



Cooperative Connections

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Mistake:
Lessons
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Critical Role in
COVID Fight**

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Renville-Sibley is Here for You Through the COVID-19 Pandemic



DeeAnne Newville, CEO

dnewville@renville-sibley.coop
Phone: 320-826-2593 or
Toll Free 800-826-2593

These are unprecedented times in our region, country and across the world. From social distancing to homeschooling your children due to school closures, we know you are dealing with many life changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As an essential services provider, Renville-Sibley is here to continue powering your life.

To continue providing essential electric services, we have adapted several business practices. We've taken the following measures to keep our employees safe and healthy so that your co-op can continue providing the high level of service that you expect:

- Closed our office to the general public.
- Decreased the number of employees working in the office to two at any given time with a six-foot distance requirement and supplies to disinfect shared areas after use. Remaining office employees are working remotely.
- The linemen are still working on our system. We ask for your assistance in practicing social distancing by not approaching linemen during this time.
- Set up social distancing rules for our linemen, allowing them to drive their work vehicles home each evening to avoid unnecessary contact with other employees.
- Canceled our March board meeting and our annual meeting. The annual meeting will be rescheduled prior to Aug. 31, 2020.

When you receive your next power bill from Renville-Sibley, we want you to be prepared for your bill to be a little higher than normal if you have been spending more time than usual at home. Many of our member-owners are currently working from home or are staying at home with their children and this increased amount of time at home requires an increased use of electricity.

Here are several quick and easy ways to begin conserving your home's energy use today to minimize your next bill:

- Reduce your thermostat. A one degree decrease in heating setpoint can decrease energy use by 3 percent to 5 percent.
- Wash clothes with cold water. Only use hot water for very dirty loads.
- Change your central HVAC system filter when dirty by the manufacturer's recommendations. Dirty filters can impact your home comfort and increase your electricity bill.
- Set both the upper and lower water heater thermostats no higher than 120° F.
- Open your blinds and use natural light as much as possible during the day.
- Turn computers and monitors off when not in use.
- Enable auto power down feature on gaming consoles.
- Unplug battery chargers and other cords when not needed.
- If you don't unplug them, use energy-saving modes or automatic sleep function on electronics.
- Set the refrigerator temperature to 34°-37° F and freezer temperature to 0°-5° F.

Everything you do – from flipping a switch to upgrading your lighting – can add up to big savings.

Renville-Sibley understands there may be circumstances now and in the future that could impact the financial situation of our member-owners due to COVID-19. If you are having trouble paying your electric bill, please contact us at 800-826-2593 to work out a payment plan.

Everything you do – from flipping a switch to upgrading your lighting – can add up to big savings.

Renville-Sibley

Cooperative Connections

(USPS 019-074)

Board of Directors

Roger Manthei – Chair
Wayland Zaske – Vice Chair
Alan Neyers – Secretary/Treasurer
Gary Eekhoff
Matt Haubrich
Whitey Hinderman
Gary Peterson
Kylie Rieke
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Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief
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Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Annual Meeting

The 82nd annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, which was to be held on Thursday, March 26, 2020, was canceled due to the current COVID-19 situation. Renville-Sibley By-laws allow the cooperative to hold the annual meeting of the membership before Aug. 31 of each year. The board of directors will discuss rescheduling the annual meeting at their April board meeting. 378800

The by-laws also allow that any subject submitted to a vote by mail, the members present in person and represented by mail vote, shall both be counted as present. As long as at least seventy-five (75) members cast a ballot for the election of directors, the election will be counted and valid. The number of ballots cast for this election was slightly higher than in previous years.

On the evening of March 26, a representative of the cooperative was at the Island Ballroom to collect any ballots that may have come in from members who did not hear that the annual meeting was canceled. The annual meeting tellers were at the cooperative board room counting the ballots. The following have received the highest number of votes and are therefore elected as directors of said districts for a three-year term:

- **District 1:** Kylie Rieke
- **District 2:** Matthew Haubrich
- **District 3:** Roger Manthei

As long as there were three tellers in the office and there were three scholarship winners to be selected by random drawing, each teller drew a name of a scholarship applicant to be the winner of a \$1,000 scholarship. The following students were selected:

- **Connor Aalderks**, son of Ryan and Jeni Aalderks
- **Anthony Maher**, son of Tom and Sara Maher
- **Colby Schroeder**, son of Dale and Lisa Schroeder



Kylie Rieke
District 1



Matt Haubrich
District 2



Roger Manthei
District 3

**Watch upcoming newsletters
for information on the rescheduled
annual meeting.**

Comparative Report

	Current Feb. 29, 2020	One Year Ago Feb. 29, 2019	10 Years Ago Feb. 29, 2010
Average Number of Consumers	1,882	3,764	3,857
kWhs purchased	37,545,781	38,411,309	37,192,989
Cost of purchased power	\$2,299,590.50	\$2,198,854.67	\$1,548,807.95

10 Steps to Avoid Scams

There are thousands of new scams every year and you can't keep up with all of them (we know, we try!). But if you can just remember these 10 things, you can avoid most scams and help protect yourself and your family.

- 1) Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face.** Seriously, just don't ever do it. And really, really don't do it if they ask you to use wire transfer, a prepaid debit card or a gift card (those cannot be traced and are as good as cash).
- 2) Don't click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email.** Links can download malware onto your computer and/or steal your identity. Be cautious even with email that looks familiar; it could be fake.
- 3) Don't believe everything you see.** Scammers are great at mimicking official seals, fonts and other details. Just because a website or email looks official does not mean that it is. Even Caller ID can be faked.
- 4) Don't buy online unless the transaction is secure.** Make sure the website has "https" in the URL (the extra s is for "secure") and a small lock icon on the address bar. Even then, the site could be shady. Check out the company first at BBB.org. Read reviews about the quality of the merchandise and make sure you are not buying cheap and/or counterfeit goods.
- 5) Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you've met online.** Scammers use dating websites, Craigslist, social media and many other sites to reach potential targets. They can quickly feel like a friend or even a romantic partner, but that is part of the con to get you to trust them.
- 6) Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted you unsolicited, whether it's over the phone, by email, on social media, even at your front door.** This includes banking and credit card information, your birthdate and Social Security/Social Insurance numbers.
- 7) Don't be pressured to act immediately.** Scammers typically try to make you think something is scarce or a limited time offer. They want to push you into action before you have time to think or to discuss it with a family member, friend or financial advisor. High-pressure sales tactics are also used by some legitimate businesses, but it's never a good idea to make an important decision quickly.
- 8) Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes and debts.** Do not pay by wire transfer, prepaid money card, gift card or other non-traditional payment method. Say no to cash-only deals, high pressure sales tactics, high upfront payments, overpayments and handshake deals without a contract.
- 9) Whenever possible, work with local businesses that have proper identification, licensing and insurance, especially contractors who will be coming into your home or anyone dealing with your money or sensitive information.** Check them out at BBB.org to see what other consumers have experienced.
- 10) Be cautious about what you share on social media and consider only connecting with people you already know.** Be sure to use privacy settings on all social media and online accounts. Imposters often get information about their targets from their online interactions and can make themselves sound like a friend or family member because they know so much about you.

Source: www.bbb.org



Utility service has never been more important.

If you're planning landscaping or any other digging projects, contact 811 first – the kids telelearning and adults telecommuting will thank you.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state




Stay safe during social distancing by calling 811 before starting any new project, so you can stay connected to the internet and utility services you rely on.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Do not play around electrical boxes."

Kayla Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Kayla is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, 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.

Comforting Casseroles

Chicken-Broccoli-Rice Casserole

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 lb. chicken tenders or boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips | 2 tsp. onion powder |
| 1 cup long grain rice | 1-1/2 tsp. rosemary leaves, crushed |
| 1-1/2 cups Kitchen Basics® Original Chicken Stock | 1/2 tsp. pepper |
| 1 cup milk | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 2 tsp. garlic powder | 2 cups fresh or frozen broccoli florets |
| | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese |

Spread chicken and rice in greased 2-quart baking dish. Mix stock, milk and seasonings in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slowly pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake at 400°F. for 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender. Makes 6 (1 cup) servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 317, Total Fat 9g, Cholesterol 69mg, Sodium 492mg, Carbohydrates 31g, Fiber 1g, Protein 28g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Ham and Rye Casserole

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 cup chopped onion | 1 (8 oz) pkg. American cheese, cubed |
| 1/2 cup chopped celery | 2-1/2 cups milk |
| 1/4 cup butter | 3 eggs |
| 4 cups cubed rye bread | 1-1/2 tsp. prepared mustard |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. ham, cut into strips or may use cubed ham | Salt and pepper, to taste |

In a saucepan, saute onion and celery in butter until tender. In a 2-quart buttered baking dish, combine onion, celery, bread, ham and half the cheese. In a bowl, beat together milk, eggs, mustard, salt and pepper until well blended. Pour over all; top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour or until golden brown and puffed.

Martha Mehlhaff, Aberdeen, SD

Corn Casserole

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 cup broken spaghetti, uncooked | 1/2 cup milk |
| 1 can cream-style corn | 1 can whole kernel corn |
| 1 cup cubed processed cheese | Diced onions, optional |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

Combine all ingredients in a 1.5-quart casserole. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour, stirring after the first 30 minutes.

Emily Luikens, Tea, SD

Cheesy Potato Beef Bake

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef | 2 tsp. butter |
| 2 (4 oz. each) cans mushroom stems and pieces, drained | 1 tsp. salt |
| 2 (5-1/4 oz. each) pkgs. au gratin potatoes | 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt |
| 4 cups boiling water | 1/2 tsp. pepper |
| 1-1/3 cups milk | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese |

In a skillet over medium heat, cook beef until no longer pink; drain. Place in a greased 9x13-inch baking pan. Top with mushrooms. Combine potatoes and contents of sauce mix packets, water, milk, butter, salt, seasoned salt and pepper. Pour over beef and mushrooms. Cover and bake at 400°F. for 30 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Stephanie Fossum, Hudson, SD

Please send your favorite dairy, dessert or vegetarian recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



Spring planting is underway. Please keep safety in mind.

Have a Successful Planting Season

ROOTED IN SAFETY

Safe Electricity

lwordes@renville-sibley.coop

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Safe Electricity urges farm workers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.

- Always be aware of the location of power lines and designate pre-planned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators or raising truck beds near power lines and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- When guy wires (a grounded wire used to stabilize utility poles) are broken, these normally neutral wires can be anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.
- If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives.
- If leaving the cab is necessary, as in the case of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment before the power has been shut off.
- Managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these safety precautions and danger areas need to be thoroughly identified and labeled.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Operation Round Up® Donations

The Operation Round Up board held their second meeting on March 12 and awarded a total of \$4,250 to the following:

- **Danube Area Athletic Club (rink) – \$2,500** – Community shelter and maintenance/improvements to the ice-skating rink and outdoor facility (lights, etc.)
- **Fairfax Fire Department/ Fairfax Rural Fire Association – \$500** – Purchase a gas monitor to detect CO2 gas and O2 levels in confined spaces and homes/ladder for safe access to the hose bed on top of the truck
- **City of Franklin/Franklin Ambulance, \$500** – Blood pressure/pulse/oxygen machine
- **Fairfax Royalty Ambassador & Scholarship Program – \$750** – Operate program which empowers young females to become leaders and advocates for the community and themselves.

Operation Round Up is a volunteer community support program. Funds are received from the round up amount on member's electric bill. It is designed to provide financial assistance to worthwhile projects and charities in our area.

The next Operation Round Up board meeting is June 11. Applications are due June 1, 2020, to be considered at this meeting. Applications can be found on our website renville-sibley.coop. If you have any questions, please contact us at 800-826-2593.



Tips for Managing Energy Use During COVID-19

As American families and businesses transition to remote-work, they may see a surge in home energy use – and in upcoming electric bills. Simple money-saving steps can help lower monthly electric bills without jeopardizing safety or comfort.

“America’s electric cooperatives understand the increased financial hardships facing families and businesses due to the economic impact of COVID-19,” said Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO. “It’s important for families to be mindful of their energy use and consider adjusting certain habits to avoid higher costs later on.”

Recommended energy-saving tips include:

- Program your thermostat to maximize energy savings. Setting your thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5 percent.
- Do full loads of laundry and wash with cold water. Using warm water instead of hot can cut a load’s energy use in half and using cold water will save even more.
- Air-dry dishes. This step can cut your dishwasher’s energy use by up to 50 percent.
- Substitute LEDs for conventional light bulbs. Lighting can

amount to up to 12 percent of monthly energy use. LED bulbs can cut lighting costs by 75 percent.

- Unplug appliances and electronics when not in use. Small appliances and electronics use energy even when not in use. When powered on, game consoles, televisions and similar electronics are responsible for up to 12 percent of energy use.

For more information on energy saving tips, visit <https://www.touchstoneenergy.com/efficiency>. This link is from Touchstone Energy®, the national brand affiliated with NRECA dedicated to helping many electric cooperatives better engage and serve their members.

Attention members: Renville-Sibley encourages members to contact the office to make arrangements if they are not able to pay their electric bill in full due to the impact of COVID-19. Renville-Sibley employees will work with members to enter into reasonable payment arrangements based on their individual circumstances.

Digging into some home improvement projects while social distancing?

811 Don't hit a buried utility line and disrupt internet or other utility services to your whole neighborhood. Call 811 or visit your states 811 website before digging. Call811.com/811-your-state

811 GSOC

www.gopherstateonecall.org

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

Source: energy.gov



Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Erika Hoff from Renville County West High School for being selected as the March Scholar of the Month. She was nominated because of her willingness to engage with her teachers and peers in school. Erika is involved in drama and is a leader with that group. She is also involved in her church and community. Her future plans are to become a nurse so that she can help others. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Erika as the March Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Month.



Erika Hoff

More information about the Scholar of the Month program can be found on our website www.renville-sibley.coop under the Customer Service tab.



A DEADLY MISTAKE

Family Shares Grief to Teach Others

Shayla Ebsen

sebsen@eastriver.coop

June 7, 2016, is a day that will be forever imprinted in Greg McCann's mind. It began as a normal June day on his farm in southeastern South Dakota. The crops had been planted and, like every year in June, they were needing to be sprayed. Greg's 35-year-old son, Grant, helped out on the farm and planned to spray the fields that day.

"He went and got the sprayer filled and ready. After he got the sprayer ready and conditions were right, well, then, he went to spray," said Greg. "He called me to see if I could move an irrigator for him and that was the last time I talked to him. He entered the field and the driveway to the field went under a power line."

Unfortunately, Grant didn't drive far enough into the field. He stopped at an angle close to the power lines. As he began unfolding the 90-foot sprayer booms, they touched the energized power line, which instantly electrified the tractor.

"He tried to call Wayne, the young man who runs my farm, but he wasn't able to get through because there was so much static, so we don't know what happened after that," said Greg.

The sprayer was caught in a Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative distribution power line. Co-op Electrician Kevin Meyer was just a few miles away when he and his apprentice received an outage call.

"A radio call came across that another neighbor farmer was out of power as it started out as an individual outage," said Meyer. "We packed up our tools and stuff and left the yard. As we were leaving the yard, I received another call from a supervisor saying that we got a call that there's a



Thirty-five-year-old Grant McCann was involved in a fatal accident involving a sprayer and a power line in 2016.

**There's
no fix.
There's no
second
chances."**

sprayer that looks like it might have made contact with a line that's probably the first place to go and it's looking like we have more consumers out."

Meyer and his apprentice didn't know what they might discover but knew they had to move fast.

"As we're rolling up on scene, one neighbor was there sitting on the road on his four-wheeler and he just said someone is down in front of the tractor," said Meyer. "It was very tough to see other than you could see someone was there but didn't know who it was and at that particular time, I knew that it could be Greg, Grant or my cousin, Wayne. So, in all that, you're mentally preparing yourself for what you're about to discover."

What they would discover is that Grant made a mistake that would end his life. Rather than staying in the cab and waiting for help, he had stepped out of the sprayer.

"The consequences of that mistake took my only son," said Greg. "He was my friend, my partner, my confidant. Now every day I remember that terrible morning and I see Grant lying dead on the ground. There's no fix. There's no second chances."

No one can know what was going through Grant's head at the moment he left the cab. But Greg wants others to learn from that mistake, so it doesn't happen to anyone else.

"If Grant would've stayed in the tractor and not touched anything, I think he'd be here today. But he didn't," said Greg. "I don't want anyone to have to experience the sadness and the emptiness that I and Grant's family and friends are experiencing and will be experiencing for a long, long time."

The consequences of that mistake took my only son.

Do you know what to do if a vehicle you're in contacts a power line? First, stay in the vehicle and call 911 for help. If you must exit the vehicle because of a fire, tuck your arms across your body and jump clear of any wires with your feet together, never touching the equipment and ground at the same time. Then shuffle or hop at least 40 feet away with your feet together. Stay away

from the equipment until the authorities tell you it is safe.

"People get in a hurry and they don't regard the risk as a risk and one mistake and it's too late," said Greg. "The consequences are so grim and terrible, that there's no good reason not to be really careful and be aware of where you're at and the machinery you're using and where it's located. Once it's done, there's no turning back."

With the spread of COVID-19 into our region as well as the pandemic's financial impacts, everyone has a lot on their mind this year. Letting distractions take your mind away from work in the fields significantly increases the likelihood of farming accidents. Minimize distractions and stay focused in the fields. If you notice your mind wandering at any point, bring it back to the task at hand.

As we enter this year's planting and spraying seasons, remain aware of where electrical equipment is located when you're working on the farm and remember the steps to take if your equipment contacts a power line. You could save your life, or the life of someone you love. Visit poweringyoursafety.com to learn more.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



PoweringYourSafety.com

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU HIT A POWER LINE

STAY PUT



If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside.
DO NOT EXIT. Call 911.

JUMP CLEAR



If you must exit due to a fire, jump from the equipment so that no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle with your feet together at least 40 feet away.

STAY AWAY



When you are clear of the area, call for help and keep others away. **DO NOT** approach your vehicle again until utility crews and emergency responders tell you it is safe.

March Board Meeting Canceled

At the April 5, 2018, annual meeting, the membership approved some revisions to the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. One of the revisions was to allow more flexibility with the regular meetings of the board of directors and to allow the meeting to be held either in person or by using alternate forms of technology.

Because of the current situation with the Coronavirus outbreak, your board decided to cancel the March 2020 regular monthly meeting. Information that would have been

presented at this meeting will be included with the April board meeting material.

Notice:

The April board meeting will be held on Monday, April 27, at 8 a.m. using an alternate form of technology.

Where's the Number?

Last month Travis Odegard did not find his member number in the newsletter. The credit will increase to a value of \$45. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by May 4, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!



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 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

Outage Report

affecting 10 members or more

Date: 1-10-20
Time off: 10:12 p.m.
Time on: 12:31 a.m.
Substation: Cairo
Cause: Unknown

Date: 1-15-20
Time off: 2:32 p.m.
Time on: 2:42 p.m.
Substation: Troy
Cause: Unknown

Date: 1-18-20
Time off: 10:54 p.m.
Time on: 12:46 a.m.
Substation: Emmet
Cause: Line conductor failure

Date: 1-18-20
Time off: 12:01 p.m.
Time on: 12:46 p.m.
Substation: Emmet
Cause: Scheduled

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

Mission Statement

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



Wanted/ For Sale

For Sale: Large Big Green Egg grill with shelves and cart, MSRP \$1,287, brand new, make offer

Steve Herschman, Gibbon, MN
507-276-0628

For Sale: Wenonah Jensen Kevlar canoe with two carbon fiber paddles, variety of black walnut boards.

Claudia Kokesch, Franklin, MN
507-430-2852

Give Away: Three kittens, litter box trained, one male, two females, cute, playful, friendly, five months old
Deb Kopel, Bird Island, MN
320-522-1746

Restorative Justice Circles Help Build Relationships

By Ashley Alsum

Renville County Register Staff Writer

Restorative Justice is a unique way to repair relationships, make amends and come closer together as a community. Since starting the program in Renville County in late 2018, Restorative Justice Coordinator Andrew Peltz has done just that.

Peltz was careful to start the program slowly by building a base of volunteers and bringing other departments on board. The focus for the program starting out is to help in the child protection arena. Many families are broken in many different ways and engaging in a circle led by a facilitator and full of supportive volunteers can be a great way to heal.

“Each circle can look very different; but in general terms, we discuss what’s going well, what isn’t going so good and what thing could potentially be done to take another step in the right direction,” Peltz explained.

A circle is comprised of a facilitator (Peltz), four or five volunteers from the community and the participants which could be an individual or a whole family. Each circle is unique and each case provides its own set of challenges and opportunities. Currently four circles are operating in Renville County. Each circle is helping one family. They meet every other week for two hours. Typically, the circles have met Mondays and Tuesdays at noon or 5:30 p.m. They begin with a small meal and lead into discussion.

After training, the volunteers met in circles for a few meetings before being introduced to the participants. This gave them time and space to come together as a group and get comfortable with how a circle worked. In July of last year, the participants joined the circles for the first time. After just a few sessions, the results could already be seen.

“Being here three times has changed us three times over,” said a parent participant of the circle program. “As a family, we used to take three steps forward and four backwards. I needed this group. A lot of stuff has changed for the better in two months. This is a big thing for us that has really paid off.”

Circles are an open place of sharing. Everyone is given an equal chance to speak and respond. Here participants can share what they are going through, their concerns and what they are doing to make changes. Volunteers can speak about their life experiences, resources and opinions. Each person around the circle has a different view on the situation and all are valid. The conversation is a give and take where often the volunteers get as much out of the discussion as the participants.

“Being a part of this group rekindled in me a faith in the people of our community,” said a circle volunteer. “With Restorative Justice

circles, there is hope for a better world.”

“I know there’s always a place for mental health testing and different things; but at the end of the day, there is a great need for human connection and more relationships,” added a youth circle participant.

Looking to the future, Peltz is preparing to add an additional family to each circle. It is a careful balance to make sure each family has enough time during a circle meeting, but hearing another perspective and situation can also shed new light on the current issue. Having multiple participants who may share common experiences can also be a jumping off point. In these cases, they may be able to understand where a family is coming from because they might have been in the same position just a few months ago.

Peltz said families in the circle program often don’t realize how much they have to offer to others going through similar circumstances. At some point they transition into a volunteer position without knowing it and are able to offer their own advice. Having multiple participants in the same circle also builds group accountability. Because they are working through their issues together, they can hold each other accountable and be a supportive hand when needed.

Peltz is always looking for more community volunteers to build up the program and create more circles. Peltz would love to see circles in every town, but that requires volunteers in those communities to step forward. Community circle open meeting events were scheduled to allow interested community members to learn about the circle program and how they can help. Due to COVID-19, these open meeting and subsequent volunteer trainings have been postponed. Watch the Renville County website for further information.

With social distancing guidelines in effect, Peltz said he is still able to maintain all the current circles. By using the Zoom App to video conference he has been able to connect virtually during this time.

The need in the area is great. Through referrals from other departments, there are at least 30 potential families who could benefit from the circle program. The potential to help is limited only by the number of volunteers willing to share their time.

“By sharing our own life experiences and by telling our stories, participants begin to open up to the group which establishes trust; and through these relationships that are formed, healthy changes begin to unfold,” Peltz said.

To learn more, contact Peltz at 320-522-1573 or email andrewp@renvillecountymn.com



3M ABERDEEN PLAYING CRITICAL ROLE IN COVID-19 RESPONSE

Plant Is Producing Millions of N95 Respirators

Ben Dunsmoor

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Standing outside the 430,000-square-foot 3M plant in Aberdeen, S.D., you can hear the whirl of productivity. The Aberdeen plant makes N95 masks which have been one of the most crucial pieces of personal protective equipment for frontline personnel responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andrew Rehder, the manager of the 3M Aberdeen plant, told *Bloomberg Businessweek*, in a story published in March, that the Aberdeen plant has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since the end of January.

“I just think as we’ve continued to see things spread across the world, it’s put more responsibility on us to make sure that every day and every minute we’re making every mask we can,” Rehder told Bloomberg.

It has also put a responsibility on Northern Electric Cooperative to ensure the 3M plant has a consistent and reliable source of power. Northern Electric has served the plant with electricity since it was constructed in 1974.



N95 respirators are loaded onto a jet at the Aberdeen Regional Airport in April. The masks produced at the 3M Aberdeen plant are being shipped directly to areas of the country that need them the most. (Photo Courtesy: 3M Twitter account / twitter.com/3M)

“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic,” Northern Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Char Hager said. “Northern Electric also recognizes that our co-op plays a crucial role in supplying 3M with reliable electricity and we take that responsibility seriously.”

The masks being produced in Aberdeen are being shipped across the country just as fast as they are being manufactured. A jet has been sitting at the Aberdeen Regional Airport during April to transport N95 respirators from the Aberdeen plant directly to areas of the country that need them most.

3M CEO Mike Roman said in a blog post on the company’s website that 500,000 masks were shipped from the Aberdeen plant at the end of March to New York and Seattle. Both of those cities have recorded some of the largest number of COVID-19 cases in the country. 3M expects a total global output of 1.1 billion masks this year and they are planning investments in the next 60 to 90 days that will double that capacity to 2 billion masks globally within the next 12 months.

“We continue to act with urgency to address this crisis from every angle and do all we can to protect our heroic nurses,

doctors and first responders,” Roman said in a statement on the company’s website.

This isn’t the first time the Aberdeen plant has been called upon to increase production during an emergency. The plant has also played a critical role in making masks for the SARS, bird-flu and H1N1 outbreaks, as well as the Mount Saint Helens’ eruption, Hurricane Katrina and numerous forest fires.

“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic.”

– Char Hager, Northern Electric CEO/General Manager

Northern Electric Cooperative has been in contact with local and corporate 3M managers and executives to ensure the Aberdeen plant has the power supply it needs as the company responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have communicated our response plans to 3M officials and have assured them that our crews will be ready and

available to respond to any emergency or outage,” Hager said. “We have also been in contact with our wholesale power supplier, East River Electric Power Cooperative, and we have told 3M that supplying their plant in Aberdeen with reliable electricity is the top priority for our cooperatives.”

The Aberdeen 3M plant is the city’s second-largest employer with 650 employees. But, Rehder told *Bloomberg Businessweek* that the plant now has more than 700 employees who are working around the clock to make sure health care workers and first responders across the country have the masks they need to protect them from COVID-19.

“People are very proud to work in a place that is making respirators, especially with the need that is out there now,” Rehder said.

Hager said the increased production at the plant in Aberdeen and the hard work of 3M employees is a perfect example of rural America stepping up to help the country during this time of uncertainty.

“We are proud of the work they do at the plant and we are proud of our co-op employees who are dedicated to keeping the lights on for 3M and for all our co-op members,” Hager said.



Northern Electric Cooperative is the power supplier for the 3M plant in Aberdeen which has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since January in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Understanding OPIOID ADDICTION

Jocelyn Romey

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One in four people who are prescribed opioids struggle with addiction. This is only one statistic from the South Dakota Department of Health that resonates how powerful and potentially dangerous opioids can be.

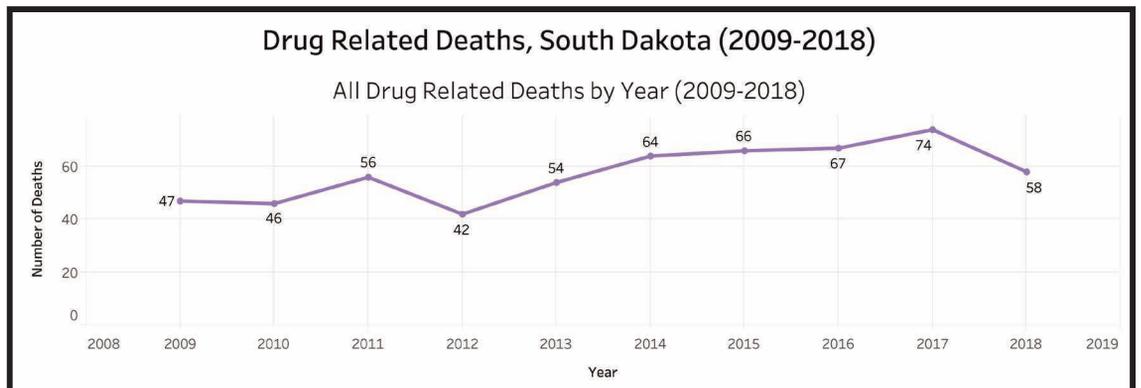
Opioids are a strong narcotic commonly prescribed for chronic pain after injury or surgery. Many know of the extreme addiction and destructive use of heroin – an unlawful opioid, but other opioid addictions may not be as visible if prescribed. A dependency can begin before anyone is aware of an addiction. Unintentional misuse or overdose of prescription opioids are also risks for anyone who takes them.

“My addiction started out very innocently. I had a back issue and so I was prescribed some Vicodin for it...and then I couldn’t stop, I couldn’t turn back. I felt hopeless,” said one woman from Pierre in an Avoid Opioid Prescription Addiction video. “Opioids deserve to be treated with respect. I think the seriousness of it isn’t always understood by people until it’s too late. People do recover and they can recover.”

An opioid addiction is actually considered a disorder and the National Institute on Drug Abuse has labeled drug addiction and opioid use disorder as a chronic disease characterized by drug use that is difficult to control despite harmful consequences. Many people mistakenly think that

Prescription Opioid Side Effects

- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Dry mouth, itching and sweating
- Confusion
- Low energy and depression
- Low levels of testosterone which can result in lower sex drive



those who use drugs lack willpower or moral principles and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to. In reality, quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will.

Due to the harmful nature of these drugs, there are risks associated with taking opioids – addiction, long-term health problems, paralysis and death. In South Dakota, opioid-related deaths are lower than the national average, but the numbers have been on a steady rise since 2012.

Research shows that drug overdose deaths tend to overly impact rural communities despite having lower drug use rates than urban communities. In 2009, deaths from drug overdose surpassed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. Sixty percent of these drug overdose deaths in rural areas are due to injection-related HIV, hepatitis C and other bloodborne infections while using illicit prescription opioids and heroin.

More in-depth statistics on opioid vulnerability assessments by county are available through South Dakota’s Department of Health website or via <https://doh.sd.gov/statistics/VulnerabilityAssessment.aspx>.

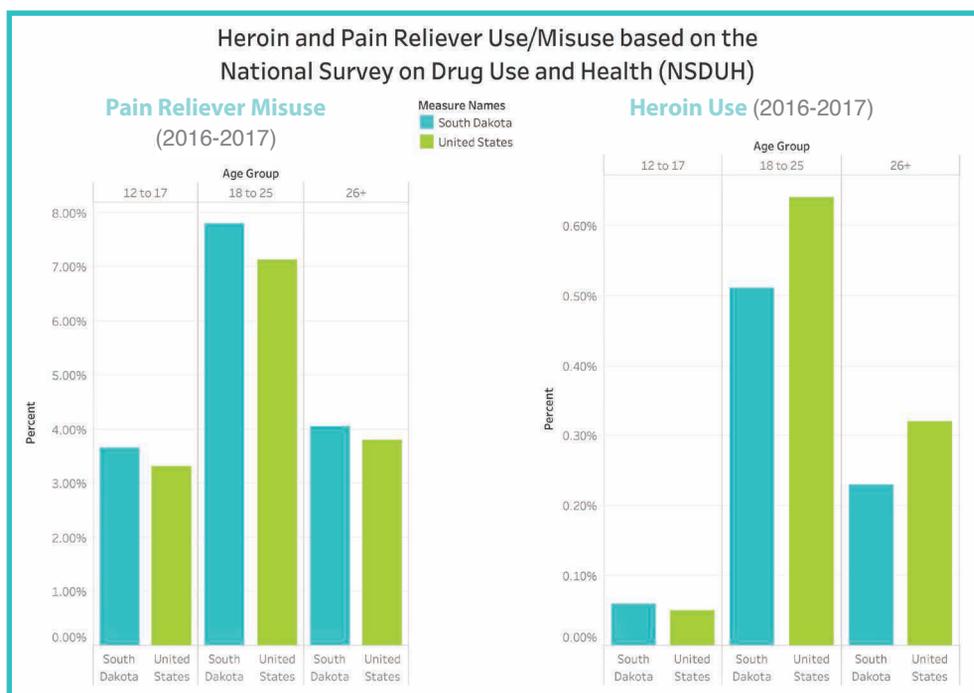
People who are addicted to opioids may seek and use them compulsively despite harmful consequences. The following are common warning signs of misuse, abuse or addiction to opioids given by South Dakota’s Department of Health.

- Neglecting responsibilities at work, school or home because of drug use.
- Using drugs under dangerous conditions or taking risks such as driving while on drugs.
- Drug use that results in legal trouble such as stealing to support a drug habit.
- Drug use that causes problems in relationships such as arguments with family members and loss of friends.
- People affected by drug addiction may stop participating in activities they once enjoyed and may use drugs even when they realize the drugs could be causing problems.

Source: South Dakota Department of Health

Commonly Prescribed Opioids

- Actiq
- Astramorph
- Codeine
- Conzip
- Demerol
- DepoDur
- Dilaudid
- Duragesic
- Duramorph
- Endocet
- Exalgo
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- Hydromorphone
- Fentanyl
- Lorcet
- Lortab
- Meperidine
- Methadone
- Morphine
- MS-Contin
- Norco
- Oxycodone (Oxycontin/Oxecta)
- Percocet
- Roxicet
- Roxicodone
- Tramadol
- Ultram
- Ventura



Resource Hotline

Call **1-800-920-4343**. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It's free and confidential.

Our trained specialists can connect you with **Opioid Care Coordination**, social support, counseling, treatment options, and services in your area.

Find out **what happens when you call the Resource Hotline**, and how we can help you or a loved one.

Opioid Texting Support

Text **OPIOID** to **898211** to connect with local resources that best fit your needs. Answer a few questions and get help for yourself or a loved one who is struggling.



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

May 2-3

Quilt Guild Show, Brookings, SD, 605-690-3246

May 8-9

Craft Beer Fest: Hops and Hogs, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

May 9

Art Wine and Food Truck Festival, Spearfish, SD, 605-644-6585

May 15-17

Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

May 15-17

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3391

May 23-24

Annual SDRA Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-770-4370

May 29-30

South Dakota Regional Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nick Brady at 605-978-6924

June 4-6

Annual Black Hills Quilt Show & Sale, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

June 5-6

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD, Contact Brett Rauterhaus at 605-722-1430

June 5-7

Fort Sisseton Historical Festival, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

June 5-7

Fish Days, Lake Andes, SD, 605-487-7694



May 9:
Traditional
Wacipi at the
Dignity Statue,
Chamberlain, SD,
605-234-5472

June 5-7

Wheel Jam, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:
■ Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

June 6-7

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, Sioux Falls, SD, 866-489-9241

June 11, August 13 and October 8

Kids Mystery Dinner Theater, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:
■ Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

June 16-21

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

June 25-27

Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197
redpowerroundup2020.com

June 26-27

Senior Games, Madison, SD, Contact Bernie Schuurmans at 605-270-3327

July 14

Rock Nobles Cattlemen 2020 Summer Beef Tour, Register Before June 1: \$20, After June 1: \$40, Worthington, MN, 507-967-2380, www.mnsca.org

July 24-26

Catfish Derby Days, Franklin, MN, 507-557-2259

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.