than a century, from a British bombardment in Baltimore to a flag-lowering ceremony on the plains of western South Dakota.

The War of 1812

The year is 1814. The United States of America is in the midst of its second war with Great Britain – The War of 1812 – and the nation is reeling from a recent attack on Washington, D.C., where British troops torched the Capitol and White House.

A Maryland lawyer, Francis Scott Key, had just boarded a British naval vessel. He was sent there on behalf of the U.S. government to negotiate the release of an American prisoner, and while his negotiation was successful, Key was not allowed to return ashore until the British forces completed their bombardment on nearby Fort McHenry for fear that Key had overheard military plans while on board.

Detained aboard the enemy ship, Key looked ashore to Baltimore as the American forces fended off the invasion. As dusk settled over the harbor, it became harder for Key to track the battle, his only illumination being the occasional glow of British rockets and exploding shells. Key watched through the night, not sure who was winning the drawn-out fight. At dawn, there was just enough illumination for Key to make out the American flag still flying over the fort. The Americans had held



Visitors to Fort Meade (1 mile west of Sturgis, S.D.) will see the very same flag pole used by Col. Caleb Carlton during the flag retirements. These once-a-day evening ceremonies were the first instance of the Star Spangled Banner serving as the United States’ unofficial national anthem.

Photo submitted by Randy Bender

the fort and fended off the British from Baltimore.

Key’s experience that night inspired him to write a poem he titled “The Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Later, it was put to song and became known as “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Fort Meade

Fast forward to 1892, thousands of miles west on the American frontier.

Col. Caleb Carlton is the new commander of the Eighth U.S. Cavalry at Fort Meade, a U.S. Army post in the young state of South Dakota. About a mile west, the bustling town of Sturgis is growing along with the fort, serving as an important stop along numerous trails heading toward gold country in the streams of the Black Hills.

“Fort Meade was put in place in about 1878 to help maintain the peace in the Black Hills region between the native tribes and the settlers coming in,” explained Randy Bender, a lifelong resident of Sturgis and second-generation Fort Meade Museum board member.

Carlton was eager to make his mark – not through a battle, but patriotism. He and his wife discussed how they could better instill respect for the American flag among their troops stationed at the fort. The Carltons’ idea was to have the band play an official song during the evening retreat, when the flag is retired for the night.

“Carlton issued orders that all within hearing distance were to stand at attention, and all men not under arms were to remove their hats as a sign of respect to the flag,” Bender said.

That song, chosen at the urging of Mrs. Carlton, was the Star Spangled Banner.

“We selected the Star Spangled Banner as it was written under very unusual circumstances,” Carlton later wrote in a 1914 letter.

Carlton’s daughter, Mabel, recalled the first ceremony in her journal.

“As the final notes of the song faded away, the flag landed gently in the arms of the waiting troops,” she wrote. “If it had been practiced, it could not have been done more perfectly.”

From Fort Meade, the practice began to spread as other officers and government officials visited and observed the ceremony.

“The New York Times referred to the fact that (I) was trying to establish a national anthem,” Carlton wrote. “This attracted the attention of Col. Cook in command of the recruiting depot at David’s Island, who wrote me that he was having recruits taught to sing our national air. I suggested he concentrate his instruction on the Star Spangled Banner.”

Carlton also wrote that later, during a meeting in Harrisburg with Pennsylvania Gov. Daniel H. Hastings, that the governor promised he would initiate the playing of the Star Spangled Banner among the state’s militia.

The most decisive support came during a meeting between Carlton and Secretary of War Daniel Lamont, with the two speaking about the custom. Before long,



Above: Officers of the 8th Cavalry in Fort Meade, S.D. in 1892. Photo courtesy of the South Dakota State Historical Society



Right: A photograph of Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Lamont ordered that the Star Spangled Banner be played during evening retreats across the nation.

Nearly 40 years after Fort Meade’s first Star Spangled Banner rendition, Congress in 1931 declared it the national anthem.

Today, visitors to Fort Meade can stand near the place where that custom began. A historical marker near the parade ground bears the words “It Started Here,” connecting the South Dakota fort to the story of the national anthem.

“That flagpole that they lowered the flag down from for that event is still standing at Fort Meade, and still used,” Bender said.

For Bender, who grew up at Fort Meade while his father worked at the

VA hospital and mother served on the museum board, the historic post still carries the feel of another era.

“When you visit Fort Meade, it’s like stepping back in time,” Bender said.

Many visitors are surprised to learn about Fort Meade’s place in the anthem’s history.

“It’s one of those things we just take for granted that we have a national anthem,” Bender said, “We never stopped to think about how these things came to be. But every one of those stories had to start at some point, and the national anthem story got its start in Fort Meade, South Dakota.”

The Fort Meade museum is open from mid-May through the end of September 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

May Board Meeting Highlights

The May board meeting was held on Wednesday, May 27th 2026, at 8 a.m. Directors Boersma, Eekhoff, Firlé, Hinderman, Manthei, Neyers, Peterson, Ruebel, and Zaské were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Nick Bruns, Bryon Stillely, Amy Ervin and Carren Frank.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the April 22nd, 2026, board meeting
- Director Expenses
- Safety Report for April
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of April
- Capital Credits to Estates
- East River Electric Annual Meeting Voting Delegates
- Basin Electric Annual Meeting Voting Delegates
- Schedule B
- Minnesota Electric Cooperatives' Commitment to Transparency and Accountability Review and Acknowledgement

The board reviewed the following items:

- 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 April (unaudited)
 - o Organization activities
 - o Basin Electric update
 - o East River update
 - o Director meeting reports
 - o Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
 - o Accounts Receivable

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

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 \$100. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 1st of July, 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

OPERATION ROUND UP

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.

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

SAVE THE DATE

* FARMFEST

2269 MN 67
MORGAN, MN
AUGUST 4 - 6

* FAMILY-A-FAIR NIGHT

AT THE RENVILLE
COUNTY FAIR
BIRD ISLAND, MN
3 P.M. - 7 P.M.
AUGUST 13

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.

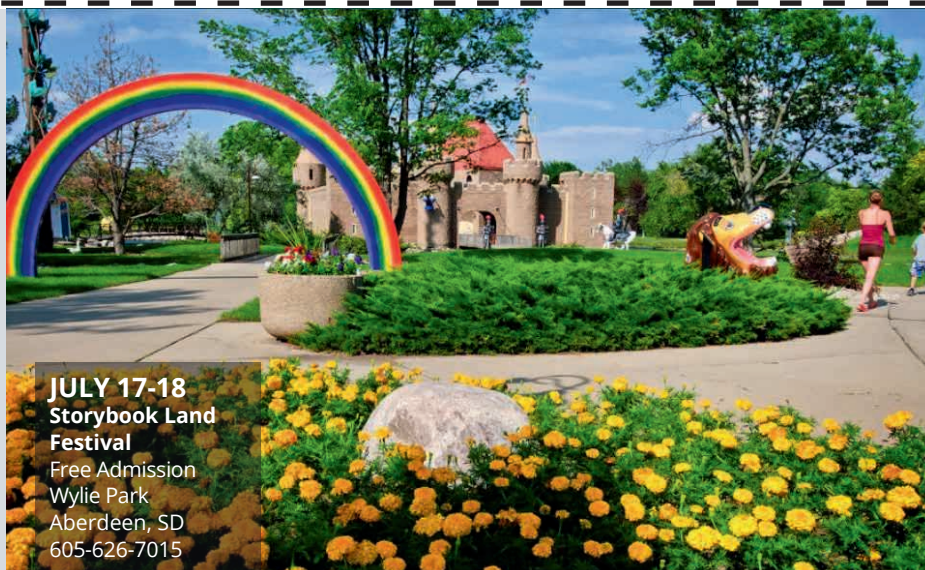
To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the 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.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 17-18
Storybook Land Festival
Free Admission
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-626-7015

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 10-12
Rooted: A Prairie Arts Weekend
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

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

JULY 15-19
Danish Days
Viborg, SD
danishdays.org

JULY 18
A Celebration of Johnny Cash
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

JULY 18
Forever Simon & Garfunkel
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 18-19
10th Annual Charles Mix Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

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

JULY 24-26
Winner Elks 57th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape
7 p.m.
Tripp County Fairgrounds
Brechyn, MN
320-522-1218

JULY 25
Planes, Trains & Automobiles
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 25
Disability Awareness & Accessibility Committees Resource Fair (DAAC)
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Minneluzahan Senior Center
Rapid City, SD

JULY 30
Spurs Grand Classic Equestrian Competition
9 a.m.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

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
28269 MN Hwy. 67
Morgan, MN
ideagroup.com/farmfest

AUG. 12-14
Renville County Fair
10 a.m. daily
Thurs.: Family-a-Fair Night (3-7 p.m.)
Renville County Fairgrounds
Bird Island, MN
renvillecountyfair.org

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.

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.