



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**RENVILLE-SIBLEY**

**JULY 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 3**

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS**

**Honoring Cooperative  
Legacy With  
Time-honored Tradition**

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*Photo by Frank Turner*



# Olivia Ambulance Service Uses REED Loan to Build a New Facility to Accommodate Growing Needs

**Amanda Dodge**

Golden Shovel Agency

Olivia Ambulance Service, Inc. in Olivia, Minnesota, debuted a new facility which was made possible with help from a \$750,000 loan from the Rural Electric Economic Development Inc. (REED) Fund that will allow OAS to have the needed extra training and meeting space in hopes of growing the team to meet growing needs.

“Besides the needed training and meeting space, we have bedrooms now,” says Julie Wertish, Secretary/Treasurer at OAS. “Our overnight staff now has living and sleeping quarters to stay on-site while on-call in order to respond to calls quickly.”

OAS is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit volunteer corporation with a 26-member crew. Established in 1958, it now provides the ambulance transport needs of the residents of Olivia, Renville, Bird Island, Danube, and surrounding townships, covering a total of 307 square miles.

## The New Facility is Large Enough to Support OAS

Olivia Ambulance Service has been planning and saving for more than 10 years to build a new facility. It has been operating out of a small ambulance shed that wasn't large enough to attempt to grow the staff to be able to answer increasing calls for emergency assistance. With one very small meeting room, monthly training sessions had to be moved to the Renville County Government Services Building. The facility also wasn't large enough to house staff from out of town to stay on-site while on-call.

Through upgrades funded in part by the REED loan, OAS has a large meeting and training room, bedrooms, a small kitchen, and a living room area with a TV. There are offices, a staff work room, a medication storage control room, and larger bays for the ambulances.

Wertish explains that while there are a few paid staff, most OAS staff are OAS volunteers and don't receive an hourly wage but instead receive a stipend for their time. All members have other paid jobs with varying hours. Staff who live in Olivia are able to respond to calls from home or work as needed, but several staff come from out of town and are now able to take on-call shifts while staying at the new facility. Staff often work long hours day and night, sometimes missing holidays and other family activities in order to serve their friends, families, and neighbors.

“We're grateful for the OAS staff who give of their time and talents to serve our communities,” says DeeAnne Norris, CEO of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association, who serves as a director on the REED Fund board. “Having first

responders in our rural communities provides such a vital service for the health and well-being of our rural residents and we're pleased that the REED Fund loan will help with a new facility that will improve their ability to serve.”

## OAS Responds to Emergencies and Medical Transport Calls

With 24/7 on-call coverage, OAS provides both emergency and non-emergency ambulance services and responds to mutual aid for surrounding ambulance services when needed.

Patients are often transported to larger hospitals across Minnesota and the Dakotas. OAS frequently makes trips to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, St. Cloud, Willmar, Hutchinson, Rochester, Fargo, and Sioux Falls, helping people access hospitals with high-level specialty care to get the treatment they need. If one ambulance is scheduled for a long-distance run, the other stays local to respond to calls.

OAS call volume has increased dramatically in recent years as demand for its services grows. In 2020, OAS responded to 476 calls for assistance. By 2023, OAS responded to 903 calls. Out of its 26 current members who cover the service area 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, four are volunteer EMRs (first responders), 19 are volunteer EMTs, and three are Paramedics. Six new members are currently working on completing the 16-week EMT class and will soon be joining OAS.

“The REED Fund and Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power are committed to supporting our rural communities and with economic and population growth comes the increased need for the services OAS provides,” says Norris. “With this new facility, we hope that OAS will have the space and accommodations they need to serve our region.”

## OAS is Funded By Patient Insurance and Donations

As a non-profit corporation, OAS is not associated with the City of Olivia and does not receive any public subsidies or tax funds from the City of Olivia, Renville County, or any cities it serves. Instead, it is totally funded by patient and insurance payments, annual fundraising activities, and donations.

“We are very grateful for the donations we receive from our annual fundraising activities,” says Wertish. “Everyone has been incredibly generous.”

Along with supporting the medical needs of the community, OAS gives back when it can. It is active in local schools and volunteers serve as standbys at sports events and city festivals. During the Olivia Corn Capital Days, volunteers put on a Family Fun Night with games, bouncy houses, face painting, and emergency service group demonstrations, all for free.

“We want to give back a little bit,” says Wertish. “We don’t spend a lot of money because we rely on donations, but we try to be involved in the community where we can.”

### The REED Team Was Easy to Work With

Wertish has nothing but good things to say about the REED Fund and the process to secure the \$750,000 loan. In addition to the \$750,000 loan for the building, OAS sought funding to help cover the cost of a new ambulance. The 2012 and 2017 ambulances are getting older, which means replacements were needed.

Renville-Sibley’s board provided the local approval required, and REED submitted an application to USDA Rural Development’s Rural Economic Development loan and grant program for a new ambulance for OSA. They received notification of a \$245,000 award for this project. OSA will receive the funds once the ambulance is delivered later this year, and they will repay the loan over a period of 10 years at zero percent interest. As the funds are repaid, they become available for relending to community and business projects through Renville-Sibley’s participation in the REED Fund. The \$750,000 loan for the new facility is just one example of the projects supported by REED’s revolving loan fund.

“I wasn’t even sure where to start with the REED loan application, but Janis from the REED Fund was so helpful,” says Wertish. “She walked us through the application process and gave us a projection about what to expect for payments, which assisted us in making the decision that this was the right financial move for OAS.”

### REED-Funded Projects

REED provides business and community project financing in partnership with commercial and other economic development lenders to leverage private investment and make a difference in the region it serves. Established in 1996 and governed by Renville-Sibley and 26 other electric cooperatives, REED assists projects that promote growth and contribute to job, business, and wealth creation, as well as improve the infrastructure, community facilities/services, and economic base of rural areas in South Dakota and Minnesota. To learn more, visit [REEDfund.coop](http://REEDfund.coop).

REED finances several healthcare projects each year so residents of Minnesota and South Dakota can get the services they need. People in rural communities can still receive quality health care, helping them recover faster and live longer. This supports quality of life in the area because residents get more time with their loved ones. Services like OAS help Renville County residents get treated for emergencies quickly or attend appointments for specialty care. With more than 900 calls a year, their presence is invaluable.



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

#### Board of Directors

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

#### Renville-Sibley Employees

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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](http://www.rscpa.coop)

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# Playground Safety

*Source: National Safety Council*

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

### Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

**Improper ground surfaces:** Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

**Overcrowded play areas:** The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

**Unprotected elevated areas:** Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

**Head entrapment spaces:** Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

**Sharp points and edges:** Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

### Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

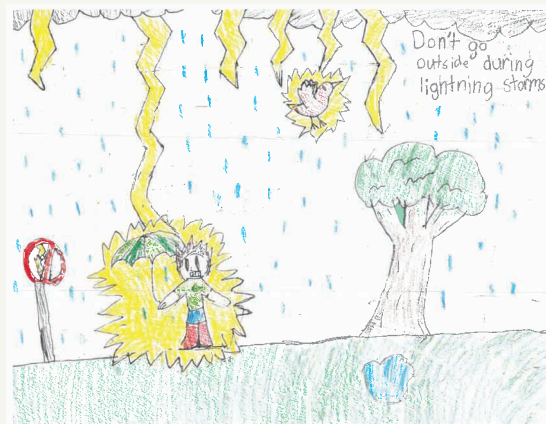
### Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child’s bare skin.

### Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



### "Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

#### Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, 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.



# Delectable CHICKEN

## CHICKEN MILANESE

### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

### Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

**McCormick.com**

## SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

### Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. \*Makes 4 servings.

**Jan Grage**  
Clay-Union Electric Member

## CHICKEN POT PIE

### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

### Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

**Cindy Foster**  
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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.

## Co-ops In the Classroom Visits Area School



**Amy Ervin**  
Executive Admin  
and HR

Renville-Sibley was fortunate to visit multiple classrooms this Spring to bring awareness to electrical safety through our Co-ops in the Classroom presentations. We spent two days on May 7th and 8th where we had the

chance to head to the elementary classrooms at GFW, St. Mary's and RCW. Renville-Sibley Lineman Mike Benson joined Jennifer Gross from East River Electric to help students recognize where electricity comes from and ways to conserve electricity.

The most important lesson we hope to impart on these visits is to teach the students to respect and be safe around electricity. Jennifer explained the relationship between East River Electric and Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association. For those of you unaware, East River is responsible for delivering wholesale power over the transmission lines to our substations. They also provide other services to our cooperative, such as load management and our Information Technology Services.

The 4th grade students participate in an hour-long presentation that begins with static electricity, protons, neutrons, and most importantly, electrons. We also discuss

what materials are conductors and insulators of electricity. The best way to demonstrate static electricity is by using the Van de Graaff generator. This is always a hit with the students! Most students think it's fun to get their hair to stand up and shock a fellow classmate. After this shocking experience, we remind the students that this is static electricity, and this type of electricity does not power our daily electrical needs.

The students are asked how the power they use in their daily lives is generated. With a little help, most classrooms students can name the major energy sources which are: hydro, wind, solar, natural gas, nuclear, and coal. They had a chance to generate power by pedaling a bicycle that powers a display board with light bulbs and various other appliances. It was easy for them when not many appliances were plugged in. As more items were added in, this task became more challenging. The point of this experiment was for the students to understand the more items they use that demand electricity, the more the powerplants must work to provide for their needs. This led to the discussion of conserving electricity.

I am thankful that the schools allow Renville-Sibley into their classrooms and allow us to share about electricity. I also would like to thank Jennifer Gross and Mike Benson for taking the time to do these awesome presentations. We look forward to our classroom visits in the 2025-2026 school year!



Students using the Van de Graaff generator to create static electricity.



Mike Benson, Renville-Sibley linemen showing a student some of the Personal Protective Equipment our crews are required to use.



(Above) Mike Benson presenting PowerTown to the 2nd Grade students at RCW.

(Left) Jennifer Gross from East River Electric, along with a student generating power by pedaling a bicycle to power a display board of different types of light bulbs and appliances.

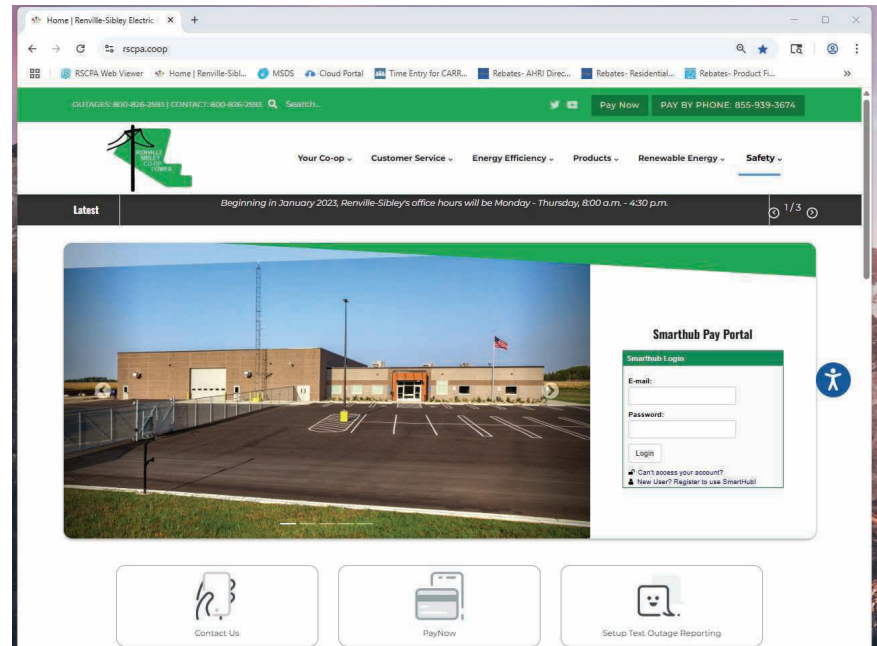


# Renville-Sibley Offers a Variety of Payment Options to Members

Renville-Sibley members have a variety of options available to pay their monthly electric bills. These options include our website, pay by phone, and autopay. These payment methods are more efficient and cost effective than mailing in a check. While we do take payment by check, Renville-Sibley office staff recommend these alternative methods.

Members can pay using two options on the Renville Sibley website <https://www.rscpa.coop/>. Located on the right side of the Renville-Sibley's homepage is the SmartHub Pay Portal and in the upper righthand corner, you will find the PayNow option. The difference between these two options is the SmartHub application requires a username and password and contains account information such as viewing your usage, billing and payment history, the ability to manage contact information, set up account notifications, and the option to make a payment or set-up autopay. Alternatively, PayNow can be accessed by simply entering an account number and last name; making payments is all you can do at PayNow.

Renville-Sibley offers an automated pay by phone option which is available any time in both English and Spanish. Members can call 855-939-3674 to make payment on an account, update the phone number, or update bank draft information. When using pay by phone, you can pay using a credit card, debit card or checking account. Regardless of



what payment method you choose there is never an additional service fee.

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 Renville-Sibley to deduct the balance from either a checking or savings account on the 3rd of each month. Members also have the option to set up automatic payment in SmartHub. Through SmartHub, members can select the payment source to be either a checking account, savings account, credit card or debit card. 980100

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 twelve (12) months factoring in any rate increases for the next year. 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 sign up for the program.

## Notice:

The June board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 24th, 2025 at 8 a.m.

The July board meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025 at 8 a.m.

The August board meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 26th, 2025 at 8 a.m.



# SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.

*Photo by JJ Martin*

## Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sreda.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sreda.coop)

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”



*Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123*



That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

## Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

## Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

*Photos by Mandy Scherer*



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."

# Backyard Safety

## Stay safe this summer: Backyard electrical safety

As the weather warms, and you spend more time outdoors it's essential to prioritize electrical safety. Hidden hazards can pose serious risks.

Here are some critical safety tips to keep your loved ones safe in your backyard.

### Stay away from power lines

Overhead power lines can be closer than they appear. Teach children never to climb trees near power lines; and never to fly kites, drones, remote-controlled toys or balloons in areas where lines are present. If you see a downed power line, stay at least 50 feet away and report it to your local utility company immediately.

### Trampoline safety

If you're considering an above-ground trampoline, remember to look up for power lines. Children jumping high into the air could come dangerously close to overhead electric lines, which pose a serious risk of shock or electrocution.

Thinking about installing an in-ground trampoline instead? Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked. Digging without knowing the location of buried electrical, gas or water lines can result in dangerous utility strikes. This simple step can prevent accidents, service interruptions and costly repairs.

### Water safety

Water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Keep these tips in mind to prevent electrical hazards and create a safe space for swimming, soaking and outdoor fun.

- Ensure pool lights, filters and outdoor outlets have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection and inspect them regularly. GFCIs are designed to quickly shut off electrical power if they detect even a small change in electrical current.
- If you notice flickering lights or feel a tingling sensation in the water, exit immediately and contact a professional. Faulty wiring can cause electric shock drowning.
- Avoid using plug-in devices, like radios, speakers or chargers, near water. Opt for battery-operated, waterproof devices to reduce the risk of shock.
- Know what to do in case of an electrical emergency. If someone is shocked, do not enter the water. Turn off the power source, call 911 and use a non-conductive tool, like a fiberglass pool pole, to assist.
- If it starts to rain, unplug electrical equipment, such

as string lights, radios, speakers or power tools. Teach children not to touch electrical appliances with wet hands.

### Outdoor sports

Sports and play areas are a haven for children, but they can also contain hidden electrical hazards. Here's how to protect your loved ones:

- Ensure swings and other tall play structures are far from overhead power lines.
- If you have outdoor lighting for night games, ensure the fixtures are weatherproof and properly installed. Have a professional check for frayed wires or loose connections.
- If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them never to touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it.
- Install a weather app on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, seek shelter inside.

### Supervise children around electrical equipment

Children are naturally curious, which is why they should be kept away from outdoor electrical equipment like utility boxes, transformers and air conditioning units. If you have an outdoor generator, make sure it is stored in a secure, ventilated area that children cannot access and never plug a generator directly into your home's electrical system.

### Avoid DIY electrical work

If you're planning a backyard upgrade, such as installing landscape lighting, sports lighting or poolside outlets, leave the electrical work to licensed electricians. DIY electrical projects can pose serious safety risks to you and your family if done incorrectly.

From poolside play to backyard sports, it's important to be aware of electrical hazards and how to avoid them. By following these guidelines, you can create a home oasis that is both fun and safe.

For more tips on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

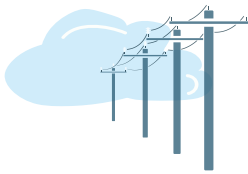




# OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

Share these **ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS** with children and teens to help keep them safe.

**1** DO NOT climb or sit on green boxes or other electrical equipment.



**STAY AWAY** from electrical equipment marked "keep out," "high voltage" or "danger."

**2**

**3** NEVER ENTER the fenced area around a substation to retrieve an item or pet.



FLY kites, remote-control devices and drones **FAR AWAY** from overhead power lines.

**4**



**Safe  
Electricity.org®**

## OUTAGE REPORT:

*Affecting 10 members or more*

**Date:** 4-23-25

**Time off:** 9 AM

**Time on:** 10:27 AM

**Substation:** Emmet

**Cause:** Prearranged

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

## THANK YOU

Dear Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association,

I am very thankful to have been selected as a recipient of your scholarship. I can't wait to learn more about my passion – Agriculture. I plan to attend Ridgewater College and study Ag Business along with Ag Communication – Marketing. Thank you again for your support. Also thank you for your generosity and belief in area youth.

Sincerely,  
Heidi Beckendorf

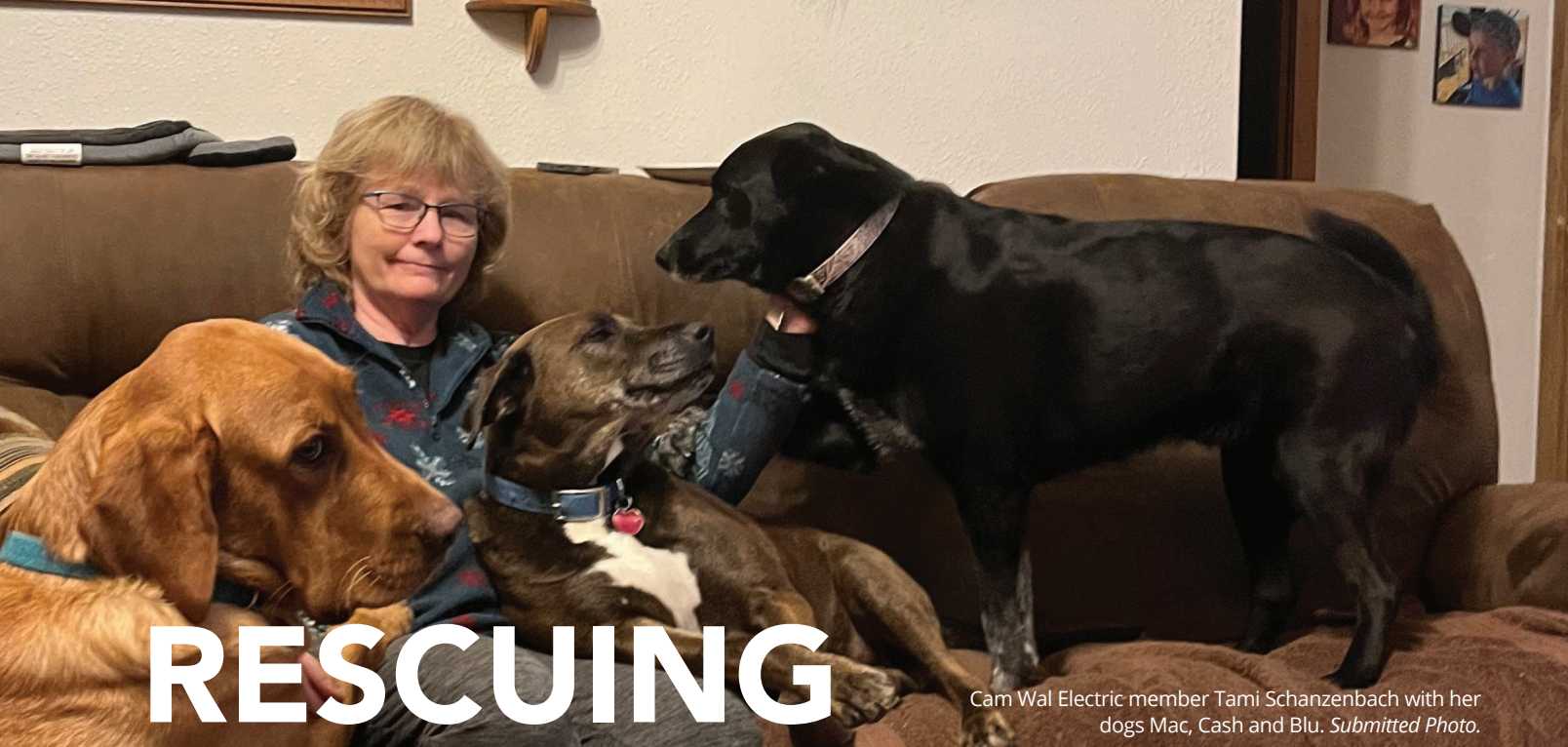
## REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2025 or 2026 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.

## NOTICE

Call 811 or go online to [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) and file a locate request before you dig!

Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

# RESCUING ANIMALS

## Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

**Jacob Boyko**

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

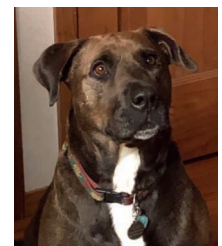
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*



blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

## HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

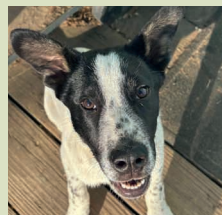
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.  
*Submitted Photo.*

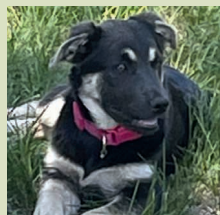


## Looking for a new home...

(plus many more)



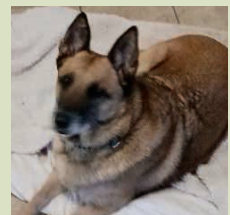
Buddy



Margot



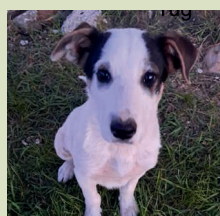
Chopper



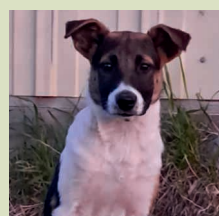
Eliza



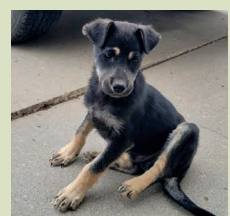
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo

# May Board Meeting Highlights

The May board meeting was held on Thursday, May 29th, 2025 at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Attorney Jeff Whitmore, and Carren Frank.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the April 29, 2025 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of April
- Safety Report for May
- Director Expenses
- Minnesota Rural Electric Trust Voting Delegates
- East River Annual Meeting Voting Delegates
- Basin Electric District 1 Caucus Voting Delegates
- CRC Board of Directors Election Voting Delegates
- CFC Voting Bylaws Proposed Amendments Voting Delegates

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Cooperative Attorney Report
- Total new members
- Capital Credits Transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through April (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - East River update
  - Area Co-ops Annual Meetings
  - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
  - Accounts receivable
- Member Comments and Concerns

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 \$60. 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 in your search!

## 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 application deadline is July 1, 2025.

Applications for donations can be found at [rscpa.coop/operation-round](http://rscpa.coop/operation-round). Contact the office at 320-826-2593 for more information.

## OPERATION ROUND UP THANK YOU

Renville-Sibley Cooperative,

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your incredibly generous donation to KA. Our progress to this point has been made possible by the support of people and businesses like you. On behalf of the students, teachers, and KA committee, THANK YOU for helping us create a vibrant educational environment for our children.

Koselig Academy

# 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



## Minnesota's Extreme Heat Law

Minnesota Statute 216B.0975 requires that, "A utility may not effect an involuntarily disconnect of residential services in affected counties when an excessive heat watch, heat advisory, or excessive heat warning issued by the National Weather Service is in effect."

Renville-Sibley will continue to work with members to stall involuntary disconnection of electric service for non-payment. Members with past-due accounts have the opportunity to work out a feasible payment schedule. However, to construct a payment plan, members must contact Renville-Sibley ahead of time to make payment arrangements and sign a payment agreement.

Renville-Sibley 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, members with past-due accounts

who neglect to contact the office to make mutually agreed payment arrangements and members who fail to meet agreed upon payment arrangements will have their electric service disconnected once the excessive heat watch, advisory or warning expires.

**For energy assistance, please contact:**

**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**

507-537-1416 Marshall

320-523-1842 Olivia

320-235-0850 Willmar

## 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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SAVE  
*the*  
DATE

**FARMFEST**

**28269 MN 67, MORGAN, MN**

**AUGUST 5-7**

**FAMILY-A-FAIR NIGHT**

**AT THE RENVILLE COUNTY FAIR**

**BIRD ISLAND, MN**

**AUGUST 7**

## 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 16-20**

**Danish Days**

Dancing, food, parade, etc.  
Viborg, SD

*Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota*

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

### **SATURDAYS UNTIL SEPT. 13**

#### **Buggy Museum**

Free Buggy Rides + More  
10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Stockholm, SD  
605-938-4192

### **JUNE 21-29**

#### **Marshall Area Stage Company's Willy Wonka**

Marshall High School  
Marshall, MN  
507-532-2754

### **JUNE 25-28**

#### **Crystal Springs Rodeo**

Clear Lake, SD  
605-874-2996

### **JUNE 27-28**

#### **Buckhorn Rodeo**

Britton, SD  
605-880-5077

### **JUNE 27-29**

**Leola Rhubarb Festival**  
Leola, SD

### **JUNE 27-29**

#### **Bowdle Tower Days**

Bowdle, SD

### **JULY 9**

#### **Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour**

2-7:30 p.m.  
Tracy, MN  
507-629-3252  
Rain Date: July 10

### **JULY 9-12**

#### **Aberdeen Senior Games**

605-626-7015

### **JULY 17-20**

#### **Danish Days**

Danville Heritage Museum  
Viborg, SD  
danvilleheritage.com

### **JULY 25-27**

#### **Clear Lake Days**

Clear Lake, SD  
ClearLakeDays.com

### **JULY 26**

#### **Planes, Trains, & Automobiles**

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Prairie Village  
Madison, SD

### **JULY 26**

#### **Richmond Lake Association's Annual Pontoon Poker Run**

Aberdeen, SD  
605-225-0609

### **JULY 26**

#### **South Dakota Chislic Festival**

10 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Freeman, SD  
www.sdchislicfestival.com

### **AUG. 1-3**

#### **Beaver Days**

Beaver Creek, MN

### **AUG. 5-7**

#### **Farmfest 2025**

8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Gifillan Estate  
28269 MN 67  
Morgan, MN  
www.ideagroup.com/farmfest

### **AUG. 6-8**

#### **Renville County Fair**

10 a.m.  
Thurs. Family-a-Fair Night  
Renville County Fairgrounds  
Bird Island, MN  
www.renvillecountyfair.org

### **AUG. 10**

#### **Czech Heritage Festival**

Bechyn, MN  
302-522-1218

### **AUG. 13-17**

#### **Lyon County Fair**

2-7:30 p.m.  
Marshall, 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.**