



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

RENVILLE-SIBLEY
APRIL 2022 VOL. 22 NO. 12

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Katie Grott, field station manager at SDSU's Cottonwood research facility near Philip, stays busy overseeing several ongoing projects designed to deliver practical and profitable solutions for producers.

Blazing new trails

Ag research abounds at Cottonwood

Pages 8-9

Line work courses through their veins

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Renville-Sibley and East River work to enhance cyber security



Shayla Ebsen
East River Electric

Vulnerability of the U.S. electric grid has been a top news topic recently - from the Feb. 2021 energy emergency that brought widespread and costly power outages in Texas to the potential for cyber attacks linked to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. With this news coverage questioning the security of our country's power systems, you may find yourself wondering what this means for you and the power you rely on from Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association. Your local electric cooperative, in collaboration with your wholesale power supplier East River Electric Power Cooperative, places a high priority on keeping our information and assets safe from physical and cyber security breaches. Our cooperative families work together to manage growing threats, promote continuous improvement, and develop solutions that keep the grid secure.

PROTECTING AGAINST CYBER THREATS

Delivering on our promise as electric cooperatives to provide safe and reliable electricity encompasses more than maintaining our system's physical infrastructure. Providing reliable power now also requires building cyber-resilient energy delivery systems.

East River Electric's Information Technology division has in-house experts focused on keeping the infrastructure safe from cyber security threats and offers a full cyber security service for our member co-ops, including Renville-Sibley. East River's cyber security service provides participating co-ops with complete cyber security and IT support. East River's team utilizes a maturity model for managing risks. This process is based on three iterative steps: security awareness and education, vulnerability management and incident response.

"When taken together, these maturity model steps make cyber security a continuous process rather than a set-it-and-forget-it task," said East River Chief Information Officer Jeff May. "As cyber security threats and threat actors continue to evolve, so must

the industry's capability to defend against them. Maintaining the security and resilience of the grid requires a flexible approach that draws on a variety of tools, resources and options."

Information sharing, technology development and coordination among industry and government partners are essential for strengthening electric sector cyber defenses. Electric co-ops have frequent interaction with the Department of Energy and other government agencies to coordinate actions to secure the electric grid. Our cooperative family routinely participates in tabletop exercises to ensure we are ready to deploy our emergency response plans if a cyber breach occurs. We also provide cooperative employees with ongoing training so they can recognize phishing scams and other cyber threats.

DELIVERING RELIABLE POWER

Our cooperative network works tirelessly to strengthen our infrastructure against the impacts of harsh weather and also to restore power when outages occur. We're proud to report that Renville-Sibley's current reliability rating is 99.963 percent, including major events and planned outages. That means you, the members, can depend on Renville-Sibley. They can offer this level of reliability with a continual distribution system maintenance program and the close proximity of their line crews to the membership.

Additionally, East River owns eight regional service centers across our territory so we can quickly and safely repair damages to our transmission infrastructure after outages. East River is also currently in the middle of an aggressive transmission system upgrade plan designed to strengthen the system's backbone, improve reliability and provide for future load growth.

With so much uncertainty and flux in the world, power grid vulnerability will no doubt remain a headline for some time. However, you can be certain that your local cooperative and our power supply partners are working day and night to safeguard against threat actors as well as to restore power quickly after outages so that the power will be there when you need it.

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**RENVILLE-SIBLEY
CO-OP POWER**

(USPS 019-074)

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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

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America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 11, 2022, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power will honor the dedicated men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We proudly recognize all electric lineworkers for the services they perform around the clock to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

Outage Report

(affecting 10 members or more)

Date: 01-10-22
Time off: 4:21 am
Time on: 6:05 am
Substation: Henryville
Cause: Transmission

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

10 helpful tips for spring energy savings

Every season of the year provides many unique energy-saving opportunities for you and your family.

Here are some ideas particularly well suited for you to apply this spring.

- 1. Clear the air:** Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate throughout your home.
- 2. Cook outside:** Enjoy the sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.
- 3. Search and seal:** Cracks and spaces let conditioned air slip outdoors. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.
- 4. Natural light:** Open blinds and curtains and turn off the lights to save energy and money.
- 5. Be fan friendly:** Use ceiling fans to circulate air and keep cool.
- 6. Atmospheric adjustment:** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the warmer months ahead.
- 7. Tune up:** Schedule an appointment with a qualified heating, ventilating and air conditioning technician to identify any potential problems with your system.
- 8. Peak savings:** Plan household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low).
- 9. Take charge:** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.
- 10. Move outdoors:** Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save more money.



DON'T TOY WITH PERSONAL SAFETY



When playing outdoors, keep a safe distance from power lines, substations and other equipment your electric co-op uses to send electricity to your home.

Flying remote-controlled toys and drones is a great way to have fun, but accidentally making contact with a power line or other electrical equipment can be dangerous and, in some cases, even deadly.

- Never fly kites or drones near power lines.
- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a power line, call your electric co-op.



Fire Prevention

Jonie Smith

Jonie Smith sends out an important safety message for campers to extinguish fires before leaving the area. Jonie is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith of Castlewood. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative.

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.

LIP-SMACKING BEVERAGES

BLUEBERRY BANANA SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:
 1 cup spinach
 1/2 cup water
 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
 1 tbsp. almond butter
 1/2 cup bananas, frozen
 1/2 cup blueberries, frozen
 1 tbsp. chia seeds
 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/4 tsp. minced ginger
 1/2 cup berry yogurt
 fresh blueberries, for garnish (optional)
 Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In blender, blend spinach, water, apple cider vinegar, almond butter, frozen bananas, frozen blueberries, chia seeds, cinnamon, ginger and yogurt until smooth. Pour into two glasses and garnish with fresh blueberries, if desired.

culinary.net

FRENCH ICED COFFEE

Ingredients:
 3 cups strong coffee
 2 cups sugar
 1 pint cream or half & half
 1 qt. milk or almond milk
 2 tsp. (vanilla) flavoring (other flavorings also work)

METHOD

Dissolve sugar in hot coffee. Cool. Add other ingredients. Pour into containers (I use the tall 2 c. Tupperware for individual drinks, but also use quarts.) Freeze. Take out and let thaw.

Ruth Schilberg, Viborg

SWAMP WATER

Ingredients:
 1 small package lime gelatin
 1 cup hot water
 1 (12-oz.) can frozen unsweetened pineapple juice concentrate
 2 liters carbonated water

METHOD

Mix lime gelatin with hot water to dissolve. Add frozen concentrate and carbonated water. Chill. Makes 10 servings.

Lily Gums, Clear Lake

FRUIT SLUSH

Ingredients:
 4 cups sugar (granulated)
 6 cups water
 1 46 oz. can pineapple juice
 2 12 oz. cans frozen orange juice
 1 12 oz. can frozen lemonade (pink or yellow)
 2 small bananas, mashed very fine (or other fruit)

METHOD

Mix and bring to a boil the sugar and water. When mixture is cool, add juices and fruit. Put in 5-quart pail and freeze. When frozen, use 2-3 scoops in a glass with 7-Up or ginger ale. Great drink for spring or summer.

Alana Neville, Milesville

STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:
 2 cup fresh strawberries, stemmed & halved
 1 cup plain yogurt
 1/2 cup ice cubes or chips
 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
 1/4 tsp. ginger

METHOD

In a blender, combine all ingredients. Blend on high speed until smoothie texture. Makes 2-12 oz. glasses.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Annual Meeting to be held March 31, 2022

The 84th Annual Meeting of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association will be held on Thursday, March 31, 2022, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being called in accordance with the bylaws of the association to transact the following business:

1. Report of officers, directors and committees.
2. Election of three (3) directors, one (1) from District 1, one (1) from District 2 and one (1) from District 3.
3. Any other business which may properly come before the meeting.

Voting ballots for director election, including candidate information, will be mailed to all members the week of March 14. If you cannot attend and you wish to mail your ballot, you may do so.

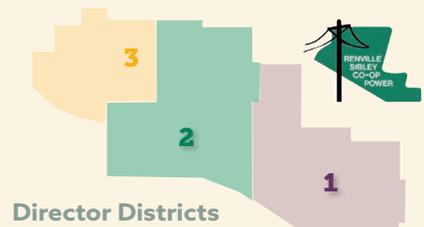
However, if mailed, it must be received through the mail by March 31, 2022.

A \$15 energy credit attendance prize will be given to members (one credit per member) who attend the annual meeting. All members are encouraged to attend the 84th annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

Alan Neyers, Secretary

Renville-Sibley Director Candidate Information

The following individuals are running for the Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association board of directors. More information from the candidates was included with the ballot mailing.



District 1



Whitey Hinderman

Incumbent

Townships of Cornish, Severance and Moltke in Sibley County; the Townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County and the Townships of Cairo, Wellington, Martinsburg, Camp, Bandon and Palmyra in Renville County.

District 2



Chuck Amberg

Townships of Honner and Delhi in Redwood County and the Townships of Beaver Falls, Flora, Henryville, Birch Cooley, Norfolk, Melville, Bird Island and Kingman in Renville County.



Wayland Zaske

Incumbent

District 3



Gary Eekhoff

Incumbent

Townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County, the Township of Rheiderland in Chippewa County and the Townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County.

Member Informational Meetings

Renville-Sibley members had the opportunity to attend a Member Informational Meeting in February. These meetings were held in Danube, Fairfax, and Sacred Heart. Gene Alex gave an update on the activities in the Operation Department. DeeAnne Newville gave a brief update on the financial condition of the cooperative then shared information on the new facility project. Information on the new facility will also be shared at the annual meeting on March 31. 961300



Co-op truck to be sold by sealed bid

Renville-Sibley is selling one of our trucks by sealed bid. The sealed bids should be received by Renville-Sibley on Wednesday, April 13. The minimum bid is \$15,000. The truck information is as follows:

1999 International 4700 DT 466E, mileage 41,990, hours 2,914, manual transmission, flatbed truck (rack shown in picture to be removed).

Contact the office at 800-826-2593 if you would like to see the most recent service records or see the truck.



Reminder: Let us know of any changes to your electric service

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2022 to please contact our office as soon as possible. In order to complete these projects on time, material may need to be ordered well in advance as often there is extended lead time to get the appropriate material. In addition, crew time will be scheduled in the order project downpayments and material are received.

ROBO RANCHING

Cottonwood Field Station Manager Katie Grott and student Lily McFadden take a break from their work. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Cottonwood Field Research Station is abuzz with studies designed to increase producer profitability

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdua.coop

There are robo-cops, robo-codes and robo-calls. But robo-cattle ranching?

That futuristic phrase is part of the nomenclature surrounding a beef production movement called “precision ranching,” an offshoot of the “precision agriculture” approach that promotes the use of advanced technology to improve yields and profitability.

This new wave of ag research evokes postmodern images of bovines grazing through the fields wearing high tech gadgets. Turns out, it’s a description not too far off the mark, according to Dr. Jamie Brennan, an assistant professor of research and extension specialist at South Dakota State University.

Based out of the West River Research and Extension Center in Rapid City, Brennan is using SDSU’s Cottonwood Field Station near Philip to study the viability of using high-tech GPS tracking collars to deliver real-time information on steer activity and behavior.

“By monitoring animal movement we can identify changes in behavior that might indicate sickness, for example, which can be sent as an alert to producers,” Brennan said.

He’s deploying the type of advanced accelerator technology commonly associated with Fitbit watches, vehicle trackers, smartphone map apps and other monitoring devices.

“We’re working to develop the capability for producers to easily identify not only where animals are on the landscape but also where they are selecting for grazing and resting locations,” Brennan said. “The work we are doing at the station is designed to determine the potential benefits - and possible shortcomings - of precision ranching technology and to predict the return on investment for the producer.”

Brennan’s project is just one of several intriguing studies currently in play at the Cottonwood Field Station. One of six field research centers in the SDSU Agriculture Experiment Station network, Cottonwood is among the

oldest facilities of its kind in the country. Covering more than 2,600 acres, Cottonwood was established in 1907 and has received regional and national acclaim with impactful results such as developing a new method of determining stocking rates for western regions and devising the Universal Soil Loss Equation now known as RUSLE2.

These scientific forays into precision ranching include virtual fencing (Vence™), Smart Feeder™ systems, mobile app-based mineral consumption monitors, methane emissions measuring devices and soil moisture monitoring.

The exploration into virtual fencing holds plenty of promise in helping producers manage their livestock and landscape more efficiently and effectively, according to Cottonwood Field Station manager Katie Grott.

While it may be hard for an old-school rancher to envision a world without barbed wire, fence posts and cattle guards, moving this technology to market could result in substantial savings for farm families.

Grott explained the technology is a much more sophisticated version of the kind of residential-grade invisible fence



A cow at the Cottonwood Field Research Station waits patiently for a Smart Feeder to be loaded with hay.

designed to keep pets from wandering around the neighborhood streets. Virtual fencing is already being used to contain goat herds and other smaller animals with measurable success.

The latest research testing involves combining an electrical pulse administered through a GPS-enabled collar, combined with an auditory stimulus to keep cattle confined within certain boundaries. A software program allows the rancher to define those boundaries as needed for successful grazing rotation and land management.

“We’re looking at how virtual fencing affects animal behavior, performance and natural resources,” Grott said.

Dr. Krista Ehlert, assistant professor and extension specialist, is also involved in the project and adds, “Virtual fencing turns physical labor into cognitive labor for producers, helping to reduce labor and potentially improve work-life balance for producers.”

Other projects at Cottonwood include work being led by assistant professor Dr. Hector Menendez. The research uses technology developed by the Rapid City firm, C-Lock. C-Lock has a scale that collects daily weight records on animals every time they drink. The data provide

valuable information on stocking rates, forage quality and weather conditions on individual animal performance.

“It’s an exciting time in the area of agricultural research,” Menendez said.

“We have secured funds to proceed with a project on interdisciplinary engagement in animal systems and precision livestock water monitoring. And we’re excited about holding producer-oriented workshops, training classes and field days to educate producers on how these advancements can improve their profitability.”

One rancher who keeps a close eye on the latest research results is Eric Jennings, president of the South Dakota Cattleman’s Association.

“There are some interesting new concepts being explored through this facility and others,” Jennings said. “We’re watching to see which of these systems prove to become both practical and affordable for producers to implement in their daily operations. For instance, the idea of virtual fencing has been around for a while, but the research and application of new technology has emerged as a viable option.”

Brennan, Ehlert, Menendez and others who work daily to blaze new pathways

Amount of acres
researchers have

2,640

at their disposal at the
Cottonwood
Field Station

for cattle producers take gratification from knowing their labor and application of scientific methods could result in a farm family turning the corner toward profitability and sustaining a generational way of life. Plus, they enjoy drawing students into the process and inspiring the next generation of farmers.

“They receive training in animal science, rangeland ecology, precision technology, modeling, computer programming and boots-on-the-ground ranching,” Menendez said. “One of our aims is to encourage the next generation of professionals that can merge precision technology to maximize rangeland livestock production while maintaining ranching culture.”

...or go online at www.gopherstateonecall.org

Get the Dirt

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW ABOUT EXCAVATION SAFETY

Welcome to the Excavator Safety Guide, Minnesota edition! 2016 brings a number of changes to Gopher State One Call (GSOC) that will provide excavators with new and easy to use technology for excavation ticket processing. These changes are intended to keep the basic goal of damage prevention in clear focus. See the custom pages in this guide for important information about both the new electronic ticket system and basic facts that will help you dig safely in Minnesota, this time and every time.

Inside You'll Find...

- ▶ An Overview of GSOC's Technology Suite
- ▶ Who Should Call 811? Don't Forget, Farmers!
- ▶ The Process for Safe Excavation
- ▶ What Doesn't Get Marked: Private Lines
- ▶ Get the Scoop on the GSOC Team

811 Know what's below. Call before you dig.

Comparative Report

	Current YTD through January 31, 2022	One Year Ago YTD through January 31, 2021	10 Years Ago YTD through January 31, 2012
average # of Consumers	1,883	1,882	1,925
kWhs purchased	20,392,920	20,475,470	19,698,393
Cost of purchased power	\$1,295,270.37	\$1,332,501.39	\$952,179.07

FREE Want Ad Service

Members can submit ads for the following categories: Giveaway, For Sale, For Rent, and Wanted. Ads should be or are limited to no more than 15 words and must be received by the first of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Renville-Sibley reserves the right to edit content or exclude ads due to space restrictions. Ads will be run one time only unless resubmitted. Please complete the following information and mail it to the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Ad to be placed (limit of 15 words per ad)

Type of ad: Giveaway For Sale For Rent Wanted

WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month Darrell Smith found his 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 the 4th of April, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

TIPS FOR STREAMING

When streaming content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on gaming consoles, which use 10 times more power than a laptop. Streaming with equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25-30% less energy.

FOR SALE

John Deere 535 baler with net wrap, in good condition, \$5,500 or best offer.

Contact Bob Gummert, Renville, MN - 320-212-4725.

February board meeting highlights

The February board meeting was held on Monday, February 28 at 9 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Cindy Mertens, Gene Alex, Lenae Wordes and representatives from Brietbach Construction and Engan Associates.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the January 31 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of January
- Capital credits to estates
- Safety report for January
- 2021 Financial Audit Report from Brady Martz
- CFC Officers Certificate of Compliance
- Nominating Committee candidate appointments
- Close the membership list for annual meeting
- CRC Voting Delegate
- Revisions to the following policies:
 - Schedule B – Rates
 - Policy 303 – Small Demand and Energy Rate
 - Policy 312 – Electric Heat Rate
 - Policy 413 – Disconnection of Service Between October 1 and

April 30

- Policy 523 – Safety Program (AWAIR)
 - Distributed Generation acknowledgments
 - Breitbach Construction contracts
- The board reviewed:
- Capital credits transferred
 - 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 – 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
 - Annual meeting
 - Member Informational meetings
 - Scholarship program
- Please contact the Renville-Sibley office if you would like more information regarding the board meeting.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

OPERATION ROUND UP

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on April 19. The deadline for applications is April 1.

Operation Round Up Thank You - Thank you so much for supporting our region's future leaders.
Shelly Maes, SWWC

NOTICE

The March board meeting will be held on Monday, March 28 at 8 am. The April board meeting will be held on Monday, April 25 at 8 am.



#THANKALINEMAN

VOLTAGE IN THEIR VEINS

The Miller and Wingen men share a total of 177 years of experience in the electric utility industry. Pictured above are Joel Miller, Rollie Miller, Travis Miller, Corey Miller, Wes Wingen and Dustin Wingen.

Miller, Wingen utility workers represent a combined 177 years of faithful service

Tara Miller

taram@centralec.coop

Take a moment to imagine life without electricity. No household appliances, no electric heat, no air conditioning, no internet and no phone. In 1925, only half of homes in the U.S. had electricity. Fast forward to 2022, and electricity is a basic necessity.

April is Lineworker Appreciation Month – a time to celebrate and honor the brave men and women who often work in hazardous conditions to power our world.

The Miller family, originally from Canova, has 177 years of electric industry experience, and most of them started their careers as lineworkers.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Before attending school to become a lineworker, Joel Miller, better known as “Joe” or “Smokey” to some, graduated from Canova High School and began working at Overhead Door Company

in Sioux Falls. While he didn’t mind the work, he knew it wasn’t what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Joe then heard about an opportunity to attend school and become a lineworker.

“I knew Ron Callies. He was an instructor,” Joe said. “He told us to look at the program, so Robert Zens and I checked it out and thought we would give it a try.”

Joe graduated from what is now known as Mitchell Technical College (MTC) in 1978 and began the family’s legacy of life on the line when he joined East River Electric in Madison. He started on the construction crew and later worked in maintenance. His friend Robert Zens also worked at East River Electric, but passed away in a motorcycle accident in 1980.

Joe worked at East River Electric for nearly 20 years before he moved to Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) in Pierre. WAPA is a federal organization that markets and delivers hydroelectric power and related services

across the 15-state region. Joe retired from his position of line foreman at WAPA in 2020 after 43 years.

FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Rollie was next in the Miller family line-up, a year younger than Joe. His mom talked him into going to Pipestone, MN, to work at Bayliner Boats with his older brother Ed. Rollie then worked at Feterl’s Manufacturing in Salem where he welded augers until he decided to enroll in line school at MTC at the age of 20.

“The biggest reason I went to line school was because Joe had just done it, and I was friends with Robert Zens. I saw how they just did it, and I thought I could do it, too,” Rollie explained.

Rollie now manages Vigilante Electric Cooperative in Dillon, MT. Before running the show, he worked for an electrical contractor and for West River Electric.

He then attended SDSU and worked for Bob’s Electric in Flandreau with Reggie Gassman, who is manager of customer electrical services at Sioux

Valley Energy. They both grew up in the Canova area.

Rollie earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, allowing him to become a licensed professional engineer.

"My education has greatly benefited me throughout my career," Rollie said.

Rollie's boys are also following the family tradition. Cody Miller attended SDSU to become an electrical engineer and consults for electric utilities, and Logan "L.J." Miller is enrolled in the power line construction and maintenance program at MTC.



Cody Miller



L.J. Miller

"It's not a cake walk. I told them you really have to study and work hard," he said.

After Rollie, Corey was the next Miller brother to attend MTC.

"The reason I went into it is because I had two older brothers who were

linemen. I knew when I was a freshman in high school that I was going to be a lineman," Corey said.

After graduating from MTC in 1987, Corey became an apprentice lineworker at Public Service of New Hampshire. He worked there for three years, then took a position at Missouri Public Service.

Like his brothers, Corey worked his way up the ranks. He was hired as a lineworker and promoted to foreman, then supervisor, and now works in management. He is also on the board of directors for the International Lineman Rodeo Association, helping host the annual lineman rodeo event which promotes lineworker safety.

Corey's 15-year-old son Zach plans to become a lineworker after high school. Corey shares this advice for anybody

- **Joel Miller**, Retired Line Foreman at Western Area Power Administration (Pierre, SD)
43 Years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Rollie Miller**, General Manager at Vigilante Electric Cooperative (Dillon, MT)
42 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Corey Miller**, Director of Regional Operations at Evergy (Lexington, MO)
35 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Travis Miller**, Foreman at Southeastern Electric (Salem, SD)
30 years of industry experience
- **Wes Wingen**, Manager of Meter Services at Black Hills Power (Rapid City, SD)
15 years, 10 months of industry experience
- **Cody Miller**, Electrical Engineer (Dillon, MT)
8 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Dustin Wingen**, Former Lineworker at Alaska Village Electric Co-op (Anchorage, AK)
2 years of industry experience
- **Logan (L.J.) Miller**, Student in the power line program at Mitchell Technical College

considering a career in the field:

"We need linemen. It is an awesome profession to get into. Linemen live to restore power – that's their lifeblood. And, quite honestly, you will make a very good wage while doing that."

Travis was the last of the Miller brothers to attend line school. He decided milking cows wasn't his calling, so in 1991 at age 26, Travis followed the path started by his big brother Joe.

"I figured they all did it, so I could probably do it better," Travis joked. He is now the foreman at Southeastern Electric in Salem.

Wes and Dustin Wingen are the sons of Stacy (Miller) and Bob Wingen. They are nephews to the Miller brothers and have also been involved in the electric utility industry. Dustin was a lineworker in Anchorage, AK, before coming back home to farm. Wes is an engineer and manager of meter services at Black Hills Power in Rapid City.

IT'S A MILLER THING

The Miller family had nine children: Sandy, Duane, Ed, Joe, Rollie, Stacy, Derrin, Travis and Corey. Marcella, mother of the youngest eight children,

passed away in 2011, and Duane "Stub" Miller, the family patriarch, currently resides in Howard. Stub shared, "People don't know it today, but having electricity is something we shouldn't take for granted."

The four Miller brothers share a combined 151 years of electric industry experience. When you add it all up, the Miller and Wingen men boast an impressive 177 years of electric industry experience.

They couldn't have worked in this profession without the support of their families, which are too large to list. All the storm jobs, dangerous assignments and family moves were worth it when they think about the people they serve. They all agree, "It's a Miller thing" and working with voltage is in their veins.

THANK A LINEMAN

Please take time to thank lineworkers for all they do to brighten our lives. We thank the Miller family for their many years of service in the industry.

Editor's note: Writer Tara Miller is Travis Miller's wife and works for Central Electric Cooperative near Mitchell.



FORAGING FOR FUN

Jayne Pfeifle of Timber Lake is fond of foraging for fruit, which she turns into delicious jellies and jams. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

Foraging for 'found food' can be fun and also good for your diet plan

Billy Gibson

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Back when Jayne Pfeifle was a little girl and ventured outdoors to gather chokeberries with her mother, her thoughts were fixed on the delicious jellies and jams she'd soon enjoy.

She wasn't aware she was engaging in an activity that would come to be known decades later as "foraging." For all she knew, foraging for food was something wild animals did when they got hungry.

With the steady lifting of pandemic restrictions, many people across the country are taking to the outdoors to avail themselves of what's called "found

food" or "nature's free grocery store."

As an indication of the rising popularity of foraging, one social media star from Ohio has amassed nearly 3.5 million TikTok followers, in addition to nearly a million more fans on Instagram. Alexis Nikole Nelson, 29, has been featured on National Public Radio, Fortune magazine, The New York Times and other news and entertainment outlets.

During the pandemic, Nelson started posting videos from her forays into the forests to gather edible mushrooms, berries, weeds and other plants. She was floored by the response she received.

Some subjects included "Where to find mushrooms that taste like shrimp,"

"How to make 'bacon' out of acorns," and "How to make 'danger bread' using cow parsnip." But Nelson struck social media gold when she posted a video that got the attention of people left financially strapped by the pandemic: "How to 'stretch' groceries by foraging."

Before long, a wider audience of outdoors enthusiasts were gravitating toward the notion that foraging can not only be enjoyed either solo or with others, but it can also be adventurous while saving money and promoting a more nutritious diet.

For Pfeifle, much of the satisfaction she derives from foraging for chokeberries, plums, elderberries and other wild edibles is making sure her husband of 39 years has a tangy treat to spread on his breakfast toast.

"Clyde likes his jelly and toast every

What to take

- Bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Long pants (for prickly and/or poisonous plants)
- Gardening gloves
- A basket or bag for storage
- A GPS or phone for maps
- Scissors or a hunting knife



Morel mushrooms are a favorite target for many foragers in search of free food and fun.

morning,” she said of her husband, her frequent foraging field companion. “I enjoy getting out and gathering the berries and he enjoys the jelly, so it makes everybody happy.”

Just don’t ask her to deal with buffaloberries. That’s where Pfeifle draws the line.

“It’s a tiny berry. They’re hard to pick, hard to clean and hard to process. The jelly is good, but it’s too much hard work and not worth the trouble,” said Pfeifle, who has served as an educator at Timber Lake Elementary for the past 48 years.

Little Moreau Recreation Area is a prime public picking place for Pfeifle and other people in the Timber Lake area, but she stays close to the vest when asked to disclose some of her other favorite foraging sites. It so happens that holding secrets is a quality found in many foragers, akin to a fisherman’s reluctance to announce to the world where the fish are biting.

Jaclyn Arens, communications and marketing coordinator at Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative, looks forward to foraging for morel mushrooms when the weather warms up in the spring. She’s learned over the past

few years since she began the hobby that there’s a limited window of time for the best hunting.

“We start scouting at the end of March, but we don’t usually find anything until April and May,” she said. “The soil temperature is important, and the morels don’t pop up until it’s warm enough, about 50 degrees. They burn up or disappear when it gets too warm.”

In keeping with the forager’s unspoken code of silence, she’ll say when and how, but she won’t say where.

“I will say we look for places that have moist soil and deciduous trees like oak, elm, ash and cottonwood. Forests with big, old, decaying trees are best because morels grow from the root systems of dying trees. People have had luck in places where trees have been cut down or burned. There is plenty of public land in South Dakota to explore,” Arens said.

One pro tip Arens offers is to bring along a mesh bag to store your morels. The mesh material allows the spores to spread while hunting for more mushrooms. Another pro tip: if you do find an elusive morel, freeze in your tracks...there are likely more close by, so it’s wise to stop before accidentally trampling over a perfectly fine ‘shroom.

In addition to the lure of the hunt, the taste of morels and the quality time spent with her boyfriend, Arens really



Jaclyn Arens

enjoys the annual ritual of getting out into the wild after a long winter.

“My favorite thing is getting outside in the spring after being cooped up in

the winter,” she said. “Plus, morels are delicious, and they taste even better after a long day of mushroom hunting. My favorite way to cook morels is to lightly batter them in flour and fry them in a hot pan with butter. Yummy!”

She encourages beginners to follow a few basic rules:

- Avoid areas beneath or around electric power lines.
- Avoid trespassing on private property.
- Never eat anything unless you can identify it with 100 percent accuracy.
- Take a companion along for fun and safety.
- Try to avoid areas where chemicals or insecticides may have been applied.



APRIL 16
Easter Egg Hunt at
Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

MARCH 25-26

Schmeckfest
748 S Main Street, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

MARCH 26

Annual Ag Day
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 30

Elton John Tribute Concert
Performing Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-7813

APRIL 2

Watertown Coin and Currency Show
Elks Lodge, Watertown, SD, 605-882-4663

APRIL 2-3

Youth & Family Services' 25th Annual Kids Fair
The Monument, Rapid City, SD, youthandfamilyservices.org/kids-fair/

APRIL 8-9

Forks, Corks & Kegs Festival
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, deadwood.com/event/forks-corks-kegs

APRIL 8-9

Jackrabbit Stampede Rodeo
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, swiftelcenter.com

APRIL 8-10

CAHF Spring Fling Eggstravaganza Series
Carroll Acres Hobby Farm, Rapid City, SD, carrollacreshobbyfarm.com

APRIL 8-16

The Passion and the Cross
Orpheum Theater Center, Sioux Falls, SD, siouxfallsorpheum.com

APRIL 9

Keystone Spring Fling Vendor Fair
1101 Madill Street, Keystone, SD, 605-786-3035

APRIL 9-10

DGTCA Gun Show
Rushmore Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-270-0764

APRIL 16

Easter Egg Hunt
Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-2867

APRIL 22

River Rat ½ Marathon, 10K, and 5K
Gavins Point Area, Yankton, SD, allsportscentral.com

APRIL 22-23

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

APRIL 23

Lakota All Star Basketball Games
The Monument Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-41985

APRIL 23

Martina McBride
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, swiftelcenter.com

APRIL 23

Winefest Renaissance
1121 1st Avenue SE, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-8714

APRIL 23-24

46th Mobridge Area Art Show
Scherr-Howe Arena, Mobridge, SD, 605-845-2060

APRIL 23-24

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

APRIL 27-30

45th Annual Kingswood Rummage Sales
Southwest Sioux Falls, SD, kingswoodrummage.com

APRIL 28-30

26th Annual Black Hills Dance Festival
The Monument, Rapid City, SD, blackhillsdancefestival.com

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 5-7

Ordinary Days
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, pierreplayers.com

APRIL 30

SDSO Centennial Finale
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, sdsymphony.org

MAY 7

Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
131 E Falls Park Drive, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-274-3735

MAY 14-15

Ellsworth Air and Space Show
1940 EP Howe Drive, Ellsworth AFB, SD, ellsworthairshow.com

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