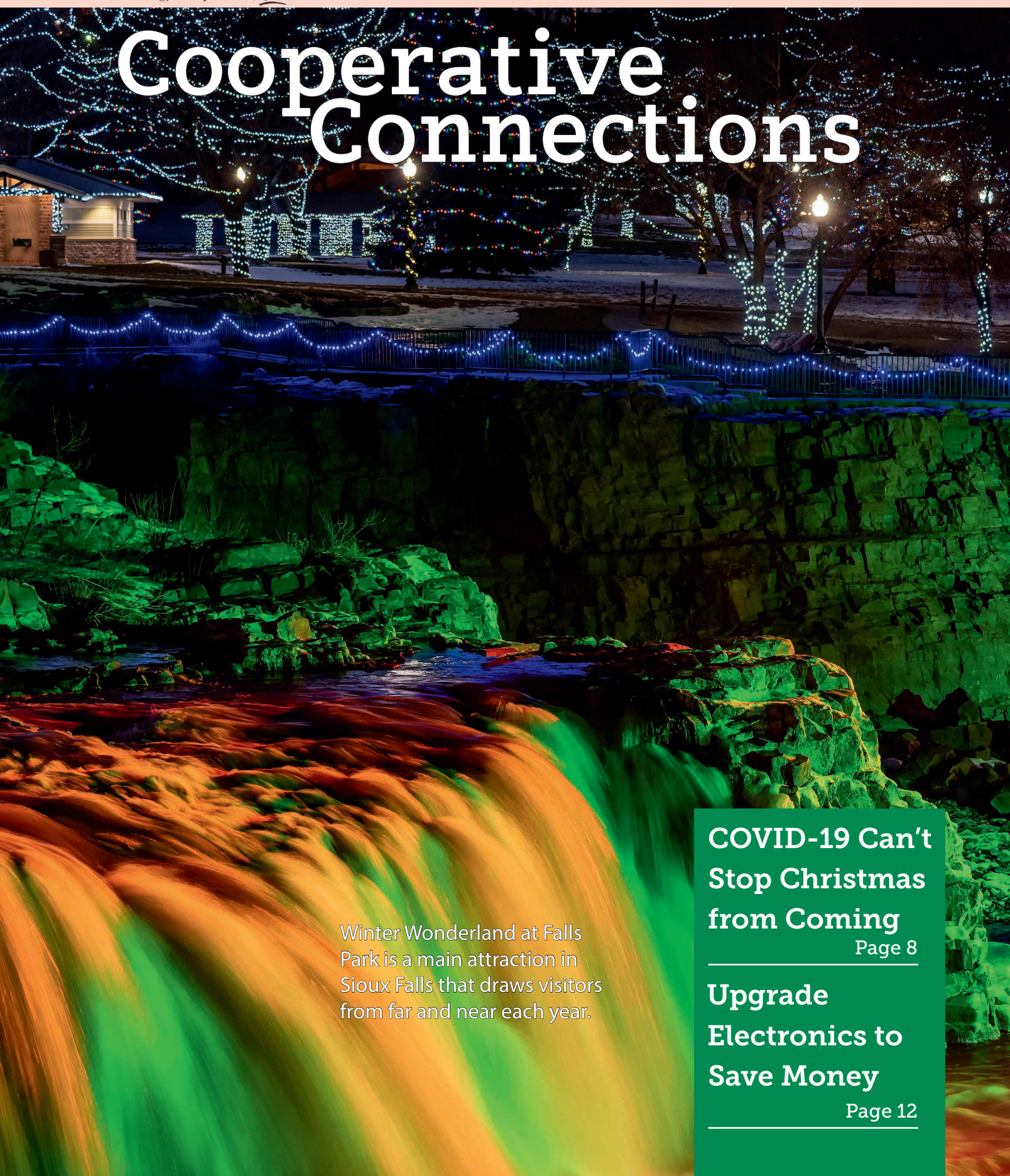


Cooperative Connections



Winter Wonderland at Falls Park is a main attraction in Sioux Falls that draws visitors from far and near each year.

**COVID-19 Can't
Stop Christmas
from Coming**

Page 8

**Upgrade
Electronics to
Save Money**

Page 12

Future Facility Needs



Joel Janorschke,
General Manager

jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com

You have elected a strong and fiscally minded Board of Directors that is working for your best interests.

In recent years, our Board of Directors has wrestled with the challenge of addressing our current headquarters facilities. We are currently challenged with issues due to the age of our buildings. We will be evaluating our existing facility, which includes examining the structure, safety, the life of the building's systems, and consideration of costs to repair existing, chronic issues related to an aging facility.

The current location was originally built in 1953 and has been added onto to accommodate the co-op's growing needs over the years. The organization currently operates from three separate buildings. Our pole yard sits next to one of the buildings across the street from our main office. Our facility has served us well over the years, but it can no longer adequately meet the cooperative's needs. Due to the ever-increasing size of utility equipment, we have outgrown our garage space. We will be looking at a few possible solutions that span from fixing up our existing building without adding any additional space to building an entirely new facility and a few scenarios in between.

TEC's board and management will exercise due diligence by researching costs to maintain and repair the present deteriorating facilities versus building a new structure that would incorporate all the co-op's needs. Consolidation to a single facility will enable the not-for-profit electric distribution co-op to enhance communication, streamline member services, and implement operational and technological efficiencies.

We will also look at the financial impact on TEC over the next 10, 20, and 30 years. As we have any concrete information about plans, we will share them with the entire membership. We do take the principle of Democratic Member Control seriously.

You have elected a strong and fiscally minded Board of Directors that is working for your best interests, and together, we will plan for the sustainable future of TEC. I will continue to let you know the details of all significant decisions at TEC – when there is something to share.

Consider becoming a volunteer this holiday season and share the spirit of giving to make our community a better place.



Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-903)

Board of Directors

President: Alan Veflin, Sisseton, SD
Vice President: Pat Homan, Beardsley, MN
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 Michael Marks, Norcross, MN
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 Karen Lupkes - Office Manager
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 Stephen Powers - Member Service Representative/Electrician
 Melissa Przymus - Accountant
 Susan Wilts - Billing Clerk

Operations Personnel

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 Lonnie Tekrony - Journeyman Lineworker
 Joe Gahlon - Journeyman Lineworker
 Chris Falk - Journeyman Lineworker
 Austin Reinke - Journeyman Lineworker
 Colden Helberg - Apprentice Lineworker
 Dennis Koch - Facility Technician

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In case of a power outage call 1-800-927-5443

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Our Mission: To provide dependable service at the lowest possible rates, consistent with sound business principles. Design assistance by SDREA.



September 2020 Board Meeting Highlights

The September board meeting was held on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at 8 a.m.
 Absent: Kath.

Staff members present were General Manager Joel Janorschke and Office Manager Karen Lupkes.

The agenda was approved.

Accepted the resignation of District 3 Director, Karen Kath.

Selected Armstrong to replace Kath as Treasurer.

The minutes of the August board meeting were approved.

The August check register was approved.

Homan reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

Armstrong, Homan and Marks reported on the East River Electric Annual Meeting.

Janorschke presented the Manager's Report, which included:

- Provided a Basin Electric update.
- Provided an East River update.
- REED Fund review.
- NRECA update.
- MREA and MN legislative update.
- SDREA and SD legislative update.
- Discussed current and future facility needs.
- Member-owned security light options.
- Reviewed two possible REED loan applications.

Lupkes gave the Office Manager's Report, which included:

- August 31, 2020 accounts receivable balances were reviewed.
- A list of new members was reviewed.
- COVID-19 update.
- Reviewed the COVID-19 MN Housing Assistance Program.
- Late payment penalties and disconnects resumed in September.
- Delivery of generators and equipment are delayed due to the hurricanes and COVID-19.

Reviewed and approved the August Financial Report.

Janorschke gave the Operations Report. Items discussed included:

- Outages were reviewed.
- Crews are working on pole changes and new services.
- Reviewed completed projects.
- Reported on the RESAP observation.
- Reviewed our Safety Program.

District 3 members will be notified by mail that a vacancy on the board exists to seek members interested in completing the term.

Selected voting delegates for NRECA and Basin Electric.

Reviewed electrician rates.

A list of upcoming meetings and attendees was reviewed.

Meeting adjourned.

Decorate Your Home Safely

It's time to deck those halls - safely. More than 800 home fires are caused by Christmas and holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season:

- Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly - indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.
- Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.
- Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.



Correction: Pheasant bag limit unchanged

A story on pheasant hunting in last month's issue incorrectly stated that the daily bag limit was increased from three to four birds. This proposed change was considered by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; however, the proposal was not approved.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Do Not Shoot the Power Line!"

Luke Welsh, 10 years old

Luke is a resident of Oral, S.D., and is the son of Ryan and Rachel Welsh. He warns, "Do not shoot the power line. It might start a fire! Be safe."

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.

Delicious Holiday Desserts

Dorothy's Baked Carmel Corn

1 c. butter	1/2 tsp. soda
2 c. brown sugar	1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. dark Karo syrup	6 qts. (24 c.) popped corn
1 tsp. salt	

Add butter, brown sugar, syrup and salt to a large pan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 4 1/2 minutes without stirring. Remove from heat. Add soda and vanilla. Stir 1-2 minutes. Pour over popcorn and stir well. Divide into 2 cake pans. Bake 250 degrees 1 hour, mix every 15 minutes. Break up and store in tight container.

Gloria Puetz, Salem, SD

Chocolate Kissed Macaroons

1 14 oz. pkg. sweetened angel flaked coconut	1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
3/4 c. flour	2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 c. salt	24 chocolate kisses, unwrapped
1 egg white, beaten til frothy	

Line two baking sheets with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper. In a medium bowl, mix together coconut, flour and salt. Add sweetened milk, beaten egg white and vanilla. Mix well. Mixture will be stiff. Use a cookie scoop, ice cream scoop or tbsp. to divide the dough dropping two inches apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 16-18 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and gently press a candy kiss into the center. Remove to wire rack to cool.

Colleen Wolfe, Hot Springs, SD.

Scoops Ah Caramel

1/2 c. butter	1 can condensed milk
1-1/2 c. brown sugar	1 tsp. vanilla
3/4 c. white syrup	3 9-oz. bags Scoops

Bring the butter, brown and white sugar and condensed milk to a boil. Boil for 1 minute. Add vanilla. Stir. Put chips on a platter. Pour caramel over Scoops. May drizzle with hot fudge. Keep well refrigerated.

Ginny Jensen, Volga, SD

Reindeer Pecan Brownies

Nonstick cooking spray	1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 stick (1/2 c.) unsalted butter, melted	1 teaspoon espresso powder (optional)
1 tablespoon pecan or canola oil	1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, granulated sugar	20 raw pecan halves, cut in half
2 large eggs	40 candy eyeballs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	20 red chocolate candies
1/2 cup all-purpose flour	1/4 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. In large bowl, whisk melted butter, oil and sugar until well combined. Add eggs and vanilla extract; beat until mixture is thick and pale in color, about 1 minute. Sift in flour and cocoa powder. Add espresso powder, if desired, and salt. Using rubber spatula, fold dry ingredients into butter mixture until just combined. Batter should be thick. Using 1-tablespoon cookie scoop, transfer batter to prepared mini muffin tin. Bake 13-15 minutes until toothpick inserted in center comes out mostly clean, with some lingering crumbs. Add chocolate chips to heat-proof bowl; microwave until smooth and melted. Pour melted chocolate into sandwich bag and cut off small portion of one corner to use as tip. Use melted chocolate to "glue" on pecan antlers, candy eyeballs and red candy noses to brownies. Allow chocolate to set before transferring brownies to airtight container. Note: Brownies will stay fresh for up to three days.

AmericanPecan.com

Please send your favorite holiday recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Three Steps to an Efficient Attic



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Many attics are under-ventilated, which allows moisture and heat to build up. Moisture causes harmful mold and wood rot.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on ensuring an energy-efficient attic, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Dear Pat and Brad: I'm convinced we could reduce our high heating bills if we add more insulation to our attic. How do I make sure everything's done right? - Kelly

Dear Kelly: It's great that you're focused on your attic, as this is often the area you can get the most bang for your buck on energy efficiency investments. Insulation is one part of the energy-efficient attic puzzle. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you prepare to make your attic more efficient.

Step 1: Sealing

Attics are often the place where warm air leaks out of the home in winter or into the home during summer. Trouble spots include anything that comes through the attic floor, such as recessed lights, the chimney, the attic hatch and pipes, and ducts or wires coming through the attic floor. It's best to properly seal these spots before adding or improving the insulation. Invest a small amount of money in the necessary supplies like caulk, expanding foam or weather stripping.

Step 2: Ventilation

Many attics are under-ventilated, which allows moisture and heat to build up. Moisture causes harmful mold and wood rot. During the summer, a poorly ventilated attic is prone to over-heating, which can bake shingles and shorten their life. During the winter, a warm attic can melt snow on the roof, causing it to run into your gutters and then freeze, causing ice dams. Proper ventilation lets air flow from a low point to a high point. This is usually done by installing soffit vents and insulation baffles around the perimeter, plus vents near the peak of the roof. If there is no way to install attic ventilators, an attic fan can provide mechanical assistance to exhausting overheated air.

Step 3: Insulation

The three main types of insulation for attics are loose-fill, batt and rigid. Whichever type you have, it needs to provide a high-enough level of insulation for your region, measured in R-value. Batt and rigid insulation will often have the R-value printed on them. Loose-fill, which is blown in, is the most common for attic floors, and its R-value is approximately its depth in inches multiplied by 2.8. Generally speaking, your attic should have 14-24 inches of loose-fill insulation if you live in a northern state and 11-14 inches if you're in a southern state. Find the recommended level for your region at www.energy.gov.

If you have loose-fill insulation that is less than the recommended amount, you should be able to add more on top of it, as long as there aren't any moisture, rodent, ant or termite problems. If your existing loose-fill insulation was installed before 1990, it could be Vermiculite, which may be contaminated with Asbestos. Asbestos can cause cancer when particles are released into the air, so it's a good idea to have the insulation tested. If it's contaminated, have it removed by a professional. Remember to seal and insulate any walls in the attic that border conditioned space, such as skylight openings.

Some of these steps can be challenging, so consider hiring a professional contractor. If you're a DIY pro and decide to do some of the work on your own, be aware of potential hazards. Disturbing old wiring can cause shorts in your electrical system, and roofing nails will often pierce the attic ceiling.

Another danger is stepping off the rafters. Years ago, I (Pat) decided to do some work in my own attic on a hot afternoon. The heat must have gotten to me because I slipped and crashed through the attic floor. My daughters were quite surprised to see their dad's legs dangling from the ceiling, with broken sheetrock and insulation everywhere. What a mess! First and foremost, always remember safety when tackling projects at home.



Saddle bronc rider Delbert "Shorty" Garrett is shown here at the Home on the Range Bronc Match in Sentinel Butte, ND, in August. Garrett has earned a spot in the National PRCA Finals set for Arlington, TX, Dec. 3-12. Photo courtesy of JackieJensenPhotography.com.

Garrett Chases His Rodeo Dream at PRCA Nationals

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Shorty Garrett has been chasing his rodeo dream for nearly as long as he can remember. He recalls sitting at his desk as a third-grader when the teacher told all the students to write down their life goals.

"I put down that I wanted to be a world champion saddle bronc rider one day," Garrett said. "To have that goal as a kid and to finally see it within reach, that's really special."

Delbert "Shorty" Garrett is making quite a name for himself on the PRCA circuit. He finished this past season as No. 4 among the top 15 saddle bronc riders in the country and will be heading off to Arlington, Texas, to compete in the national finals Dec. 3-12. The national competition puts Garrett one step closer to achieving his boyhood dreams. He got close to earning a spot in the finals last year but fell...well...short.

"I made my mind up this year that nothing was going to stop me, and I'm going to go for that title. I just have to focus and stay zoned in. Last year made me that much more hungry," he said.

It's not very surprising that Garrett would succeed on the rodeo circuit. He's been

surrounded and mentored by top rodeo competitors all of his life. He was already training horses when he was 8.

His dad, Juan, and a slew of uncles and other relatives have tasted success in the arena and he's been picking their brains for the best tips and tricks during most of his 27 years. One of his uncles, T.C. Holloway, stands out as a role model even though he lost his life in an automobile accident at the age of 24 in 2000. From Uncle T.C., Garrett learned about developing a winning style.

"Everything he did was cool and loose and in control. He had a flashy style of riding, more than anyone around. He just made it look so easy, and I tried to mimic him the best I could – and I still do," Garrett said.

When he was a youngster, Garrett knew he wouldn't be able to ride until he reached a weight of 100 pounds. He ate everything in sight to try to pack on the pounds, but the process was slow. When he finally reached the mark, Garrett went to his grandfather and said he was ready to ride. The old cowboy set him up with a horse named Three Bees – as in the stinging insect.

"I didn't really have time to be scared or anything. I'd been watching everybody ride

all of my life. I wanted to be like them," Garrett said.

He didn't stay on for long, but that maiden ride got him hooked on that "thang called rodeo." Garrett heads to the national finals with confidence, thanks to one of his uncles who he said gave the best piece of advice he's ever received: "The horse is as good as you want him to be."

Garrett explained often he would be disappointed in the performance of a horse, "Then I'd think about it and ask myself if I did everything I could do to make that horse the best he could be. You have to take accountability and think positively, then everything will work out."

Whether he returns to Eagle Butte with the winning buckle or not, Garrett has big plans this spring. He and his fiancé, Alex Bush, intend to get married next May. The two have known each other since they were teens. She was a rodeo rider in high school and the two share a love for the sport.

"We get along really good and she helps me a lot. She knows that rodeo gets in your blood and she's real supportive," Garrett said. "I really owe a lot to all of my family and friends."



Storybook Island captures the imagination of the young and old alike both during the summer and the holiday season.

CHRISTMAS IN SD

COVID-19 Hasn't Stopped Christmas from Coming

Billy Gibson

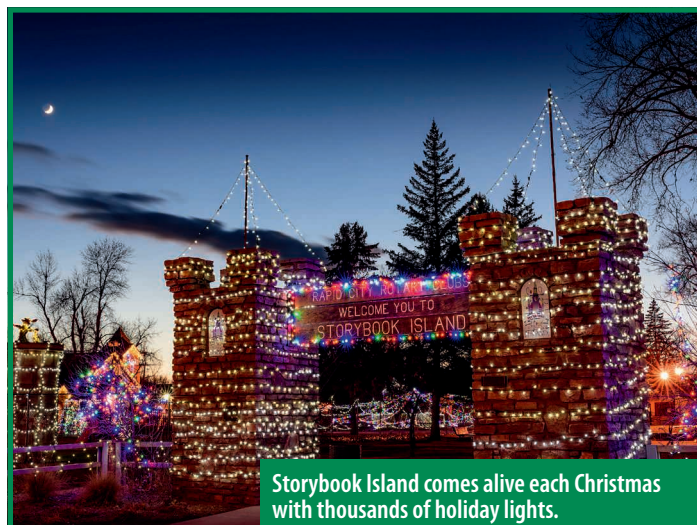
billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly had a substantial “bah humbug” effect since it began sweeping across the globe last spring. And as the virus continues to pose a health risk going into the new year ahead, many familiar holiday festivals and events across the state have been canceled, curtailed or postponed until 2021.

But there are still a number of events across the state that are planning to proceed as scheduled, many of which have become annual holiday traditions for individuals and families looking to get into the Christmas spirit.

That’s the case for those who look forward every year to taking in the sights and sounds of the Winter Wonderland event held at Falls Park in Sioux Falls. For residents of the Sioux Falls area and thousands of out-of-town visitors each holiday season, the brilliant light display is a spectacle that not only sparks the Christmas spirit but also brings back memories of childhood wonder from previous seasons.

The Winter Wonderland exhibit includes 270 decorated trees and light poles and more than 25 miles of string lights throughout the complex that runs along the Big Sioux River. A five-story observation tower also gives park visitors a 360-degree bird’s eye view of the many eye-popping displays.



Storybook Island comes alive each Christmas with thousands of holiday lights.

The 29th Annual Parade of Lights will officially kick off the downtown Sioux Falls holiday season with festive music and a dazzling float parade along historic Phillips Avenue from 13th Street to 5th Street. But due to the pandemic this year, officials have announced there will be a twist: instead of the floats moving past the spectators, the spectators will walk along in front of the floats. The floats will remain stationary for the duration of the event and the public is invited to casually walk along the route and view the parked floats up close.

The “stationary parade” begins at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 27.



Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer shares the holiday spirit by decorating a bucket truck each year.

Everyone is encouraged to stay for an after-party and awards ceremony where there will be live musical entertainment and other activities. Admission is free.

Storybook Island, a popular attraction in the Rapid City area during the summer months, will hold its annual Christmas Nights of Lights display this season. The park boasts 16 miles of colorful lights, including dioramas, popular children’s fictional characters and a variety of additional holiday-related themes. The event takes place Dec. 4-6, 11-23 and 26-31, from 5:30 to 8:30 each night at 1301 Sheridan Lake Rd. Admission is \$3 per person.

In Custer, the Annual Parade of Lights will take place downtown on Saturday, Dec. 5, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The annual event signals the kick-off of the holiday season in the Southern Hills area. After the parade, Santa and Mrs. Claus will make an appearance at Way Park for the Memorial Tree Lighting Ceremony. The parade begins at 8th and Mt. Rushmore Road and will end at Way Park on 4th and Mt. Rushmore Road.

The residents of Spearfish will celebrate the start of the season with the annual Holidazzle Light Parade and Christmas Stroll sponsored by the Downtown Business Association. The event will take place along Main Street on Saturday, Dec. 5, beginning in the morning and lasting all day.

The Christmas Stroll will take place immediately after the parade and will feature special sales and discounts at downtown merchants and business establishments. To add to the holiday mood, carolers will perform from 2 to 4 p.m., and there will be a



The Pumpkin Carriage is a popular attraction at Storybook Island.



Winter Wonderland at Falls Park offers a unique light display along the Big Sioux River.

Community Chili Feed at Common Grounds at 5 p.m.

In Pierre, revelers will ring in the holiday season with the 20th Annual Parade of Lights on Monday, Nov. 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place entries and there will also be a Mayor’s Choice Award as well as a Griswold Award for gaudiest float.

Also in Pierre, the highly anticipated “Christmas at the Capitol” event will take place once again this year from Nov. 25 through Dec. 26. The rotunda and the hallways of the Capitol Building will be filled with the sounds of carolers and musicians as well as the scent of mountain pine and the soft glow emanating from nearly 100 lighted Christmas trees. The trees are decorated by cities, businesses, non-profit groups and other civic organizations.

Popular displays inside the Capitol include a set of hand-painted porcelain ornaments and a wooden nativity scene believed to be nearly 125 years old located on the second floor.

Before scheduling a visit, check for the most recent updates at www.facebook.com/ChristmasattheCapitol.



Holiday Closings

The Traverse Electric office will be closed on Thursday, December 24, and Friday, December 25, 2020, to celebrate Christmas, and Friday, January 1, 2021, for New Year's Day.

Traverse Electric's employees and Board of Directors sincerely wish all of our members a holiday season filled with good health, the love of family and friends and a prosperous New Year!

Monthly Statement has a New Look

Starting with your October bill, you will notice that our statements have a new look! All of the information that you are used to seeing is still there but in an easier to read layout. We have also added graphs that show your monthly usage history.

If you have any questions, please call 800-927-5443.

You can also go to our website www.traverseelectric.com, click on Member Services and General Billing Information, and you will find this copy with the highlighted explanations to help you read and understand your new billing statement.

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Wheaton, MN 56296
Telephone (320) 563-8616
Toll Free 1-800-927-5443

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday
Oct 1-April 30 8:00-4:30 May 1-Sept. 30 7:00-3:30

Account Number	Statement Date	Due Date	Amount Due	Amount Due After Due Date	Notes
9999	10/31/2020	11/15/2020	\$169.37	\$171.91	

Important News

YOU MAY NOTICE OUR STATEMENTS HAVE A NEW FORMAT. WE HOPE YOU LIKE IT. PLEASE RETURN THE BOTTOM PORTION OF THE BILLS WITH YOUR PAYMENT. THANK YOU

Check here every month for important messages and reminders.

Current Charges Summary

Previous Balance	\$133.09
Payments - Thank You	(\$133.09)
Current Charges	\$169.37
Amount Due	\$169.37

Usage History

Charge Description	Previous Reading	Current Reading	Multiplier	Billed Usage	Charges
Meter # CT-13736					
ELECTRIC - If you have a submeter, these kwh are billed at a reduced price.					
Meter # CT-12345	09/30/2020	10/31/2020		31 Days = Days in billing cycle 3.00	
Sub Meter Charge				740 = kwh used	40.70
Kwh LM Mtr @ .0550	538	575	20		
ELECTRIC - This is for your main meter. These kwh do not include kwh used by the submeter.					
Meter # 67890	09/30/2020	10/31/2020		31 Days	
Monthly Base Charge					40.00
Kwh Main Mtr @ .1075	18043	19512		1469	78.37
Tax					7.30
Total For: 99-99-9 = Your Map Location					169.37

Please return this portion with your payment. THANK YOU.

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MEMBER NAME
123 MAIN ST
WHEATON MN 56296

Account Number	9999	Due Date	11/15/2020
Statement Date	10/31/2020	Amount Due	\$169.37
Notes		Amount Due After Due Date	\$171.91

To view and pay your bill online, visit www.traverseelectric.com

We accept:

TEC September Financial Information

	September 2019	September 2020	YTD 2020
Total Revenue	\$724,990.39	\$824,616.81	\$8,255,855.93
Cost of Power	\$447,881.39	\$511,344.44	\$5,067,432.19
Total Cost of Service	\$720,216.88	\$771,498.09	\$7,838,368.14
Operating Margins	\$4,773.51	\$53,118.72	\$417,487.79
Total Margins	\$17,183.66	\$52,244.38	\$462,274.14
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Purchased	7,228,368	8,431,780	86,724,433
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Sales	6,698,828	8,001,544	82,579,921
Line Loss	7%	5%	5%

Think Outside the (Gift) Box This Christmas

Let's admit it—we all love to get and give gifts. The anticipation of watching someone open a gift that we've put careful thought into is as much fun as receiving something special. But as the holiday season approaches, it's easy to get caught up in the frenzy of buying gifts, sending holiday cards, travel plans, parties, and all the other things that our society tells us is important. But if you're interested in a different way to go about "giving," here are some alternatives to traditional gift giving to consider:

- Host a big potluck dinner where everyone brings a dish to share. This takes some of the stress of planning and the financial responsibility off the host. To make this event even more fun, you could consider a theme meal where everyone brings a dish and dresses up according to the theme.
- A Secret Santa gift exchange allows everyone to randomly draw another family member's name and purchase a gift only for that specific person. You can put a price limit on how much everyone can spend. This saves money and gives you the time to really find something special and thoughtful for that one particular person.
- White Elephant gift exchange games

involve each person bringing one gift based on a suggested dollar amount, numbers are drawn to determine who gets to choose and open a gift first and then gifts are often "stolen" and exchanged in good fun until everyone has something.

- Adopt a family. Instead of buying presents for each other, get necessities for a family in need. This is a great time to show others, even strangers, that we care about them. Seek out people in your community that don't have "built-in family" because they didn't grow up here. You'd be surprised how many people are actually very lonely on holidays.
- Make memories. Instead of gifts, think of something you and your family or friends can all do together. It doesn't have to cost much, but chances are that the experiences you'll have together will be more memorable than a gift. This could include a trip to the movies, a weekend getaway, or fancy meal out.



- Create a "need" list. It's never easy to guess what people want for Christmas. Instead, ask everyone what they really need. If you're going to be spending money on them, they would probably appreciate something they need versus a gift they might not even use or like!
- Go homemade. Even if you don't consider yourself "crafty," you can make homemade items. The internet has endless ideas and step-by-step instructions to make everything under the sun, like woodworking projects, scarves, body scrubs, food items, and home décor. This takes time and planning since you have to actually make the gift, so don't procrastinate.

Members Thank Traverse Electric

Thank you for your donation to the Sisseton Area Chamber basket auction. We really appreciate your support!

Sisseton Area Chamber of Commerce Board, Sisseton, SD


Thank you for the fire extinguisher I won on the drive-thru, and vouchers for cred on billing.

Joe Dietz, Dumont, MN

Thanks for the quick service repairing the security light - works great.

Darrell Holtz, Beardsley, MN





There are several popular electronics on the market that can help you use energy more efficiently.

Cut Energy Consumption

Upgrade Electronics for Energy Savings

Are you looking for easy ways to save more money on your monthly energy bills as the year comes to a close?

Beyond some of the more traditional energy efficiency measures, such as sealing air leaks or adding additional insulation, there are several popular electronics that can help you use energy more efficiently.

These devices are relatively easy to incorporate into your home, making them a simple way to help manage your energy use.

Smart thermostats are becoming an increasingly popular option to help save energy at home. With smart thermostats, there's no longer a need to constantly adjust the temperature. They can be programmed to follow a pattern of heating and cooling throughout the day and year to maximize your comfort and energy use at the same time.

Some advanced smart thermostats out on the market today can even learn your habits and adjust the temperature in your home accordingly. Another great benefit is the ability to control a smart thermostat remotely from an app on your phone, allowing you to set the temperature to your liking before you even arrive home.

Lastly, some smart thermostats can be integrated with a more complete smart home hub, like Amazon Alexa or Google Home,

which are both hot sellers in the market. Smart thermostats can be pretty pricey upfront, but if it's time to upgrade your home's thermostat, you'll soon discover that smart options offer more convenience and savings that make them worth the initial investment.

If you're looking for ways to save energy while you and your family are on a budget, consider smart plugs. Smart plugs can be inserted into any standard electrical outlet and can help you manage the energy of the devices that are plugged in. With con-



Smart thermostats are becoming an increasingly popular option to help save energy. Photo provided by Ecobee.

If your goal is to reduce your energy use at home, energy monitors can give you the information you need to achieve this goal.

trol of the smart plug, you can stop power-hungry devices from being on longer than necessary.

Some smart plug models have a scheduling option, allowing you to turn on lights or turn off the TV at certain times of the day, such as when you leave in the morning and when you anticipate returning home. Others offer a dimming function, allowing you to change the brightness of lights that are plugged into the smart plug. These features can be controlled through an app on your phone, and some models also have voice-controlled options when connected to a smart home hub.

Another useful gadget is the home energy monitor, which helps you monitor home energy use and set energy budgets. If your goal is to reduce your energy use at home, energy monitors can give you the information you need to achieve this goal. They are connected to your electric meter and provide a big picture on your home's energy use.

Additionally, some home energy monitors can show which appliances are using the most energy, giving you the knowledge on which devices to cut down on. There are also a few additional features among home energy monitors that provide several different benefits. Some models can show you real-time electricity use and costs, while some can help create a personalized plan for energy efficiency. Most home energy monitors can be connected through a smart phone app, which can send notifications, warn about abnormal energy use and provide tips for further energy savings.

These simple devices can help you save a little more energy each month. Considering what your needs are will help you choose a device with the appropriate features. As with any new product, do some homework first to determine which device suits your home best.

Plug into Presents that Pay Off with Safety

During the holidays, many of us turn our attention to gift giving, and while the shiny, trendy and pricey may make a big splash when the unwrapping's done, practical gifts can leave lasting impressions. What's more, they can really make a difference by enhancing safety and improving security.

Here are a few practical gift ideas that can make a real difference in helping to reduce safety risks year-round.

Smoke Detectors: Most of us have at least one in our homes, but experts say that's not enough. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that a working smoke detector be installed in every bedroom, on every level of a home, and in hallways outside of sleeping areas. And, if smoke detectors are more than 10 years old, they should be replaced.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless gas

created by incomplete consumption of fuels like gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane, oil, coal or methane. The gas is highly toxic, so having CO detectors outside of sleeping areas and on every level of a home improves safety. Local fire departments respond to about 80,000 non-fire CO incidents each year. Fuel-burning heating equipment and cooking appliances should be professionally inspected once a year to reduce the risks of malfunction and detect structural problems early.

Extension Cords: They are not all created equal; subject to wear; have specific use guidelines; and are never recommended for permanent use. Brittle and cracked plastic can indicate heat damage, and exposed wires or frayed connections increase risk of shock, shorts or fires. An extension cord that's warm or hot to the touch is a good indication it's not designed to safely do the job. Consider giving an assortment of extension cords designed for indoor or outdoor use. Before you buy, look for the label of a nationally recognized testing lab like Underwriters Laboratories (UL), CSA-International (CSA) or Intertek (ETL).

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters: Arcing and sparking are indications that a home's electrical wiring needs service. Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs) can help address fire hazards before they occur. Properly installed by a licensed electrician, AFCIs can often replace circuit breakers in the electrical panel box. This should be completed by a qualified electrician because the installation involves working inside the panel box, which carries current even when main circuit breakers are turned off.



Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom on every level of a home.

CO-OP SPIRIT OF GIVING



Black Hills Electric employees assist in clean-up efforts after the flood of 2019 in Custer. From left to right are Carlos Rodriguez, Danny Dooley, Scott Schramm, Beau Bradeen, Mark Svoboda and Rory Halverson.

CO-OP SPIRIT OF GIVING

The Cooperative Spirit of Giving is Alive Year-Around

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

For member-owned electric cooperatives, the spirit of giving associated with the Christmas holiday season is something that continues long after the presents have been opened and the egg nog container has been emptied.

Electric cooperatives are committed to serving their communities, a commitment - Concern for Community - that is part of the 7 Cooperative Principles that guide all member-owned cooperative organizations.

Across the state and across the country, for example, electric cooperatives participate in a program called Operation Round Up where members are encouraged to “round up” their bills to the next whole dollar amount. The funds are then used to support civic organizations, local charities and in some cases individuals or individual families who are in need.

There are many other examples. Cooperatives support education through scholarship programs and safety demonstrations, and also engage in youth development programs such as the annual Washington Youth Tour and the Youth Excursion. Employees regularly volunteer their time to participate in local fun runs, community clean-up days, and other projects organized to enhance the quality of life for all.

This commitment to serve is something that has been a hallmark

since the beginning of the rural electrification movement more than 80 years ago and continues unabated today.

Ed Anderson, general manager of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, said the spirit of giving is an integral part of the fabric that unites all electric cooperatives, and it extends beyond the delivery of electric power.

“Electric cooperatives were created for one purpose only, and that’s to do everything we can to improve the quality of life for the people we serve, as well as everyone else in the community,” Anderson said. “It begins with the thing that everybody needs - electricity - but it also includes a solid commitment to be active, to be engaged and to be involved in those things that make our homes better places to live, work and raise our families.”

Anderson also noted that the commitment to serve also includes not just staff but also cooperative leaders such as upper and middle management and board members.

“Board directors are elected by the members to establish policies that set the future course of the cooperative,” Anderson said. “By definition, they are also members of the cooperative themselves and have a keen interest in supporting the community while also making the decisions that will lead to more reliable power and affordable rates.”

Four Ways Santa Saves Energy in His Workshop

The holiday season is finally upon us, and Santa and his elves have been especially busy as they gear up for their biggest night of the year.

It's no secret that Santa is known for running an efficient workshop - how else could he make all those toys in time for Christmas Eve? Rumor has it that one way Santa ensures an efficient workspace is through energy-saving measures.

Here are four ways Santa saves energy in his workshop.

1. Santa leaves his decorations up year-round, so by using LED holiday light strands, he's able to save on his monthly energy bills. LED holiday strands can last up to 40 seasons, which make them a great option for any festive home.

2. Santa requires several power tools to make a year's worth of new toys. That's why he insists on using cordless power tools with the ENERGY STAR® rating. According to energystar.gov, if all power tools in the U.S. used ENERGY STAR®-rated battery chargers, 2 billion kWh hours of electricity could be saved - that's equivalent to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1.7 million tons!

3. Mrs. Claus loves the comfort of a fire, and Santa knows one of the best tricks to ensure fireplace efficiency. While a fireplace can keep a small area of your home cozy and warm, it can also pull heated air from the room through the chimney. That's why Santa always closes the flue when a fire isn't burning.

4. Santa also saves energy by using power strips. Power strips are ideal for workshops, craft nooks, game rooms and other spaces in your home. With one simple switch, you can conveniently control several devices and electronics that are plugged into the power strip.



Last year, Sioux Valley Energy employees volunteered to wrap Christmas presents at the Sioux Empire Mall to raise money for the Children's Home Society. Pictured from left to right: Sarina Hanson, Kim Hansen, Kara LeBrun, Lori George and Chinelle Christensen.



Santa paid a visit to Pipestone, MN, last year. The event was made possible through Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up program, which provided a new suit and related items for Mr. Claus.

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

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

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



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

November 20-21

Holiday Arts Christmas Show, 112 E. 5th St. Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

November 21-22

Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival, 203 S. Washington St., Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-1557

November 24-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Free Admission, Pierre, SD

November 27

Hill City Olde Tyme Christmas Parade and Celebration Kick-Off, 5 p.m., Downtown Hill City, SD, 605-574-2368

November 27

Black Friday Trap Shoot, Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League, 10:30 a.m., Lunch Available, 5000 North Oakview Place, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-9527

November 27

Annual Sioux Falls Parade of Lights, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Phillips Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 605-338-4009

November 28

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, 2 to 6 p.m., Free Admission, Main Street Square in Downtown Rapid City, SD

November 27-December 27

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD, 605-574-9000



December 4

Christmas in the Hills Parade of Lights, 6 p.m., Downtown Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

December 4-5

Creekside Crafters 13th Annual Bazaar, Snappers Club Building in City Camp-ground, Friday 1 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Spearfish, SD

December 4-6 and 10-12

Same Time, Next Year, Dramatic Comedy by Bernard Slade, Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, www.pierreplayers.com

December 5

Manager Medlodies Concert Christmas in the Hills, 7 to 9 p.m., Mueller Center, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

December 5

Rapid City Garden Club's 59th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Lions' and Bridger Buildings, Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 5

Custer Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m., Downtown Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

December 5

Festival of Trees, Newell City Hall, Newell, SD, Admission: Two Cans of Non-Perishable Food Items Per Person, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 6, 20

VFW Bingo, Wall Community Center, Wall, SD, 605-279-2663

December 12

Christmas for Kids, Ages 0-10 visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, Custer High School, Preregistration is Required, Register via email custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com, Custer, SD

December 12

Frontier Christmas, 11907 434th Ave., Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

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.