

April 2021 Vol. 21 No. 12

# Cooperative Connections

Deep freeze challenges power grid Pages 8-9

The latest on EVs in SD Pages 12-13 Co-ops respond as extreme winter weather brings up concerns over power supply and demand

### MANAGER'S COLUMN

# **Post-Storm Reflections on Power Supply**



DeeAnne Newville, CEO

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

We don't experience wild market pricing swings like some other utility groups might. Electric utilities have been in the news a lot lately after that bitter cold winter storm blanketed much of the central part of the country. As most of you know, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power is a member of East River Electric Power Cooperative and purchases from East River all of the power we deliver to you. East River receives its power from two sources: the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) that markets hydropower from the federal dams, and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which generates electricity from a diverse mix of resources like coal, natural gas, and wind.

You may have heard about the Regional Transmission Organizations (RTO) that serve our area. Much of East River Electric is included in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), but in our area, we are served electricity as part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). In each of these organizations, Basin Electric will sell energy into the market and buy energy out of the market. These transactions happen on a real-time basis – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year long.

### What happened that led to an energy emergency in some areas?

A combination of unfortunate circumstances led to some rolling outages across the region on February 15 and 16. Extreme cold weather stretching from the Upper Midwest down to Texas led to a shortage of generation resources to meet the historical demand for electricity. There were generating resources in the southern states that froze, natural gas delivery issues, and distribution problems that all combined to reduce the amount of generation available on the system. Historic demand for electricity across the entire region led to the shortage. Fortunately, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power did not lose power during this emergency like some of our cooperative partners did.

#### Load management system used to reduce demand.

East River Electric operates a load management system that can help to reduce energy demand on the system. Renville-Sibley members are part of this program where East River can turn off water heaters and some other equipment on a rolling basis to reduce the amount of electricity needed across a wide area. Renville-Sibley members currently on the load management system experienced extended load control time during the energy emergency. East River was able to control its total energy demand to help reduce demand across the entire system. Renville-Sibley members who conserved energy helped to reduce strain on the grid. We appreciate your assistance in that effort.

### Why did Renville-Sibley members get a message to prepare for a power outage?

The relationship between SPP, MISO, WAPA, and Renville-Sibley can be confusing. WAPA is part of SPP and Renville-Sibley has WAPA as part of our power supply mix through East River. Even though we are in MISO, through East River, we are part of SPP. You may need to read those sentences a couple of times for them to make sense. WAPA has a substation in Granite Falls that could have been shut down to reduce the system's energy demand. That shutdown could have affected Renville-Sibley members. Every-thing was happening so fast that no warning would or could have been provided to prepare for the power outage. Also, the MISO market saw a higher-than-normal demand for energy which could have resulted in the same power situation that SPP fell in, the need to reduce the energy demand to match the amount of generation available.

Rather than being surprised should an outage have occurred, Renville-Sibley felt it was best to notify our members of the pending situation. This notification would allow members time to prepare their generators and reduce their electric consumption to reduce the electric system's stress. Renville-Sibley is grateful rolling outages did not occur in our service territory. Some of our neighboring cooperatives, who are also part of the East River system, were not so lucky.

### What will happen to my electric bill?

Because we are part of an extensive system of cooperative power across the region and part of the MISO system, we see the same rate components in place before, during, and after the energy emergency. You may have seen stories of huge electric bills that are tied to high market prices. That's the power of being connected to a cooperative power supply system that provides generation and transmission into the market. We don't experience wild market pricing swings like some other utility groups might.

Thank you again for your assistance during the emergency. Know that your cooperative power network will be watching the grid every day to provide you with reliable and affordable power on the coldest days and all year long. 391900

### **CO-OP NEWS**

# **Renville-**Sibley Cooperative Connections

#### (USPS 019-074)

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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

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# Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Brandon Bentley from Renville County West High School for being selected as the February Scholar of the Month.

Brandon was nominated because he puts effort into his academic performance and adds a positive academic environment to the classroom. He is a member of the school's student council and often volunteers his time to help out with student council activities.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Brandon Bentley as the February 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.



# **Renville-Sibley, Basin Electric Scholarship Winners Named**

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power typically awards academic scholarships at our annual membership meeting in March. This year our annual meeting is scheduled for June. However, the winner of the Basin Electric scholarship needs to be submitted to Basin Electric by March 1. For that reason, the Scholarship Committee met and selected the scholarship winners.

This year was easier than in past years as there were seven scholarships to award and seven applications. All applicants will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

The scholarship winners are as follows:

### **Basin Electric Scholarship**

Makayla Lagerwall, daughter of Mike and Rebecca Lagerwall

### **Renville-Sibley Scholarship**

Abby Mulder, daughter of Luke and Trisha Mulder

### Random drawing scholarships

Kamren Freitag, son of Karen Firle and Jessy Freitag

Ashley Frank, daughter of Dale and Lowanda Frank

Whitney Wordes, daughter of Ed and Christy Wordes

Madyson Herdina, daughter of Nathan and Robyn Herdina

Harlie Rubischko, daughter of Jason and Sarah Rubischko

Congratulations students! These scholarship winners will be recognized at our annual meeting on June 24.

### HOME IMPROVEMENTS

# Home Improvements Don't Have to be Expensive

You don't have to replace your air conditioner with a high-efficiency system or make other major improvements to reduce energy consumption. There are low-cost efficiencies anyone can implement to help reduce energy bills.

- Mind the thermostat. You might be able to trim your energy bill by carefully managing the temperature in your home. Consider setting your thermostat to 78 degrees when you're running the air conditioner. If that's not cool enough, use fans to help circulate the air to help you feel cooler.
- Go programmable. If you don't always remember to adjust your thermostat manually, you could benefit from a programmable model. In the right situation and set correctly, programmable thermostats can save your household \$150 a year. Some models can be managed from your smartphone or other devices.
- Stop air leaks. Small gaps around windows, doors, wiring and plumbing penetrations can be major sources of energy loss. This problem can be alleviated with a little weatherstripping and caulk. A \$10 door draft stopper (also known as a "door snake") is a simple way to block gaps underneath exterior doors. Sealing air leaks around your home could shave up to one-fifth off your heating and cooling bills.
- Manage your windows and window coverings. Your windows may be letting heat out during the winter and letting heat in during the summer. Window coverings like medium or heavyweight curtains and thermal blinds can help. During the summer, keep window coverings closed to block the sun and keep it from heating conditioned indoor air. On cooler spring days, turn off your air conditioner, open the windows and enjoy the breeze and lower electricity bills.
- Look for energy wasters. There are small steps you can take every day to reduce your energy use. Water heaters should be kept at the warm setting (120 degrees). Wash dishes and clothes on the most economical settings that will do the job, and always wash full loads. Use the microwave instead of the oven when possible. And unplug phone chargers, electronics and small appliances when not in use.

### A Note of Appreciation for the Service Co-ops Provide

### By Mark Peacock, Dupree

Most of us wake up each day with an agenda and a schedule that ensures we do things in pretty much the same way from the moment we open our eyes to the moment we arrive at wherever it is we spend our day working.

But on those rare occasions when I walk through our warm home and turn on the bathroom light, which in our home has an overhead radiant heat lamp, and start the shower, which releases hot water from the water heater nestled in the basement, I sometimes take a brief pause in my routine.

I pause to feel the heat of the water wash over me...if only for a minute or so, to enjoy and appreciate what a wonderful experience having a hot shower in a well-warmed, well-lit bathroom in a very comfortable home represents. It means I live in a country and in a state and in a county that has invested in the infrastructure and made a commitment to allowing normal, everyday Americans the opportunity to enjoy such a treat in the middle of a South Dakota winter.

And I smile, because we may not get all we want in life, but we may, for a brief moment, feel all the warmth it takes to start off the day in a positive way. Thank you and your energy partners for making my day and the days of thousands of others begin just a little better, a little bit warmer, a little bit brighter, and a whole lot more optimistic.

### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



### Stay Indoors During a Storm

### Celeste Meyer, 6 years old

Celeste is the daughter of Brice and Sarah Meyer. She is a resident of Trent and a member of Sioux Valley Electric.

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.



powdered

# Slushes, Punches, Lattes

### Fruit Slush

1 6-oz. can orange juice concentrate

1/3 cup halved maraschino cherries with juice

1 6-oz. can lemonade concentrate

2 firm bananas, sliced

3 or 4 juice cans water

2 10-oz. boxes frozen strawberries, thawed

2 20-oz. cans crushed pineapple with juice

Stir all ingredients together and freeze in 9 x 13 inch pan or ice cream bucket. Remove from freezer a few minutes before serving. To serve, put scoop of slush in glass and fill glass with 7-Up or Squirt.

### Mary Jessen, Holabird

### **Banana Slush Punch**

#### 7-8 bananas

concentrate

2 12-oz. cans of orange juice 1 46-oz. can of pineapple juice

1 12-oz. can of lemonade

Blend bananas will all ingredients above. Bring to boil 6 cups water and 3 cups sugar. Cool. Combine banana mixture with sugar water. Freeze. At the time of serving, mixture should be slushy. Add two 2-liter bottles of Sprite or Fresca to the banana/water mixture and serve.

Julie Hummel, Hawarden, IA

### **Seasonal Punch**

12-oz. can frozen orange 4 quarts water juice 3-3/4 cups sugar 12-oz. can Frozen Lemonade 2 Liters 7-Up (or Diet 7-Up)

4 pkgs. Koolade, any flavor

Mix orange juice, lemonade, Koolade, water and sugar, store in fridge to keep cold. Also refrigerate the 2 liters of 7-Up. Prior to serving - pour in the 2 liter of 7-Up and gently stir to mix. You can use any color Koolade, maybe green for Easter, red for 4th of July, Labor Day and Christmas, and orange for Halloween. Refreshing punch goes well with meals or anytime of day.

Pam Conn, Sioux Falls

### **Spiced Cocoa Mix**

1/4 cup cocoa	1/2 cup nondairy p	
1 cup powdered sugar	creamer	
2 cups nonfat dry milk	3/4 tsp. cinnamor	
powder	1/2 tsp. nutmeg	

Sift powdered sugar and cocoa together. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well. For each serving, use 1/3 cup mix and 3/4 cup boiling water. Stir. May add a teaspoon of coffee crystals, a dollop of whipped cream, or a teaspoon of liquid flavored coffee creamer.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis** 

### **Creamy Hot Chocolate**

1/2 cup dry baking cocoa

14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk

шк

1/8 tsp salt

Mix cocoa, milk, salt into a crock pot. Add water gradually, stirring into smooth. Cover and cook on high 2 hours, or low 4 hours. Stir in vanilla before serving.

Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls

### **Chocolate Latte**

1/2 cup hot brewed coffee 2 or 2 shots espresso

2 teaspoons cocoa nibs

7-1/2 cups water

1-1/2 tsp vanilla

1 Premier Protein 30g High Protein Chocolate Shake

In large 14-16-oz. mug, prepare espresso or coffee. Pour chocolate shake on top to combine. Top with cocoa nibs.

www.premierprotein.com

Please send your favorite casserole 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



# **Electrical Accident Impacts a Couple's Lives**

### Normal Will Never Be the Same

Bailey Edenburn was packing for an unknown destination. She also had to pack for her fiancé, Cody Conrady. Many times, throwing necessities in a suitcase is for something fun. Unfortunately, packing on this day in May was for anything but.

She didn't know how long she would be gone or even where she was going. All she knew is she had to pack. And she had to get to Cody.

After finding out where he was and driving faster than she cares to admit, she reached her destination: the Level 1 trauma center. She did not know how bad it was. She only knew Cody was alive. At that point in time, Cody only knew the same - that he was alive. After nearly dying in an electrical accident, the day was a blur; most of it unetched in his mind.

Earlier that day, Cody had started his next-to-last day as assistant manager for an ag fertilizer company. They were shorthanded that day, so it was all hands on deck. To get ahead of the sprayer, he hopped in his truck and got going. "I had to take loads because we needed an extra truck to take fertilizer," Cody recalls. A sprayer had been broken down for three and a half hours, and when it finally showed up, he was ready.

### What happened next

After the sprayer pulled in, Cody pulled up in his truck to unload fertilizer. "I hooked on like I normally would, and the sprayer was unfolding, which is pretty much standard procedure."

What transpired next changed everything. Those who were there think that when the operator unfolded the sprayer boom, he extended the sprayer tips at the same time, and one of them grazed the power line. Cody believes the sprayer tip was electrified for only a moment, but that the stray electricity moved through the tip, boom, tractor, and down to the ground where Cody was standing. When Cody touched the camlock, which connects the hoses together, 7,400 volts of electricity flowed through his body.





Cody and Bailey share their experiences to increase awareness about power line safety.

Electricity can travel through anything in its path. Unintended contact can happen in an instant. The area where Cody was standing and the equipment was energized for only "a split second or two," he said.

Bailey says this type of accident could happen to anyone. "No matter what you think, you're not bulletproof," she said. "No one is."

Cody's advice to anyone around power lines is to "pay attention a little more. Keep an eye on your surroundings. Just take an extra second to look at things, to see how your situation is going to unfold."

The force of the stray voltage threw him backwards and onto the ground. The person in the cab jumped out and started CPR (luckily the ground was no longer electrified) and called 9-1-1.

### One journey. Two experiences.

As in any journey, two people experience it differently. Cody is matter of fact. He says he doesn't mind talking about it, but that Bailey does. As an outward expression of his love for her, you can tell he worries about her reliving that day.

He says he doesn't remember a lot about the accident, but he does have a few vivid memories that have to do with the stretcher - one was the sound of the collective click as it was being loaded into the ambulance. The other was him being rolled on it to the medivac.

"My first memory was probably a week and a half later," Cody said, adding that there were many conversations with Bailey to help him piece the details together, including the progression of his care. He said the medical staff made several attempts to save his hand, but that the damage progressed too far to do so. He also questioned why they had to take his leg. "What we learned is that tissue is actively still dying over the course of two weeks, so it (the internal damage) just kept moving up (the affected limbs)," he said.

### **Bailey's recollections**

When Bailey recalls what happened, her words come a bit faster than Cody's. "Emotionally, I've probably been more of a mess



# **Member Informational Meetings**

Each year Renville-Sibley hosts member meetings throughout our service territory. At these meetings information is shared about what is happening with your cooperative and in the electric industry in general. This is also an opportunity for members to ask questions or offer comments to cooperative leadership and board members.

Due to the pandemic, Renville-Sibley is asking members to pre-register for this event. Some facilities may not be open at the time of the meeting depending on the pandemic situation at that time. Other facilities may need to limit the number of guests in attendance. Due to these unknown variables at the time of this writing, Renville-Sibley is asking members to pre-register for the meeting they wish to attend. Renville-Sibley will contact each registered member should there be a change to the meetings. The deadline to register is Thursday, April 1st. Please contact the office at 800-826-2593 to register.

### 2021 meeting schedule

Saturday, April 10 @ 9:00 a.m. Danube - Community Center

Monday, April 12 @ 6:30 p.m. Bird Island - Athmann's Inn

Tuesday, April 13 @ 9:00 a.m. Fairfax - Lion's Den

Thursday, April 15 @ 1:30 p.m. Sacred Heart - Community Center

Save the Date: Renville-Sibley's 83rd annual meeting will be held on Thursday, June 24th at the Island Ballroom in Bird Island. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

### Electrical Accident, continued

than him. He struggled early on with just the circumstances (of it all) and just how badly hurt he was. But he's accepted the fact that this is his life now, and (that) he has to make this life as good as he can. I'm not quite there yet," she admits.

As with most significant journeys in life, "there are days that are perfect, (when) the world is right." And there are the bad days, she notes.

After watching Cody experience immense pain, lose two limbs, undergo numerous surgeries and learn to walk again, "we knew life wasn't going to be the same," Bailey reflects. "We knew that the 'normal' before was not going to be the 'normal' after.

"In the beginning, it was just all about survival," Bailey recounts. Today, their lives include more grey areas.

"I don't know what the future holds," Bailey said. "There are days when his leg just bothers him (but) he's not the type to want to sit still for anything. He's had to sit still and learn more patience in the last year than he has his entire life. And it (sitting still) just drives him bonkers."

### The dangling carrot

Bailey recalls how at one of the initial meetings with the medical team, Cody mentioned September 7 of that same year: the day they were to be wed. "It was a giant dangling carrot, really," Bailey recalls. "I mean, he was bound and determined we were not going to put the wedding off."

Not only did they get married, but on the Wednesday before their wedding, Bailey came home to a huge surprise. "I had gone to do chores, and when I came back, he was walking around the house, without a cane, and I bawled, absolutely bawled."

Bailey recalls that Cody had gotten his leg prosthetic 10 days before the wedding. "I didn't think he'd walk down the aisle. I'm not sure in that moment in time he thought he'd walk down the aisle."

But he did, and you can hear in Bailey's voice just how special their wedding day was. "It was just the most perfect of days," she said, smiling.

Bailey says that the goal was and still is for "Cody to do whatever Cody wants to do."

Cody and Bailey are still packing for a destination. Sometimes figuratively. They adapt to the twists and turns of their life together. Cody navigates the challenges he faces with a different dominant hand than before the accident. Some days he can't do everything he wants to because of his pain. Bailey still struggles at times with what happened that day in May.

But sometimes they pack in a literal way. Lately, they've been busy completing registries for a new addition in their lives. Though a bit apprehensive like most first-time parents, bring on the next chapter, they say.

The journey continues.



# **AN ENERGY EMERGENCY**

### Why Did February Outages Happen and Could They Happen Again?

### **Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The national power grid has been hailed as one of the greatest and most complex engineering feats ever achieved. Every second of every day it works to keep electricity flowing freely to homes, schools, farms, hospitals and businesses in every region of the country.

But while it stands as one of mankind's most marvelous inventions, sometimes it's simply no match for Mother Nature.

This electric superhighway was put to the test in mid-February when a bone-chilling air mass swept through large swaths of the country and caused a spike in the demand for power. As the temperatures dropped, millions of Americans attempted to stave off the frigid air by reaching for electric blankets, plugging in space heaters and nudging their thermostats up a few notches. With so many people clamoring to stay warm, the sudden spike in demand for power caused the gatekeepers of the grid to reach their option of last resort: ordering temporary disruptions in service to maintain the delicate balance between demand and supply that's required to keep the network from completely melting down.

The result was several waves of controlled and coordinated rolling blackouts often spanning one hour and isolated incidents of up to three hours for some consumers. The service interruptions impacted nearly one-third of the nation. Industry officials explain that this response to skyrocketing demand was necessary to keep the grid from sustaining extensive damage and causing a repeat of the historic event that occurred in the summer of 2003. The Northeast Blackout extended across the eastern seaboard, through parts of the Midwest and into southern Canada and left approximately 50 million in the dark.

"Controlled outages are necessary to prevent widespread damage to the grid, which could cause a cascade of outages that could potentially be far more devastating," explained Barbara Sugg, CEO of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). "There's no doubt this would have been a much more significant event if our individual customers and businesses and industries had not all pulled together to reduce the load."

### Air Traffic Controllers for the Grid

Sugg describes her organization as an "air traffic controller" for the grid. In fact, the SPP is what's known in the electric utility industry as a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). It's one of the four quasi-government entities responsible for maintaining the critical balance between supply and demand along the nation's power grid. While RTOs don't create or generate power, they are charged under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with the task of making sure the power produced by other utilities flows smoothly across the grid and gets to the places where consumers need it, when they need it.

SPP is the power transmission overseer for 14 states - including South Dakota - and more than 17 million people in the midsection of the U.S. from North Dakota to the Texas Panhandle. Electric co-ops in South Dakota are also part of the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), a federal agency that markets power produced from hydroelectric dams in the Upper Midwest. It operates the larger bulk transmission facilities in 15 central and western states in its geographical footprint.

Most of the time the high-voltage transmission process operates without a hitch, and electric generation can be moved across the grid when there is high demand in one area and excess generation in another. But when foul weather comes into the picture grid operators focus on activating their emergency response plans. Those plans typically include communicating with generators to coordinate arrangements for assuring that an ample supply of power will be available to meet projected demand when the inclement weather strikes.

Lanny Nickell, operations manager for SPP, points out that while arrangements were in place to face the February cold snap, the winter blast turned out to be an unprecedented event for the organization. As the temperatures dropped, SPP initiated the process of contacting power generators and transmitters to warn that the looming storm may cause the system to be severely strained. Six days later, SPP officials went

### ENERGY EMERGENCY

through a series of three Energy Emergency Alert levels and eventually declared a Level 3 emergency, which required "controlled interruptions of service," or rolling blackouts. It was the first time in the SPP's 80 years that a Level 3 emergency was declared.

"Despite our plans, the severe weather coupled with a limited fuel supply hampered our ability to balance our supply with the demand from end-use consumers," Nickell said. "So, first we had to go out and ask for a voluntary reduction in energy use. Then, we held off as long as we could to make the call to interrupt service in a controlled fashion, but it was necessary to prevent overloading the system and causing an even bigger problem and much longer outages."

Nickell explained that without an affordable and viable means of storing high-voltage electricity for future use, power is created in one location and consumed in another location in real time. The balance must be maintained even though both supply and consumption change on a second-by-second basis.

"Once we observe an imbalance, we have to react within seconds to reduce the demand," Nickell said. "This is why it's very difficult for us to announce well beforehand when these things will happen because they happen at the speed of light."

#### A Smorgasbord of Fuel Sources

Interruptions in service are more than minor inconveniences for many co-op members, especially when severe weather conditions are in play. The February storm and the ensuing service outages triggered wide-ranging discussions about the push toward renewable resources to generate electricity.

Supporters of fossil fuels point out that decades-long efforts to curb coal and natural gas played a part in restricting the kinds of available resources that could have prevented widespread outages. Coal has long been a reliable source of "baseload power" requirements, or the amount of power necessary to provide an adequate supply to meet basic needs without interruption. It's utilized largely because it can be more easily controlled compared to intermittent sources. Advocates emphasize that wind turbines were frozen in place and solar panels were buried in snow and limited by scarce sunlight during this event.

Renewable fuel source proponents echoed SPP officials in noting that the February storm was an historic occurrence. They contend that renewable power promotes a cleaner environment, decreases energy reliance on other countries, adds jobs to the economy and that innovations in the emerging industry



could be effective in responding to any future storms. Presently, roughly 25 percent of South Dakota's overall energy supply comes from wind turbines. For electric co-ops, that figure is closer to 20 percent. Proponents of wind also point to issues with natural gas delivery and the inability of some fossil fuel plants to produce electricity through the storm. A combination of high demand, lower-thannormal wind resources and natural gas delivery problems all met at the same time to contribute to the energy emergency.

As for those members of RTOs who receive the call to actually implement controlled outages - particularly transmission and distribution cooperatives - there are very few options available when demand begins to significantly outpace supply on the grid.

Chris Studer is chief member and public relations officer for East River Electric, a co-op that provides transmission and substation services for distribution entities in South Dakota and Minnesota. He said the cooperative's hands are essentially tied when SPP reaches the point of calling for rolling outages.

"The utilities involved in the SPP are required to carry a surplus of generation resources throughout the year over and above their historic peak demand so they are prepared for extreme circumstances. However, when wind resources and other generation are constrained, there is a limited amount of other generation available to serve the region's recent record demand for electricity," he said.

Distribution co-ops find they have even less control when RTOs and power marketing agencies restrict the flow of power, but they still find ways to mitigate the situation. Officials at West River Electric based in Wall, implemented "Once we observe an imbalance, we have to react within seconds to reduce the demand. This is why it's very difficult for us to announce well beforehand when these things will happen because they happen at the speed of light." - Lanny Nickell, SPP

the co-op's load management program after receiving the request for reduced demand hoping it would be enough. But it was not, and some of the co-op's members were subject to a 50-minute unplanned blackout. CEO Dick Johnson said he had never experienced a similar event in his 27 years in the industry. He added that he hopes the emergency situation prompts discussions centered around policy proposals that will prevent future emergencies.

"I think we should have a national conversation that includes large new baseload generation, whether that be hydroelectric, nuclear or carbon capture on coal plants. We must also have a conversation about building necessary electric and gas transmission infrastructure to allow us to get electricity and gas to the places where it is needed when times like this happen. If not, I am afraid it will happen again in the future, only more frequently."

# 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

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees.

Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

Source: www.energy.gov



# **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, P.O. Box 68, Danube, MN 56230.

Name:					
Address:					
Phone number	•				
Ad to be placed (limit of 15 words per ad)					
	- <u> </u>				
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.

## Where's the Number?

Last month Jeremiah Slagter did not find his member number in the newsletter. The credit will continue to grow to a value of \$45. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 1st of April, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## **Outage Report**

Affecting 10 members or more: Date: 01-07-21 Time off: 12:47 p.m. Time on: 1:19 p.m. Substation: Henryville Cause: Motor Vehicle

Date: 01-09-21 Time off: 11:08 a.m. Time on: 12:30 p.m.

Substation: Kingman

### Cause: Weather

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

## For Sale

**Firewood:** Contact Daryl Wendt, Gibbon, MN, 507-327-8101

10 Cooperative Connections | April 2021

### CO-OP NEWS

### **BOARD NEWS**

# February Board Meeting Highlights

The February board meeting was held on Monday, Feb. 22 at 8 a.m. via Zoom. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Gene Allex, Cindy Mertens and Lenae Wordes. Guests in attendance were Ryan Breitbach, Richard Engan, Barbara Marks and Matt Hagstrom.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the Jan. 25 board meeting
- Revised new facility budget
- Close on the purchase of land for new facility
- Agreement for Renville-Sibley to provide power to new facility
- 2020 Financial Audit Report from Brady Martz
- CFC Officers Certificate of Compliance
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of January
- Capital credits to estates
- Safety report for February
- Nominating Committee appointment
- CRC Annual Meeting Voting Delegate and Alternate
- Revised Revenue Deferral Resolution

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Capital credits transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High level Statement of Operations review – January (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - Facilities update
  - East River update
  - Basin Electric update
  - NRECA update
  - MREA update
  - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update and outage update
  - Accounts receivable
  - Member Informational meetings
  - Scholarship Program
  - Nominating Committee meetings

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

# Notice:

The March board meeting will be held on March 29 at 8 a.m. The April board meeting will be held on April 26 at 8 a.m.

# **Comparative Report**





## Operation Round Up

The February electric statement included the amount contributed in 2020 to the Operation Round Up program for that account. Thank you to all the members that contributed to this program. In 2020, your contributions resulted in donations totaling \$6,950 going to organizations such as the Olivia Area Technical Rescue Team, the Fairfax Fire Department, and the West Central Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities organization, to name a few.

The Operation Round Up board of trustees meets quarterly to review the applications from organizations requesting donations. Board members include Louise Kiecker, Ty Erickson, and Butch Buschette. Application for Donation, application deadline, and next board meeting date can be found on Renville-Sibley's website www. renville-sibley.coop under the Your Co-op tab. Non-profit organizations that support our local community are encouraged to apply.



# **Electric Vehicles in SD**

### **Electric Co-ops Working to Build Fast Charging Stations**

### **Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

General Motors turned a lot of heads earlier this year when the auto industry titan announced its intention to phase out all gas and diesel engines by 2035. GM made sure its message was loud and clear by running ads during the Super Bowl.

Not to be outdone, Ford CEO Jim Farley soon followed suit by announcing the company's plans to invest \$29 billion in the development of autonomous vehicles (AVs) and electric vehicles (EVs) by 2025. And against a backdrop of companies like Tesla and Workhorse seeing triple-digit stock gains, President Joe Biden rolled out plans to turn the entire 650,000-vehicle federal government fleet to all electric.

With a solid upward trend in support of E-mobility and electric vehicles sweeping the globe, electric cooperatives throughout the region are doing their part to provide the power those vehicles will need to carry their passengers from Point A to Point B.

According to Ben Pierson, manager of beneficial electrification at Sioux Valley

Energy, the state's electric cooperatives are facing a chicken-and-egg proposition in deciding whether - and how much to invest in an industry that's still in its early stages. Pierson has been involved in rallying support for the formation of a DC fast charging network that will make it easy for EV drivers to navigate across and throughout the state. The stations will be placed 75-100 miles apart but will have to be constructed before the demand is fully materialized. He has received interest from groups representing tourism, economic development, transportation and state government.

Pierson has been working with municipal and investor-owned utilities to build out the infrastructure, with an emphasis on making sure there are enough charging stations along I-90 to get travelers from one side of the state to the other with confidence. Stations will also be installed along the I-29 corridor in Brookings and Watertown in Phase 1, with plans to include a station in Vermillion as part of Phase 2. Pierson points out that "range anxiety" is a major obstacle for consumers and early adopters who are considering the purchase of an EV. Presently, EVs make up less than 1 percent of the total U.S. vehicle fleet while 10 percent of the vehicles sold in Europe last December were pure electric.

A recent study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago indicated that EVs are driven about half the distance - an average of 5,300 miles a year - compared to conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. One conclusion taken from the study is that EV owners see those vehicles as complements to their transportation needs instead of a replacement for their conventional cars.

"When industry giants like Ford and GM are making a commitment to electric vehicles, that's a huge indicator that EVs are more than just a passing fad and are something we should invest in," Pierson said. "But like any industry transformation, it can be a frightening proposition for people to experience a paradigm shift like this. With our members in mind, we're committed to staying out ahead of the wave and doing what we can to make sure the power delivery infrastructure is in place when the other pieces and parts of the total picture emerge."

### EVs IN SD

#### DC Fast Charging Infrastructure Plan N Aberdeen 12 85 281 Watertown 212 83 212 Spearfish [14] Huron Pierre Brookings Rapid 14 City 385 Wall 281 83 29 14 Murdo Chamberlain Sioux Mitchell [16] Hot Falls 183 Springs [18] 18 [18] 18 [83] Vermillion Phase 1 Phase 2 ş

Utilities are in the process of conducting siting plans and ordering equipment needed to install the network of charging stations. In the state Legislature, lawmakers favored a \$50 annual fee on electric vehicles which don't contribute the gas tax revenue that goes toward construction and maintenance of road and highway infrastructure. Presently, there are roughly 400 EVs on South Dakota roadways.

"We're just tremendously excited to be a part of this project," Pierson said. "Our goal is to help our members in any way we can and we want to be there on the ground floor as the industry continues to expand."

Collaborating with Pierson is Robert Raker, manager of public relations at West River Electric. They are working with utilities throughout South Dakota and Minnesota to build out the DC fast charging infrastructure. The plan is to initially focus on major highways and interstates and then branch out from there.

The way Raker sees it, getting involved in constructing a charging station network is a sound investment in the economic growth and development of cooperative communities. He said cooperatives are leading the way by purchasing EVs of their own as demonstration models for their members and also as part of the cooperative's fleet. West River Electric's Nissan Leaf is used for business purposes throughout the day and is quite the attraction at community events on the weekends. He noted that co-ops have a long history of innovation and progress.

"Many co-ops are formulating plans to

migrate their light-duty service vehicles to EV," Raker said. "Co-ops have always been at the tip of the innovation spear. We were the first to bring power to rural South Dakota and we made sure people had access to power in order to run their farms, homes and appliances...things that would make their lives easier while allowing their communities to prosper."

Part of West River's overall EV strategy, Raker said, is to address the issue of whether the escalating number of EVs will increase stress on the electric power grid.

"EVs make the perfect load for co-ops," he said. "They can be charged during off-peak hours so they are not detrimental to the grid. Like it or not, EVs are coming. We can't change the wind so we'll have to adjust our sails."

## **Visit Co-op Connections Plus**

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."



### FFA CAREER FAIR

# Bright Futures Virtual Career Fair Showcases Rural, Agri-Business Job Opportunities

### Shayla Ebsen

Grow a rewarding and challenging career right here at home. That was the overarching theme of the Bright Futures virtual career fair that was hosted on Feb. 24 by the region's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. South Dakota and western Minnesota high school and post-secondary students, educational advisers, teachers, and parents from across the region attended the free virtual career event that highlighted rural-based careers and explored industries like finance, precision ag and agricultural trades.

"Our cooperative family is committed to enhancing the communities we serve," said Jennifer Gross, education and outreach coordinator at East River Electric Power Cooperative, one of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that hosted the event.

Attendees were able to connect with each other, respond to survey questions, post their own comments and photos, and participate in real-time Q&A sessions with presenters.

"We hosted this unique event to inspire our youth with local stories emphasizing job opportunities, career development, personal fulfillment and financial advancement. There are hidden career gems throughout South Dakota and Minnesota. This event shined a light on all the ways our rural areas offer a bright future!"

The five-hour virtual event featured a blend of keynote speakers and breakout



sessions. Attendees were able to connect with each other, respond to survey questions, post their own comments and photos, and participate in real-time Q&A sessions with presenters.

South Dakota Representative Dusty Johnson opened the event with a timely discussion about politics, agriculture and our region's future. Johnson also discussed how decisions made in Washington, D.C., have a big impact on what happens in our region and why it's important for citizens to remain engaged. A few of the many companies featured during the career fair included Farm Credit Services of America. C&B Operations, Raven Industries, Midwest Vet Services, Salem Vet Clinic and Pipestone System. A panel discussion led by East River Electric Business Development Director Mike Jaspers explored opportunities that are on the horizon for the next generation of farmers, ranchers and rural social media influencers. South Dakota Ag and Rural Leadership Foundation CEO Don Norton provided the event's closing remarks.

"The nature of work in rural America is changing. Growing industries such as precision agriculture, livestock development, food processing, manufacturing, energy, communications and more require different skills, as well as an entrepre-



East River Education and Outreach Coordinator Jennifer Gross interviewed Matt Leighton from Titan Machinery.

neurial spirit," said Gross. "This is truly a great time to be starting your career in our region and our goal was to highlight those awesome opportunities for our next generation of leaders."

Recorded videos from the event will be available free for viewing at yourcooppower.com/futures. Additionally, the webpage will include information on internships and job opportunities at many of the employers that were featured in the event.

# **POWER GRID GLOSSARY**

### Learn More About the Power Grid by Knowing These Terms

### **Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Power grids are essential in moving electricity from its source to the places where it's needed, but they are often overlooked and rarely mentioned - that is until a major storm strikes and the juice ceases to flow. Here is a glossary of terms that will help cooperative consumers learn more about how power moves across long distances to their homes and businesses.

**BASELOAD POWER PLANT** - A large, efficient generating station, typically with a capacity factor of at least 65 percent, that provides dependable power year-round at a low cost. Coal-fired, nuclear, hydro and large natural gas-fired power plants make up most baseload generation, although smaller-scale biomass facilities and geothermal power systems, if properly operated, can also produce baseload power in much smaller quantities.

**FOSSIL FUELS** - Hydrocarbon-based material such as coal, oil, or natural gas found within the top layer of Earth's crust and used

### Sensible Solutions for Our Energy Future

South Dakota's electric cooperatives support reasonable strategies for our energy future that make sense for our members:

- Renewable energy solutions that are both productive and practical
- Rate structures that take affordability into account
- Balanced strategies centered on the best interests of co-op consumers
- Technology-based policies that promote economic development

to produce heat or power; also called conventional fuels. These materials were formed in the ground hundreds of millions of years ago from plant and animal remains.

**GRID** - A network of interconnected high-voltage transmission lines and power generating facilities that allows utilities and other suppliers to share resources on a regional basis. The North American Electric Reliability Corp. oversees reliability of the electric grid covering the U.S. and most of Canada.

**REGIONAL TRANSMISSION ORGANIZATION** - A power transmission system operator that coordinates, controls, and monitors a multi-state electric grid. The transfer of electricity between states is considered interstate commerce, and electric grids spanning multiple states are therefore regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

**PEAK DEMAND** - The industry's equivalent of rush-hour traffic, when power costs run the highest. It's the greatest demand placed on an electric system, measured in kilowatts or megawatts; also, the time of day or season of the year when that demand occurs.

**PEAK LOAD** - The amount of power required by a consumer or utility system during times when electric consumption reaches its highest point; measured in kilowatts or megawatts.

**POWER MARKETING ADMINISTRATION** - A federal agency within the DOE responsible for marketing hydropower, primarily from multiple-purpose water projects operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the International Boundary and Water Commission.

**RENEWABLES** - Sources of energy generation that are naturally replenishable, including wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro, and hydrokinetic (ocean wave and tidal) power.

**ROLLING BLACKOUTS** - Controlled power outages designed to lessen the threat of a major cascading outage, caused by short supply and high demand for power affecting major transmission systems. Rolling blackouts are scheduled for predetermined sectors of the transmission grid at timed intervals.

**SOUTHWEST POWER POOL** - An entity that manages the electric grid and wholesale power market for the central U.S. As a regional transmission organization, the non-profit corporation is mandated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to ensure reliable supplies of power, adequate transmission infrastructure and competitive wholesale electricity prices.

**WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION** - Markets and delivers hydroelectric power and related services within a 15-state region of the central and western U.S. One of four power marketing administrations within the U.S. DOE having the role to market and transmit electricity from multi-use water projects to retail power distribution companies and public authorities. **Note:** Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

### March 19-20

Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD 605-332-6000

### March 23-24 CANCELED

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza **Civic Center Fine Arts** Theatre, Rapid City, SD 605-394-4115

#### March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead Hills, Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center, Deadwood, SD 605-722-4800

#### March 27

Hill City Community Easter Egg Hunt, Hill City Area Chamber of Commerce, Hill City, SD 605-574-2368

#### March 27

Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt, City Park, Groton, SD 605-846-7607

#### March 27

SD State High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD

#### April 1-3

ACL Regional #6 Cornhole Tournament, Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD 605-996-5567

#### April 3

Spring Fling Fun & Glow Egg Hunt, Rush Mountain Adventure Park, Keystone, SD 605-255-4384



#### April 8

The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest, Sioux Falls Arena/Virtual, Sioux Falls, SD 605-339-1203

#### April 9-10

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Main Street, Deadwood, SD 605-578-1876

#### April 9-18

Four Weddings & An Elvis, Mitchell Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD 605-996-9137

#### April 17

Winefest Renaissance, Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD 605-225-8714

#### April 20

All-State Chorus & Orchestra Concert, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD

### April 22-May 2

Beauty and the Beast, Sioux Empire Community Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD 605-367-6000

### April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD 605-941-4958

#### April 30-May 2

Radium Girls, Pierre Players Community Theatre, Pierre, SD 605-224-7826

#### May 8

Davis Flea Market & Artisan Fair, Main Street, Davis, SD 605-940-0069

#### May 15

Red Dirt Music Festival featuring Casey Donahew, Ian Munsick and Randy Burghardt Deadwood Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD 605-559-0386

#### May 21-23

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

### May 21-23

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks and Recreation Areas, SD 605-773-3391

#### May 22

Frühlingsfest & Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD 605-716-7979

### June 5-6

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessinaton Sprinas Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD 605-770-5720

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.