

# Cooperative Connections



**Electricity in the classroom**

Page 8-9

**People behind the power**

Pages 12-13

*Jennifer Gross has educated thousands of students about electricity through the Cooperatives in the Classroom program.*

# Three-Tiered Power Supply



Joel Janorschke,  
General Manager

jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com

**Traverse Electric operates like a locally owned retail store by directly selling energy to homes, farms, and businesses within the community.**

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota. East River Electric Power Cooperative and ten other power supply systems created Basin in 1960 to build the power plants that supply electricity to the Great Plains. Basin Electric was formed because the demand for electricity in rural areas quickly outgrew the production of the federal hydropower dams. Basin Electric operates the natural gas, coal, solar, and wind generation resources that produce the energy used by local distribution cooperatives throughout nine states. Today, Basin Electric generates power for 141 member systems that serve more than three million electric co-op members.

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) administers the electricity generated by federal hydroelectric dams, including the dams on the Missouri River. Hydropower was one of the original sources of electricity allocated to rural electric cooperatives by the federal government in the 1950s.

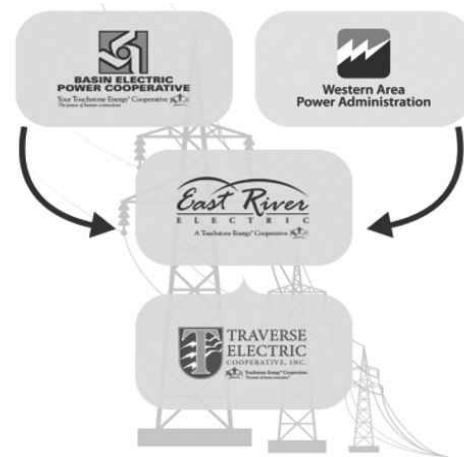
East River Electric Power Cooperative is headquartered in Madison, South Dakota, and was formed in 1949 to deliver energy to local cooperatives like Traverse Electric. East River serves as the wholesale power provider to 25 member systems through its high-voltage transmission lines and substations located throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Distribution substations are the delivery point for electricity. Traverse Electric builds its lines from local substations to farms, homes, and businesses. There are 10 East River substations in the Traverse Electric service territory.

Traverse Electric Cooperative is the local cooperative at the end of the line. Traverse Electric operates like a locally owned retail store by directly selling energy to homes, farms, and businesses within the community. Traverse Electric crews build, maintain, and operate the power lines and meters that link consumers to the electricity generated across the regional cooperative grid. Traverse Electric Cooperative does not directly generate the electricity sold to consumers. Still, it pays a power bill every month to its wholesale power provider East River Electric Power Cooperative, in Madison, South Dakota.

Traverse Electric, along with 22 other distribution electric co-ops and one municipal electric system in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, receive power from East River Electric. East River Electric was formed about 70 years ago to provide power when these cooperatives, including Traverse Electric, couldn't get a fair deal from the for-profit power companies of that time. Each cooperative signed a long-term power contract to purchase power from East River Electric.

Dakota Energy Cooperative, headquartered in Huron, SD, which serves most of Beadle, Hand, and Hyde counties, is attempting to break its contract with our wholesale power provider, East River Electric Power Cooperative. Along with our board of directors, I am sending this letter to provide details on this issue and discuss our stance on the matter, including its impact on you, our member-owners.

These contracts have been continually updated over the years to ensure our cooperative network has the necessary capital to sustain operations and build infrastructure. The decision to sign this contract was a promise between neighbors and cooperatives to work together in all



*(Continued on page 11)*

# Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-903)

## Board of Directors

**President:** Alan Veflin, Sisseton, SD  
**Vice President:** Pat Homan, Beardsley, MN  
**Secretary:** Mark Pearson, Rosholt, SD  
**Treasurer:** Russ Armstrong, Wheaton, MN  
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 Michael Gaulrapp, Breckenridge, MN  
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 Michael Marks, Norcross, MN  
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## Office Personnel

Joel Janorschke - General Manager  
 Karen Lupkes - Office Manager  
 Dale Schwagel - Operations Manager  
 Stephen Powers - Member Service Representative/Electrician  
 Melissa Przymus - Accountant  
 Susan Wilts - Billing Clerk

## Operations Personnel

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

## General Managers Contact Information

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

Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly by Traverse Electric Cooperative, PO Box 66, 1618 Broadway, Wheaton, MN, 56296 for its members. Families subscribe to Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric co-op members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 66, Wheaton, MN 56296; Phone (320) 563-8616; Fax (320) 563-4863;

Web site: [www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com). This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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



**TRAVERSE  
ELECTRIC**  
COOPERATIVE, INC.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## November 2020 Board Meeting Highlights

The November board meeting was held on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 9 a.m. Absent: Frisch. Staff members present were General Manager, Joel Janorschke, Dale Schwagel, and Karen Lupkes.

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the October board meeting were approved.

The October check register was approved.

District 3 mail ballots were opened and tabulated. Michael Gaulrapp received the most votes and will complete the term.

Homan reported on the East River board meeting.

Armstrong reported on the Basin Annual meeting he attended virtually.

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 matter involving ditching near poles.
- Discussed current and future facility needs, options, and preliminary cost estimates.

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

- October 31, 2020 accounts receivable balances were reviewed.
- A list of new members was reviewed.
- COVID-19 update. Office doors temporarily closed due to rise in COVID cases.
- District 3 ballots were mailed to members of District 3.
- Requested approval to write off bad debt.

Reviewed and approved the October Financial Report.

Schwagel gave the Operations Report. Items discussed included:

- Outages were reviewed.
- Reviewed completed projects and new services.
- COVID impacts on workforce.
- Discussed minor issues with new line truck.
- Discussed a member ditching near poles.
- Reviewed our Safety Program.

Reviewed and approved the 2019 990.

Approved the retirement of \$600,000 to estates and general retirement.

Reviewed and approved the 2021 Budget.

Discussed COVID impact on holding District Meetings in January and our annual meeting in March.

Selected Marks as the voting delegate and Homan the alternate for 2021 MREA meetings.

A list of upcoming meetings and attendees was reviewed.

Meeting adjourned.

# Lighten Your Laundry Load

Laundry isn't a task that many people relish, but if the process can be tweaked to save money, conserve electricity and prolong the life of your clothes, some minor adjustments may be worth your time. Here are some suggestions from Consumer Reports.

- Opt for cold water. Hot water is only needed for laundering oily stains, cloth diapers and sheets and towels used by a family member who has been sick.
- Use high-efficiency detergent for front-loaders, high-efficiency top-loaders and where otherwise recommended by the machine's manufacturer. Conventional detergents create more suds, which can cause the washer to repeatedly rinse laundry, wasting water and time.
- Increase the spin speed to extract more water from your laundry, reducing dryer time. Shake clothes out before transferring them from the washer to the dryer to avoid wrinkles.
- Clean the dryer's lint screen before every load. This improves air circulation and prevents fires. Dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, so if you use them, scrub the filter with a brush monthly.
- Clean the dryer duct regularly to increase airflow, which dries your clothes faster and prevents fires.
- Clean the dryer's moisture sensors. Dryer sheets can leave residue on the sensors that affects their ability to gauge how dry laundry is. Check the owner's manual for instructions on how to clean them.
- Dry similar items together. Don't mix heavy cottons with lightweight fabrics. Wash and dry towels and sheets separately, for example.
- Use the automatic cycle instead of timed drying. If the moisture sensors are working properly, the automatic cycle avoids over-drying, which shortens the life span of clothes and can shrink them.
- And for the least expensive, most efficient method, dry your laundry on a clothesline or use a drying rack indoors. This approach takes a bit more time but is gentler on your clothing, keeping it nicer looking for longer - a savings in itself.

## Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at [www.sdrea.coop](http://www.sdrea.coop). You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"The Electric Fence is Unsafe!"**

**Gabbie Eichmann, 11 years old**

Gabbie is a resident of rural Canistota. She is the child of Jeremy and Melanie Eichmann, members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Recipes to Power Up Your Day

## Bacon and Egg Lasagna

12 uncooked lasagna noodles	or crumbled
1/3 c. bacon drippings (or oil)	1 lb. bacon/turkey bacon/sausage, cut up
1/3 flour	1 c. chopped onions
1/4 t. pepper	1/2 t. salt
2 c. Swiss cheese	4 c. milk
2 T. parsley	1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
12 eggs, hard cooked, sliced	

Cook lasagna noodles per directions on package. In large skillet cook bacon until crisp (or cook other meat of choice). Reserve 1/3 c. bacon drippings (or use oil) and cook the onion until tender. Add the flour, salt and pepper. Stir until smooth and bubbly. Gradually add the milk, cook until mixture boils and thickens. Stir continuously. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 pan. Spoon a small amount of the sauce onto the bottom of the pan. Layer the noodles, sauce, cheese and bacon (or other meat). Pour the remainder of the sauce over the last layer and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

**Kristine Shaffer, Lennox, SD**

## Apple Cranberry Muffins

1-3/4 c. brown sugar	1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. vegetable oil	2 eggs
2 c. flour	1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking soda	2 c. thinly sliced apples
1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 lb. cranberries, halved
1 tsp. nutmeg	1/2 c. nuts, chopped

Cream oil and sugar; add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to mixture. Add spices next. Stir in apples, nuts and cranberries. For Streusel: 1/2 c. flour; 1/3 c. brown sugar; 3 tbsp. butter. Cut butter into flour and sugar until crumbly. Pour into muffin tins and sprinkle with Streusel. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

**Ruth E. Schilberg, Viborg, SD**

## Breakfast Bread Pudding

Butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup creamy peanut butter, divided	4 cups cubed brioche or challah bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2 eggs	2/3 cup pure maple syrup
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1/3 cup crushed peanuts
2/3 cup milk	Powdered sugar, for garnish
1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract	

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter four 4-ounce ramekins. In bowl, mix 1/3 cup peanut butter, eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla and salt. Toss bread cubes in mixture until thoroughly coated. Divide evenly among prepared dishes. Bake until custard is set in middle and tops are golden, about 35-40 minutes. If tops of bread brown too quickly, cover ramekins loosely with aluminum foil. In small saucepan over low heat, combine remaining peanut butter and maple syrup until thoroughly warmed. To serve, drizzle ramekins with maple-peanut sauce and garnish with chopped peanuts and powdered sugar. Substitution: Whole wheat rolls may be used in place of brioche or challah bread.

**culinary.net**

## Baked Eggs

Line muffin pans with 2 wafer thin slices of chicken, beef or pork. Break an egg into each cup. Add a 3/4 tsp. half-and-half and a bit of butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until eggs are cooked to desired firmness.

**Elaine Rowitt, Sturgis, SD**

Please send your favorite seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Which Appliance Should I Upgrade?



**Pat Keegan**

Collaborative Efficiency

**When you're looking to replace an old fridge, style counts.**

**Dear Pat and Brad: My husband and I just bought a home that was built in the 1970s. The kitchen appliances are so old that they may be originals, but we only have enough money for one appliance upgrade. Which appliance replacement will help reduce our energy bills the most? – Jessica**

Dear Jessica: You're smart to consider energy use as you look at replacing appliances because most new appliances use much less energy than they did in the past. Manufacturers have found innovative ways to reduce appliance energy use without sacrificing performance. The federal government began tightening appliance standards in the 1980s and has continued as technological innovations became more cost-effective.

It may seem like the oldest appliance should go first. That may make sense if you want the looks and features of a newer oven or dishwasher. But with most appliances, the energy savings you get from a new one will take several years to pay for itself with the energy saved.

The appliance replacement most likely to produce the greatest energy savings is your refrigerator. An older fridge can cost about \$20 to run every month. Replacing an old fridge with a new ENERGY STAR®-rated model can cut that down to less than \$5 a month. The ENERGY STAR® label certifies that the appliance saves energy. New refrigerators will include an additional label, the Energy Guide label, which shows how much energy it uses annually and compares that to the most and least efficient models available. It's also possible to measure how much energy your fridge is using with a kWh meter. Energy auditors use these meters to measure energy use for common household appliances. Sometimes the energy use of an older fridge can be reduced by replacing the seal around the door.



**The appliance replacement most likely to produce the greatest energy savings is your refrigerator.**

When you're looking to replace an old fridge, style counts. A top-freezer setup is the most efficient, while a lower-freezer unit offers medium savings, and a side-by-side style is the least energy efficient.

If your goal is to save money on your energy bill, resist the urge to keep the old fridge in the basement or garage - that won't help you reduce your energy use. An old fridge in an uninsulated garage on a hot summer day can use a lot of energy. Maybe you just need more freezer space. If so, we recommend the most efficient freezer you can find. You can find recommendations on [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

If your current fridge is in good condition, another appliance you may want to consider upgrading is the dishwasher. With most of us spending more time at home these days, chances are you're using your dishwasher more than you used to.

As with any major purchase, be sure to read customer reviews for any brands and models you're considering, and look for additional opportunities to save money, like an upcoming Presidents Day appliance sale.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips)

# Legendary Performer Gary Mule Deer - and His Pompadour - are Still Going Strong

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Just like his trademark pompadour, Gary Mule Deer is still standing tall and proud after all these years. Thanks to the wondrous super holding power of Kenra 25, Mule Deer is still taking the stage with his skyscraper hairdo and delivering the sharp wit and old-school country music that have made him a South Dakota entertainment icon.

Going strong at 81, Mule Deer is one of the first to be amazed that he continues to have the stamina to do hundreds of shows a year (pre-pandemic) after six decades in the business. Not that he's prone to just let himself go. Despite some age-related medical issues, he works hard to keep his physical and spiritual energy up.

"I try to stay as fit as I can," Mule Deer said from his home in Spearfish. "I'm careful about what I eat, and I always pay attention to what I watch on TV or see on the internet. I try to keep things light and stay away from the dark. Tuning into the news any more than necessary can really bring your spirits down."

Mule Deer was part of a 40-show tour with Marty Stuart and The Steve Miller Band – including 24 scheduled appearances at the Grand Ole Opry – when the pandemic brought the tour to a halt. He managed to perform at the Opry last November and returned in January. But it wasn't anything like pre-pandemic days.

"A lot of the fun of doing the Opry is hanging out backstage," he said. "Now you can't just hang out. You have to wear a mask up to the microphone, then you can take it off. After you do your show you have to put the mask back on, go to your locker and grab your stuff and leave."

Mule Deer said he is happy to comply with the rules to help contain the virus. He recently lost one of his long-time friends and fellow country music stars, Charlie Pride, to the disease.

"Charlie was a real legend. We had just

done the Opry together last February. My wife Nita and I were great friends with him and his wife, Rozene. He could not have been a nicer guy and a true gentleman," Mule Deer said. "This disease is scary, but the scariest thing to me is that some people still think it's all a hoax."

Mule Deer also stays busy helping his son, Shawn Michael Bitz, promote the budding novelist's new book, *The Slim Chance*

"I always thought 'adult humor' wasn't very grown up," he said. "You can tell what kind of laughter comes out of people who respond to clean humor and 'blue' humor. When you're entertaining to make people happy and not just shock them, you can hear the difference. My type of humor brings a healthier kind of laughter. It comes from the gut and the spirit, where all the good stuff is."



Legendary performer Gary Mule Deer is still going strong entertaining audiences all over the country. Photo courtesy of Jill Jarrett.

Tour: *Stories in the Key of G-Whiz*. Bitz is also author of *Butterfly Pit Crew*. Both books are available on Amazon.

Apart from his 350 TV appearances and sharing the stage with every notable performer from Frank Sinatra to Willie Nelson, he said there are two things he is most proud of: working clean and working for charity.

Audiences can always count on a clean, upbeat show from Mule Deer.

He has also been a solid supporter of a great number of charities. Many of them have been projects also supported by fellow performers such as Pride, Vince Gill, Bing Crosby, and a long list of sports celebrities. The Make-A-Wish Foundation honored Mule Deer with a Walk of Fame star for his fundraising efforts.

Mule Deer signs off with a joke: "I saw a woman the other day riding a bike in Spearfish. I yelled out to her, 'Cow!' She flipped me off. Then she hit the cow."



Jennifer Gross teaches the fundamentals of electricity to students at Warner Elementary. Photo by Ben Dunsmoor.

## ENLIGHTENING STUDENTS

### Teachers, Co-ops Take Energy Education to the Classroom

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@srea.coop

Jennifer Gross doesn't know it for a fact, but she has a sneaking suspicion she has saved someone's life. Maybe more than once.

Gross is not a nurse, or a doctor, or a firefighter or an emergency medical technician. She serves as the education and outreach coordinator at Madison-based East River Electric and oversees the organization's Co-ops in the Classroom program. In that role over the past five years, Gross has instructed thousands of students on the importance of electric safety.

She goes into the classroom and covers a wide range of concepts in less than an hour, including how electricity is generated, how it can be conserved and how potentially dangerous it can be. She's been accused of speaking at the speed of light because there's so much for the students to grasp.

"Our follow-up evaluations sometimes show that I talk too quickly," Gross said with a chuckle. "But there's a lot to cover, so many things they need to know that could keep them safe and free from harm. These are things they're going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It's a lot to pack into an hour, but it's important information."

Gross is one of many cooperative employees across the state who teach students the importance of understanding the benefits and potential dangers of electricity and how to use it wisely. In fact, member and community education is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide South Dakota's electric cooperatives.

The classroom program that Gross delivers includes how electrical power is generated, how it's transmitted, how it's conserved and how use it safely. The program also includes information that distinguishes electric cooperatives from investor-owned and municipal electric utilities. And one of those differences is a commitment to education and youth leadership development.

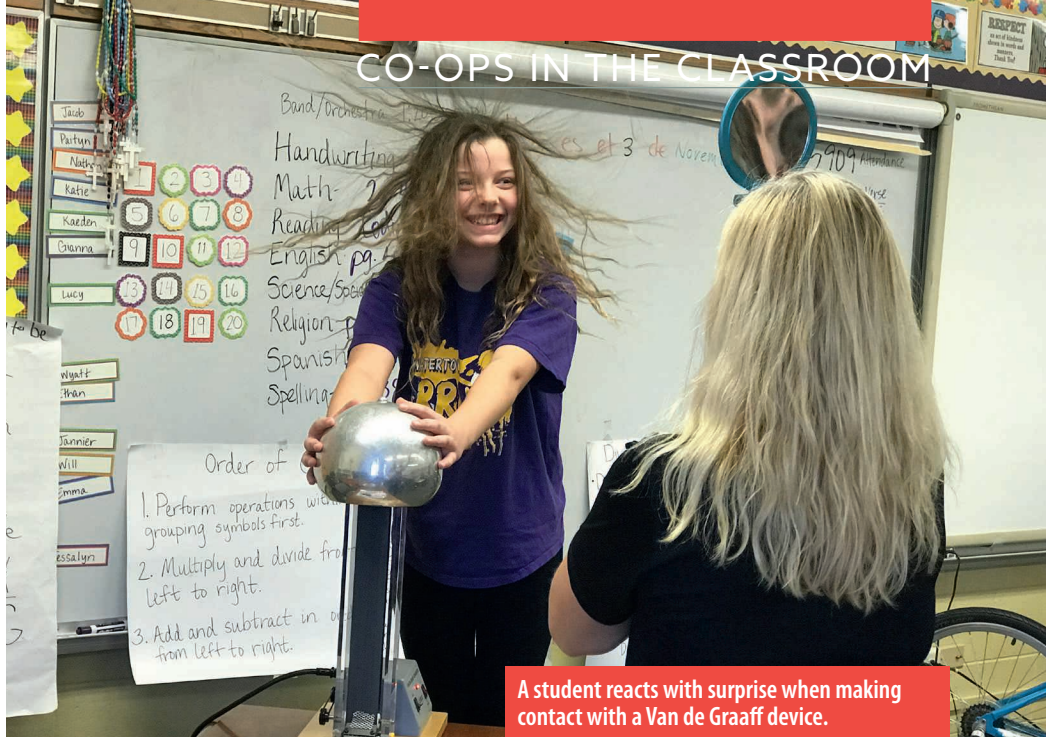
"We teach them that there are all kinds of cooperative businesses out there – food co-ops, clothing co-ops, housing co-ops, marketing co-ops and others – and we're here to do more than

Students learn incandescent light bulbs cost more to operate compared to LEDs.





**“These are things they’re going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It’s a lot to pack into an hour, but it’s important information.”**  
 - Jennifer Gross



A student reacts with surprise when making contact with a Van de Graaff device.

just provide electrical power. We’re here to deliver this information because we care about the welfare and well-being of our members, and we’re always here for them if they have questions about electricity.”

Gross was a social worker before she joined East River as support staff in the engineering department more than 10 years ago. Since taking over the Co-ops in the Schools program, she has interacted with many primary and secondary educators who also see the need to teach the fundamentals of electricity.

One of those is Jami Heinrich, a fifth-grade teacher at Warner Elementary School where Gross recently delivered her presentation. She has seen how students respond to discussions about electricity and see the direct application to their everyday lives.

“It’s something that’s always around them and they deal with all the time,” Heinrich

said. “It’s good to get them the information they need to make better choices. When Jennifer was talking about insulators, one of my students brought up that his grandparents’ cell phone chargers were worn out and you could see the wires. He said, ‘So, this is a bad idea.’ It brought up a good discussion in the classroom. Safety around electricity is definitely a priority, and teaching children about it will lead them to make safer choices.”

South Dakota’s electric cooperatives extend their education outreach well beyond elementary school classrooms. The cooperatives have invested in an electrical safety demonstration trailer that makes its way around the state not only to instruct linemen but also to attend public events and show the various components of a grid-based power delivery system. During the demonstration, facilitators send an electrical current through a hotdog, grapefruit and tree branch to show how much destruction unhar- nessed and mishandled electricity can do.

To view a video of the safety demonstration trailer, visit [youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s).

Cooperatives have also supported programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and the Youth Excursion

that teach high school students not only about electricity but also some of the political considerations surrounding the electric utility industry and the history of the country’s rural electric cooperative movement.

Many elementary and secondary school educators throughout the state – including Gross – have attended the annual teacher education seminar sponsored by the Lignite Energy Council, which attracts 130 participants from Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota. The four-day program takes place at Bismarck State College and offers professional development credits for attendees.

The seminar focuses on how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses. In addition, the seminar covers lignite’s economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry. Since 1986, more than 3,400 teachers have attended the seminar.

Roger Lawien, director of member services at Moreau-Grand Electric in Timber Lake, underscores the importance of electric education: “Member education is a vital part of what we do as co-ops. We have a program we call ‘Neon Leon,’ and one day after a safety demonstration a woman came up with her two boys and said, ‘I just wanted to thank you for what you do here. Because of what you taught my boys at last year’s demonstration, my husband is alive.’ That really shows how important it is.”



Science is at the center of learning about how electricity is generated and used.

## Hasbargen Named Scholar of the Month

August Hasbargen will be featured on Dakota News Now during the 6:00 p.m. news on Monday, Jan. 25, and again on the Dakota News Now morning news on Tuesday, Jan. 26, between 6 and 7 a.m.



Hasbargen attends Breckenridge High School. His activities include athletics in football, basketball, and track and field. He is also a two-year officer as vice president of Community Engagement in the local DECA Chapter. Gus qualified for State Competition in DECA in 2017-18 and is heavily involved in the Chapter. Gus has won numerous "Teammate of the Week" awards across his involvement in activities and is stepping up this coming year by taking a "CEO" course in which he will visit local businesses to learn more about their operations. Gus is also involved in his family's farm and has an interest in ag and business. He is always going out of his way to help other students or community members.

## District Meetings Canceled: Districts 2, 5, 8 Open for Director Nominations

Our district meetings typically held in January each year for the purpose of obtaining nominations for directors in the districts that have terms expiring and to inform members of cooperative operations, were canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, we are seeking qualified members interested in serving on the board for a three-year term.

Districts 2, 5, and 8 directors are up for election at our annual meeting in March 2021. Interested members from these districts should contact Joel Janorschke at [jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com](mailto:jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com) or at 320-304-1392 for more information regarding director qualifications and to have your name printed on the ballot to be voted on by members of those respective districts at the annual meeting in March 2021. If you are not sure which district you reside in please call our office. In general, qualified candidates must be a current member of Traverse Electric with the membership in your name, and your permanent residence must be in the district. More information on director qualifications can be found in our bylaws on our website at [www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com) under the Cooperative menu.

The deadline to submit your name to be included on the ballot is February 1, 2021.

## Standby Generator Systems

Together We Save Energy and Money



### Benefits of Owning A Generator System

Our standby power systems are designed to provide peace of mind and keep your life uninterrupted. Lights stay on, the sump pump keeps running, and your furnace or AC keeps your family comfortable.

- Standby generator system intelligently powers your whole house, automatically powering what you need when you need it most.
- Generator automatically starts when the power goes out.
- Sold and installed by Traverse Electric Cooperative.
- Financing is available.
- From Briggs & Stratton – *The Power Experts!*
- Runs on natural gas or LP (provided by others).



STANDBY GENERATORS

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20 KW\*  
FORTRESS



Starts at \$5,016.00\*\*

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Generator packages include the following:

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\*Other sizes available. Our Energy Management Representatives will help you choose the appropriate size for your home. \*\*Does not include installation labor & material. Contact Traverse Electric to set up a site visit for details and a free estimate.

CALL TRAVERSE ELECTRIC AT (800) 927-5443!

[www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com)



## Journeyman Electrician Needed

Traverse Electric Cooperative, Inc. located in Wheaton, MN, is looking for a full-time permanent Journeyworker (Journeyman) Electrician. A two year associate degree or certificate in an electrical program required and must have a current Journeyworker (Journeyman) license in MN and/or SD. The individual must be hardworking, dependable, and motivated.

For a job application and job description visit [www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com) under employment opportunities. To request an application or job description please call 800-927-5443 or email your request to [klupkes@traverseelectric.com](mailto:klupkes@traverseelectric.com). Completed applications can be mailed to Traverse Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attn: Karen Lupkes, PO Box 66, Wheaton, MN 56296 or emailed to [klupkes@traverseelectric.com](mailto:klupkes@traverseelectric.com). Position open until filled.

*\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## TEC November Financial Information

	November 2019	November 2020	YTD 2020
Total Revenue	\$1,414,348.91	\$1,060,176.89	\$10,528,327.34
Cost of Power	\$840,076.93	\$637,466.55	\$6,415,016.52
Total Cost of Service	\$1,117,346.52	\$904,836.24	\$9,707,198.01
Operating Margins	\$297,002.39	\$155,340.65	\$821,129.33
Total Margins	\$307,270.56	\$161,788.51	\$884,190.66
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Purchased	15,255,813	11,491,186	111,171,115
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Sales	14,413,112	10,943,119	105,839,095
Line Loss	5%	5%	5%

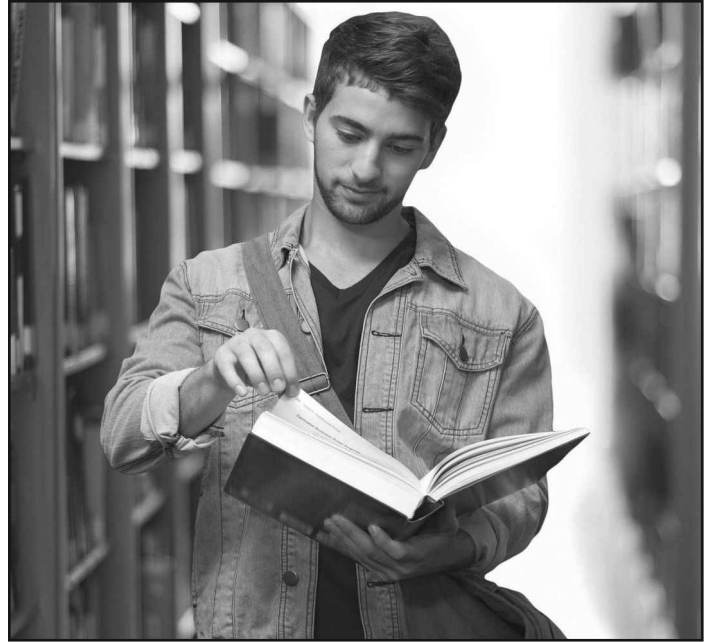
## \$1,000 Basin Electric Scholarship to be Awarded Traverse Electric to also Award One \$500 Scholarship

Basin Electric scholarship applications are now being accepted. Each year more than 175 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each are awarded. One hundred thirty-four of those scholarships are awarded to children of member cooperative consumers.

Each year Traverse Electric awards one \$500 scholarship to a child of a member. The scholarship must be used for educational costs and the student must enter college in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. Checks will be made payable to the school and will be distributed in August for the full amount.

Applications are available on our website at [www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com), through your high school counselor, at our office or can be mailed or emailed on request.

Completed applications can be emailed to [klupkes@traverseelectric.com](mailto:klupkes@traverseelectric.com) or mailed to Traverse Electric's office at P.O. Box 66, Wheaton, MN 56296 by Feb. 17, 2021, for consideration. The winners will be announced by March 1.



## Three-Tiered Power Supply

*(Continued from page 2)*

member systems' best interest. We, along with each of East River's members, freely signed our current power contract in April 2015. On Nov. 6, 2020, Dakota Energy filed a legal complaint against East River to break the contract and withdraw from their membership in the cooperative. Dakota Energy requested an exit fee in their effort to break its power contract.

Dakota Energy intends to seek their wholesale power supply from a for-profit, Denver-based company called Guzman Energy. They are a power broker with no infrastructure or investment in South Dakota or Minnesota. Guzman has made attempts in other states to lure cooperatives away from their local wholesale power supply cooperatives.

We stand with East River Electric because, collectively, we are East River Electric. We want to keep our co-op family whole. We understand that every cooperative

face unique challenges, but that is why for 70 years, we have all worked together to solve problems and face the future together. Our proven long-term strategy is better than a short-term gamble with an entity like Guzman.

East River's board has representatives from the member systems they serve. Pat Homan currently serves as Traverse Electric's representative on East River's board. We help set our power supplier's direction and collectively agree on our wholesale rates through our board's representation. That is the power of our co-op network – we have a voice. Our cooperative network is not beholden to investors. No one's profits come before our members. We are here for you, and East River is here for you.

In 2021, East River forecasts a third consecutive year with flat rates. Our co-op network is cost-based, which means that any excess funds are returned to the member. In the past ten years, East

River has returned \$27.5 million to their member systems.

We understand that green energy solutions are growing in the U.S. As an East River Electric member, we currently get 37% of our energy from renewable sources, with plans for steady and fiscally responsible new renewables. That includes buying power from what will be South Dakota's largest solar farm – the 128-megawatt Wild Springs Solar farm – beginning in 2022. We change and adapt in ways that limit our members' risk while taking advantage of new developments in energy production.

Again, we stand with East River to keep our cooperatives local, reliable, and out of the hands of for-profit investors. As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. Thank you for the trust you have in our co-op family to provide you with safe, affordable, and reliable power.



Antelope Valley Station control room operator J.D. Wolf sits at the control center where he monitors the facility operations.

# The People Behind the Power

## Power Providers Take Pragmatic Approach to Fuel Use

### Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With every change in presidential administrations, there comes a predictable shift in policy positions surrounding coal and the fossil fuels used to generate the electricity that drives the country's economic engine and allows for the conveniences of modern life.

The Obama Administration, for instance, waged what many described as a “war on coal.” It pursued an agenda that focused on imposing stringent regulations designed to push the power generation market toward renewable resources and eliminate fossil fuels. It was an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate an emerging renewable industry.

The next administration followed with President Donald Trump declaring an end to the “war on coal” during his first State of the Union address. President Trump signed executive orders revoking various rules regarding carbon emissions enacted by his predecessor. He vowed to revive the coal mining industry and “put those miners back to work.”

And with yet another change in political

power, President Joe Biden has started the pendulum swinging back in the other direction. His energy approach, which he dubs the “Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice Plan” involves reinstating many of the Obama-era policies including restrictions on oil and gas leases and investing \$400 billion in clean energy technology and innovation over the next 10 years. It also includes pushing the ag sector toward net-zero emissions.

While these policies play out in the political arena, those who bear the responsibility of actually generating the power the country needs have their own perspective. Working diligently and silently in the background of the high-profile political battles pitting climate change activists against climate change deniers are thousands who see these issues as a lot less political and much more practical. Pundits and ideologues suit up each day to argue over policy. Power generators suit up every day to keep the lights on 24/7 at rates people can afford.

For South Dakota's electric cooperative members, that responsibility falls on the staff, management and board members of Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric). Owned by the members it serves, Basin Electric generates electricity

for 140 transmission and distribution co-ops in nine states. The massive power co-op has professionals in place to deal with the political considerations of power production, but most are concerned with keeping the ions flowing toward three million homes, businesses, farms and ranches across the region.

For those individuals, policy decisions have real consequences in terms of how they carry out their work. For example, while some lawmakers roll out plans intended to push the industry in the direction of net-zero emissions, engineers, rate designers, operators, financial experts and others are dealing with the realities of making that happen.

According to Andrew Buntrock, Basin Electric's director of strategic planning, so often it comes down to a delicate balance – a three-legged stool – between on-demand accessibility, zero emissions and low rates. It's practically impossible to achieve all three at optimal levels simultaneously.

“Someone explained it like this: Let's say a rancher wants a vehicle that's affordable, cheap to operate and has zero carbon emissions,” said Buntrock. “But he's not going to be able to pull his loaded cattle trailer with a Prius. He needs the power

of an F-350 to do what he needs to do, to make a living, to bring his product to market and contribute to the economy. Sometimes we want to have it all, but that's not always possible."

He explained that power generators experience constant pressure to curb greenhouse gas emissions and eliminate fossil fuels in favor of renewable power while staying in compliance with governmental and regulatory agencies. To many vocal environmentalists, no realistic timeline to make the country completely energy independent is fast enough.

Basin Electric, Buntrock explained, has long been working to reduce emissions. For instance, in 2000 roughly 85 percent of the cooperative's power was generated with coal as the primary fuel source. Today that percentage is around 44 percent, with nearly \$2 billion spent on environmental emissions control technology. The co-op also has renewable power projects underway including the Wild Springs,



Tom White serves as a mechanic technician at Basin Electric's Deer Creek Station.

from a podium or street protest is often difficult to carry out in the trenches.

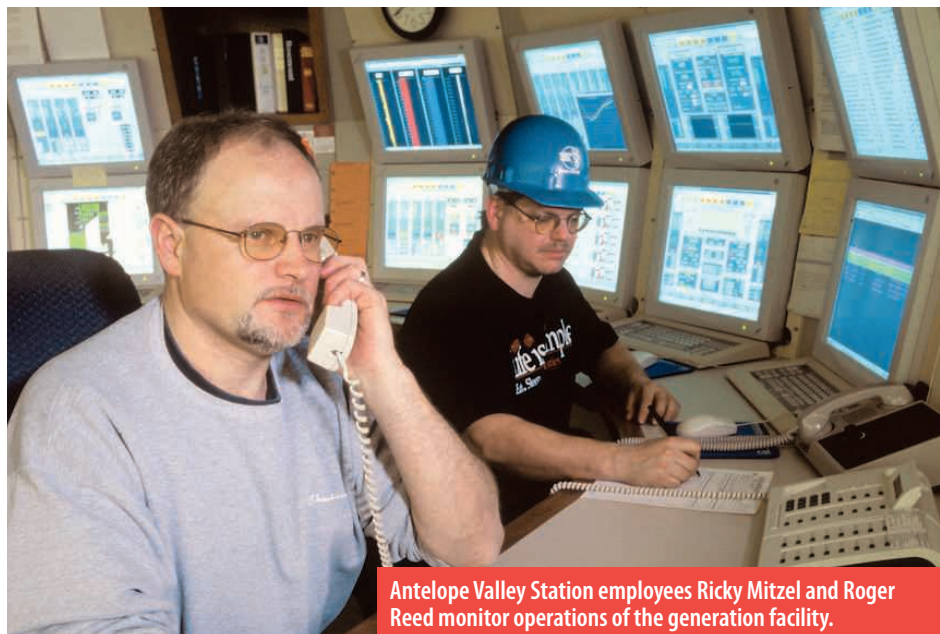
"We've been working on this for 20 years and we've been making strides. We're proud of our efforts to accomplish the thing that we all want: a clean environment. But we also want affordable, accessible power and for now and the foreseeable future, that's going to include

noted that price is even more of a priority since the pandemic struck a blow to the economy.

"Our approach and our strategy is 'all of the above.' We can't put all of our eggs in one basket," Buntrock said. "We're mindful of the concerns expressed by environmentalists because we share those concerns. But we think we're moving in the right direction. We just want our members and the public to understand that a plan or a goal may be easy to formulate, but actually making it happen often entails complex challenges that most people aren't aware of. The story behind the switch isn't one that people hear very often."

Even if fossil fuels could be eliminated altogether and baseload demand could be met entirely with renewable sources, the transition would still leave power producers – and consumers – in a financial lurch.

"It's like having two cars. You have one that you're still paying for. But then you want another model and you can't just dump the first one. You end up having two car notes, but you can only drive one to work," Buntrock said.



Antelope Valley Station employees Ricky Mitzel and Roger Reed monitor operations of the generation facility.

West River and Cabin Creek solar farms and Northern Divide Wind Project. There is also a division dedicated to conducting research on renewable energy sources and applying the most cost-effective implementation.

Buntrock said most power providers welcome and embrace efforts to reduce emissions, but the timetables should be realistic and take into account the fact that formulating a plan that sounds attractive

fossil fuels because it's the best source for being able to control the power production process. You can't always depend on the wind blowing and the sun shining."

Basin recently conducted an extensive survey of its members in an effort to identify their top priorities. The list of responses was led by price, followed by reliability, the two factors necessary for providing power that people can afford and they can access on demand. Buntrock

As the rest of the country watches the Biden Administration and congress negotiate on policy, Buntrock said Basin Electric will continue to produce on-demand power for its members.

"We know we're moving in the right direction and we know our members are confident that we're doing our best to look out for their interests, deliver the power they need and strive to be a good and trusted partner."



Jaclyn Arens of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor practices yoga during her vacation breaks.

# DE-STRESSING

## Shed the Stress of a Busy Life: Take it Easy on Yourself

**Billy Gibson**

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

Take it easy on yourself.

That bit of advice was dispensed by Country Music Hall of Famer Don Williams back in the late 1990s, and it's the same wisdom imparted by Kristie Ching, a certified health and life coach.

Ching, an employee at Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Deer Creek station near Elkton, works with clients who find themselves being overwhelmed by the breakneck speed of modern life and feeling lost and ridden with angst.

What can you do to stay centered while the flurry of activity and information all around you is leaving you exhausted and reducing your quality of life? Ching believes she has the answer. After earning her master's degree in human science in 2014, Ching has helped many clients find the balance they need to regain control of their lives and thrive. But if she had to boil it all down to one pearl of wisdom, she'd say the most important consideration is to make your own success a priority and take it easy on yourself during those times you don't always hit the bullseye.

"You have to give yourself some grace and understand that you don't have to be perfect and it's okay to make a mistake," Ching said.

Maintaining a close mind/body connection is also paramount in being able to cope with the stress and pressures that come to

bear on any given day filled with family and work responsibilities, Ching said. Over the past seven years, she has led classes in PiYo, a blend of pilates and yoga training.

Classes usually include meditation techniques, deep and controlled breathing exercises and vigorous physical movements. The idea is to slow down your mind while moving your body. Some prefer to call it "yoga on crack."

In her work, Ching has discovered that the most helpful directive for many clients is to intentionally take an extended hiatus from the news and generally spend less time in front of a phone, computer or television screen. The results can be transformative, she said.

"The biggest 'aha' moments I get with my clients is when they unclutter their lives and just quiet their minds. We take in so much information from hour to hour. In order to absorb it all, you have to push all of that chaos out with the old stuff cluttering your mind," she said. "One client said what brought her the most peace is when she stopped watching the nightly news. It would literally bring her down. Take some time away from the world and feed your soul. Spend some time laughing with friends or reading a book before you go to bed, not watching TV or scrolling through Facebook."

## Tips for Dealing with Stress

By Kristie Ching

- Be thankful. Showing gratitude for all you DO have in your life brings more good into your life.
- Move your body. Do the things you enjoy, attend a class at the local gym, go for a walk or run, dance in the kitchen, play with your kids or grandkids, play a game of basketball with friends. The main thing is to find a physical activity you enjoy.
- Unplug. Put down the phone, iPad, computer.
- Meditation or deep breathing. There are a ton of meditation resources on YouTube, or I teach my clients to utilize a 5-5-7 breathing technique that can be done in just 2 minutes. Set your intention of what you want and just breathe. Breathe in for 5 seconds, hold for 5, exhale for 7.
- Get enough sleep. When you are tired you tend to make more poor choices.
- Write it down. When stress is high it's often a good practice to write it down and get all the frustration down on paper. Then throw it away and release it.
- Slow down and eat with all your senses. We often add stress to our bodies just by scarfing down our food. Slow down. Enjoy the smells and tastes.
- Spend time with people who lift you up and make you laugh. Laughter is the best medicine!
- Make time to do the things you enjoy. Reading, blogging, going for a walk, watching your favorite TV show, draw, color, anything to let your inner child come out.
- Unclutter. I encourage clients to first look at areas they need to unclutter. In order to bring in the new you need to take out the old, just like when you buy a new couch, you get rid of the old one.



One thing that Ching is sure to bring up with her clients is the connection of food, eating, the body and the mind.

She said one highly effective way of losing weight is to unclutter the mind before approaching the dinner table. While many succumb to overeating due to worry and stress, managing the spirit and the mind typically results in fewer bad dietary habits and prolonged body weight control. Less stress leads to fewer calories, and fewer calories leads to weight loss. She calls it food freedom.

“When you achieve food freedom, you don’t have to diet all the time and deal with the stress that comes with always being on a diet.” Ching said. “Stress can

lead to overeating. If you’re under stress, don’t reach for those potato chips or candy bar. Go find a quiet place and relax for a moment and meditate. If you can meditate for a few minutes before you sit down to eat, that can help you relax, and it will also aid in your digestion.”

Jaclyn Arens sometimes experiences stress in her role as marketing and member services coordinator at Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor. She was a fixture at the Soul Story Yoga Studio before the local business shut down its facility due to concerns over the pandemic. Arens said the concepts and techniques she has learned can be practiced anywhere. She sometimes pauses

during vacation trips to center herself and prepare herself for a day of outdoors fun.

“Yoga is adaptable for any fitness level and can be practiced pretty much anywhere,” she said. “I do yoga to increase my strength, balance, and flexibility, and to take time to think and breathe. One thing I appreciate about yoga is the supportive community, and I look forward to returning to the studio when the pandemic is under control and feeling that sense of community again!”

Soul Story Studio owner Rebecca Johnson said she has no timetable to re-open the studio but has begun offering classes online at [www.soulstoryyoga.com/online-classes](http://www.soulstoryyoga.com/online-classes).

## 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.

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**January 18-25**

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD  
605-717-9294

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**January 21-24**

Elf The Musical, Area  
Community Theatre,  
Mitchell, SD  
605-996-9137

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**January 23**

Treasured Lives Presents:  
Bazzel Baz, Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
1-800-468-6463

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**January 29-30**

Pro Snocross Races, Days  
of '76 Rodeo Grounds,  
Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**January 29-February 6**

Black Hills Stock Show &  
Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-335-3861

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**January 29-31**

Winterfest, Lead, SD  
605-335-3861

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**February 5-6**

Mardi Gras Weekend,  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**February 10-13**

Watertown Winter Farm  
Show, Codington County  
Extension Complex,  
Watertown, SD  
605-886-5814

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**February 12-13**

SD High School State  
Gymnastics Meet, Watertown  
Civic Arena, Watertown, SD



Pro Snocross Races, Jan. 29-30, 2021

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**February 18**

The Q's High Line to  
Deadwood – A 130-year  
Retrospective, Homestake  
Adams Research and Cultural  
Center, Deadwood, SD  
605-722-4800

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**February 18-25**

Twelfth Annual Black Hills  
Film Festival, Virtual  
605-574-9454

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**February 20-27**

SD State High School  
Wrestling Tournament,  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

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**February 25**

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood  
Live: Neighbor Day,  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux  
Falls, SD  
605-367-6000

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**March 5-6**

SD High School State Debate  
& IE Tournament, Central  
High School, Aberdeen, SD

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**March 12-13**

St. Patrick's Day Weekend,  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**March 13**

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride  
and Tour, Spearfish Canyon  
Lodge, Lead, SD  
605-641-4963

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**March 13**

St. Patrick's Day Celebration,  
Knights of Columbus Hall,  
Watertown, SD  
605-886-5814

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**March 13-14**

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun  
Show, American Legion Hall,  
Philip, SD  
605-859-2280

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**March 19-20**

Annual Schmeckfest,  
Freeman Academy,  
Freeman, SD  
605-925-4237

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**March 23-24**

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

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**March 25**

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

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.