



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

RENVILLE-SIBLEY
MARCH 2022 VOL. 22 NO. 11

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is one of several hidden gems in the park system that are waiting to be discovered

Spotlight on State Parks

Hidden treasures
for you to discover
Pages 8-9

REED Fund fills
community needs
Pages 12-13

Working with local legislators to serve your interests

“All politics is local.” This observation by the late Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, means that even national politics have a local impact, and people care most about issues that directly affect them. Indirectly, this famous adage underscores the importance and value of local politics.



DeeAnne Newville
CEO
320-826-2593 or
800-826-2593

At Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, we think it’s critical to develop and cultivate relationships with local legislators because they craft, introduce and vote on legislation that impacts the local business climate, the environment and quality of life for our community. That’s why we work closely with our local elected officials. After all, our purpose is to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy, but our mission is to help our community thrive.

Renville-Sibley is a local business that powers economic development and prosperity for our region. As a cooperative, we have deep roots here, and we listen closely to our members to better understand the needs of the community. Our leadership, board members and employees live and work right here in the community we serve.

We strive to be an advocate for our community, ensuring that local legislators know, understand and act on the issues that are important to our area.

PROVIDING INDUSTRY GUIDANCE AND EXPERTISE

As a practical matter, we recognize that most legislators are “generalists,” yet they vote on a wide range of issues. Their expertise may not include the changing energy industry, which is why Renville-Sibley, with assistance from our statewide organization Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and our national organization National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), provides guidance and expertise from subject matter experts who’ve been in the energy industry for many years.

Today’s energy landscape is an increasingly complex topic covering not only the traditional engineering

and vegetation management aspects of the industry, but also encompasses technology, cybersecurity, the electrification of the transportation sector and more.

Our experts provide briefings and backgrounds to legislators, committees and staff, and we offer expert testimony for hearings and other legislative or regulatory meetings or gatherings. And because we’re involved in economic development and we know local community leaders, we can provide insight on how issues and policies under discussion might impact our region.

REPRESENTING YOUR BEST INTERESTS

We strive to be a trusted resource on energy issues. Because of our deep roots in the community, we have a firm understanding of local issues and needs. We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our consumer-members. This means we are able to cultivate and foster positive, productive relationships with legislators who know and trust us, because we’re advocating on behalf of the community we serve.

We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our consumer-members.

Also looking out for your best interest are the directors that serve on the board of Renville-Sibley. These directors are elected by the members of the cooperative. Each year at annual meeting time, ballots are mailed to all members. Each member can elect someone from their district to represent them on Renville-Sibley’s board. Ballots will be mailed to members the week of March 14th. More annual meeting information can be found on page 6 of this newsletter.

We’re proud to power your life and bring good things to the community. We hope you’ll continue to advise Renville-Sibley on matters of importance so we can work to improve the quality of life for all.

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**RENVILLE-SIBLEY
CO-OP POWER**

(USPS 019-074)

Board of Directors

Roger Manthei – Chair
Wayland Zaske – Vice Chair
Alan Neyers – Secretary/Treasurer
Gary Eekhoff
Matt Haubrich
Whitey Hinderman
Gary Peterson
Kylie Rieke
Helen Ruebel

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Brian Athmann – Journeyman Lineman
Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief
Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman
Brad Braulick – Crew Chief
Nick Bruns – Systems Coordinator
Anthony Carruth – Journeyman Lineman
Amy Ervin – Consumer Accounts Representative
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman
Cindy Mertens – Administrative Services Manager
DeeAnne Newville – CEO
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman
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Shane Suess – PT Janitor
Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Tyler Froland is selected Scholar of the Month



Congratulations to Tyler Froland from Renville County West for being selected as the January Scholar of the Month. Tyler was nominated because of his honesty, strong moral principles, and dedication to helping others. Tyler is involved in basketball, baseball, NHS, and is a part of the ecumenical Youth

Group. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Tyler Froland as the January 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. 516500

Outage Report

(affecting 10 members or more)

Date: 12-05-21
Time off: 6:27 pm
Time on: 7:22 pm
Substation: Troy
Cause: Equipment failure

Date: 12-14-21
Time off: 1:30 pm
Time on: 1:45 pm
Substation: Troy
Cause: Scheduled

Date: 12-15-21
Time off: 11:25 pm
Time on: 3:00 am
Substation: Cairo, Wellington
Cause: Substation

Date: 12-16-21
Time off: 1:05 am
Time on: 2:38 am
Substation: Cairo, Wellington, Birch Cooley
Cause: Transmission

Date: 12-16-21
Time off: 1:05 am
Time on: 2:38 am
Substation: Cairo, Wellington, Birch Cooley
Cause: Transmission

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

Four shocking electrical dangers in your home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

1. Appliances. Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

2. Ladders. Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

3. Power tools. Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

4. Electrical outlets and extension cords. Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

WE'VE GOT CO-OP COUNTRY COVERED



We know you love to read your local edition of Cooperative Connections magazine, but you'll get more great content when you visit our video companion, Cooperative Connections Plus. Scan the QR code or search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus and you'll be treating yourself to an intriguing repository of videos on interesting events going on around our state. There's walleye fishing, rodeos, electric vehicles, curling, Christmas at the Capitol, the State Fair and much more. Visit us today!



Call 811 before digging

Amelia Swift Hawk

Amelia Swift Hawk knows that it's wise to call 811 before digging into the ground. Amelia and her parents, Michael and Alyssa Swift Hawk, are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.

SAVORY SEAFOOD

OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:
 1 onion, chopped
 6 T. butter
 2 tsp. minced garlic
 6 cup whole milk
 1 pint (2 cans) oysters - do not drain
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
 1/4 tsp. paprika
 1 tsp. parsley
 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

METHOD

Sauté onion and garlic in butter. Stir in undrained oysters. Cook at medium heat about 5 minutes until oysters curl at the edges. Stir in milk, red pepper flakes, paprika, parsley, and Tabasco sauce. Heat to serving temperature. Serve with oyster crackers.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

GRILLED SALMON

Ingredients:
 1 1/2 lbs. salmon fillet cut into 6 slices
 2 tbsp. olive oil extra virgin
 1 lemon or lime (juice of)
 1 tsp. smoked paprika
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. onion powder
 1 tsp. salt
 Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In a small bowl, add olive oil, lemon juice, smoked paprika, garlic and onion powders, salt, pepper. Whisk to combine. In a shallow flat dish with edges, lay salmon slices and brush with marinade. Marinate from 10 minutes to 24 hours. Longer marinating time, more flavorful salmon. Preheat grill to 450-500. Clean grill and oil grates with oil-soaked paper towel to avoid salmon sticking to the grill. Place salmon on the grill skin side up, close the lid and grill for 4-5 minutes. Check with spatula – if salmon has grill marks and comes off easy, flip it. Cook uncovered for another 3-4 minutes or until thermometer reads 125 degrees for medium rare or 140 for medium. Serve hot or cold on top of salad, mango salsa, guacamole, brown rice or quinoa. ifoodreal.com

SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Ingredients:
 12 ozs. fully cooked andouille sausage, cut to 1/2-inch slices
 12 ozs. uncooked shrimp (31-40 per lb.), peeled and deveined
 1 med. green pepper, chopped
 1 med. onion, chopped
 2 celery ribs, chopped
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 tsps. Creole or Cajun seasoning (paprika, with cayenne pepper, oregano, dried sweet basil)
 1 can (14-1/2 ozs.) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, drained
 1 cup uncooked "instant" rice
 1 can (8 ozs.) tomato sauce
 1/2 cup chicken broth
 3 green onion sprigs chopped

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Divide mixture among six greased 18x12-inch pieces of heavy-duty foil. Fold foil around mixture and crimp edges to seal, forming packets; place on a baking sheet. Bake until shrimp turn pink and rice is tender, 20-25 minutes. Use caution when opening packets as they will be steamy. Consider adding jalapenos to taste and/or some chopped pineapple to cool the palate. Try serving for breakfast or brunch with sumptuous eggs and biscuits.

Shannon Collins/Taste of Home

Please send your favorite beverage 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.



SAVE THE DATE



Thursday, 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

Notice: Candidates for the director positions will be included in the April newsletter. Also, candidate information for each district will be included with the ballot mailing.

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 projects and material are received.

Five safety tips for your home workshop

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into a disaster. You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware and materials, but if you do not put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of a new set of shelves or upgraded lighting in the kitchen. Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

1. WEAR SAFETY GEAR, GLASSES AND GLOVES

The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Roll up your sleeves or choose ones that are tight against your skin. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended.

Safety glasses are necessary 100 percent of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. Before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw, however, take the gloves off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.

2. OBSERVE ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Before you start any DIY project, inspect your power tools and cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around.

If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.

3. KEEP YOUR WORKSHOP CLEAN

Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it. The byproducts of do-it-yourself work, such as sawdust, cast-off nails and screws, and rags or brushes with potentially combustible or hazardous fluids on them, increase the risk of fires and projectiles.

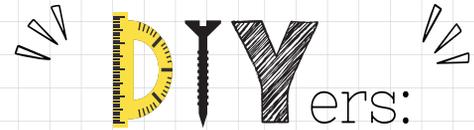
4. KEEP TOOLS IN GOOD CONDITION

Besides inspecting the cords and plugs for electrical safety, everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use. Use appropriate lubrication, such as WD-40 or others specifically created for power tools.

5. KNOW YOUR LIMITS

If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

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



HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:



Inspect tools for damage before using them



Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear



Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)



Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible



Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard



Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on



Use the right tool for the job



Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry



Make sure your work area is well-lit



Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords

Safe
Electricity.org

HIDDEN TREASURES

Despite its legacy as the site of an epic battle over good and evil, Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is a source of family fun for those who want to get away and enjoy the great outdoors. *Photos by SD Tourism.*

The State Park system has seen visitation increase with new programs in place to serve the public

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

At first blush, Sica Hollow State Park might seem like someplace you'd want to avoid.

The area was named after a Dakota Sioux word used to describe something sinister and features a winding pathway called the Trail of the Spirits. There are maroon-colored bogs, sangria-tinged streams and brown foliage that reminded early tribes of the blood and flesh of their ancestors.

The undulating terrain is said to be the site of an ancient spiritual battle in which the land and the people were overcome by a malevolent force. Local legend has it that the restless souls of the dead manifest themselves as unexplained bursts of fire and light in the night, disturbing sounds of agonized wailing and the ominous beat of war drums in the distance.

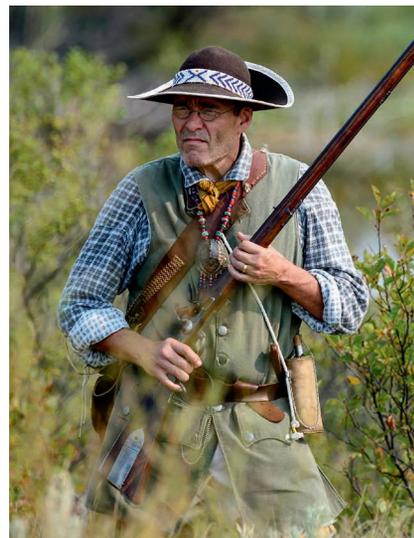
Apart from the spooky stories and eerie lore, Sica Hollow turns out to be one of many "hidden gems" in the

State Park system that are found off the beaten paths.

Sica Hollow is located in the northeast corner of the state near Sisseton where you'll find rustic bridges, winding creeks, scenic waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers festooning the eight miles of hiking trails. The Trail of Spirits, which today is a self-guided interpretive foot trail, was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1971. The park also contains the Old River Warren and Coteau des Prairies, which have been named National Natural Landmarks.

With more than 60 facilities in its fold, the State Park system has lots to offer and includes several lesser-known destinations for families to discover such as Sica Hollow, Spirit Mound and Adams Homestead in the eastern part of the state and Shadehill, Rocky Point and Llewellyn Johns out west.

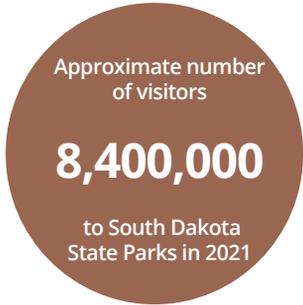
The Shadehill Recreation Area near Lemmon is situated on the shores of Shadehill Reservoir, which is one of western South Dakota's few large lakes.



At Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area, visitors will find a monument to Hugh Glass, a hunter who survived a vicious attack by a grizzly bear in 1823.

There are 85 campsites with seven camping cabins, a group lodge, and facilities for boating, fishing, canoeing, biking, archery and more.

Nearby is the much smaller Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area with just 10 campsites and an opportunity to enjoy



a quieter and more secluded camping experience. There are points of historical interest close by as many historic figures have traveled through the area, including George Custer’s 1874 Expedition and Hugh Glass. According to first-hand accounts, in 1823 Glass was attacked by a grizzly bear, an event documented in the novel *Lord Grizzly* and recounted in the movie, *The Revenant*.

Nick Harrington, communications manager for Game, Fish and Parks, reports that the system is stronger and more popular than ever. Last year more than 8.4 million visitors passed through the parks, representing a 25 percent increase in visitation over the nine-year average. Custer State Park, the system’s most popular spot, saw a 3 percent increase in attendance with more than 2.3 million visitors.

Seventy-seven percent of visitors rated their camping experience as an A with 43 out of the 48 areas surveyed receiving the top rating.

To keep the momentum moving along, the State Park system has added 15 new facilities from a new Bison Center at Custer State Park to an improved boat ramp at West Whitlock Recreation Area.

And just in time for the spring and summer camping season there is a new and improved way of helping campers navigate the parks and outdoor facilities. Through www.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com, customers can secure a camping reservation or buy an annual park



Sica Hollow is one of the “hidden gems” in the state park system where visitors can commune with nature while learning about local lore.

entrance license while also purchasing hunting and fishing licenses all from the same transaction. A new mobile app provides 360 degree views of the more than 4,000 campsites in the system.

The Department of Tourism has also launched a free mobile pass called South Dakota Great Finds that helps users explore the state’s many attractions, including hidden treasures like Sica Hollow. The pass can be accessed at travelsouthdakota.com, and there is no app to download.

According to Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen, “This mobile experience allows us to better highlight what truly makes up the great state of South Dakota. It showcases rural America, unexpected businesses and parks, and gets people off the beaten path to discover something new.”

Search for “Go Outdoors South Dakota” to find GFP’s official mobile app for iOS and Android.

Top 10 most visited state parks in 2021

1. Custer State Park
2. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area
3. Spring Creek Recreation Area
4. Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
5. Cow Creek Recreation Area
6. Angostura Recreation Area
7. Roy Lake State Park
8. Farm Island Recreation Area
9. Springfield Recreation Area
10. Newton Hills State Park

...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 December 31, 2021	One Year Ago YTD through December 31, 2020	10 Years Ago YTD through December 31, 2011
average # of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,928
kWhs purchased	187,065,101	182,595,473	168,675,160
Cost of purchased power	\$12,176,062.38	\$11,628,476.20	\$7,685,386.24

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)

Type of ad: Giveaway For Sale For Rent Wanted

WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

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

GET A LEG UP ON YOUR TUNE-UP

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tuneup for your home's heating and cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system.

January board meeting highlights

The January board meeting was held on Monday, January 31 at 9 am. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Cindy Mertens, Gene Alex, and Lenae Wordes. Also present was Attorney Jeff Whitmore and Ryan Breitbach.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the December 20 board meeting
 - Operating and disbursement reports for the month of December
 - Capital credits to estates
 - Safety report for December
 - Loan application Resolution
 - Depreciation Resolution
 - Direction for the new facility (more information presented at the Member Informational Meetings)
- 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 – YTD through December (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.

NOTICE:

The February board meeting will be held on Monday, Feb. 28 at 9 a.m.

The March board meeting will be held on Monday, March 28 at 8 a.m.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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

At the January Operation Round Up board meeting, the Board of Trustees awarded a donation of \$500 to the Renville Fire Department. The funds will be put towards the purchase of a 6-inch elbow and 20 feet of hard suction hose along with some new adapters for the hoses.

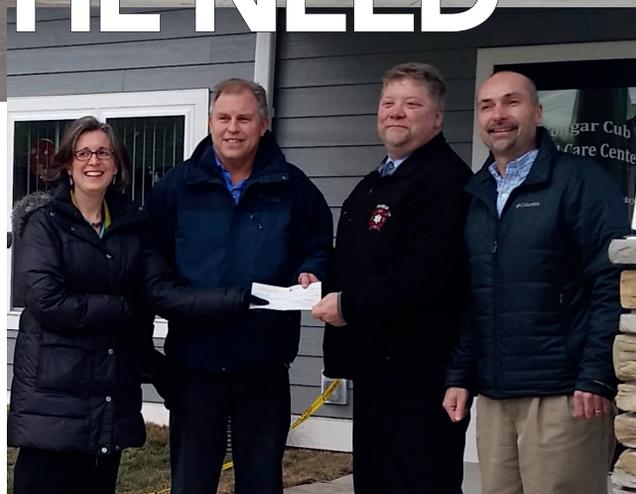
If your non-profit organization has a project or event that would benefit the community, Operation Round Up funds may be available to help your group reach its goal. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on April 19. The deadline for applications is April 1.



REED FILLS THE NEED

Pictured at right, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power CEO DeeAnne Newville (left), presents a check to the local Community Center and Cougar Club daycare facility in Franklin, MN, through the electric cooperative REED Fund.

Electric cooperative REED Fund helps meet many needs for communities in South Dakota and western Minnesota



Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Leaders of the Garretson community northeast of Sioux Falls had the vision for a much-needed expansion of the small town's non-profit daycare center. Since cobbling together two older structures in 2019 and taking in more tykes, it was apparent that the current white-hot demand for childcare was going to necessitate yet another expansion.

So they set their jaws, put together a plan and mustered up the will to make it happen for the sake of local families and the greater good of the community.

Now, all they needed was a miracle.

That miracle came in the form of a random conversation that took place between Blue Dragon Academy Board Member Kris Frerk and Sioux Metro Growth Alliance CEO Jesse Fonkert.

Frerk was in full fret mode over a lack of funding for the project, but it turned

out Fonkert had a fail-safe solution.

Through his contacts Angie Neises at East River Electric and Jay Buchholz at Sioux Valley Energy, Fonkert was aware of the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund, or REED Fund. He knew it was a valuable financial resource made available by electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota just for this kind of project.

Bottom line: Blue Dragon Academy will begin work in April with plans to complete the 3,500-sq. ft. project in November. Best of all, nearly 40 more families in and around the town of Garretson will have access to quality child care services.

While Frerk doesn't recall any trumpets blaring or harps playing in the background, she contends that her off-hand discussion with Fonkert was delivered by divine intervention.

"It's a pure miracle," she said. "We had been putting feelers out for funding because we have a big need in this area.

When I got that information from Jesse, it was just like a miracle. We jumped on it, we got accepted by the REED Fund Board and now we're ready to get the work done."

Blue Dragon secured a low-interest REED loan for nearly \$700,000. The non-profit organization is required to match \$239,000. Now Frerk and her crew are heavy on the fund-raising trail and have already received tremendous support from many donors in the community, she said. The Blue Dragon Board hopes to pay the debt off early with plans to hire five or six more workers once the project is complete.

For East River Electric Economic Development Director Eric Fosheim, it was another day at the office. His job is to match the money with the need, and he says many recipients respond with the enthusiasm and gratitude Frerk expresses when they receive funds.

He does fall just short of uttering the "M" word, however.

“It’s extremely satisfying to be in a position to help people solve problems and overcome challenges in their communities,” Fosheim said. “We try to work together with folks to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic impediments and come up with clever ways to get projects across the finish line. This is all made possible through the electric cooperatives and the fact that they take their responsibilities and obligations to their communities very seriously.”

The REED Fund has backed scores of projects and loaned out more than \$100 million since it was established in 1996. Fosheim sees it as the perfect tool for promoting local economic growth, improving infrastructure, enhancing community facilities and contributing to job, business and wealth creation.

Funds have gone to retail and service businesses, industrial parks and office facilities, fire protection projects, manufacturing firms, housing projects, health care facilities and more.

Approximate amount of money
\$100 million
 loaned through the electric cooperative REED Fund

Chris Larson, general manager at Clay-Union Electric in Vermillion, and his board tapped REED funds to support the Wakonda Heritage Manor assisted living facility. They also worked with the business to secure a zero-interest loan through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program.

“It’s truly an honor for us to have this tremendous resource available to help improve the lives of our members and the community at-large,” Larson said.

The real meaning of the REED program came to light when he and the board visited the place.

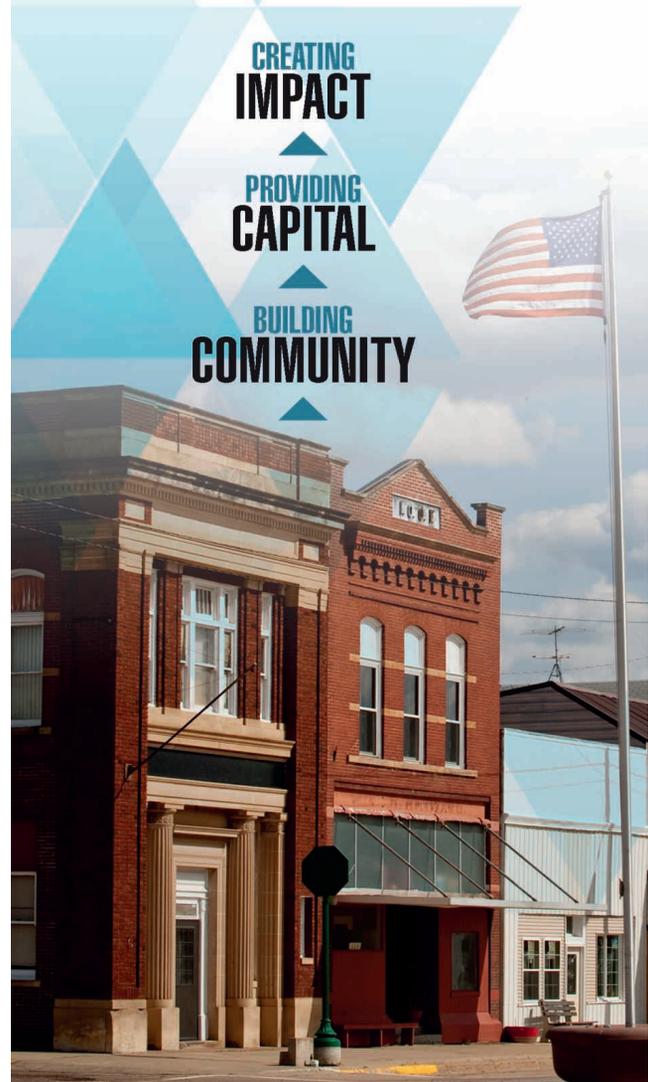
“We viewed the improvements they’d made, and heard from the people there about how it enhanced their quality of life. It really warms your heart to know you’re part of a co-op system that can have a positive impact on families and businesses. It just shows how much of a difference we can make when we all work together, pool our resources and get things done.”

East River cooperatives serving western Minnesota have also participated in the program. As with the Garretson community, parents in Franklin, MN, also had a need for a daycare center.

www.reedfund.coop

RURAL ELECTRIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

REED FUND



The Cougar Cub Child Care Center was launched with the help of REED funds obtained through Renville-Sibley Co-op Power after two of the town’s three daycare facilities closed.

Renville-Sibley CEO DeeAnne Neville said, “We were happy to help fill the gap. Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles. It’s an example of the city, school and economic development coming together for the good of the people in our rural communities.”

For more information about the REED Loan program, visit www.reedfund.coop.

CUTTING CARBON, SAVING CASH



Owned by H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake, this Tesla Model 3 has been used during the legislative session to educate lawmakers about the emergence of EV technology and beneficial electrification. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cooperatives promote the concept of beneficial electrification to help members cut carbon and save money

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

When that short snappy algorithm started appearing on the sides of shampoo bottles back in the 1950s, some said it simply encouraged people to practice good hygiene and do a more thorough job of scrubbing their tresses right down to the scalp.

More cynical observers took it as a thinly-veiled scam devised by some devious marketing firm to sell more shampoo and spin bathers into an endless cycle of washing their hair, breaking only long enough to go out and purchase more Prell.

Rare is the business that encourages customers to use less of its product. But that's the very approach that lies at the

heart of electric cooperatives and their guiding principles. Electric co-ops exist exclusively to deliver the power their members need, but they also go above and beyond by working to make sure their members don't pay a penny more than the cost of providing the service while helping them to better manage their consumption.

That basic formula has remained the same since the rural electric cooperative movement began back in the 1930s, even as new methods of generating, distributing and using electricity have evolved over the decades. Every step along the way, co-ops have stood at the forefront to help members make the best and most efficient use of whatever new development comes down the pike.

Enter the emergence of a concept

called beneficial electrification. This is a relatively new term that describes the pursuit of solutions that allow cooperatives to meet rising service demands while helping their consumers save money over time, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, fostering a more resilient electrical grid, protecting the environment and improving the quality of life for all.

Across the country, electric cooperatives are launching and embracing beneficial electrification programs and blazing pathways that lead to providing more value to members, their local communities and the environment.

Some of what falls under the heading "beneficial electrification" has been adopted by co-ops and their consumers for years, such as replacing older and inefficient gas furnaces and water heaters with more efficient electric heat pumps. More recently, cooperatives have implemented load management programs that enable the co-op to control devices in the home and help balance power supply and demand, resulting in more efficient consumption and potential savings for

the member. Or as it's known in more colloquial terms, a "double back scratch."

And even more recently, cooperatives have accelerated their adoption of renewable power and have gotten involved in programs to incentivize the use of electric vehicles and help build out a system of fast-charging stations across the state, region and nation.

All of these types of initiatives are called "beneficial" because they help members save money and also help protect the environment.

In his role as Manager of Beneficial Electrification at Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, Ben Pierson often works with members to give them what they've indicated through surveys that they want: more information about how they can use technology to reduce their energy consumption while saving money.

"As we get out in the community, we hear from our members all the time, especially as we discuss the benefit of EVs in particular," Pierson said. "We try to make it easier to integrate this emissions-reducing and money-saving technology by offering incentives for installing home chargers and a time-of-use plan that allows members to charge their cars overnight at a much lower cost."

Pierson said some members are taking advantage of the home-charger incentive even though they aren't yet among the nearly 500 South Dakotans who own an EV.

"They're just excited that we've made these programs available," he said. "They realize EVs are going to be a substantial part of our transportation future and they want to be ready to ease the transition for them and their families."

Robert Raker is manager of communications and public relations at West River Electric and works out of the co-op's Rapid City office. Raker sees a fertile field for promoting beneficial electrification as the Rapid City area experiences accelerated growth. Like Sioux Valley Energy and other co-ops around the state, West River Electric offers load management programs, rate structures and incentives

SAVE MONEY

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.



Did you know...

Replacing your HVAC system with an electric heat pump can **save you nearly \$1,000 per year** on your heating and cooling bills.¹



Did you know...

The average cost of **charging an electric car** is equivalent to **\$1.20 per gallon of gasoline.**²



Did you know...

Owning an electric vehicle can **save you over \$800** in annual maintenance.³

for electric appliances like water heaters and heat pumps.

He uses the cooperative's Nissan Leaf EV to demonstrate the advantages of this emerging technology and is also part of the effort to leverage government and private funds to build a reliable EV charging network.

As neighborhoods grow and businesses expand in his area, Raker collaborates with developers to promote beneficial electrification. He also sees value in encouraging residential members to make more beneficial use of electricity by converting lawn implements from gas to electric.

"We've seen a real shift in mentality toward carbon-free growth," he said. "Our job is to educate and inform our members about how they can continue to integrate technology into their everyday lives on any scale."

As spring and summer are just around the corner, he said, one way most residential members can help in the goal to curb carbon emissions is to convert lawn and garden equipment from gasoline to

electric/battery-powered.

Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products.

There are several electric lawn mower brands that operate without a cord, unlike the first generation of electric mowers. Typically priced in the \$200-\$500 range, electric mowers are powerful, low maintenance, and work well for lawns that are a half-acre or less.

Electric trimmers and leaf blowers are also catching up to their gas-powered competitors in performance and reliability.

Raker encourages members to do their research before investing in electric lawn equipment, citing consumerreports.org as a trust source of information.

He and Pierson agree that beneficial electrification is the way of the future and there's no better time for members to engage in this environmentally-friendly approach than the present.



March 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD

Photo by Travel South Dakota

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.

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5
Making God Laugh
 Grand Opera House, Pierre,
 SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
The Music of John Williams
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 3-5
Pro Snocross Races
 Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
 Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826

MARCH 4-5, 10-13
The 39 Steps
 Orpheum Theater Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 4-6
Home & Garden Show
 Brown County Fairgrounds,
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-2055

MARCH 5
I Hate Winter Cornhole
Tournament
 Scherr Howe Arena,
 Mobridge, SD, www.mobridge.org/Corn-Hole-Tournament

MARCH 5
Mountain West® Whiskey
Festival
 Rushmore Hotel, Rapid City, SD,
www.mountainwestwhiskeyfestival.com

MARCH 5
Road 2 Destruction Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 5-8
2022 Summit League Men's
and Women's Basketball
Championships
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.thesummitleague.org/tickets

MARCH 10
Singing in the Rain: Dinner
& A Movie
 Goss Opera House, Watertown,
 SD, 605-753-0200

MARCH 10
TobyMac Hits Deep Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 10-13
Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.siouxfalls.sportshow.com

MARCH 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
& Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
 SD, www.28below.com

MARCH 12
Meraki Dance Competition
& Convention
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 12-13
Hill City's Antique and
Railroad Show & Sale
 440 Main Street, Hill City, SD,
 605-574-2821 or 605-877-6629

MARCH 14
Harlem Globetrotters
 The Monument, Rapid City,
 SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 18-19
St. Patrick's Day Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

MARCH 18-19
Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts
Show
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

MARCH 18-19, 25-26
Schmeckfest
 748 S Main Street, Freeman,
 SD, 605-925-4237

MARCH 19
Dakota Coffee Festival
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

MARCH 19
St. Patrick's Day Celebration
 Various Locations, Watertown,
 SD, 605-886-5814

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