



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**RENVILLE-SIBLEY**  
OCTOBER 2022 VOL. 23 NO. 6

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Former co-op general manager Jim Moore is one of the original organizers of the Line Patrol Charity Ride and was the designated lead rider in 2021 as the group embarked on its adventure

## Line Patrol Charity Ride

20 years of assisting  
co-op families  
Pages 8-9

Food co-ops meet  
community needs  
Pages 12-13

# Insights gained from tour of SPP facilities

It's hard to decipher any direct connection between electricity and pools. In fact, folks like me in the electric cooperative industry make a point of warning members about the dangers of using electricity around water sources.

But there are different kinds of pools, and the pool I visited this summer had little to do with swimming, splashing or diving. In late August, I joined a group of more than 30 electric co-op representatives from throughout South Dakota and western Minnesota to tour the facilities of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) based in Little Rock, Ark.

The term "pool" in this instance stands for the pooling of resources through the SPP - also known as a regional transmission organization - to make sure power flows efficiently along the electric grid throughout a 13-state swath of territory that spans from Canada to Texas.

While these types of entities seldom attract much public interest, the winter storm that swept across the country and chilled the Renville-Sibley Co-op Power service area in February of 2021 captured the attention of many in the industry. As the temperatures dropped, electricity use among consumers spiked, threatening to disturb the delicate balance of supply and demand that's necessary to keep the power flowing without interruption and without causing substantial - and costly - damage to the system.

I have to admit that when I first heard about the tour, I was preparing to be underwhelmed. What would there be to view...a bunch of glassy-eyed bespectacled engineers staring blankly into their computer monitors as charts and schematic images flashed across the screens?

Actually, the trip was indeed short on visuals but it was surprisingly loaded with information about how these engineers, forecasters, analysts and strategists perform the critical task of keeping the power generation and transmission process in balance from farm-to-farm, town-to-town and city-to-city across thousands of miles of terrain.

Members of the SPP team took turns explaining the role they play individually in keeping the power

moving and making sure it gets delivered when and where it's needed.

Even though this was a different kind of pool, quite frankly, much of the arcane and obtuse information started to make my head swim even though I've been in the industry for a quarter of a century.

I think few consumers really comprehend, or take time to contemplate, just how much our country's economy, national security and the collective health and safety of our citizens depend on the reliable delivery of electricity. Our power grid that's been constantly growing and evolving for the past 90 years is an absolute engineering marvel with more than 9,200 generating units producing more than 1 million megawatts of generating capacity, all connected to 600,000 miles of transmission lines.

The grid has been referred to as a vast ecosystem of asset owners, manufacturers, service providers, and government officials at federal, state and local levels, all working together to run one of the most reliable electrical systems in the world.

And it all costs you and me mere pennies per kilowatt hour. Amazing, when you sit down and take a minute to think about it.

It was even more astounding to listen to the professionals at the SPP describe what they do and how they manage to pull it off practically every second of every day and night, through fair weather and foul.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Director Gary Eekhoff participated in the tour and came away with a greater understanding of how SPP operators do their jobs so that he can do his job better as a board member: "There are so many people behind the scenes at the SPP making sure the power flows seamlessly across the country. This is such a complex entity. Decisions about our electricity, which affects our daily lives, sometimes need to be made within seconds."

He and the rest of the group learned that maintaining the necessary equilibrium of the power grid is difficult under normal circumstances but becomes much more complex when Mother Nature decides to throw a curve ball in the form of a severe heat wave or a strong winter blizzard.

Surviving these events without massive regional blackouts and substantial destruction of the infrastructure requires coordination and communication. And that was one of the primary purposes of this tour: to meet the folks who work



**Billy Gibson**  
SDREA Director of  
Communications

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**RENVILLE-SIBLEY  
CO-OP POWER**

(USPS 019-074)

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

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**SPP tour, continued**



Operators monitor the flow of electricity across the regional grid around the clock at the Southwest Power Pool headquarters in Little Rock, Ark.

at the switches, to talk with them, to understand what they do and to have the face-to-face interaction and shared contact information so that we can navigate through the next storm event and prevent prolonged outages.

It's impossible to expect the system or the people who run it to perform absolutely flawlessly under all conditions,

but be assured that the folks we met who take on the responsibility of getting power to your home, ranch or business are highly competent and conscientious professionals. They take their jobs very seriously because, after all, the system that delivers affordable and reliable electricity to your home and mine also delivers it to their own families.

**Thank You Notes**

**4-H**

Thank you for sponsoring Renville County 4-H.

**Kellen Nachreiner**

Thank you so much for supporting Renville County 4-H at the fair! I had the opportunity to show market goats and placed reserve champion. Thank you for the generous donation to help this industry thrive and provide incentives for the elite show.

**Natalie Beckendorf, Renville Aces 4-H**

Thank you, I really like the cup and I'm going to display it so every time I look at it I will think about you guys.

**Tessa**

**AMERICAN DAIRY ASSN.**

Thank you for being a coupon sponsor

of the American Dairy Association and treating your customers to an enjoyable treat while people experienced the Fair.

**American Dairy Association**

**DAYZ OF THUNDER**

Thanks so much for sponsoring the Fairfax Dayz of Thunder weekend events again this year! Everyone enjoyed celebrating 140 years and we appreciate your support!

**Fairfax Dayz of Thunder Committee**

**OPERATION ROUND UP**

Thanks to Operation Round Up for supporting student enrichment again this year! Your help allows us to keep programs affordable for students and families. You are making an impact on our region's future leaders!!

**Shelly Maes, Executive Director**

## Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignites. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

**SMOKE DETECTORS.** These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. Six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHERS.** Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

**INSTALL ARC-FAULT INTERRUPTERS.** These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

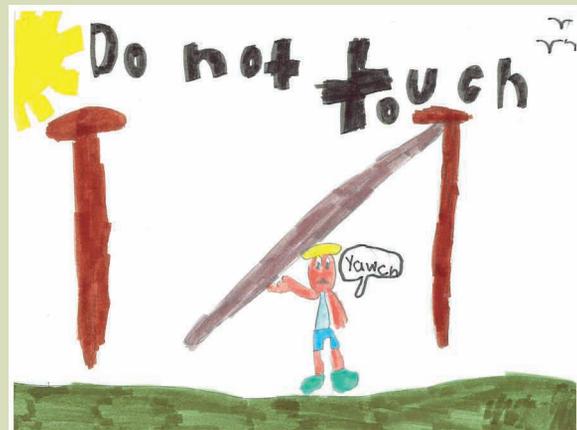
**MAINTAIN IT ALL.** Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

## ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES REPRESENT AT DAKOTAFEST



Electric cooperative representatives were on hand at the 2022 Dakotafest in Mitchell to share information about energy efficiency and electric-powered lawn implements and to showcase a 2022 Ford Lightning electric pickup truck provided by Vern Eide Ford. Shown left to right are Sheila Gross, Jared Rakness, Jennifer Gross, Patrick Soukup, Kristie Hauck, Brett Snyders and Tara Miller.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Do not touch power lines

**Kendyl Gill**

Kendyl knows that electricity always seeks a path to the ground and that all power lines should be treated as if they are energized. Kendyl is the child of Brent and Emily Gill, and they 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.

# PRIMO PASTA!

## PASTA WITH ZUCCHINI AND TOMATOES

### Ingredients:

- 7 oz. short whole wheat pasta like penne fusilli or farfalle
- 2 lbs. zucchini, chopped
- 1 lb. grape or cherry tomatoes cut in halves
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves minced
- 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese grated
- 1 c. parsley or 1/2 cup basil finely chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

Cook pasta per package instructions undercooking by 2-3 minutes or until pasta is cooked but firm. While pasta is cooking, preheat large ceramic non-stick skillet on medium-high heat and swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat. Add zucchini and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Return skillet to stove, swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat, add tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring a few times. Turn off heat and add cooked pasta and zucchini, remaining 1 tbsp. of oil, salt, pepper, cheese and parsley or basil; stir and serve. Adjust seasonings to taste. [ifoodreal.com](http://ifoodreal.com)

## MEXI-CORN LASAGNA

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1 can Mexican corn
- 1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
- 1 c. Pace picante sauce
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 16 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

### METHOD

Combine first six ingredients in large skillet. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Combine cottage cheese, eggs, parmesan cheese, oregano and garlic salt; mix well. Arrange 6 tortillas on bottom and sides of a lightly greased 13x9x2 baking dish, overlapping as necessary. Top with half the meat mixture. Spoon cheese mixture over meat. Arrange remaining tortillas over cheese. Top with remaining meat mixture. Bake 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Let stand 10 minutes, serve with additional picante sauce. Serves 8. **Carol and Rollie Smith, Brandon**

## BAKED SPAGHETTI

### Ingredients:

- 8 oz. package angel hair pasta
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasonings
- 2 c. tomato sauce
- 1 c. water
- 2 c. canned crushed tomatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 garlic cloves chopped
- 1/2 c. green peppers chopped
- 1/2 c. onion chopped
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

### METHOD

Cook pasta and set aside. Add 1 tbsp. olive oil to pasta and stir in to keep it from sticking together. Precook beef and pork together with salt, garlic salt and black pepper. Drain grease off and set aside. In a large pan add parsley, Italian seasonings, tomato sauce and water, garlic, green peppers, onions and crushed tomatoes. Bring sauce to a boil then reduce to a simmer and continue to cook for 30 minutes. Add cooked meat to the sauce. Let set while preparing the baking pan. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Layer sauce with spaghetti noodles in the pan. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes. At 30 minutes pull spaghetti from the oven and mix cheeses together then pour on spaghetti evenly. Bake 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted **Jane Cave, Sioux Falls**

Please send your favorite 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.

## Electric products featured at annual Farmfest

The annual Farmfest Event was held on Aug. 2-4 at the beautiful Gilfillan Estate near Morgan, MN. Renville-Sibley joins together with 11 other electric co-ops each year to sponsor a booth. The temperature on the first day started out very nice and attendance was strong. However, before long it got extremely hot, and the crowds dwindled. That was the day representatives from Renville-Sibley worked the Farmfest booth. It was great to visit with members who stopped by our booth that day.

On display this year were two electric bikes. Electric bikes have become quite popular. These bikes were pedal assist, which

is a mode on the bike that provides power from the motor to help the rider pedal easier and move faster. Riders must pedal to get the benefits of the electric motor.

Also on display were five electric products, including a snowblower, chainsaw, leaf blower, grass trimmer and lawn mower. Members had the opportunity to register to win one of these electric products by bringing in the coupon from their newsletter and placing it in the registration box of the product they wished to win. Congratulations to Renville-Sibley members Connie Mulder for winning the leaf blower and Arlyln Minkel for winning the chain saw.



Cooperative representative Jennifer Gross visited with guests at the Touchstone Energy booth at Farmfest.

## Fun had by all at Family-A-Fair

On Thursday, Aug. 11, the annual Family-a-Fair night was held. This event brought our membership together to attend the Renville County Fair. It was a cool and breezy evening, but fun was still had by those in attendance. A total of 370 members and guests entered the gates of the fair FREE of charge. Each person also received a \$1 off coupon to use at either the Pork Producers or Dairy

Association stand. That evening, 165 coupons were turned in at the Dairy Association stand and 166 coupons were redeemed at the Pork Producers stand. All members who attended the fair were registered for a \$50 energy credit with those 12 and under registered for a kids prize. The winner of the \$50 energy credit was Carl Lund. The winner of the kids' drawing was Laken Slagter.



In the photo above, Directors Wayland Zaske and Gary Peterson register members for free admittance.

## Cold Weather Rule and Energy Assistance Program

Per Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between Oct. 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your bills from Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects. Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between Oct. 1 and April 30, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members' rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2023.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.

- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance (list providers & phone numbers).

Here is a list of local energy assistance providers:

**Minnesota Valley Action Council**  
706 N Victory Dr., Mankato, MN 56001,  
800-767-7139 (Toll-Free); 507-345-6822  
(Mankato)

**United Community Action Partnership**  
**Marshall Office:** 1400 S Saratoga St., Marshall,  
MN 56258, Marshall (Corp.) 507-537-1416  
**Willmar Office:** 200 SW 4th St., Willmar, MN  
56201, Willmar 320-235-0850

**Prairie Five Community Action Council:**  
719 North 7th St., Suite 302, P.O. Box 159,  
Montevideo, MN 56265-0159, 320-269-6578  
(Montevideo) or 800-292-5437

Renville-Sibley exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association to set up a payment plan.

# Wordes works to master complexity of the pipe organ

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The many pastimes of Rachel Wordes include popular activities such as dance, soccer and volunteer work through her church.

And then there's the pipe organ. Wordes, a native of Renville and recent graduate of Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa, has been on a quest to perfect her musical skills on this arcane instrument since she joined the music program at Dordt.

She received scholarship support in dance and education, but also received a special private scholarship to study the pipe organ because of her proficiency on piano, her passion for music and eagerness to learn. She sat down at the imposing Casavant organ at Dordt and it was love at first listen.

Wordes read a history of the vaunted Casavant organ written by Dr. Joan Ringerwole, who described it as having voice and breath and taking on the qualities of a living being. The massive organ has 2,865 pipes, 57 ranks, 37 stops and 32 pedals.

"The appeal to me is that the pipe organ is like a palette you can use to paint a musical picture," Wordes said. "Every one is different and has its own unique tone and timbre."

Throughout her college career, Wordes taught piano and pipe organ lessons, led summer music camps, participated in recitals and distinguished herself in her ability to play and teach.



Rachel Wordes plays an organ at St. Bavorkerk in Haarlem, Netherlands. The instrument was built in the early 1700s and was played by Handel and Mozart.

During two weeks last spring, she was selected to take part in a pipe organ tour across the Netherlands. She has also traveled with her fellow Dordt University students and faculty to Europe for the opportunity to play 24 famous and historic pipe organs.

"The Netherlands trip was remarkable," she said. "We got to play two or three pipe organs a day. We had some pieces picked out and played in the style represented during the time the organ was made, going all the way back to the 1300s. It was kind of like driving a car that's not yours. They're all different with

different tones, temperaments, character and personality. I learned a lot."

Knowledge is something Wordes is more than eager to share. In 2019, she spent the summer teaching music in La Entrada, Honduras. During the first five months of 2022, Wordes worked with students in Managua, Nicaragua, and recently returned there with a year-long commitment to teach English and music at a local private school.

Her career goal is to teach English as a Second Language (ESL).

"I love to teach and watch students expand their skills," she said.



Roger Lawien and his wife, Kris, are regular participants in the Line Patrol Charity Ride. *Photos by Brad Letcher*

## Line Patrol Charity Ride marks 20 years of serving those in need

### Billy Gibson

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

When Roger Lawien encountered some unexpected health problems, his fear and anxiety were assuaged by the assurance that he had several key factors in his favor.

He knew he could rely on his faith. He knew he could rely on his family. And he knew he could rely on his fellow cooperative employees across the state.

Lawien, member services manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake, is a part-time volunteer and full-time advocate of Line Patrol, Inc., a charitable organization that exists to provide financial relief for South Dakota electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Since the program was launched in 2003, hundreds of co-op employees have contributed to the emergency response fund by staging golf tournaments, bowling tournaments, auctions, trap shoots, 5K runs, raffles,

bake sales and more. One of the most popular and highly anticipated events is the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride held each September.

This year's 20th annual event took place on Sept. 10 and was co-hosted by Rushmore Electric, Butte Electric and Grand Electric. More than 200 riders and other participants gathered in Whitewood at the Iron Horse Inn and spent the afternoon motoring through the picturesque northern Black Hills.

Lawien was there perched aboard his prized Indian Roadmaster, soaking in the experience with his co-op friends and feeling grateful to have a dependable network of support that can be counted on not only to help rebuild lines and poles after a storm but also render aid in a personal crisis situation.

"Having been a recipient of funds from this program, it means a lot to be among these fellow co-op employees who are all so eager and willing to demonstrate their kindness and sincerity by showing up every year to contribute

Estimated amount of Line Patrol funds

**\$580,000**

donated to electric co-op employees

to a worthy cause like this," Lawien said. "It's that same cooperative spirit that bonds us all together. It's the can-do attitude they bring to their jobs every day in service to their members and their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities. They are salt-of-the-earth people who care deeply for one another and the people around them."

Lawien said more than 240 families have received assistance through the fund totaling roughly \$580,000. He is one of three directors of the program along with Jessie Tucker (West Central Electric) and Tim Neises (Central Electric).

Jerry Swartz was one of the first



Jerry Swartz, pictured above-left, was the first recipient of Line Patrol funds after he was injured in 2004.

recipients of Line Patrol funds after he was involved in a workplace accident. He expressed what the charitable organization has meant to him and his family.

“Back in 2004, I had an extreme accident at work. I spent six months in recovery and this foundation gave us a check for \$500 to help us out. It may not seem like much money, but at the time it meant everything to me and my family. It’s amazing. God bless this fund and the people who donate to it and keep it running,” Swartz said.

One of the original organizers of the Charity Ride is former Northern Electric General Manager Jim Moore. Each year, as is the custom, Moore leads the cavalcade of dozens of motorcycles

away from the gathering site and along the chosen route.

“The ride has just gotten bigger and better over the years,” Moore said. “The money goes to help co-op employees in need. One person had a tornado damage their home, another lineman from Yankton was killed in Afghanistan and we set up a scholarship fund for his three children. I always tell my wife, Janice, this is the one thing I look forward to every year and truly love because we’re helping employees and their families get back on their feet.”

Laine Mitchell, communications director at Butte Electric, said helping to host the Charity Ride was an honor for the cooperative and something the organization was happy to support.

“Having many of our own employees benefit from the Line Patrol fund over the years, we are thrilled to co-host this year’s event and help raise money for other cooperative families across South Dakota. The ride is just one of the many ways the foundation bonds our cooperatives together and has touched countless lives in the last 20 years,” Mitchell said.

The weekend began with a social on Friday evening and concluded the following night with a buffet dinner and charity auction.

Sponsors for this year’s ride were Irby, Altec, RESCO, Dakota Supply Group, Border States Electric, WESCO and The Okonite Company.



Hundreds of riders from across the state participate in the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride each year. The program exists to provide financial support for electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

## Update your contact information

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur and sometimes outages simply can't be avoided. There are steps you can take to ensure power is restored as quickly and safely as possible. One step is by keeping your contact information up-to-date. Not only does this help us when notifying you of planned outages for repairs and maintenance, but it also assists in a quicker response when calling in an outage after hours. After-hour calls go to Cooperative Response Center (CRC). Your account information automatically shows if the number you are calling from is tied to your account in our system. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your address, it can make your call to CRC more time-consuming as they search for your account. Another step to a speedy response when calling in your power outage is to have your account number available.

Your contact information and acct. # are located on your statement. Let us know if this information needs to be updated. You can update the information on your return stub or by calling our office at 800-826-2593.

## Comparative Report

	Current YTD through July 31, 2022	One Year Ago YTD through July 31, 2021	10 Years Ago YTD through July 31, 2012
average # of Consumers	1,888	1,882	1,923
kWhs purchased	103,434,914	104,769,904	72,438,543
Cost of purchased power	\$5,849,685.71	\$6,762,290.83	\$3,581,417.81

## 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 Dan Marcus 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 3rd of October, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## MEMBER REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning to make changes to their service in 2023 to 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 down payments and material are received.

## August board meeting highlights

The August board meeting was held on Tuesday, Aug. 30, at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Cindy Mertens, Gene Alex, Lenae Wordes and Amy Ervin. Representatives from Breitbach Construction joined the meeting during lunch to give an update on the new facility. The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the July 25 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of July
- Capital Credits to estates
- Safety report for August
- Operation Round Up Dist. 3 Board Member
- RESCO Annual Meeting Voting Delegates
- Federated Rural Electric Voting Delegates
- CFC Dist. 6 Meeting Voting Delegates

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 July (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - East River update
  - Basin Electric update
  - NRECA update
  - MREA update
  - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
  - Accounts receivable
  - Farmfest
  - Family-a-Fair night
  - New facility update

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

## NOTICE:

The September board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 27 at 8 a.m.  
The October board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 25 at 8 a.m.

## New facility update

## Work continues on schedule

The new facility project continues to be on schedule even though there have been some rain and wet conditions to work around.

The foundations for the precast wall panels are complete. Site grading will continue to include constructing the retention ponds and installing the subbase for the entrance driveway and parking lot.

In early September, the precast

wall panels and roof structure will be produced at the Wells Concrete's plant in Albany, MN. The walls are scheduled to be installed in the first part of October.

Once the building is erected, activities that will commence include installing in-floor heat, roofing, interior concrete slabs, and exterior site work.

## 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 Operations Round Up board of trustees met on Tuesday, July 26. At this meeting, the following donations were awarded:

- Imagination Library - FPC
  - \$1,500
  - Books for children from birth to age 5
- SWWC Foundation for Innovation in Education
  - \$1,000
  - Activities and programs for students, families and over 70 schools in the 18 counties of southwest and west central MN

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 18 at 3:00 pm. The deadline for applications is October 1. Applications for donations can be found at <https://www.renville-sibley.coop/content/operation-round>.



The Sioux Falls Food Co-op has persevered for 50 years by adhering to the co-op model. *Photo by Sioux Falls Food Co-op*

## Food co-ops meet the need for nutritious, healthy choices

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Back in the 1930s, rural community leaders all across the country began traveling from farm to farm knocking on doors and asking for \$5 as seed money to build out a network of electric distribution systems.

It was not an insignificant sum to solicit from many farmers and ranchers contending with substandard soil conditions, the vagaries of weather patterns and fairly primitive mechanization compared to today's operations.

But in exchange for that investment, those same community leaders turned the promise of rural power into a reality and presently there are more than 750 locally-owned electric cooperatives serving roughly 40 million Americans.

Bess Pallares keeps that electric co-op success story close to mind as she embarks on establishing a grocery store in Brookings County using the

cooperative business model as her template.

Pallares is president of the Dakota Community Market board of directors, whose members have been working since 2019 to bring a food cooperative to the Brookings area. She reports that the endeavor hasn't been a cake walk, but she continues to be inspired by the way like-minded electric co-op leaders back in the '30s managed to gain popular support for locally-owned, independent entities created to provide a valuable service.

The board's market analysis indicates that a "low food access zone" exists within Brookings County when it comes to full-service retail grocery stores with just two providers in a 50-mile radius.

"On average, there are typically 2.84 grocery stores per 10,000 population. We have .68 in this area," she said. "People keep saying they're sick of having to drive miles and miles to get to a full-service grocery store that stocks



Bess Pallares

what they want and need for their families."

To generate start-up capital, the board is offering memberships at \$150, a little more than a week's worth of groceries for many families. Meanwhile, Pallares and her board members are scouring the landscape for additional financing sources and federal grant opportunities with plans to have a retail store up and running as soon as possible.

She has had discussions with East River Electric in Madison about accessing available funds through the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund (REED). The REED program



Caselli's Garden is among a growing list of fresh food suppliers for Dakota Community Market. *Photo by Caselli's Garden*

is designed to provide financing to help build the economic base of rural communities within East River Electric's regional service area. Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

**Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.**

Pallares said she sometimes feels exactly like those early electric cooperative pioneers, attempting to pave the way for providing a reliable source of quality, low-cost food in the Brookings area. She has become active in the Billie Sutton Leadership Institute Rural POWER program to help tap into the regional business community with the goal of developing an optimum financial strategy and making connections with future suppliers and other partners.

"The Institute opens up a giant network across the state where you can meet a lot of people doing the same kinds of things you're doing, and they've

got great ideas and big goals and a fearless entrepreneurial spirit. One of our board members has gone through the class and I'm doing it now. It's been transformational," she said.

The Dakota Community Market is not the only fearless group striving to launch a locally-owned and locally-controlled food cooperative. The Coteau Community Co-op is also trying to establish a food co-op to serve the Watertown area. Both have plenty of successful models and supporters to help guide and inspire their efforts.

The National Food Co-op Startup Network and the National Co-op Grocers based in Minneapolis are both available to provide resources and expertise. Additionally, there are a few successful stores already operating in South Dakota, including Natural Abundance in Aberdeen, Breadroot Natural Food Co-op based in Rapid City and the Sioux Falls Food Co-op.

Patrick Saylor is general manager of the Sioux Falls Food Co-op on West 18th Street, an operation that has been going strong for the past 50 years through several relocations, growing competition and even a fire. Saylor sees food co-ops across the region as sharing the same common goals and working together to accomplish those goals.

"We tend to put a different twist on things, but in the end we all want the families we serve to have a better way of

accessing the food they eat to maintain good health and a healthy lifestyle," said Saylor, who used to frequent the store as a teen and replaced long-time manager Molly Langley in 2016. "It's always encouraging to see different leaders working hard to do what we've been able to do. It takes a lot of effort and it takes tireless visionaries to stay focused and committed to achieving what you want to accomplish together."

In meeting its commitment to improve the quality of life in the community, the co-op has a program called Big Change, where shoppers are invited to round up their expenditures to the next whole dollar amount. The difference is added to a fund that goes to support local charities such as the Teddy Bear Den, Mobile Pantry of Sioux Falls, Bishop Dudley Hospitality House, SD Voices for Peace and many more. The co-op even has a space available for public meetings and workshops.

The store recently celebrated an expansion and re-opening, and Saylor said he's optimistic about the future while keeping an eye on industry trends.

"We're growing. There's a lot of competition, but we've got a great location, great employees and a great product," he said. "The co-op model is alive and well. We have members who support us and are committed to our mission of providing a source of healthy, affordable good choices."

## BEEF TO SCHOOL



Black Hills State University is one of four higher ed institutions to adopt the Build Your Base with Beef program. *Photo by BHSU Athletics*

## Beef is what's for lunch in many local school district cafeterias

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Beef. It may be what's for dinner, but now it's what's for lunch in many school cafeterias across the state.

In January of 2019, the Wall School District launched a program called "Beef to School" in an effort to add locally-raised beef to the weekly lunch menu and provide protein-rich meals to meet the nutritional needs of the students. At the time, it was billed as the first program of its kind in South Dakota.

The pandemic threatened to scuttle the initiative before it had the chance to gain momentum, but school district leaders, parents and supporters stuck to their mission and today the program has spread to nearly 20 local school districts.

Wall Meat Processing located just north of town is at the center of the action, identifying and working with local ranchers to deliver beef products for hungry students.

Inflation and rising market prices have also presented challenges, but Food Services Director Lynn Dunker stresses that community support has been key to success.

"The price of groceries and the price of everything just keeps going up," Dunker said, "but we've had individuals donate monetary funds out of their own pockets, and Wall Meat Processing is doing what they can to help us and to get other processors involved. We have a very supportive community and they've really been backing this program because they know how important it is that children get good nutrition."

In fact, it was local rancher and concerned citizen Josh Geigle who brought the Beef to School idea to the district leaders after learning about a similar program in Nebraska.

Dunker said the program is part of a popular farm-to-school model that emphasizes locally-grown fresh foods that are generally healthier for young students and their cognitive, behavioral

and physical development.

Besides benefiting from quality nutrition, students also have the opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from and the importance of ranching and farming to the overall success of the community.

"Some maybe don't even realize where beef comes from in the first place," said Wall School District Superintendent Dan Baldwin. "And now when they found out it's their dad, their uncle, a family member, it's actually someone from their ranch, I think that's a really neat thing."

### **BUILD YOUR BASE WITH BEEF**

Another protein promoting program reaching both high school and college students is called Build Your Base with Beef and is specifically directed at athletes who rely on good nutrition to perform at their maximum level.

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council, Sanford Health and the Sanford Sports Science Institute have teamed up to develop a comprehensive tool kit for student-athletes that includes ready-to-use educational materials that help students and their

## AFTER WORK BEEF POT ROAST

### Ingredients:

- 1 beef Bottom Round Rump Roast (3 to 3-1/2 lbs.)
- 1 envelope (0.7 z.) Italian dressing mix
- 2 large onions, each cut into 8 wedges
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 2 zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 2-1/2 tbsp. cornstarch dissolved in 2 tbsp. water

### Directions

Press dressing mix evenly onto all surfaces of beef roast. Place onions and garlic in 4-1/2 to 5-1/2-quart slow cooker; top with roast. Add bell peppers and broth. Cover and cook on high 5 hours or low 8 hours. Add zucchini. Continue cooking, covered, 30 minutes or until pot roast is fork-tender. Remove roast and vegetables. Strain cooking liquid; skim fat. Combine 2 cups cooking liquid and cornstarch mixture in medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly; cook and stir 1 minute or until thickened. Carve roast into slices; season with salt and pepper, as desired. Serve with vegetables and gravy.

families adopt more healthy lifestyle choices, practices and habits.

Build Your Base has been endorsed by the National Scholastic Athletics Foundation (NSAF) and recently expanded its reach by appearing at the 2022 Nike Indoor Nationals in New York City last spring. Jack Links serves as the official snack sponsor of the program.

Chris Nilsen, a pole vault record-holder, Olympic silver medalist and former University of South Dakota student, has endorsed the program along with other prominent Olympic athletes such as hammer thrower Deanna Price and shot putter Payton Otterdahl.

“Build Your Base prepped me so well, and without this nutritional approach I wouldn’t be in such great shape. Eating well is such a big part of competing well, and they absolutely do their part,” Nilsen said.

Along with four colleges and universities, more than 25 South Dakota high schools have adopted Build Your Base and integrated it into their athletic departments and lesson plans.

Athletes learn how to determine the proper amounts of beef protein to consume for optimal effect in the maintaining, building and repairing of muscle.



## Co-op leaders visit Southwest Power Pool facilities in Arkansas

A contingent of more than 35 electric cooperative leaders from throughout South Dakota and western Minnesota recently visited the facilities of the Southwest Power Pool based in Little Rock, Ark.

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is the Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) responsible for managing the electric grid and wholesale power market throughout a 13-state region that spans from the Canadian border to northern Texas.

While RTOs seldom attract much public attention, the polar vortex that swept across the country in the winter of 2021 placed grid operators closer to the spotlight. The roles and responsibilities of RTOs have also come to the fore with concerns over extreme weather events, changing market forces, aging infrastructure, grid congestion, the emergence of renewable power sources and other issues.

The tour was organized by Codington-Clark Electric General Manager Dave Eide. He said he initiated the event because he believed electric cooperatives that transmit and distribute power within the SPP’s footprint would benefit from engaging in face-to-face interactions with those responsible for moving electricity across the grid.

“This was a very eye-opening visit, as we were able to see first-hand how the Southwest Power Pool operates,” Eide said. “Coordination is key, and having personal interaction with the professionals at SPP helps in preparation for the next storm event.”

Eide explained that in the real-time generation, transmission and delivery of electricity, supply and demand must balance out to provide 24-hour continuous service that is safe, efficient and affordable for consumers. When situations develop that threaten to throw the system out of equilibrium, RTOs work in collaboration with utilities throughout the service area to keep the network stable.

The process includes communicating with those entities under the RTO’s umbrella to take decisive measures to modulate either the supply or the demand.



September 29-October 1  
**Buffalo Roundup and Arts Festival**  
*Photo Credit: Chad Coppess*

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.

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival**  
 Custer, SD  
 605-255-4515

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 1**  
**Oktoberfest**  
 Citywide, Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 2**  
**SiouxperCon**  
 1201 N West Ave.  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**OCT. 1**  
**Prairie Village Hobo Marlin Pumpkin Train**  
 45205 SD Highway 34  
 Madison, SD  
 605-256-3644

**OCT. 1-2**  
**Magic Needlers Quilt Festival**  
 Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD  
 605-881-3273

**OCT. 7**  
**The Pumpkin Patch**  
 Rapid Valley United Methodist Church, Rapid City, SD  
 605-393-1526

**OCT. 7-9**  
**Great Scarecrow Festival**  
 Campbell Park  
 Huron, SD  
 605-353-8530

**OCT. 7-9**  
**Black Hills Powwow**  
 444 Mt. Rushmore Road  
 Rapid City, SD  
 605 341-0925

**OCT. 7-8**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vender Show**  
 Philip, SD  
 605-441-1060

**OCT. 8**  
**Fall Festival**  
 Fairburn United Methodist Church, Fairburn, SD  
 605-255-4329

**OCT. 8-9**  
**Crazy Horse Marathon & Races**  
 Crazy Horse Memorial  
 12151 Avenue Of The Chiefs  
 605-390-6137

**OCT. 15**  
**Fall Festival**  
 18473 US Hwy 83, Onida, SD

**OCT. 22**  
**Ladies Day**  
 The Crossing Bar, Mina, SD  
 605-390-2939

**OCT. 28-30**  
**ZooBoo**  
 Great Plains Zoo  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-7003

**NOV. 3-5**  
**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
 Downtown, Yankton, SD  
 harvesthalloween.com

**NOV. 3-5**  
**Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge**  
 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD  
 605-352-0000

**NOV. 5-20**  
**Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show**  
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily  
 Ethan, SD  
 605-770-2411

**NOV. 11-13**  
**Christmas at the Barn**  
 Front Porch 605, Groton, SD  
 605-216-4202

**NOV. 12**  
**Black Hills Meat Festival**  
 Black Hills Harley Davidson  
 2820 Harley Dr., Rapid City, SD  
 605-390-7917

**NOV. 18-20**  
**Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival**  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

**DEC. 2-3**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
 Mueller Center, Hot Springs, SD  
 605-745-4140

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