



Cooperative Connections



**Growing
Big in Little
Spaces**

Page 8

**Celebrating
the Great
Outdoors**

Page 12

Renville-Sibley Board of Directors Approve a June Capital Credit Retirement



DeeAnne Newville, CEO

dnewville@renville-sibley.coop

Phone: 320-826-2593 or

Toll Free 800-826-2593

To make this as convenient as possible, the funds will be returned to members as a credit directly on the June electric bills.

During this turbulent time, the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association board of directors wants to help by giving back. In an effort to relieve financial stress on members caused by the COVID-19 crisis, at their April board meeting, the cooperative directors voted to retire \$200,000 in Renville-Sibley capital credits.

Aggregately, \$200,000 will be returned to anyone who was a member during 2018. We know that every dollar helps and we want to be here for our members during this time of crisis. We are activating this equity return six months in advance to benefit co-op members when they most need it.

To make this as convenient as possible, the funds will be returned to members as a credit directly on the June electric bills. The amount received during any capital credit retirement is based on the amount of electricity the member purchased during the retirement year.

Renville-Sibley delivers electricity to rural homes and businesses. When a consumer signs up to receive electric service from Renville-Sibley, they become a “member” of the cooperative, not a customer. While investor-owned utilities seek to generate profits that can be returned to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an “at-cost basis.” Co-ops return margins (profits) to their members. Renville-Sibley annually allocates capital credits to its members. The board of directors retire capital credits based on the financial condition of the cooperative.

We realize that the retirement may not be enough to help some members who are experiencing financial difficulties. Renville-Sibley encourages members to contact the office at 320-826-2593 or 800-826-2593 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.

Another resource for members is the state’s Energy Assistance Program (EAP). There have been some changes to the program allowing more people access to assistance if they lost their job or are otherwise unable to pay their bill because of the pandemic.

- The EAP program during the pandemic only requires a one month look-back for income.
- Total maximum amount of assistance that is available has been increased to \$1,200 annually for the program year.
- Members do not need an active disconnection or disconnection notice to qualify – they can qualify if they have an unpaid balance.
- Members may apply for benefits through July 1 (they are available through July 15 but they should apply by July 1).
- The phone number is 1-800-657-3710, then enter the ZIP code or members can review the list of service providers by county or tribe at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/eap-provider.jsp>.
- Find general EAP information at <https://mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp>.

On another note, as you know, Renville-Sibley’s annual meeting was cancelled the end of March. More information on this topic will be in my next newsletter article.

I am currently working from home. If you have any questions or comments, you are always welcome to reach out to me at dnewville@renville-sibley.coop or call the office at 800-826-2593 to schedule a return call. Stay safe and healthy.

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
Helen Ruebel

Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Alex - Line Superintendent
Brian Athmann - Journeyman Lineman
Shawn Beckler - Crew Chief
Mike Benson - Journeyman Lineman
Brad Braulick - Crew Chief
Nick Bruns - Systems Coordinator
Anthony Carruth - Journeyman Lineman
Amy Ervin - Consumer Accounts Representative
Brayden Fischer - Journeyman Lineman
Cindy Mertens - Administrative Services Manager
DeeAnne Newville - CEO
Brandon Ochs - Journeyman Lineman
Clint Olson - Journeyman Lineman
Kathy Ridl - Office Assistant
Lenae Wordes - Communications Manager

RENVILLE-SIBLEY COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association, 103 Oak Street, Danube, MN, 56230 for its members. Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$6 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Danube Post Office, Danube, MN 56230 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230; Telephone (320) 826-2593; Toll Free 1-800-826-2593; Fax (320) 826-2679;

Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



BEAUTIFY YOUR YARD, NOT UTILITY EQUIPMENT

Safe Electricity

safeelectricity.org

Green or grey utility boxes, known as pad-mounted or pad-mount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your neighborhood. Those boxes sit on an easement, which allows us access to them.

What are the green boxes for? Their job is to step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes.

Please do not paint, enhance, block or otherwise obstruct pad-mount transformers. By respecting all utility equipment, including meters and transformers, you can help keep the power on and your local utility workers safe. 511402

As you beautify your yard this spring and summer, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association and Safe Electricity remind you of these safety tips:

- Do not plant shrubs and trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment. Limiting or restricting access to the box in your yard by us could delay restoration work during an outage and create a serious safety hazard. We need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the side that is padlocked), as well as

four feet of clearance on the other three sides.

- Contact us with questions about landscaping around or installing fencing near a pad-mount transformer (or any other changes) to learn what is allowable.
- Contact us if the transformer becomes unlocked or if it or any other type of utility equipment appears to be damaged.
- Call 811 prior to digging around a transformer and respect the clearance requirements noted above. If you dig near a transformer (even if it is beyond the clearance requirements), you could inadvertently hit a live underground cable. Always call 811 prior to any digging.
- Keep a clear path to the transformer. Even though the transformer seems like it is in "your yard," it is technically on an easement and our workers need clear access to it to maintain equipment and keep power running smoothly.

Contact us with any questions or concerns about the safety of padmount transformers. Always teach children that they should not sit on, open or play around the green boxes. For more about electrical safety, visit Safe-Electricity.org.

Stay Safe at Home

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for thousands of home fires, injuries, death and property damage. The average American home was built in 1977, and many existing homes simply can't handle the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices. Keep safety in mind with these helpful tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

Learn the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system:

- Frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses
- Dimming of lights when other devices are tuned on
- Buzzing sound from switches or outlets
- Discolored outlets
- Appliances that seem underpowered

How to avoid overloading circuits:

- Label your circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in your home.
- Have your home inspected by a qualified electrician if older than 40 years or if you've had a major appliance installed.
- Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices.
- Reduce your electrical load by using energy efficient appliances and lighting.

Working from home?

Follow these electrical safety tips to keep you and your home safe from electrical hazards.

- 1) Avoid overloading outlets.
- 2) Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire.
- 3) Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage. Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- 4) Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip.
- 5) Never run cords under rugs, carpets, doors or windows.
- 6) Make sure cords do not become tripping hazards.
- 7) Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least three feet away from heat sources.
- 8) Make sure you use proper wattage for lamps and lighting.
- 9) Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries annually and replace the unit every 10 years.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

The Secret Ingredient

Electric cooperative members know that the recipes published in their local electric cooperative magazine are time-tested by their neighbors. The recipes feature ingredients that are readily available in the region (there may be a few somewhat exotic components). For the most part, if you have a can of cream of something soup, a pound of ground beef, some flour, eggs and a little salt and pepper, you probably have the basis of many a recipe found here. We raise our mixing spoons to the hundreds of co-op members who have sent in their recipes over the years.

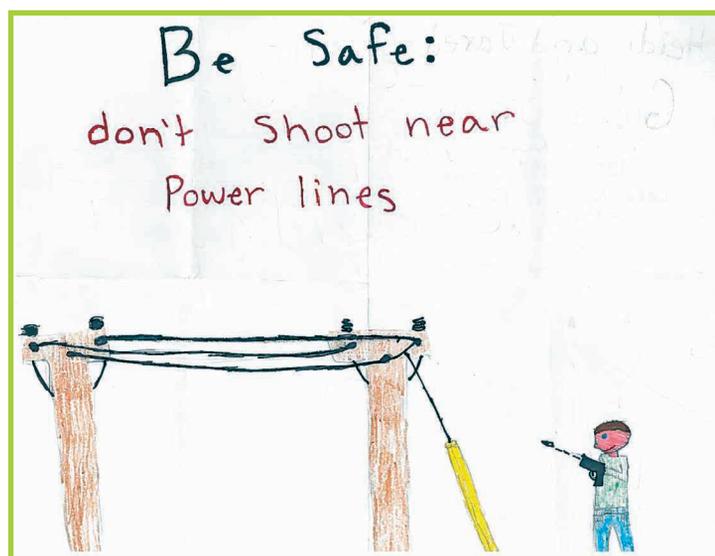


Dawn Trapp

And, we applaud the work of Dawn Trapp who has reviewed the recipes, compiled them for print and made sure our South Dakota, Minnesota and Nebraska cooks shine for their neighbors. Trapp is retiring after a 30-plus year career with South Dakota's electric cooperatives. Since 2000, she has compiled the recipes featured in this magazine. She previously compiled recipes for the *South Dakota High Liner Magazine* and edited *Home Cooking: 50th anniversary commemorative cookbook of the South Dakota High Liner Magazine* in 1998.

For a .PDF compilation of the first 20 years of recipes found in your local *Cooperative Connections* publication, contact your local electric cooperative.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Be safe: Don't shoot near power lines."

Gwen Smith, 10 years old

Gwen is the daughter of Jared and Heidi Smith, Lake Norden, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake, 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.

Dairy Delicious



Chicken Lasagna

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 can cream of chicken soup | 1 cup Parmesan cheese |
| 1 can cream of mushroom soup | 3 cups diced chicken |
| 1/2 cup milk | 3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese |
| 1 cup sour cream | Lasagna noodles, cooked |

Mix together soups and milk. In a separate bowl, combine sour cream, Parmesan cheese, diced chicken and cheese. Spread a thin layer of the soup mixture in the bottom of a 9x13-inch glass baking dish. Make a layer of cooked lasagna noodles. Spread an even layer of the chicken mixture. Top with another layer of soup. Repeat layers until gone. Bake at 325°F. for 1 hour.

Mary Hunt, Gary, S.D.

Pineapple-Pretzel Salad

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2 cups crushed pretzels | 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened |
| 1 stick butter, melted | |
| 1 cup sugar, divided | 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained |
| 1 (8 oz.) container Cool Whip | |

Combine pretzels, butter and 1/2 cup sugar. Spread on a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 400°F. for 7 minutes; cool. Break into pieces; set aside. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and remaining sugar. Add Cool Whip and pineapple. Mix well; refrigerate overnight. Just before serving, add pretzel pieces.

Linda Rauscher, Aberdeen, S.D.

Cheesy Garlic Bread

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 cup Miracle Whip | 1/4 tsp. garlic salt |
| 1/2 cup sour cream | 1 cup chopped onion |
| 1 cup shredded yellow cheese | 1 loaf French bread |

Combine salad dressing, sour cream, shredded cheese, garlic salt and onion. Cut the French bread length-wise. Cover both sides, cut-side up, with mixture. Sprinkle with parsley and paprika, if desired. Bake at 400°F. for 8 to 10 minutes. Cut diagonally for a pretty presentation.

Jane Ham, Rapid City, S.D.

S'mores Pie

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Graham Cracker Crust: | 2 tsp. ground cinnamon |
| 1-1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs | 1 T. plus 1 tsp. vanilla extract, divided |
| 7 T. butter, melted | 1 (7 oz.) jar marshmallow creme |
| 1/3 cup sugar | 1 (4 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened |
| Filling: | 1 (8 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed |
| 3/4 cup heavy cream | |
| 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped | |

For the crust, mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Press into bottom and up sides of 9-inch pie plate. Set aside. For the filling, bring cream just to boil in small saucepan. Pour over chocolate in medium heatproof bowl. Let stand 1 minute then stir until smooth. Stir in cinnamon and 1 tsp. of the vanilla. Pour into prepared crust. Refrigerate 30 minutes or until chocolate is firm. (Freeze 15 minutes for faster chilling.) Beat marshmallow creme, cream cheese and remaining 1 T. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Gently stir in whipped topping until well blended. Spread evenly over chocolate layer in crust. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or until ready to serve. Garnish with chocolate curls or toasted marshmallows, if desired. Makes 8 servings

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 600, Total Fat 36g, Cholesterol 75mg, Sodium 267mg, Carbohydrates 65g, Fiber 2g, Protein 4g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Taco Cheese Dip

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1 (8 oz.) container sour cream |
| 1 pkg. taco seasoning | Shredded Cheddar cheese |

Blend cream cheese, taco seasoning and sour cream well in serving dish. Spread shredded Cheddar cheese on top. Serve with chips.

Mary Ellen Luikens, Scotland, S.D.

Please send your favorite dessert, vegetarian or garden produce 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

The Kind of Audit You Want



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

A home energy audit is the perfect place to start if you want to reduce your energy bills or make your home more comfortable.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on a home energy audit, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Dear Pat and Brad: I need to reduce my energy costs and don't know where to start. You often recommend a home energy audit. What will an audit tell me? – Jacob

Dear Jacob: You've nailed it! A home energy audit is the perfect place to start if you want to reduce your energy bills or make your home more comfortable. An audit can also help you decide whether to invest in a new energy source like a solar array or a new heating and cooling system like a heat pump or whether it's time to upgrade your current system.

It's possible to conduct your own energy audit using a website or app. Online and app audits are great tools you can use to learn about energy use and potential efficiency upgrades, but an in-person, comprehensive energy audit provides much more information.

When things are back to normal and it's safe to have visitors in your home, there are typically two options for an in-home energy audit.

The least expensive is a home energy survey, sometimes referred to as a "walk-through" audit that is essentially a visual inspection. If you have modest goals about what you want to learn from an energy audit and if you are fortunate enough to find an experienced and knowledgeable professional, this type of audit might meet your needs.

The second, more comprehensive energy audit requires more time and utilizes several diagnostic tools. The average cost for this type of audit is about \$400. Check with your local electric cooperative to see if they offer energy audits or provide a discount or rebate.

A comprehensive energy audit will look at four main areas. The first is the envelope of your home, which includes all the places where the exterior and interior meet – roof, walls, doors, windows and foundation. A critical tool for testing the envelope is a blower door test, which has a powerful fan that is mounted in an exterior door frame and used to de-pressurize the home. The auditor can then identify how well-sealed your home is and locate any air leaks. Some auditors will work with you to seal leaks and continue to take blower door readings as the home is tightened up. One advantage of this approach is avoiding excessive air sealing. It's possible, in some homes, to tighten the home too much, so the energy auditor can determine when to stop sealing leaks so that a healthy supply of air infiltration is maintained.

Another tool auditors will use to look at your building envelope is a thermal imaging camera, which shows hot and cold spots that pinpoint exactly where insulation is needed on walls and ceilings. The camera works best when the exterior temperature is much colder or much warmer than the interior temperature.

The second focus of the audit is your home's HVAC (furnace/AC unit) system and water heater to see how energy efficient they are and whether they should be replaced. If your home has air ducts, the auditor can conduct a duct blaster test to see if your ducts are properly sealed. Ducts located in unheated areas are often a major source of energy loss.

The third area the auditor will review includes other energy end use, such as lighting, appliances and other "plugged-in" devices. The auditor may also suggest steps like energy efficient lighting or a smart thermostat.

The fourth area included in a comprehensive energy audit is health and safety. Does your home have the correct number and placement of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors? Should your basement be tested for radon emissions? Make sure you get answers to these questions.

Some audits include a sophisticated energy analysis of your home using energy modeling software. These analyses can rank the different energy efficiency opportunities in your home from most to least cost-effective. This will tell you how much you can save if you invest in all the cost-effective upgrades.

After the energy audit is complete, the auditor should sit down with you and explain the findings in detail. This conversation should include a discussion of ways to operate your home to achieve more energy savings and more comfort.

A home energy audit may seem like an unnecessary expense, but it truly can save you money in the long run because it helps to ensure every dollar you put into energy efficiency pays for itself.

Yankton, S.D., Fifth-Grader Wins Arbor Day Poster Contest

Sienna Vera Weiman, a fifth-grade student at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Yankton, is the winner of the 2020 South Dakota Arbor Day Poster Contest. Sienna's poster was chosen out of 567 entries from fifth-graders all over the state.

Weiman's first-place poster was selected for its interpretation of the contest theme "Trees Are Terrific...In Cities and Towns!" Weiman will receive a \$125 cash prize and a certificate of achievement and her poster will be featured on the division's poster contest promotional flier.



Weiman's teacher, Barb Geigle, will

receive \$175 for the purchase of educational supplies.

Abigail Ingham of Madison Elementary School in Madison, S.D., was selected as the second-place winner. Ingham receives a \$100 cash prize and a certificate of achievement. The third-place winner, Joclyn Vargason of Edmunds Central School in Roscoe, S.D., will receive a certificate and a \$75 cash prize.

The top 12 artists' posters will also be featured in the annual Arbor Day Poster Contest Calendar.

The annual Arbor Day Poster Contest is designed to help promote the importance of Arbor Day and tree planting and is open to all South Dakota fifth-graders. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the poster contest provided children the opportunity to stay busy and learn about the importance of trees in their communities. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's Resource Conservation & Forestry Division (RCF), the South Dakota Society of American Foresters, Aspen Arboriculture Solutions, LLC and the South Dakota Arborists Association sponsor the state contest.

Call Before You Dig

Calling 811 Remains An Essential Safety Step, Even During A Pandemic.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission is urging South Dakotans to be especially vigilant about utilizing 811's Call Before You Dig service to mark underground utilities and to exercise extreme caution with excavating projects.

"Underground utilities are always essential to the health and safety of South Dakota citizens, but with the current COVID-19 pandemic, these utility services are more important than ever," said PUC Chairman Gary Hanson. "Hospitals and their staffs rely on electricity and broadband networks to provide the best care for those in need. Our healthcare systems are already being stretched thin and damage to these utilities would only cause further strain to those on the front lines," he continued.

Whether you're landscaping, starting to build a new home or putting up a new fence, calling 811 at least two days before starting any kind of digging should always be your first step. Those two days give utility providers time to go out and mark all the natural gas, electricity, communications, water and sewer lines on your property. This simple step helps avoid injury to those working and damage to the essential infrastructure that not only keeps utilities functioning properly, but also connects you to the world outside your front door.



"Each of us has been asked to do our part to flatten the curve of COVID-19 by practicing social distancing and making major changes to our daily routines. These necessary changes have made access to quality broadband more essential now than ever before. With students using distance learning to continue their education and many adults working from home, we really rely on quality internet to function in our everyday lives. Preserving those connections by following safe digging practices is important," said PUC Vice Chairman Chris Nelson.

Uneven surfaces, erosion and previous digging projects can all cause the depths of utility lines to vary and change over time, enhancing the risk of hitting an underground utility. For this reason, every digging project warrants a call to 811. Striking even a single line can result in service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs.

"Coronavirus has caused a lot of uncertainty but one thing you can be certain of is calling 811 will help ensure you remain safe and connected while working outdoors. Spending a little time outdoors is important for our health; especially during this outbreak when we're spending so much time at home. Remember, whether you're working, playing or just soaking up some sun, practicing safe distancing is an essential step to help flatten the curve no matter where you are," said Commissioner Kristie Fiegen.

South Dakota 811 is a free service. Homeowners and excavators with upcoming, outdoor construction projects must contact the South Dakota 811 center 48 hours before digging, excluding weekends and holidays. The center will then quickly notify all affected utility companies of your upcoming excavation plans and utility companies will dispatch crews to mark the underground lines at the respective dig site. To learn more about 811 and safe digging practices, visit www.SD811.com.

BIG (Little) GARDENS

Growing Vegetables in Limited Spaces

L.A. Jackson

Contributing Writer and Photographer

Spring has arrived! So, if thoughts of producing oodles of fresh, homegrown edibles have you ready to dig in the dirt, it's time to roll up those sleeves and start a vegetable garden!

While the physics of time and space dictate that big harvests naturally come from big gardens, for backyard growers who prefer to pass on the challenges of tending mega-plots through the long, hot summer or who simply don't have an abundance of planting areas, there are alternative ways to raise impressive passels of veggies – it is simply a matter of making make less do more.

Go to bed

First, for maximum production from limited growing areas, go with beds, not rows – in other words, place young plants or seeds according to their recommended spacing per plant and forget about distances between rows. Rows of plants looking like tidy lines of soldiers are better for large gardens in order to have paths to walk around, but this isn't necessary in small beds. Accessibility is, of course, still important, so, while you can stretch 'em as long as Texas, try not make beds over 4 feet wide – this shortens your reach into the plants and greatly minimizes embarrassing face-flops in the dirt.

Small wonders

Size isn't everything in gardening, especially when it comes to growing backyard edibles. There are many vegetable selections – often tagged with such labels as “Bush,” “Dwarf” or “Patio,” – that are modest in height and girth, but still quite capable of producing impressive crops.

The most common big veggie that can be found in smaller sizes is the tomato. There are a ton of cultivars available, but, for starters, give “Tiny Tim,” “Bush Beefsteak” or “Early Wonder” a look. Keep in mind, however, that a majority of these slight-in-stature tomato selections are determinate, meaning they produce all the 'maters they are going to yield in a matter of weeks. Standard vine tomatoes, if kept healthy, typically crank out fruit continually over the long growing season.

Want a wider range of veggies in your small garden? Squash, watermelons, pumpkins, cucumbers, cantaloupes and green beans – all champs at chewing up space in a planting bed – can also be found in compact forms, either as young plants or seeds, at local garden shops in the spring.

Grow up

Don't think you have to stick to Munchkin-sized plants. Typical strong growers such as tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers and squash can't be allowed to crawl across small growing spaces, but they can be trellised, staked or caged to grow up rather than out.

Even the long, rangy vines of watermelons, pumpkins and cantaloupes can be trained upwards on vertical supports, but to avoid the dreaded drop-and-splat factor, it's not a bad idea to cradle the developing fruits in supporting burlap, nylon or cloth slings.

Small watermelons such as “Sugar Baby” can be trained to grow up, not outwards, in a garden.
COVER: A (literal) bed of cabbage taking center stage in a flower garden.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Harvest eggplants when their skins are shiny, not dull.
Photos By L.A. Jackson

Suspension weight and size problems with standard pumpkins are obvious, but there are many cultivars, including “Spookie,” “Jack O’ Lantern” and “Sugar Pie,” that yield smaller, more manageable 6- to 7-pound fruits. Ditto for big ol’ watermelons, but with so-called “icebox” varieties like the popular “Sugar Baby” and its 8- to 10-pound melons available, it is possible to hang ‘em high, too.

Growing vine crops on erect supports has other advantages besides saving space, starting with making harvesting easier. Also, vertical gardening improves fruit shape and, since beneficial air circulates through the foliage easier, can promote healthier plants.

Beyond the veggie patch

Looking for even more growing ground? Limited-space gardening with edibles doesn’t need to be confined to small vegetable plots – in other words, anywhere you have dirt in your yard is a potential planting site. And many veggies can be easily inter-planted in the landscape as complements, rather than complications, to existing ornamentals.

One popular vegetable that bears the double standard of being both productive and pretty is the pepper. While blocky bell peppers might look a bit clunky in flower beds, there is a wide range of hot peppers that show off long-lasting fruits in many sizes, shapes and sizzling colors on relatively compact plants.

Like bell peppers, common pudgy eggplants probably won’t qualify as eye candy in an ornamental garden, but there are vibrantly colored fruits of cultivars such as “Fairy Tale,” “Prosperosa” and “Neon” that can also add extra visual sass to sunny flower borders.

And okra, which is closely related to the lovely hibiscus, stays true to its family ties with fancy foliage and delicate, hibiscus-like flowers. One particular standout beauty is “Red Burgundy,” an heirloom selection that has been a veggie garden favorite for many years because its gorgeous (and tasty) scarlet pods never fail to turn heads.

Other decorative edibles with strong, distinctive profiles such as curly spinach, cabbage, loose-leaf lettuce (especially red-tinted varieties like “Red Sails” and “Lolla Rossa”), kale and Swiss chard (look for “Ruby Red” or “Bright Lights”) are low-growing and, for vegetable plants, actually rather good looking. Any of these can be successfully incorporated as accent plants for perennial beds or flower gardens. In addition, root vegetables such as carrots, onions and radishes hide their crops below ground but freely flaunt flowing foliage that can be used to fill in the fronts of border plantings.

Many herbs are also great “double-duty” plants. Need examples? Rosemary’s spiky leaves and delightful (as well as edible) bluish-purple flowers make it an appealing addition to any landscape setting. Bronze fennel’s smoky look is a nice touch for container planters, while the rich, dark foliage of purple basil is a horticultural fashion statement waiting to happen. And curly parsley, with its deep emerald leaves, is an ideal alt-ornamental to line the front of a flower bed.

One word of caution about interplanting vegetables or herbs with other plants: If you spray any pesticides on neighboring ornamentals, make sure the chemicals are cleared for safe use on edible plants as well.

L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine.

Harvest Time Tips

When are veggies table-ready?

With proper care, spring vegetable plantings will grow up big, strong and productive to add plenty of homegrown edibles to the dinner table. But, while waiting for these crops to mature, now is not too soon to start mentally registering harvest tips to be ready when the bountiful times arrive. Such pointers can also be helpful to folks who don’t have gardens but go to pick-your-own farms. In addition, frequenters to farmers’ markets will probably find a few of these tips useful to help select produce at their freshest and tastiest.

Bell peppers. The typical bell pepper can be picked when it is either green or red. A red bell pepper is just riper than a green one and tastes slightly sweeter. If you prefer to use a size-o-meter, harvest these peppers when they are about 3 inches in diameter.

Carrots. Carrots are normally ready when their orange crowns poke out above the soil line. For better storage, cut off all but about 2 inches of the fern tops after you pull carrots from the ground.

Cucumbers. Although they come in all sizes, standard cukes will, of course, be a deep green when mature. However, if a cucumber starts to show a yellow tint, it is past ripe.

Eggplant. Common varieties, such as “Black Beauty” and “Classic,” should have a shiny, dark purple color and be about 4 inches in diameter. Any eggplant that has been on the plant too long will lose its shine – this also applies to the newer, fancy-colored varieties such as “Neon” and “Ping Tung.”



Okra. The better tasting (and least slimy) okra pods are snipped off at about 3 inches long. *Chef’s Tip: For little or no slime, when boiling okra, leave the pods whole.*

Green Beans. These beans are at their best when they are about 3 to 6 inches long. At these sizes, the seeds haven’t started to swell yet, and the pods are tender enough to snap easily.

Leaf Lettuce. Wait until the plants are about 5 inches tall and starting to fully fill out with foliage. Then, begin your picking. Use scissors and only take outer leaves so the plants will continue growing strongly in order to extend the harvest season. This method works well for romaine lettuce and spinach, too.

Summer Squash. Tasty crook, straight-neck and zucchini squash will be had when they are picked at about 6 inches long. Round patty pan varieties are in their prime around 4 to 5 inches in diameter.

Tomatoes. Come on – everybody knows what a ripe tomato looks like! Sometimes, however, ‘maters are picked with a bit of green still showing. To turn the green to red (and make fruits fully ripe) simply place them in a cozy area indoors. A sunny windowsill won’t do because the sun’s direct rays could redden the skin but not ripen the inside of the tomato. Moderate warmth, not strong light, is the key to properly maturing a tomato.

Attention Members Impacted by COVID-19?

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.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference, the more energy you will save.

Where's the Number?

Last month, Jerome Petersen did not find his member number in the newsletter. The credit will increase to a value of \$60. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 3rd of June, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

Outage Report

affecting 10 members or more

Date: 4-3-20
Time off: 1:19 a.m.
Time on: 3:06 a.m.
Substation: Kingman
Cause: Weather

Date: 4-3-20
Time off: 4:45 a.m.
Time on: 6:45 a.m.
Substation: Troy
Cause: Weather

Date: 4-3-20
Time off: 5:31 a.m.
Time on: 6:45 a.m.
Substation: Troy
Cause: Scheduled

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



Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

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.

Call 811.com/811-your-state

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



Mission Statement

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

April Board Meeting Highlights

The April board meeting was held via Zoom on Tuesday, April 28, at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were Attorney Jeff Whitmore, CEO DeeAnne Neville, Gene Alex, Cindy Mertens and Lenae Wordes.

The following items were tabled until the May board meeting: election of officers, director compensation, CoBank Incumbency Certificate, board committees, appointment of management officers and the 2021 annual meeting date. Attorney Jeff Whitmore has contacted each director to complete the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the Feb. 24 board meeting
- Board meeting dates and times from June 2020 to May 2021
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of February and March
- Safety report for March and April
- 219 acknowledgement
- Capital credit retirement
- 2020 budget
- MREA resolution and bylaw vote

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Capital credits transferred
- 2020 annual meeting
- Consent agenda/calendar

- CRC voting delegate
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
 - High level Statement of Operations review – YTD through March (unaudited)
 - Organization activities
 - East River update
 - Basin Electric update
 - NRECA update
 - MREA update
 - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update and outage update
 - Accounts receivable
 - Alaska tour
 - Scholarship Program
 - Annual meeting

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

Notice:

The May board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28, at 8 a.m. The June board meeting will be held on Monday, June 29, at 8 a.m.

Comparative Report

	Current YTD-March 31, 2020	One Year Ago YTD-March 31, 2019	10 Years Ago YTD-March 31, 2010
Average Number of Consumers	1,882	5,646	5,785
kWhs purchased	54,829,923	53,095,021	54,510,081
Cost of purchased power	\$3,418,016.43	\$3,141,471.65	\$2,228,967.85

Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Amanda Santjer from MACCRAY High School for being selected as the April Scholar of the Month. She was nominated because she is a hard worker and a great student.



Amanda Santjer

Amanda is a very talented artist and has won several awards with her artwork. She is also involved in track, NHS, BPA, FFA and FCA to name a few. She has also volunteered numerous hours to a summer camp, mission trips and VBS. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Amanda as the April Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the month.

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

Notice

In compliance with Minnesota Statute 216B.1611, Renville-Sibley Co-operative Power Association is updating the technical requirements for distributed energy resource interconnections. The existing technical requirement document will be replaced with the Technical Interconnection and Interoperability Requirements (TIIR) and Technical Specification Manual (TSM). These new documents can be found after June 1, 2020, on www.renville-sibley.coop. These requirements become effective July 1, 2020, and all new DER systems and DER system additions applied for interconnection after July 1 will be required to meet these updated requirements.

Outdoor Fever

Celebrating South Dakota's Outdoor Spaces

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

People are really rediscovering the outdoors again.

South Dakota's state parks and wide-open spaces can be a beacon to those who have spent the winter and spring months cooped up at home.

"Parks are very good places to go outdoors and get out of the house," said Al Nedved, deputy director of parks for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Nedved said that in April 2020, the parks had seen an increase in use over 2019, due in part to better weather than the previous year and also to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"People are really rediscovering the outdoors again," said Nedved. "Our parks are open. We are strongly advising people to follow social distancing guidelines set by CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the state department of health."

In addition to the social distancing, the parks are encouraging people to be as self-sufficient as possible by using their own facilities. State park visitors are also asked to plan ahead and use the reservation website to purchase licenses and make reservations ahead of time to limit interaction at the parks as much as possible.

And as Americans head outdoors celebrating June as both National Camping Month and Nation Great Outdoors Month, thousands of South Dakotans will



Biking in South Dakota campgrounds is a popular family activity.
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

be discovering and rediscovering the Rushmore state's park system.

The state's parks, established in 1919 with the creation of Custer State Park in western South Dakota, saw considerable growth in the post World War II era. The newest park, Good Earth State Park, was established in 2013 southeast of Sioux Falls.

"It's a very unique archaeological and historical site," said Nedved, noting the area was a vast trading center for Native Americans going back several hundred years.

The South Dakota State Park system includes 13 state parks, 43 recreation areas, five nature areas, one historic prairie, 69 lakeside use areas and 10 marina/resorts. In addition, the Division of Parks and Recreation manages the



Hiking trails are offered in many South Dakota state parks.
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks



Access to water-based activities, such as this one found at Farm Island in central South Dakota, is a draw for South Dakota state parks.
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

114-mile Mickelson Trail, South Dakota’s Snowmobile Trail Program, and maintains 240 public water access areas.

“I always tell people the best-kept secret is the place you have not been yet. You never know where there is a site that will become a favorite spot,” said Nedved. “Each park is unique; it’s great to experience them all. Each is rich with natural, historical and cultural resources.”

Custer State Park is the largest of the parks at 71,000 acres, while Fort Sisseton in northeastern South Dakota is one of the smallest.

Palisades State park has geological structures that are really unique,” Nedved said.

“The Missouri River Parks offer incomparable opportunities for fishing and water recreation,” said Nedved, noting that parks on the river extend from Pollock in the north-central part of the state to the Adams Nature Area and Preserve by North Sioux City which features a well-preserved farmstead and a trail system.

“They are a great place to make memories and be together,” Nedved said.

The parks offer a variety of activities: camping and fishing are popular as well as other water-based recreation. Hiking, biking and trail-related activities are a draw

as are leisure sport activities like disc golf, volleyball and horseshoes.

“The biggest one is the ability to come out and enjoy the outdoors and have a really good experience,” said Nedved. “I like to tell people to think of parks as a really great place for your emotional and physical health. There’s no greater place to go and exercise than the great outdoors.”

Those intending to camp should do a little research and have a basic knowledge of the outdoors. In addition to packing bug spray, appropriate clothing and sunscreen, campers in the 2020 season should also plan on bringing masks and hand sanitizer.

Also on the list should be a NOAA weather radio or other device to track severe weather.

“South Dakota weather can be unpredictable at times. You need to plan ahead and be prepared for wind, hail and lightning,” said Nedved.

“We encourage everyone to enjoy the outdoors this summer and do it responsibly,” Nedved said.

Before you go, be sure to check the GF&P website at gpf.sd.gov/parks for updates and current information.

They are a great place to make memories and be together.

By the Number

A look at South Dakota’s state park system

- 16 Welcome Centers
- 9 Regional Offices
- 3 Fish Hatcheries
- 2 Outdoor Campuses
- 83 Dams
- 4,417 Campsites
- 223 Camping Cabins
- 2 Modern Cabins
- 7 Lodges
- 153 Picnic Shelters
- 93 Playgrounds
- 121 Comfort Stations
- 49 Fishing Docks
- 50 Fish Cleaning Stations
- 347 Boat Ramps
- 50 Beaches
- 349 Miles of Trails
- 328 Miles of Roads
- 155-Mile Canoe/Kayak Trail
- 1,518 Miles of Snowmobile Trails

June is PTSD Awareness Month



UNDERSTANDING PTSD

Jocelyn Romey

jocelyn.romey@sdrea.coop

Trauma is an experience that can occur in an instant – to anyone. It has the power to alter a life or change the future plans or outlook of someone who has suffered it. But does this mean that a traumatic occurrence comes with a life sentence? Does trauma affect people for life?

One unfortunate outcome of trauma is a diagnosed disorder known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). According to the National Center for PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident or sexual assault. The normal occurrence of trauma is grief – for a time. During this time, it may be hard to do normal daily activities, like go to work, attend school or spend time with people you care about. But most people start to feel better after a few weeks or months. The National Center for PTSD maintains that if someone who has experienced trauma still has these feelings longer than a few months, then they might have PTSD. For some people, PTSD symptoms may start later on or they may come and go over time.

Dr. Brian Wilson, D.O., a psychiatrist for Fall River Health Services in Hot Springs, S.D., works closely with patients who have experienced trauma and PTSD. The following Q&A points to his knowledge and experience with people dealing with a traumatic aftermath.

■ **Do you see signs or symptoms of PTSD often? Is it common?** There are specific criteria used to make a

diagnosis of PTSD. Obviously, to be diagnosed with PTSD, an individual must experience exposure to a trauma, but not everyone who experiences a traumatic event will experience PTSD or meet the symptom criteria required for a PTSD diagnosis. PTSD is more common among populations that are more frequently exposed to traumatic events, such as military personnel, first responders, victims of natural disasters and victims of abuse, but PTSD can occur as the result of a wide variety of traumatic events and can occur as the result of exposure to a single traumatic event.

■ **Are there different levels of PTSD?** Depending on their type of practice, most mental healthcare providers see some individuals with PTSD. This amount varies between different practice settings. In my own practice, I work with a wide age range of patients. A large portion of my own practice is with military veterans and another large portion of my practice is with children who have experienced trauma and abuse. I also work with many adults who have experienced personal traumatic events. Because of this, I work with a large number of patients with PTSD.

A diagnosis of PTSD requires the presence of certain criteria, but the way those symptoms present and the severity of those symptoms can vary among individuals.

■ **How can PTSD be managed?** There are several treatment options for individuals with PTSD. There are different types of therapy that have shown effectiveness and

there are medications which are often used. Frequently, a combination of one or more of these therapies and medications is used to treat PTSD. With effective treatment, individuals often experience significant improvement and are able to continue living happy and productive lives.

■ **As a psychiatrist, what is something you would say to someone struggling with PTSD?** It is often difficult for someone with PTSD to recognize that they are experiencing symptoms of PTSD. It frequently presents as a combination of symptoms which may include irritability, anger, restlessness, difficulty sleeping, nightmares and disturbing memories of past events. Symptoms may also include sadness, crying, nervousness, worry, fear, emotional disturbance and mood fluctuations.

In children and adolescents, PTSD often presents as behavioral problems. These symptoms often have a negative effect on personal relationships, friendships, work and professional relationships and an individual's life satisfaction and happiness. Individuals with PTSD often attempt to self-treat with alcohol, drugs, unsafe and unhealthy life choices, and other dangerous and/or harmful behaviors without even realizing that is what they are doing. This is ineffective and even harmful and often leads to even more problems for those individuals.

■ **What is something that you would want people to know about PTSD?** Often people have misperceptions about mental health treatment and what it is. In the past, there was often a stigma attached to mental health problems

and they were often, incorrectly, seen as a character flaw or sign of weakness. There was an idea that asking for help meant that a person wasn't strong and there was something wrong with them. It was often something that "our family didn't talk about." As we understand more about the role of genetics, neuroanatomy and neurochemistry in mental health, we realize that the idea of a negative stigma related to mental health is inaccurate, outdated and wrong. We now know that PTSD is related to a combination of environmental and biological factors and that seeking help for PTSD is a sign of strength and the first step to a better quality of life and healing.

We now know that PTSD is related to a combination of environmental and biological factors and that seeking help for PTSD is a sign of strength and the first step to a better quality of life and healing.

National PTSD Awareness Month is observed annually in June. This time is dedicated to raise awareness about post-traumatic stress disorder. June 27 is also National PTSD Awareness Day. For more information about PTSD, visit www.ptsd.va.gov.

Trauma-focused Psychotherapy Works Best

Now more than ever, there are effective treatments for PTSD.



Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)

CPT teaches you how to change the upsetting thoughts and feelings you have had since your trauma.



Prolonged Exposure (PE)

PE teaches you to gradually approach trauma-related memories, feelings and situations that you have been avoiding since your trauma.



Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR helps you process and make sense of your trauma while paying attention to a back-and-forth movement or sound (like a finger waving side to side, a light, or a tone).

Medication Can Help

If you prefer to take medication, you have four good options. *But remember: you will need to keep taking medication in order to keep feeling better.*



Sertraline

Paroxetine

Fluoxetine

Venlafaxine

THE BEST TREATMENT FOR PTSD: The evidence is in.



Trauma-focused psychotherapy is the first-line treatment for PTSD.

It lasts only about three months, and research shows that for most people its effects last long after treatment is over.



Did You Know?



Trauma-focused Psychotherapy

53 OUT OF 100

people who receive trauma-focused psychotherapy will no longer have PTSD after about 3 months of treatment.

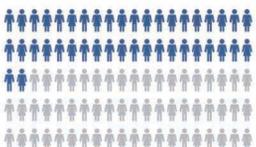




Medication

42 OUT OF 100

people who take medication will no longer have PTSD after about 3 months of treatment.

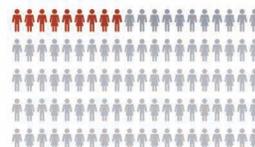




No Treatment

BUT ONLY 9 OUT OF 100

people who don't get treatment will no longer have PTSD after about 3 months.





PTSD Treatment Decision Aid
www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid



AboutFace: Veterans talk about PTSD and PTSD treatment
www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/aboutface/



National Center for PTSD
www.ptsd.va.gov

October 2017

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

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 7

Miss Prairie Village / Miss Prairie Princess Pageant, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644, www.prairievillage.org

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 19, 26 and July 3, 10

River City Friday Nights, 6 to 10 p.m., Live music, beer garden, vendors, food trucks, games and activities for the entire family, Main Street, Chamberlain, SD, 605-683-9051

June 20

Divas Gone Country concert, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

June 20-21

Men's Club Fishing Tournament, Pollock, SD, Contact Brent Odde at 605-848-1967



June 16-21:

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

June 24-27

Crystal Springs Rodeo, Extreme Bulls June 24, Rodeo June 25-27, Clear Lake, SD, 605-874-2996

June 27

Railroad Day, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

June 28

Variety Show, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

July 11

6th Annual Auto Value Car Show, Hav-A-Rest, Campground, Redfield, SD, 605-450-0332

July 18

Wessington Fun Day, Pancake Breakfast, Parade at 10 a.m., Car Show at noon, Dance, Wessington, SD, Contact Mary Spicer at 605-458-2359

July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood, SD, 1-888-838-BULL, www.DAYSOF76.com

July 23-24

Jr. Miss Rodeo South Dakota Pageant, The Lodge and Days of '76 Rodeo, Deadwood, SD, 605-641-8604, jrmissrsd@gmail.com

July 24-26

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

July 25

17th Annual Make-A-Wish 'On the Road to Wishes' Poker Run, Registration 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., C&S Motorsports, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-4533

August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks, SD, www.threshingshow.com

August 8-10

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

August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car Races plus Wissota MWM, Dakota State Fair Speedway, Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show, 1 p.m., 47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake, SD, 605-881-8405

September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival, Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792, www.twinriversoldiron.org

October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative Rural Communities Conference, Milbank, SD, <https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.