



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**RENVILLE-SIBLEY**  
**OCTOBER 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 6**

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## Rural Electrification

**West Central - The Last  
Co-op to Incorporate**  
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Rural Electrification served even  
the most rural communities.



# Renville-Sibley Co-op: Energizing Rural Communities Through Education and Innovation

Scott Tedrick

It was Teddy Roosevelt who said, “The cooperative plan is the best plan of organization wherever men have the right spirit to carry it out.”

That spirit is alive and well at the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) in Danube. There, the co-op is actively educating the next generation of energy leaders while pioneering ways to enhance service for its members by embodying the member-owned, not-for-profit, and community-focused core cooperative principles:

With just 1,564 member-owners and a dedicated team of 14 employees, RSCPA punches above its weight as the state's smallest electric distribution cooperative, not only by delivering reliable power to rural homes and businesses but also in championing the cooperative business model. Under the leadership of CEO DeeAnne Norris, RSCPA's service territory spans a vast agricultural expanse in Renville, Sibley, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Redwood, and Nicollet counties, where residential accounts dominate in number, but agricultural and industrial loads drive the majority of energy use. The co-op's largest member, the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, represents 59 percent of energy sales and requires ironclad reliability, with an outage as short as 20 minutes, in certain conditions, potentially costing hundreds of thousands in damages. To counter this, RSCPA employs creative load-shifting to alternate substations and supports on-site backups, all while navigating the challenges of low consumer density. With only 1.8 consumers per mile of line, the co-op faces the classic rural challenge of high infrastructure costs relative to revenue, yet it continues to innovate for affordability and sustainability.

Leading the charge of such efforts at RSCPA and beyond is Norris, a proactive leader known for her creative problem-solving. Whether envisioning ways midwest energy cooperatives can work together to lower costs and improve services for customers or restructuring workdays to improve the distribution of on-call duties to improve quality of life and work experience, she and other cooperative employees are constantly seeking a better way.

To ensure the next generation has the opportunity to carry the cooperative torch, RSCPA co-led a Rural Midwest Energy Field Experience in May. The week-long tour took 27 University of Minnesota students, made up mostly of master candidates from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Partnering with Professor Gabriel Chan, Norris organized the comprehensive tour, which took students to a variety of electric cooperatives and generation-related sites across Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota.



U of M students tour solar array on Shawn Black's installation in Fairfax

The tour kicked off in Renville County with visits to local farmer-owned solar and wind projects in Olivia and Fairfax, showcasing agrivoltaics—innovative systems that combine agriculture with solar energy production and a member-owned combined wind and solar production site located adjacent to a livestock facility. Students then toured RSCPA's headquarters before heading to South Dakota. There, East River Electric Power Cooperative—RSCPA's transmission supplier—hosted an electric vehicle ride-and-drive, a high-voltage safety demonstration, a substation tour, and presentations on governance, public engagement, beneficial electrification, load management, system operations, and engineering. Sioux Valley Energy, another distribution co-op who helped coordinate this year's tour, provided insights into community solar and storage projects, while T&R Electric, the country's largest remanufacturer of critical transformer equipment provided another unique experience. A tour of the Oahe Dam, a major hydroelectric facility on the Missouri River operated by the Army Corp of Engineers, followed.

Crossing into North Dakota, the group explored coal mining, reclamation, and generation at the Freedom Mine and Antelope Valley Station, learning about resource planning, sustainability, and the supply chain that ultimately powers RSCPA members. Discussions with Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative highlighted rapid infrastructure expansion during energy booms, while a presentation on fracking operations offered a glimpse into oil extraction. The itinerary included tours of Basin Electric's trading floor and resource planning, as well as Minnkota Power Co-op's Project Tundra, an advanced plan to demonstrate large-scale carbon capture technology. There were also interactions with the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative and guests from the SAGE Development Authority. Back in Minnesota, stops at the University

of Minnesota Morris featured renewable energy research in agrivoltaics, energy storage, and hydrogen; West Central Research and Outreach Center: a visit with the CEO of Runestone Electric Association; and a tour of the New Flyer electric bus manufacturing facility.

The hands-on experience exposed students to a full spectrum of energy production—from renewables like wind and solar to traditional sources like coal and hydropower—while emphasizing cooperatives' role in balancing environmental goals with reliable and affordable service. RSCPA sources nearly 20 percent of its power from Western Area Power Administration hydropower projects, with the rest from Basin Electric via East River. The co-op also leads in member-owned distributed energy resources (DER), ranking second among Minnesota's 44 distribution cooperatives in DER per capita, with 36 systems totaling 952 kW.

"Ensuring students have a greater understanding of cooperatives and how our missions integrate safety, affordability, and reliability is a crucial experience for them to carry forward whether they enter the energy workforce, research positions, or the public policy environment," said Norris. "Many of the students were surprised because they had no idea of the vast infrastructure owned and operated by the Three-tiered cooperative business model and they didn't realize that it was the end

consumers who are actually electing their own directors to govern the distribution cooperatives like RSCPA, the transmission cooperatives like East River, and the generation cooperatives like Basin Electric... and all of these cooperatives are not-for-profit. Which means the co-ops are already doing whatever they can to keep energy safe, affordable and reliable."

Norris said that part of the problem is the lack of cooperative education occurring at universities. However, initiatives such as Humphrey School's Electric Cooperative Innovation Center, have emerged to fill some of the gaps.

Committed to biannual tours, Norris believes this education will yield long-term benefits.

"This investment in education about the nature and benefits of cooperatives will reap continuous returns. Providing this experience to graduate students is perfect timing for them to spread the word throughout their careers as they are the future of the energy transition," she said.

RSCPA's unique method of engagement is another example of how small cooperatives can drive big change by fostering collaboration with universities, researchers, and other co-ops to tackle challenges and opportunities. In this way, Norris and her team are not just keeping the lights on Southwest Minnesota—they're illuminating paths to a prosperous and sustainable future.



2025 Rural Midwest Energy Field Experience tour group.

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

#### Board of Directors

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Roger Manthei – Vice Chair  
Vicky Firlie – Secretary/Treasurer  
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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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# Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

Anne Prince  
NRECA

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

### 360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used.

### Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.

- Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment. Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- Avoid using metal poles inside bins. Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.



### "Don't play with outlets!"

#### Kinzlee Klomp, Age 12

Kinzlee warns readers not to play with power outlets. Great advice, Kinzlee! Kinzlee's parents are Kaitlin and Austin Klomp from Box Elder, 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.



# Fresh BREADS

## ZUCCHINI BREAD

### Ingredients:

3 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup oil  
2 tsps. vanilla  
3 cups flour  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
3 cups zucchini (shredded)

### Method

Cream together eggs, sugar and oil. Then add the vanilla. Mix together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and add to the egg mixture. Stir in zucchini. Pour into two loaf pans. Bake at 325°F for approximately one hour.

**Kimberly Grimm**  
Southeastern Electric

## GLUTEN FREE OATMEAL PANCAKES

### Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups oats  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup milk  
3/4 cup applesauce  
3 tsps. maple syrup  
2 tsps. apple cider vinegar  
2 tsps. vanilla

### Method

Grind 2 1/2 cups oats in blender until turned into flour. In large bowl, whisk together oats, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Form a bowl in center, add eggs and whisk them. Then, add milk, applesauce, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar and vanilla. Stir to combine. Wait five minutes to thicken batter. Cook in oiled pan.

**Jean Beauchamp**  
Southeastern Electric

## KUNSI' FRY BREAD

### Ingredients:

1 tbsp. yeast (quick rise)  
2 tsps. sugar  
1 qt. warm water  
1 tbsp. oil/melted butter  
1/2 tsp. salt  
6 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsps. powdered dry milk  
4 cups oil for frying

### Method

Mix yeast, sugar, salt, warm water, oil/melted butter and let proof for 15 minutes. Mix flour and powdered dry milk. Make a well in the flour mixture and add yeast mixture. Gradually add warm water until dough comes together and is no longer sticky. Cover and let rise until doubled in size. Heat oil to fry dough. Separate dough into 10 to 12 baseball-size dough balls (or smaller if you want smaller pieces). Stretch dough balls and shape into oval discs or round discs approximately 1/4 inch thick. Test the oil to see if it's hot enough by dropping a small pea size piece of the dough in the oil. If it floats it's ready. Flatten the disc between your hands and stretch it again. Fry the bread until both sides are golden brown. Transfer to paper towel lined plate to drain. Continue until all the dough is fried. Enjoy with soup or a Spam and egg sandwich or taco toppings.

**Sheila Ironheart**  
Whetstone Valley Electric

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.

### Notice

To ensure the safety and reliability of Renville-Sibley's system, STAR Energy Services will be pole testing starting in late October. We are in the seventh year of a 10-year pole inspection plan, with the rejection rate at five percent last year.

Our goal is to test approximately 1,700 poles in 2025, primarily using a ranger or other 4-wheeled off-road vehicles. STAR Energy Services conducts our below-ground pole testing. The inspector will be in Norfolk, Birch Cooley, Beaver Falls, and Henryville townships this year.

Please call the office if you have any questions during this process.




### Update Your Contact Information

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. There are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible. One step is to keep your contact information up to date. Not only does this help us when notifying you of planned outages for repairs and maintenance, it also assists in a quicker response when calling in a power outage after hours. After hour calls go to Cooperative Response Center (CRC). Your account information automatically shows if the phone number you are calling from is tied to your account in our software system. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it can make your call to CRC a little more time-consuming as they search for your account. Another step to a speedy response when calling in your power outage is to have your account number available. 885300

Your contact information and account number is located on your electric statement. Please review your contact information and let us know if this information needs to be updated. You can update the information on your return stub or by calling our office at 800-826-2593.

CancelNew ContactDone




Add Photo

First name

Last name

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Assoc...

 work > (320) 826-2593

### Notice

The September board meeting will be held on Thursday, September 18th, 2025 at 8 a.m.

The October board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 28th, 2025 at 8 a.m.

The November board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 20th, 2025 at 8 a.m.



## Choose Renewable Energy for Your Home or Business

You can easily purchase renewable energy from your local electric cooperative, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power. Renville-Sibley has Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) available for purchase to offset your current usage with 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% renewable energy options. The price of the RECs will be added to your current electric bill.

The electricity you receive will still be the same reliable, affordable energy you have always received from Renville-Sibley Co-op Power but, by participating in this program, you will be supporting current and future renewable projects in our area.

Your home or business will be joining hundreds of other people from across the nation who are supporting renewable energy. By purchasing RECs, your business could add value to your products or services, promote future regional renewable projects and showcase your support for renewable energy sources.

### FAQ's

#### What is a Renewable Energy Credit (REC)?

- 1 MWh (megawatt hour) produced by a renewable energy source equals 1 REC
- RECs are also called Green Tags
- RECs represent the valuable renewable attributes of wind energy

#### How much does it cost?

\$1 per MWh. The average Renville-Sibley member uses 1,200 kWh a month. Participating in the REC program would add the following amount to your monthly bill:

100%	=	\$1.20
75%	=	\$0.90
50%	=	\$0.60
25%	=	\$0.30

#### Do I need to purchase any special equipment?

No. Renville-Sibley will continue to fulfill all your electric needs and you can enjoy the benefits of renewable energy.

#### Where do the RECs come from?

The RECs come from several wind farms in the region that supply renewable energy to Renville-Sibley Co-op Power. These include, but are not limited to:

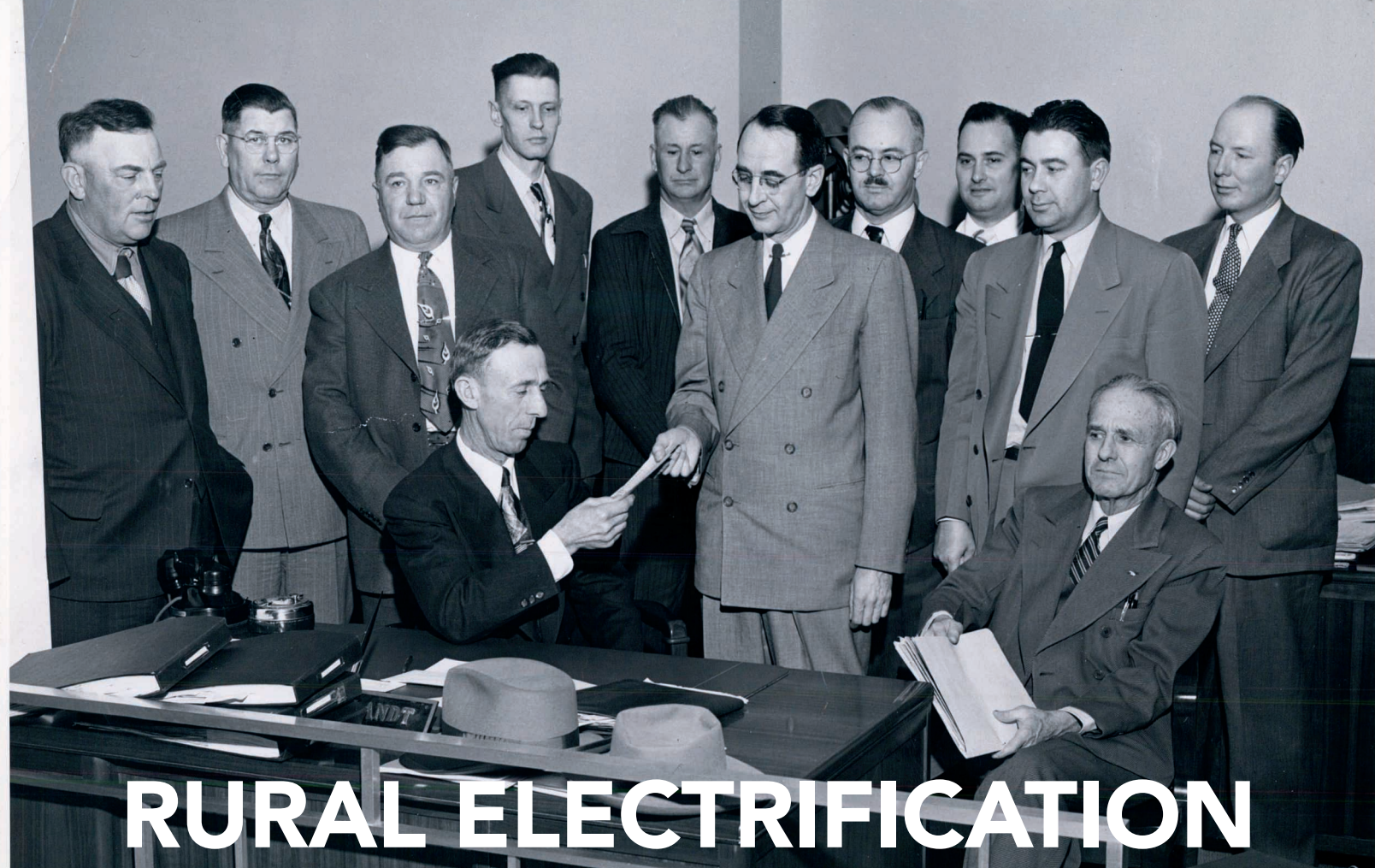
- North Dakota: PrairieWinds 1, Wilton 1 & 2, Baldwin Wind Project and Minot Wind Project
- South Dakota: Crow Lake Wind, the Chamberlain turbines, Day County Wind Farm and South Dakota Wind Project



1.800.826.2593  
renville-sibley@rscpa.coop

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power is an equal opportunity provider & employer.





# RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

## WEST CENTRAL

### Last to Incorporate, Lasting in Impact

**Frank Turner**

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

Before rural electrification, South Dakota's farmsteads ended the day in silence. There was no music from the radio playing in the living room or hum of an electric refrigerator in the kitchen. Over decades of work, power lines would stretch across the prairie through President Franklin Roosevelt's vision of rural electrification, carrying not only electricity but also a new way of life.

In 1935, President Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his New Deal policies to revive a nation struggling through the Great Depression and bring electricity to

America's rural communities, something that private and investor-owned utilities refused to do.

Clay-Union Electric was the first rural community in South Dakota to adopt the cooperative model in 1937, and West Central was the last in 1949. But as former West Central Electric CEO Steve Reed can attest, being the last to adopt the cooperative way didn't hinder their success. Once the path to forming a cooperative was established, the members of West Central benefitted from electricity's transformation from a luxury into a necessity with the rest of rural South Dakota.

"We couldn't rely on the power

West Central Electric board directors present a check to a representative of Central Electric and Gas in 1951, finalizing the cooperative's purchase of the private utility system. *Photo submitted by West Central Electric.*

companies to come out to serve rural South Dakota," said Reed, a 42-year cooperative veteran who joined West Central Electric as a lineman and worked his way up to CEO. "They were never going to do it at price that was affordable, so rural electric has been great for not only the members of West Central but the entire country."

So why was West Central the last to form a cooperative? According to Reed, the rural communities that organized West Central Electric in 1949 had several hurdles to clear. The first was overcoming the sheer remoteness of the territory, which then had a system that averaged 1.5 members per mile of line constructed, even including towns and



cities. Because members were few and far between, the REA needed the towns in the proposed West Central territory to become members: from Philip to Hayes and Murdo to Kennebec, where West Central Electric was incorporated.

That led to the next problem: the towns and cities in the proposed West Central Electric's service territory were already being served by Central Electric and Gas, a private company based out of Philadelphia. This obstacle didn't stop the people who had a vision of what rural electrification could accomplish. Following lengthy discussion in 1951, West Central Electric purchased systems from Central Electric and Gas for \$850,000 using low-interest REA federal funds.

Former West Central Electric Attorney John Larson outlined the discussions in his 50th Annual Meeting Speech: "There was no choice but to buy out the private supplier, Central Electric and Gas, and that was accomplished... (Former South Dakota Governor M. Q. Sharpe, who served as West Central Electric's attorney), showed up for the meeting that morning unshaven and unkempt, with a threadbare shirt and suit. For the entire morning, he listened with his head down and eyes shut to the Philadelphia lawyer types who represented the power company. After the dinner break, however, he showed up in a new suit, shaved, and took over the meeting by dictating exactly what West Central would do and what we would pay. During an afternoon break, one of the Philadelphia types was heard to mutter, 'You want to watch that old guy. When he's got his head down and eyes shut, he's not sleeping!'"

West Central Electric's 1951 purchase included all the electrical infrastructure within the town boundaries, as well as the diesel generation system extending west from Chamberlain. Shortly after, the evolution of West Central Electric progressed with the construction of distribution systems to farms and reconstructing the systems of various

towns, including the installation of street lights.

Since that iconic moment, West Central has continued to grow with its membership, meeting more demand for electrical energy than had been previously thought possible, a reflection of just how integral electricity has

become in day-to-day living for business owners, ag producers, and rural folk alike.

"That moment modernized us," said Reed. "It just did so much for everything – and without it, where would we be?"



(Top) A West Central Electric Annual Meeting.  
(Bottom) A West Central Electric Board Meeting with the REA.  
*Photos submitted by West Central Electric*

# Cold Weather Rule and Energy Assistance Program

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between Oct. 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

## 216B.097 COLD WEATHER RULE; COOPERATIVE

**Subdivision 1. Application; notice to residential customer.** (a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 1 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

**Subd. 2. Notice to residential customer facing disconnection.** (a) Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

(1) a notice of proposed disconnection;

(2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;

(3) a list of local energy assistance providers;

(4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and

(5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

(b) At the same time that notice is given under paragraph (a), the utility must also give written or electronic notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider and the department.

**Subd. 3. Restrictions if disconnection necessary.** (a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected remotely using advanced metering infrastructure or physically at the property being disconnected between October 1 and April 30 for failure to comply with subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

(1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;

(2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;

(3) when utility offices are closed; or

(4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 30 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) The customer must not be disconnected until the utility attempts to confirm whether the residential unit is actually occupied, which the utility may accomplish by:

(1) visiting the residential unit; or

(2) examining energy usage data obtained through advanced metering infrastructure

to determine whether there is energy usage over at least a 24-hour period that indicates occupancy.

(c) A utility may not disconnect a residential customer who is in compliance with section 216B.098, subdivision 5.

(d) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

(e) For the purposes of this section, "advanced metering infrastructure" means an integrated system of smart meters, communication networks, and data management systems that enables two-way communication between a utility and its customers.

**Subd. 4. Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

**Subd. 5. Cost recovery.** A municipal utility or cooperative electric association may recover the reasonable costs of disconnecting and reconnecting a residential customer, based on the costs of providing notice to the customer and other entities and whether the process was accomplished physically at the property being disconnected or reconnected or remotely using advanced metering infrastructure.

**History:** 1991 c 235 art 2 s 1; 2001 c 212 art 4 s 2; 1Sp2003 c 11 art 3 s 2; 2007 c 57 art 2 s 14,15; 1Sp2021 c 4 art 8 s 11-14

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, Energy Assistance Program / Minnesota Department of Commerce - Energy (mn.gov) for more details and to access the application portal.

- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association to set up a payment plan.



## Here is a list of local energy assistance providers:

### United Community Action Partnership

**Marshall Office:**  
1400 S Saratoga St  
Marshall, MN 56258  
Marshall (Corporate) 507-537-1416

### Olivia Office:

1635 West Lincoln Ave Suite 2  
Olivia, MN 56277  
Olivia 320-523-1842

### Willmar Office:

200 SW 4th St  
Willmar, MN 56201  
Willmar 320-235-0850

### Minnesota Valley Action Council

706 N Victory Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001  
800-767-7139 (Toll-Free)  
507-345-6822 (Mankato)

### Prairie Five Community Action Council

719 North 7th Street, Suite 302  
P.O. Box 159  
Montevideo, MN 56265-0159  
320-269-6578 (Montevideo) or 800-292-5437

### Renville County Human Services

105 S 5th St., Suite 203h  
Olivia, MN 56277  
320-523-2202 or 800-363-2533

## Utility Payment Arrangements for Military Service Personnel

### 325E.028 UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL.

Subdivision 1. Restriction on disconnection; payment schedules. (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if such a residential customer:

(1) has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility under which the residential customer pays ten percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or

(2) has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "household income" means household income measured after the date of the orders specified in paragraph (a).

Subd. 2. Annual notice to all customers; inability to pay forms. (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must notify all residential customers annually of the provisions of this section.

(b) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must provide a

form to a residential customer to request the protections of this section upon the residential customer's request.

Subd. 3. Application to service limiters. For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Subd. 4. Income verification. Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility in subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (1).

Subd. 5. Appeal process. (a) The municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility shall provide the residential customer with a commission-approved written notice of the right to appeal to the commission or other appropriate governing body when the utility and residential customer are unable to agree on the establishment, reasonableness, or modification of a payment schedule, or on the reasonable timeliness of the payments under a payment schedule, provided for by this section. Any appeal must be made within seven working days after the residential customer's receipt of personally served notice, or within ten working days after the utility has deposited first class mail notice in the United States mail.

(b) The utility shall not disconnect service while a payment schedule is pending appeal, or until any appeal involving payment schedules has been determined by the commission.

Subd. 6. Enforcement. This section may be enforced pursuant to chapter 216B.

History: 2007 c 111 s 1; 2015 c 21 art 1 s 72

## OUTAGE REPORT:

*Affecting 10 members or more*

### Date: 7-5-2025

Time off: 4:03 PM  
Time on: 5:54 PM  
Substation: Wellington  
Cause: Equipment Failure

### Date: 7-27-2025

Time off: 9:28 PM  
Time on: 2:44 AM on 7-28-2025  
Substation: Cairo  
Cause: Tree on Line

### Date: 7-27-2025

Time off: 9:51 PM  
Time on: 12:12 AM on 7-28-2025  
Substation: Kingman  
Cause: Lightning

### Date: 7-28-2025

Time off: 8:54 PM  
Time on: 10:41 PM  
Substation: Troy  
Cause: Lightning/Equipment Failure

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

## OPERATION ROUND UP THANK YOU

Thank you so much for selecting us to receive a grant from your program!! We are honored to pay it forward through our non-profit to local current breast cancer patients.

Our Facebook page and website have loads of pictures of us and our events (Gallery). There are also links to other interviews and newspaper articles we've done that give more information about our foundation and purpose (Press). We just recently posted on our Facebook page about a local resident Jamie Weikle who had a benefit organized in her honor, and we were able to present a grant to her at her benefit surrounded by friends and family. These funds from your donation will currently help us with the costs to put on our next fundraiser in Eagle Lake MN in October. Again, thank you from the Flock!!!

Thanks,

Flamboyant Flamingo Flock Foundation



Photo submitted by JT and Luann Weber.

# GENERATIONAL FARMERS

## Four Generations of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Members Ranch on Lake Benton-Area Land

**Jacob Boyko**

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

Nestled amongst the rolling green pastures of western Minnesota, there's a generations-old farm worked by one family for over three quarters of a century.

From their Lincoln County property, the Weber family watched rural electrification improve the prairie, connect neighbors and bring reliability to farmsteads. Now they watch precision agriculture guide planting, bovine genetics strengthen herds, and social media and the internet connect their business to the wider world.

It all started in 1947, when John and Marie Weber moved into the old three-bedroom farmhouse from nearby

Elkton, S.D. Luckily, the move came six years after Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative energized lines in the area, so the Weber home enjoyed many of the modern amenities brought on by rural electrification, including electric lights, kitchen appliances and a washing machine.

"I know I had the best mom and dad in the world," said JT, one of John and Marie's eight children, who today helps run the ranch with his wife, Luann, their three sons and their families. "Dad was very community-oriented. He was on the school board, the elevator board and the rural water board. In fact, he was instrumental in starting rural water. He went from place to place, talking people

into getting rural water."

JT was born on the farm in 1957 during a blizzard that left his parents unable to reach the hospital in town. As a boy, he remembers collecting rainwater in a cistern and using it for cooking, cleaning and baths. Even as rural electrification began to transform the countryside, life on the farm remained far different – and often harder – than life in town.

"When I grew up, back in the 60s and 70s, if you milked 40 cows that was quite a few," JT said. "We were milking about 100 cows – we were kind of ahead of our time. But we had a big family, and us boys, we got right in there."

He continued, "We were hauling silage, hauling manure, milking cows and doing chores. But Dad never told us to do anything. He always asked us if we wanted to, and there's a difference. You wanted to work for him. He made you want to work for him, and it was never a burden."

That was a quality JT kept in mind with his own seven children on that same



ranch where he grew up. Today, JT and Luann's sons Jake, Garret, and Matt all stay involved in the ranch, now Weber Bros. Cattle.

"Growing up, I kind of always had that bug to get in the tractor, chase cows, put up fence, and do what needs to be done," explained Jake, the oldest son.

Today, they specialize in raising purebred Angus bulls and Simmental-Angus crosses, while also producing corn silage and alfalfa to help sustain the operation. While the operation may be old, it's not at all low-tech.

"Our main thing is our bull program," Jake said. "We sell about 50 registered Angus and Simmental bulls by private treaty every spring, and we also develop 50 replacement and bred heifers, and market a portion of them. We do a lot of artificial insemination and embryo transfer. Some of the more elite donor cows we can get our hands on by buying females and buying embryos. We're just trying to make good cows."

Jake, like his dad, graduated from South Dakota State University with an animal science degree, and was excited to return to the ranch to incorporate some of his new skills into the operation.

"When I got back from school, we really amped up our embryo transfer program with different ideas and stuff I learned about genetics from contacts and producers we've met over the years," Jake continued. "We went from selling 10 bulls per year to selling close to 50 bulls."

Jake's younger brother and fellow SDSU animal science graduate, Garret, keeps involved on the family's ranch as well. Though he works full time as swine genetic company Hypor's US Sales Manager, he helps out with the operation and finds the time to run Weber Bros. Cattle's social media pages, which he says has successfully expanded their presence in the market.

"Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or our company website, we're able to hit such a broad spectrum of people, and it's a great way to tell the story of our operation, what we're doing year-in and year-out and advertise the



genetics of the cattle that we're showing and selling," Garret explained. "We're able to have a much greater touch point of individuals that we can reach out to and market our livestock."

JT, Jake and Garret all credit their spouses and families for supporting them as they work to grow the operation.

"It took a long time and a lot of support for us to get established and get to where we are today," JT said.

Looking toward the future – and the next generation, their goals are to make an already successful operation even better.

"We'll keep working with the cow herd, continue to make improvements and make better genetics every year," Jake said. "I want this opportunity to be available to my kids, so that if they want to be able to do this, they'll have the same chance we did."

Garret added, "It's something that I hope my sons can do someday if we're able to continue to grow the operation. I hope it's something they're going to be able to share and cherish with their own kids, because those are the memories that stick with you forever."

JT and Luann Weber with their adult children, Jake, Garret, Matt and Sara Weber, Liz Mergen, and Maria Opheim, and families.

Back, from left: Garret Weber, Levi Weber, Kailey Weber, Jake Weber, Amanda Weber, Sara Weber, Cade Opheim, Maria Opheim, Tawnee Opheim, JT Weber, Luann Weber, Brent Mergen, Liz Mergen, Davie Fiedler, Matt Weber, Racheal Krog.  
Front, from left: Adam Weber, Chisum Weber, Abeline Weber, Vidalia Fiedler.  
Not pictured: Talon Weber



Photo submitted by JT and Luanne Weber.



A purebred Angus Heifer.  
Photo by Garret Weber

# August Board Meeting Highlights

The August board meeting was held on Tuesday, August 26th, 2025, at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Gene Alex, Amy Ervin, and Carren Frank.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the July 22, 2025, board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of July
- Safety Report for August
- Basin Electric Rate Increase Resolution
- Director Expenses
- Policy 526
- Capital Credits to Estates
- Board meeting dates and times from January 2026 to December 2026
- Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting Voting Delegates

The board reviewed the following items:

- Total new members
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through July (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - East River update
  - Director meeting reports
  - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
  - Accounts Receivable
  - CFC District 6 Voting Delegates reviewed
  - CFC At-Large Director Position
  - Federated Rural Electric Region 6 Director Position

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

## WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month's RSCPA member found their member number in the newsletter. Congratulations! The value of the energy credit will start over at \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 1st of October, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## REMINDER

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

## THANK YOU

Thank you so much for the scholarship, it will be very helpful for my education at SDSU! I will be majoring in Precision Agriculture and minoring in Agronomy. I am very excited for my next steps at SDSU! Thank you again for your support to students!

- Abby Willegal

Abby was selected as Renville-Sibley's winner of a \$1,000 Basin Scholarship for 2025

## 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 October 15th. The deadline for applications is October 1st.

Applications for donations can be found at [rscpa.coop/operation-round](https://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



## Family-a-Fair

Renville-Sibley hosted our annual Family-a-Fair Night on Thursday, August 7th at the Renville County Fair. In true August weather fashion, the fair was hot but that didn't stop our loyal members from enjoying all the fun and great food the fair has to offer. We welcomed 396 members and their family and friends through the gates at the Renville County Fair compliments of Renville-Sibley.

The fair is always a great opportunity for us to visit with our members. All members who attended were automatically registered for a \$50 energy credit drawing and kids 12 and under were able to register for a kid's prize. Congratulations to Ron Bernardy for being drawn as our winner of the \$50 energy credit and to Brecken Fostvedt for winning the kids'



Renville-Sibley Employee Amy Ervin and Directors Vicky Firle and Gary Peterson ready to welcome members to the fair.

prize! We also want to extend a thank you to the American Dairy Association and the Pork Producers for allowing us the opportunity to give our members a \$1 off coupon to enjoy at either of their booths. The Renville County Fair Board works extremely hard to make this event happen, and we were thrilled to offer this evening of fun to our members. We hope to see you next year at the fair!

## Farmfest

Renville-Sibley, along with other electric cooperatives in Southern Minnesota, joined together at Farmfest to share information on electricity with our members. The week kicked off with hot and humid temperatures, but attendance was still high. Upon visiting the Touchstone Energy booth, the members of the cooperatives were able to register for one of five electric prizes to be given away: an ice auger, pole saw, power chain saw, blower, or a power string trimmer. Unfortunately,



EGO Tools that members had a chance of winning.

Renville-Sibley did not have a member's name drawn again this year. Thank you to everyone who came to Farmfest and visited our booth. We look forward to seeing you again next year at this event!



## 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.



**OCT. 10-12**  
**Black Hills Powwow**  
 Rapid City, SD  
 605-341-0925

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.

**UNTIL OCT. 31**  
**Wallace Dow, Prairie Architect**  
**Traveling Exhibit**  
 Lake County Museum  
 Madison, SD  
 605-256-5308

**OCT. 3-5**  
**Black Hills Film Festival**  
 Journey Museum  
 Rapid City, SD

**OCT. 4-5**  
**Run Crazy Horse**  
**Full & Half Marathon**  
 Crazy Horse  
 Custer, SD

**OCT. 4-5**  
**Sioux Falls Quilt Guild**  
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Sioux Falls Convention Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-951-2034

**OCT. 10-11**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest**  
**& Vendor Show**  
 Fri. 12-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.,  
 Philip, SD  
 605-441-1060

**OCT. 11**  
**Fall Festival**  
 4 p.m.  
 Fairburn Church  
 Fairburn, SD  
 605-255-4329

**OCT. 11**  
**A Celebration of Classic Hits**  
 7 p.m.  
 Gayville Music Hall  
 Gayville, SD  
 605-760-5799

**OCT. 18**  
**Arts & Crafts Festival**  
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Faulkton, SD

**OCT. 18**  
**Northern Prairie Arts**  
**Barn Quilt Class**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Register by Oct. 6  
 Watertown, SD  
 605-882-1780

**OCT. 18-19**  
**Heartland Quilting Stars Show**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-770-1551

**OCT. 19**  
**Helping With Horsepower**  
**Year-End Horse Show**  
 10 a.m.  
 Reclamation Ranch  
 Mitchell, SD

**OCT. 25**  
**Trick or Treat Trails**  
 3-6:30 p.m.  
 Big Sioux Recreation Area  
 Brandon, SD

**OCT. 25**  
**The Greats of Country**  
 7 p.m.  
 Gayville Music Hall  
 Gayville, SD  
 605-760-5799

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2**  
**Haunted Trail at**  
**Reclamation Ranch**  
 7-10 p.m.  
 Reclamation Ranch  
 Mitchell, SD

**NOV. 1**  
**Reliance Christmas Carousel**  
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Reliance, SD  
 605-730-1462

**NOV. 1**  
**Black Hills Meat Fest**  
 2-4 p.m.  
 Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall  
 Rapid City, SD

**NOV. 1**  
**Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show**  
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Dakota Christian School  
 Corsica, SD  
 605-366-7940

**NOV. 15**  
**Club 14 Craft & Vendor Fair**  
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Hendricks Public School  
 Hendricks, MN  
 605-690-5586

**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.**