



# Cooperative Connections



**New Solar  
Coming to S.D.**

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**Saving Lives:  
Grain Bin  
Safety**

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# Renville-Sibley Board Approves Facility Project



**DeeAnne Newville, CEO**

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Toll Free 800-826-2593

**In early 2017, a facilities committee was formed to include a cross-section of employees and two members of the board.**

From well before I started in October 2012, our board of directors has wrestled with the challenge of addressing our current facilities, including an office, garage, and warehouse within the city of Danube and a pole yard and cold storage facility located north of town. Due to the ever-increasing size of utility equipment, we have outgrown our garage space (see pictures at right). We marvel at our linemen's driving skills as they back the large trucks into spaces that, in some instances, have only a few inches of clearance from walls and other vehicles. Our pole yard is located at a different location, which impacts our efficiency. We are also challenged with issues due to the age of our building. The current location has served us well for over 70 years, but it can no longer adequately meet the cooperative's needs. The board of directors made a diligent decision to move forward with a new facility project.

In early 2017, a facilities committee was formed to include a cross-section of employees and two members of the board. We were tasked with finding a conservative but reasonable amount of square footage that included future expansion and contraction options. Over a period of three years, we looked at a few possible solutions that spanned from fixing up our existing building without adding any additional space to building an entirely new facility, and a few scenarios in between. The committee's budget did not allow for an in-depth analysis or design. However, it did serve the purpose of providing enough information to determine the ideal direction for our facilities moving forward. A facility assessment program was created to provide an estimated cost for a new facility at a high-level to minimize the cost of a study for a project that we knew may or may not move forward.

We plan to give an update at the rescheduled annual meeting on Thursday, Aug. 27. We also will host a few Zoom and small group meetings to give an updated version of the presentation we gave at the February member informational meetings. We ask members to please register in advance for us to provide the instructions for in-person meetings and offer guidance for Zoom meetings.

*(Continued next page)*



**When all the trucks are in the building, there is minimal room for loading/unloading material or for truck maintenance.**



**There are only inches of clearance between the truck and garage door when entering and exiting the building.**

# 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  
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman  
Amy Ervin – Consumer Accounts Representative  
Cindy Mertens – Administrative Services Manager  
DeeAnne Newville – CEO  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Kathy Ridl – Office Assistant  
Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

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Web site: [www.renville-sibley.coop](http://www.renville-sibley.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Stray Voltage Can Cause Livestock Problems

Stray voltage can cause serious problems in certain confinement livestock systems. Dairymen and hog producers can lose production and experience health problems due to small electric voltages that occur between two animal contact points.

The cause of the voltage can be varied and complex. It may be caused by poor load balance, faulty wiring or equipment, improper grounding or a host of other electrical problems.

A common problem is that the farm operations grow in size, but the electrical service isn't upgraded to grow along with it. Also, electrical systems become obsolete and deteriorate due to improper maintenance.

Many factors other than stray voltage may cause behavior, health and production problems. A careful analysis of all possible causes is necessary if proper corrective procedures are to be found.

A special section of the National Electric Code deals with the special requirements for wiring livestock buildings. If buildings are



“up to code,” the potential for stray voltage problems is greatly reduced. Many older barns have been converted from one use to another and do not meet code requirements. If you are building new livestock facilities, be sure all work is done in accordance with Article 547 of the National Electric Code.

If stray voltage is suspected, contact Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association. An investigation will be made to determine if a problem is present. Your electrician is also requested to be present so problems can be noted and corrected. In dairy operations, consulting your equipment dealer and local veterinarian is also recommended. They can determine if stray voltage problems are present.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

The following dates and times have been selected:

Saturday morning, Aug 8, at 9a.m. – Renville-Sibley main building – 103 Oak Street, Danube

Saturday morning, Aug 8th 11:00 a.m. - Zoom

Monday morning, Aug 10th – 11:00 a.m. - Zoom

Monday evening, Aug 10th - 7:00 p.m. – Renville-Sibley main building

Tuesday morning, Aug 11th 11:00 a.m. – Renville-Sibley main building

Tuesday afternoon, Aug 11th 2:00 p.m. – Zoom

Thursday afternoon, Aug 13th 2:00 p.m. – Renville-Sibley main building

Thursday evening, Aug 13th 7:00 p.m. - Zoom

**Please RSVP by calling our office at 800-826-2593 or 320-826-2593** no later than the business day before the meeting you wish to attend. In-person attendance will be limited. Thank you. 728200

The decision by the board to move forward with a new facility was not taken lightly, and the leadership they showed during the process was impressive. The effect on rates was foremost on their minds as well as the minds of the leadership team. We value the trust the membership has placed in us to make sound decisions to serve our members.

# Focus on These Safe Practices Away From the Workplace

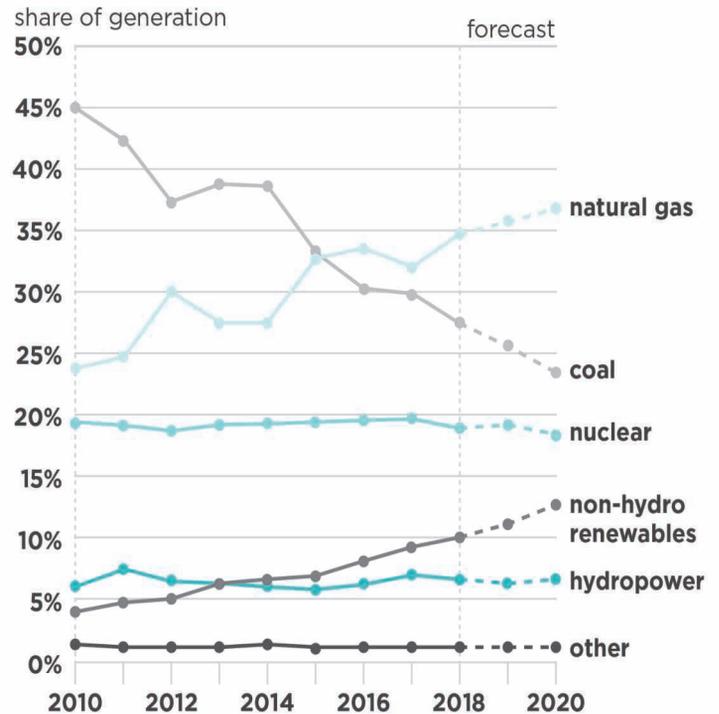
While your local electric cooperative often focuses on electrical safety and provides reminders to keep you free from harm, there are many other dangers lurking out there that don't necessarily pertain to electrical power.

Read on to see the National Safety Council's list of the top causes of preventable injuries and death away from the workplace. Keep these in mind and help protect you and your family from danger.

- **Poisoning.** In 2011, accidental poisonings overtook car crashes for the first time as the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for all ages combined. Poisoning deaths are caused by gases, chemicals and other substances, but prescription drug overdose is by far the leading cause.
- **Vehicle crashes.** Roadway crashes are the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death overall in the U.S. Impaired driving, distracted driving, exceeding the speed limit and inexperience can often cause a life to be cut tragically short in the blink of an eye.
- **Falls.** Falling is the third-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death over all age groups across the country, but it's the No. 1 cause of death for those who are 65 and older who sometimes have health complications and problems with balancing.
- **Choking and suffocation.** Choking on food or other objects is a primary cause. Suffocation and choking rank higher among the elderly and infants.
- **Drowning.** This is the No. 1 cause of death for children ages 1-4, mostly due to children falling into pools or being left alone unattended in bathtubs.
- **Fires and burns.** Fires often start at night, when families are asleep and most vulnerable. A working smoke alarm will cut in half the chances of dying in a fire.
- **Natural and environmental incidents.** Weather-related disasters claim hundreds of lives per year. You should learn all you can about emergency preparedness and always have an emergency kit on hand.

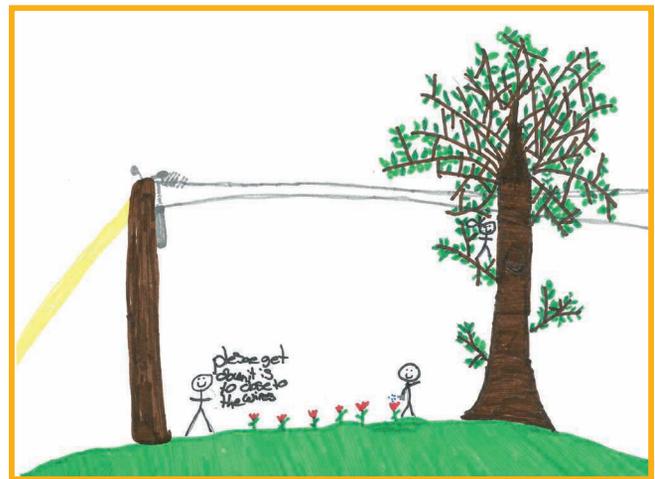
Source: National Safety Council

## U.S. ELECTRICITY GENERATION BY ENERGY SOURCE (2010-2020)



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, January 2019  
 Note: Confidence interval derived from NYMEX options market information

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Please get down - it is too close to the wires!"**

**Forrest Hawk, 9 years old**

Forrest Hawk is the grandson of Steve and Pru Hawk. They are members of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc., Martin, 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.

# Protein-Packed Salads

## Ranch, Bacon, Parmesan Salad

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 16 oz. Farfalle (bowtie) pasta | ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese |
| 1 cup prepared ranch dressing    | 1 carrot, peeled and diced     |
| 6 slices bacon                   | 1 stalk celery, diced          |
|                                  | 1 red onion, diced             |

Fill large pot with lightly salted water, bring to rolling boil over high heat. Once water is boiling, stir in bow tie pasta and return to boil. Cook pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until pasta has cooked through, but still firm to the bite, about 12 mins. Drain well in a colander set in the sink. Transfer to a bowl, refrigerate until cool, at least 30 mins. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet, cook over med.-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 mins. Drain bacon slices on a paper towel-lined plate, let cool, and chop. In a large salad bowl, stir together the ranch dressing, bacon, Parmesan cheese, carrot, celery, and red onion. Lightly stir in cooled pasta to coat with dressing, and refrigerate 2 hours.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

## Rotini Salad

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 box rotini   | sliced turkey, deli style |
| celery, green pepper, radishes, cucumber, onion, carrots | mushrooms, chopped        |
|  | cheddar cheese, shredded  |

Cook rotini as directed on package. Chop vegetables. Put all ingredients into a large bowl. Add 1 bottle zesty Italian dressing. Let chill, enjoy. Can add almost any fresh vegetable.

Mary Jessen, Holabird, SD

## Broccoli Bacon Salad

- |                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Dressing:       | 2 T. vinegar                          |
| 1 cup real mayo | Brown 1 pkg. bacon, break into pieces |
| ¼ cup sugar     |                                       |

Wash two fresh heads of broccoli and cut into bite size pieces. Add ½ cup raisins, ¼ cup purple onion, 1 cup shredded cheese, pepper to taste. Mix well.

Karen Jacobs, Tolstoy, SD

## Ring Tuna Salad

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 pkg. ring macaroni cooked and drained | 1 cup green olives sliced                       |
| 4 green onions chopped                  | 2 6 oz. cans Albacore tuna                      |
| 1 cup frozen peas cooked and drained    | 2 T. salad dressing mixed with 1 tsp. olive oil |

Cook, drain and cool macaroni. Mix first 5 ingredients then add salad dressing and olive oil, which has been whipped together. Store in refrigerator.

Darlene Price, Prairie City, SD

## Chicken, Onion, Quinoa Salad

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dressing:                   | 1 tsp. canola oil              |
| ¼ cup apple cider vinegar   | 1 white onion, sliced          |
| 2 T. olive oil              | 3 cups baby kale               |
| 1 T. lemon juice            | 1 red skinned apple, chopped   |
| 1 tsp. honey                | 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped |
| 1 tsp. Dijon mustard        | ½ tsp. salt                    |
| 1-½ cups red quinoa, rinsed | ¼ tsp. pepper                  |
| 2-½ cups vegetable broth    |                                |

To make the dressing: In a large bowl, whisk vinegar, olive oil, lemon juice, honey and Dijon mustard until well combined. Set aside. In a saucepan, bring quinoa and broth to boil. Simmer, covered, for 12-15 minutes, or until all of the broth has been absorbed. Let cool completely. In a medium skillet, heat canola oil over medium-high heat. Saute onion for 3-5 minutes, or until it is softened and translucent. Remove from heat; let cool completely. In a large bowl, toss onion, kale, apple, chicken, salt and pepper with dressing. Stir in cooled quinoa. [www.onions-usa.org](http://www.onions-usa.org).

Please send your favorite vegetarian, garden produce and pasta 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.

# 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

Installing a smart power strip is an easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.



## Where's the Number?

Last month, Janice Olsen found her member number in the newsletter. Congratulations!

The credit will start over with a value of \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by Aug. 3, you will receive this credit on your electric statement.

Good luck in your search!

## Outage Report

Affecting 10 members or more:

None

## Did You Know?

Insulating your hot water pipes can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the water heater temperature setting, and save 3 to 4 percent per year on water heating costs.



## Mission Statement

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

## 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

# June Board Meeting Highlights

The June board meeting was held on Monday, June 29 at 8 a.m. All board members were present, in person or on Zoom. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Gene Alex, Cindy Mertens and Lenae Wordes.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the May 28 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of May
- Capital credits to estates
- Safety report for June
- Minnwest Bank signature card
- East River Electric annual meeting delegates
- RESCO Board election
- USDA Rural Economic Development loan to Renville County
- Acknowledgement of distributed energy resources policies, rules and reporting
- Allocation of 2019 margin

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High level Statement of Operations review – YTD through May (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - East River update
  - Basin Electric update
  - NRECA update
  - MREA update
  - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update and outage update
  - Accounts receivable
  - Scholar of the Year banquet

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

# Annual Meeting Notice

The 82nd annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association will be held on Thursday, Aug. 27, at 6 p.m., at the Island Ballroom in Bird Island. A postcard will be mailed the first week of August identifying whether the meeting will be held inside the ballroom or as a drive-up meeting. Either way, no meal will be served and prior registration is required. The meeting is being held to conduct the following transactions:

- Report of officers, directors and committees
- Any other business which may properly come before the meeting.

A \$10 energy credit attendance prize will be given to members (one credit per member) who attend the annual meeting.

Alan Neyers, Secretary/  
Treasurer of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

# Thank You

I'd like to express my gratitude for the scholarship you awarded me. I appreciate your recognition of my efforts. I am honored to be one of the recipients of the Basin Electric and Renville-Sibley Cooperative scholarship. I will be attending South Dakota State University majoring in ag communications and agronomy. Sincerely – Kaitlyn Lorang

## Notice:

The July board meeting will be held on Monday, July 27th at 8 a.m. The August board meeting will be held on Monday, Aug. 31, at 8 a.m.

### Comparative Report

	Current YTD-May 31, 2020	One Year Ago YTD-May 31, 2019	10 Years Ago YTD-May 31, 2010
Average Number of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,929
kWhs purchased	75,713,246	69,469,600	79,492,299
Cost of purchased power	\$4,740,875.19	\$4,062,312.98	\$3,198,790.71



Wild Springs Solar Farm will capture the sun's rays to produce electrical power for South Dakota homes, farms and businesses.

# CATCHING RAYS

## Wild Springs Solar Farm to Produce Renewable Power

**Billy Gibson**

Contributing Writer

Business leaders know that diversification is the key to containing costs and surviving sharp economic slumps over the long haul.

That's especially true when it comes to producing the power that keeps South Dakotans supplied with the juice they need to run their homes, farms, irrigation pumps, offices and shops.

Those utilities tasked with keeping the power flowing day and night look for diversification when determining the raw materials they'll use to generate electricity.

The ability to draw from a variety of available resources – coal, natural gas, solar, wind, hydro, biomass, etc. – stabilizes the production process and helps to levelize costs as market rates for any or all of these resources rise and fall over time. This “all-of-the-above” strategy, in turn, makes it easier for producers to engage in long-range forecasting, planning and purchasing for the ultimate benefit of consumers.

That's why it made perfect financial sense for Basin Electric to strike a power purchase agreement with Geronimo Energy, a renewable power generation developer based in Minnesota.

Geronimo Energy is in the early phases of constructing a solar farm called Wild Springs that is expected to generate 128 megawatts (MW) of clean renewable power. When construction is completed in 2022, the \$190 million facility will be the largest grid-scale solar installation in South Dakota.

According to Basin Electric officials, the not-for-profit wholesale power provider jumped at the opportunity to join forces with Geronimo Energy and expand its renewable power portfolio.

“We are excited about adding large-scale solar to our already



Vic Simmons, CEO of Rushmore Electric, delivers a presentation on the Wild Springs Solar Farm.

diverse generation mix,” said Basin CEO and General Manager Paul Sukut. “The board’s decision to add solar to our resource portfolio is to continue with our all-of-the-above strategy, as well as solar generation becoming a more economic energy source.”

Basin Electric transmits electricity to 141 member co-op distribution systems in nine states. It also transmits wholesale power to two South Dakota generation and transmission (G&T) co-ops: Rushmore Electric and East River Electric. Those two G&Ts then transmit the power supply to their respective distribution cooperatives. Rushmore Electric is the power provider for West River Electric, which is the closest distribution co-op in proximity to the solar farm. West River Electric owns more than 2,500 miles of power lines and poles in western South Dakota.

Wild Springs will be built on more than 1,000 acres within West River’s service area near the town of New Underwood in Pennington County and will help stabilize costs for thousands of

ratepayers throughout the region.

West River CEO/General Manager Dick Johnson said he's happy to have a new neighbor and that the project has garnered the support of community leaders as it will create roughly 150 construction jobs. But he said he's even happier for the members who will benefit from the renewable power generated by the solar farm.

The facility is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 85,000 metric tons annually, which is the equivalent of taking 18,000 cars off the road every year.

"We're excited that West River's service area will be home to the Wild Springs Solar Project," said Johnson. "This solar energy project will benefit our cooperative family, as well as our local communities. As not-for-profit co-ops that are owned by our members, everything we do goes back to the people we serve."

Johnson pointed out that the project is expected to produce \$17 million in economic benefits through its first 20 years in terms of tax revenue, job creation and contributions to charitable funds. The list of benefits also includes an education fund that plans to donate \$500,000 to local school districts.

Officials at Rushmore Electric said the power purchase agreement is a perfect fit in line with the cooperative's mission and long-term strategy.

"Our cooperative network is always looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to meet the needs of our membership and renewable energy is an important part of that strategy," said General Manager Vic Simmons. "This project is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power."

Geronimo Energy recently completed the 200 MW Crocker Wind Farm in Clark County and also developed the Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services in Hughes County.

Geronimo Energy President David Reamer said industry analysts often tend to doubt the viability of solar power in the region, but he said the Wild Springs project shows that consumers in more northern climates can also benefit from the renewable resource.

## 7 Efficient Home Improvement Projects to Help Save Money

The best home upgrades make spaces more livable and energy-efficient and are also cost-effective. Making energy-efficient improvements is a savvy way to save money on utility bills, curb energy consumption and add to the house's value. Consider a variety of home improvement projects, both big and small, that can reduce the financial burden of maintaining your home throughout the year and improve energy efficiency.

**Add Insulation** - A cost-effective way to save on heating and cooling bills is adding a layer of insulation in the attic where heat loss is typically greatest due to hot air rising. While many newer homes are adequately insulated, those that are several decades old (or older) may benefit from an upgrade in not only the attic but other common problem areas where air can escape such as basements, crawl spaces, fireplaces and ductwork.

**Seal Doors and Windows** - Windows and doors are common culprits for energy loss. While a complete replacement of doors and windows can be pricey, adding exterior caulk and weather stripping to fill in gaps where air can escape around these openings can make a noticeable difference for a fraction of the cost and make it cheaper to heat and cool your home.

**Install Skylights** - Skylights are a cost-effective option for transforming any room with natural light while also saving energy. For example, Sun Tunnel Skylights can be installed in 90 minutes and funnel natural light from the roof through the attic and into the room below with an aesthetic that resembles recessed lighting. Customizable with six diffuser film styles to complement interior design, the skylights can make a home more energy-efficient by reducing reliance on artificial lighting.



**Reflective Window Film** - When the sun shines through windows, it can heat up the home's interior quickly and trigger the air conditioner to turn on. Window coverings, such as blackout curtains, can help, but adding low-e reflective window film to your windowpanes, particularly southern-facing ones, can provide an additional shield from the sun and reduce energy costs.

**Install a Programmable Thermostat** - A programmable thermostat is an efficient way to control the climate inside your home. Today's smart thermostats not only let homeowners control temperatures from their smart devices but can also learn daily habits and adjust the temperature accordingly with no other manual adjustments necessary.

**Replace Appliances** - Because appliances like refrigerators and ovens are major energy users, investing in more efficient models provides both cost and energy savings. Additionally, homes more than 15 years old could benefit from updates to the air conditioner or heater as systems 15-20 years old or older may be candidates for replacement.

**Ceiling Fans** - In comparison to running your air conditioner consistently, the cost of running a ceiling fan (or several) is significantly less. Particularly on days that may not require cooling the entire house completely, fans can provide a gentle breeze and circulate air in the spaces you use most often. Simply adjust the switch to the counterclockwise position to ensure it's pushing air downward during warmer months.

For more information and home improvement ideas, visit [whyskylights.com/livelifghter](http://whyskylights.com/livelifghter).

# COMMON ELECTRICAL TERMS

## Conductors, Ohms, Path-to-Ground, Other Buzz Words Defined

If you work with electricity for a living or you paid attention during that junior high or high school science unit that covered ohms, currents and connectivity, you will know every term listed here.

This article is for the rest of us: everyday people who scratch their heads every time they hear the word ohm (unless they are meditating of course, softly chanting oohhhhhhhmm as they put their index fingers on top of their thumbs and slowly pull their arms outward). Here are some common electrical terms and their basic definitions:

- **Path to ground:** Electricity likes to take the easiest path. If electricity's usual path is interrupted, the current will take the new path. If that path is a person, electrical current will shock or kill as it runs through the body, since the body has become part of the electric circuit or pathway.

in volts, is what makes electric charges move. Industry professionals often liken electricity to an invisible fluid that moves through some materials better than others while doing its job. To expand on this analogy, voltage would be the pressure needed to move the fluid along. No voltage (pressure), no movement of electricity (fluid).

- **Current:** Measured in amperes (amps), current is the amount of electricity moving through the path as pushed by voltage (pressure). Continuing with the fluid analogy, current can be thought of as flow.
- **Circuit:** This is an electrical pathway in which electricity enters and exits. Your home's electrical system/wiring has different circuits. Several devices that don't draw much power (a lamp or clock, for instance) can be plugged into the same circuit, while large appliances

working properly. GFCIs detect whether electricity is staying inside the circuit or leaking out somewhere else (like through you). It's a good idea to test them monthly.

- **Arc:** An arc is a discharge between two electrodes that can cause intense heat or light. Lightning is a big arc.
- **AFCI:** This acronym stands for arc fault circuit interrupters, and they break the circuit when they sense a dangerous arc. AFCIs are more sensitive to arc faults than regular circuit breakers.
- **Step potential:** As its name implies, it is the potential for a person to step from one voltage to another, which can cause electrocution. When there is stray electrical current running through the ground from a downed power line or other electrical source, it often spreads like ripples on a pond, and each ripple represents a different voltage. This happens because the electricity going into the ground is not limited to just where the wire touches. The ground resists the flow, which can cause a "pool" of electricity to form.
- **Watt:** Simply put, a watt is a unit of power, named after James Watt, who invented the steam engine.

■ **Joule:** Simply put, a joule is a unit of work or energy.

- **Ground** literally means the earth or ground in the term "path to ground" because electrical circuits can be connected to the ground. A ground wire is a wire that has been intentionally connected to the earth but does not typically carry electricity, although it can if the system detects a problem.
- **Ground fault:** This is when an electrical circuit malfunctions and finds a path to ground outside the established path. When there is a ground fault, a human in contact with the wiring may suddenly become part of the pathway to ground.
- **Voltage:** Voltage, which is measured

that draw a lot of power are usually placed on their own circuit.

- **Ohm:** This is a unit used to measure electrical resistance. Resistance measures how much an object (like a wire) resists the current moving through it. Other ways to think of it (fluid analogy again): a water pipe with a lot of buildup would have higher resistance than a clean pipe; a small pipe would have higher resistance than a large pipe.
- **GFCI:** This stands for ground fault circuit interrupters, and they help protect against electrical shock and electrocution as long as they are

■ **Conductor:** This is anything electricity can go through.

■ **Non-conductor:** This is anything that is really bad at conducting electricity, like most plastics and rubber (although everyday rubber-soled shoes may not protect you). Non-conductors are also called insulators.

Always be aware of power lines when working or playing outside, and always assume a downed power line is live and NEVER go near it. If you are in a car accident involving a downed line, stay in your car and call 911 to report the accident.



# SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR BANQUET

The 5th annual Renville-Sibley Cooperative Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year banquet was held on Thursday, June 18. This event honors the eight high school seniors who were selected as the Scholar of the Month each month throughout the 2019-20 school year. As with most other in-person events during COVID-19, this event was modified from its original format. The banquet was held via Zoom.

Kyle Agre, from Live Well Solutions, was the guest speaker. Kyle grew up in the area and now lives in Fargo, ND. He is Vice President of Live Well Solutions which is the provider of Renville-Sibley's Employee Assistance Program. In summary, Kyle's presentation encouraged students and adults alike to take care of ourselves, physically, mentally, and emotionally as we go through each step of our life.

As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, we are guided by the four pillars of Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and a Commitment to Community. The Scholar of the Month program strives to recognize those high school seniors who also share these same values.

Here is a recap of how the program works. Each month, teachers from the local school districts nominate a high school senior from their school who demonstrates outstanding academic, school and community achievements. By random drawing, one name is selected each month from those names submitted. The selected student is awarded a \$100 donation to



**Lauren Wulf**  
September



**Trista Smith**  
October



**Tyler Rice**  
November



**Gracie Slagter**  
December



**Kaitlyn Lorang**  
January



**Katelyn Hultgren**  
February



**Ericka Hoff**  
March



**Amanda Santjer**  
April

be given to the student's school on their behalf. The student chooses which program the donation should be given to at their school (music, sports, arts, etc.). Monthly winners were featured on their local radio station (KLGR, KOLV or KNUJ), an ad placed in their local newspaper, as well as Renville-Sibley's newsletter, Cooperative Connections.

Schools invited to participate in the program include Renville County West, MACCRAY, Central Minnesota Christian School, BOLD, Redwood Valley, Cedar Mountain, and GFW.

All students selected as the Scholar of the Month were invited to the banquet, along with their family and the teacher who made the nomination. This year, Erika Hoff from RCW was randomly selected as the Scholar of the Year. She will receive a \$1,000 scholarship from Renville-Sibley. Each student who attended the banquet received a gift card for taking time to attend the banquet and as a congratulations for their accomplishments.

Renville-Sibley will continue this program in the 2020-21 school year.

## OPERATION ROUND UP

The Operation Round Up board held its meeting on Thursday, June 11, and awarded a total of \$1,500 to the following:

### **West Central Entrepreneurial Opportunities - \$1,000**

The purpose of the WCCeO program is to help students learn about entrepreneurship through direct interaction and mentoring with area businesses. A combined group of 16-22 students from MACCRAY, KMS and RCW participate in this program. Funds

will be used for educational instruction and needed supplies and materials.

### **Gibbon Fire and Rescue Department - \$500**

Funds will be put towards the purchase of a new gasoline-driven positive pressure fan to be used to assist with fire fighting tactics.

The Operation Round Up program began just over one year ago, with the first round up contribution included on the member's

June 2019 statement. Since that statement, Renville-Sibley's members have contributed \$10,500 to the program with \$7,750 already donated to worthwhile projects and organizations in our community.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 10. Applications are due Sept. 1, 2020, to be considered at this meeting. Applications can be found on our website [renville-sibley.coop](http://renville-sibley.coop) under the Your Co-op tab.



Due to recent unusual weather patterns, grain bin safety is more important than ever.

# GRAIN BIN SAFETY

## Unusually wet year makes grain bin safety on the farm more important than ever

Susan Smith

Contributing Writer

Wet conditions during last year's harvest meant grain went into bins under conditions that aren't ideal.

Wet grain can cause crusting or bridging in bins. Producers try to scrape the crust away from the side, causing a landslide of grain sucking the producer in as it falls. Or they could be working in a bin not realizing they are standing on a bridge of grain that when it falls has nothing beneath it but air. This can also cause entrapment.

Many of these accidents happen in winter and early spring, said Beth Locken, director of safety and environmental at Agtegra Cooperative in Aberdeen. She calls that time period the second harvest when farmers are cleaning out bins for the coming year's crops. While South Dakota and North Dakota don't see the number of entrapment accidents as corn-belt states like Iowa and Illinois, grain bin entrapments are not picky, Locken said.

"We've already seen one (death in South Dakota) in 2020 already and that's too many," she said.

During the third week in February 2020, decreed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue as National Grain Bin Safety Week, Christopher Bauman died at his farm near Elkton while emptying corn. Bauman had a wife and three children.

After Bauman died, Locken and Scott Wheelhouse, safety director of the Agfirst Farmers Cooperative in Aurora, began



Training is an important element in responding to grain bin accidents on the farm.

talking about creating a local day-long seminar on grain bin safety. The morning would focus on a refresher course for first responders who already are trained to rescue someone trapped in a grain bin but maybe haven't had hands-on experience recently, Wheelhouse said. In the afternoon, producers from the area would get information on general grain bin safety and use of rescue equipment.

"We really want to emphasize we don't just want your business, we want your friendship," Wheelhouse said. "We want you alive."

AgTegra sold grain bin entry kits at cost to local producers this year, a service Wheelhouse would like to offer his customers as well. The kits sell for \$460 and include resources on how to use them.

"Mostly the benefit we get out of it is hoping we can educate the family and keep them safe," Locken said.

Purdue University releases an annual report on entrapment injuries and fatalities. The number increased by 9.8 percent in 2019. From 2017 to 2018 the number jumped 23 percent. In the last decade, 370 people died in grain bin accidents.



The number of grain bin accidents increased nearly 10 percent in 2019.

About 10 years ago, Agtegra donated to fire departments in its coverage area grain bin rescue tubes that fit around a submerged person. That includes about 70 departments in northeast and northwest North Dakota and areas along Highways 12 and 281 and I-90. Agtegra deployed a technical rescue team for the last 10 years.



The risks of working around grain bins may be forgotten during the high pressure of an average work day on the farm.

## Training paid off during a March grain entrapment.

The team membership and training is widespread for Agtegra employees and first responders.

"Immediate response is of the essence," Locken said. "If something happens on a farmer's bin site, they're not going to call AgTegra, they're going to call the fire department," Locken said.

That widespread training paid off during a March grain entrapment near Pierre.

"We were there providing guidance and additional equipment. We were inside the bin with the fire department just trying to get the victim out of there," she said. "We worked for about five hours and that was a successful response. Not all of them are like that, unfortunately."

The first rule of grain bin safety is not to go into the bin in the first place.

"We always say any time someone needs to go into a bin, stop and talk about it," Locken said. "Have absolutely more than one person there. Make sure the person has a harness and rope attached to the harness and to something attached to the bin that's not going to move."

Locken said turning off equipment like an auger is another good rule of thumb. That way grain isn't being pulled out of the bin as a person works in it.

John Keimig, SDSU Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist, conducts safety programs for 4-H youth. He educates children of producers so they know the rules and can keep an eye on their parents. Most producers know the risks of working around grain bins, he said, but might not consider them during the high pressure of a typical farm day.

"Adults know better," he said. "We get in a hurry. We don't always think and particularly in grain storage that can become very bad very quickly. By working together, we can help each other out if we have to go into a bin and we can save lives."



State officials say the problem of meth addiction disproportionately affects women and Native American populations.

## METH. WE TREAT IT.

### Front Line Treatment Providers Stay Focused on Their Goal

By Billy Gibson

Contributing Writer

To a public growing desensitized to increasingly sensational news accounts, one particular police report stood out.

Probably because of the cattle prod.

Back in June, Sioux Falls police arrested a couple accused of using a cattle prod to discipline their four children, ages 11 to 17. The astonishing accusations also included the couple giving methamphetamine and marijuana to the youngsters in their charge.

It was another in a steady stream of stories serving as an indication of the widespread use of methamphetamine and the deleterious effects of drug abuse in the state.

Meth, especially, is a social and public health menace that has not mysteriously disappeared since the coronavirus outbreak, although it has morphed a bit as the pandemic has spread.

State and federal officials report that the impact of the virus has brought both good news and bad news.

On one hand, the curtailing of international and national travel, the economic downturn and the tightening of borders have all combined to reduce the supply of the powerful drug on city and rural streets.

On the other hand, the street price for the drug is escalating due to increased demand and shortened supply. As those hooked on the drug seek any means of securing it and as general anxiety levels rise, officials fear that a jump in criminal activity is inevitable.

In Los Angeles, for example, meth prices doubled recently as narcotic traffic from Mexican cartels slowed down significantly.



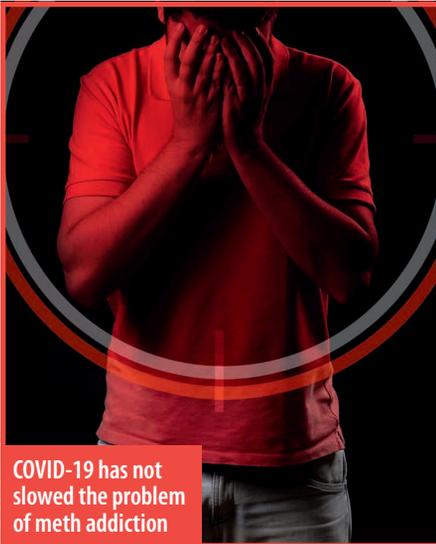
Price increases were also seen in states like Virginia, West Virginia, New Mexico, Kentucky, Tennessee and many others.

While the world turned its attention to the coronavirus earlier this year and now braces for a second wave, others dedicated to battling meth abuse over the long haul have never steered their focus away from their goals.

A statewide campaign to raise awareness of the meth problem was launched last fall as officials began recognizing that the manufacture, distribution and consumption of meth was becoming a plague for far too many South Dakotans. The troubling trend was placing both rural towns and the larger population centers at risk.

The campaign was in response to disturbing figures that painted the picture of a national and international progression that was finally at the point of breaching the state's borders in record numbers.

For instance, officials reported that in 2018 more than 3,600 individuals were arrested in the state for possessing, transporting or



COVID-19 has not slowed the problem of meth addiction

distributing a collective 100 lbs. of methamphetamine. The Centers for Disease Control proclaimed that meth was taking the lives of more South Dakotans than any other illegal drug and that twice as many teens from 12 to 17 years old were using meth compared to the national average.

Additionally, 83 percent of court admissions for controlled substances in 2019 involved meth, as the state saw a 200 percent increase in people seeking treatment with the primary diagnosis of meth addiction between 2014 and 2018.

Meanwhile, law enforcement seized 24 lbs. of meth in the Rapid City area in 2018, over 20 lbs. in Sioux Falls, and almost 1 lb. in Pierre. It takes just .0003 lb. of the drug to cause a fatal overdose. From January to August of 2019, there were 2,243 meth-related arrests across 50 counties. In 2002, that number was just 467.

More recently, figures show that meth is impacting Native American and female populations at a disproportionate level.

For instance, officials report that more than 90 percent of inmates at the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre are substance abusers. Overall, roughly



**“Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there.”**

Carol Regier

one-third of those inmates incarcerated in the state prison system are there because of some form of drug addiction.

Recently, the female inmates have campaigned to push for more programs to help addicts within the system.

Inmate Heather Shooter, who belongs to the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe, is one of several convicts who have been instrumental in an initiative called Sober is Sacred, in which inspirational speakers, performers and other guests call for additional counseling and treatment programs to help those hooked on meth. The program follows a similar one launched at the Mike Durfee State Prison for men in Springfield called Fathers Against Meth.

Shooter said that when her time is served this fall she plans to enter the Full Circle Substance Abuse Center in Rapid City and spread the message of a drug-free life.

Dave Flute, the state's Secretary of Tribal Affairs and former Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribal chairman, has described the meth plague as having reached epidemic proportions on the state's reservations. He spoke last fall at the second State-Tribal Meth Summit in Mission and assured the audience that the governor's administration is working closely with Native American tribes to combat the problem.

Carol Regier, CEO of the Keystone Treatment Center with facilities in Canton and Sioux Falls, said her program often works with tribal communities in South Dakota and surrounding states. She echoed Flute's comments that the governor's office has been deeply engaged.

“We've had discussions with the governor and the state has been very supportive of our work, going back to the Rounds administration,” she said, noting, “But we did make up our own catch phrase: ‘Meth. We Treat It.’”

She pegged meth abuse as “by far” the most toxic culprit when it comes to addiction and the social maladies that

spring from it.

“Besides alcohol, meth is our number one problem. It's very addictive and caustic and people who get hooked rarely defeat it without qualified help,” she said.

Regier said the in-patient program offered at Keystone typically lasts a month to 45 days and includes components of the 12-step Narcotics Anonymous plan. It also



focuses on spiritual, physical and mental health, she said. After therapy, patients are supported and encouraged to participate in after-care and continued counseling.

Keystone has 126 beds, and Regier said there is a steady stream of patients seeking treatment for their addiction. The pace hasn't slowed with the coronavirus.

“There was a period where it seemed people were afraid to come in, but they've started to come in now,” she said. “We've seen an escalation in alcohol and drug abuse during the pandemic as people are having to deal with loneliness, joblessness, personal relationships and other drastic changes in their lives and in the country.”

From her vantage point standing on the front lines of the drug addiction battle, Regier strikes a positive tone. She encourages those who feel they need treatment to get it. She assures that most treatment plans are covered by medical insurance and that grants and other resources are available to help addicts break free from the grip of addictions.

“Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there. We hear heartbreaking stories, but on the good side we see people who have turned their lives around,” she said. “For all of us committed to helping drug addicts get well, we have the same commitment: getting people back to normal so they can live healthier, more fulfilling lives. Treatment works.”

## Register to Win!

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

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### September 3-5

South Dakota State Fair:  
Perfect Vision of Fun,  
1060 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD  
800-529-0900  
www.sdstatefair.com

### July 21-25

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

### July 26

15th Annual Car Show  
Langford, SD, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
605-493-6597

### July 31-August 1

Senior Games, Yankton,  
SD, Contact Kristi Hauer at  
605-665-4685

### July 31-August 1

Plein Air & Arts in the Garden,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
605-354-3826

### August 1

Rockin' Ribfest BBQ  
Competition, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

### August 1

Foothills Classic, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-350-1687

### August 1, 22

The Murder of Miss Kitty  
Comedy Mystery Dinner  
Theatre, Holiday Inn Express  
& Suites, Deadwood, SD,  
605-580-5799

### August 8-9

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



**August 8-10:**  
Red Power Round Up  
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-460-0197

Photo courtesy: South Dakota Department of Agriculture

### August 8-10

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

### August 9

Online Only Bechyn Czech  
Festival, Online Concert,  
7 p.m., Bechyn,  
Minn., 320-522-1218  
www.facebook.com/Bechyn-  
MinnesotaWorld

### August 14-16

Astronomy Festival, Badlands  
National Park, Wall, SD,  
605-433-5241

### August 21-22

Harvest Festival, Elkton, SD,  
605-524-2681

### 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

### September 13

20th Annual Antique Tractor  
and Car Parade, 1 p.m.,  
Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

### September 25-27

Coal Springs Threshing  
Bee Featuring Massy Harris  
Tractors, Meadow, SD,  
605-788-2229

### September 26

10th Annual ROCS Fall  
Festival, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.,  
Springfield, SD,  
605-464-7379

### September 26

Wheelin' to Wall, Wall  
Community Center, Wall, SD

### 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.