

# Cooperative Connections



**New Solar  
Coming to S.D.**

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**Saving Lives:  
Grain Bin  
Safety**

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# Electricity Brings Everyday Value



**Joel Janorschke**

General Manager  
jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still do not think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we do not think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it is a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we are getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we do not necessarily “see” all that we are getting for our money.

**Traverse Electric provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op.**

But considering what electricity does for us, it is a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4 percent (from 2014-2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care was increased 3 percent during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6 percent. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4 percent.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. In fact, Traverse Electric members in 2019 experienced an average of 3.6 outages lasting just 67 minutes each year. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, I am proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

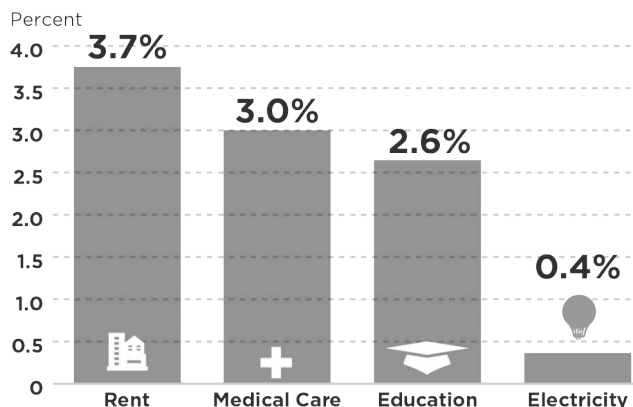
Traverse Electric provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we are here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. Traverse Electric is your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That is everyday value.

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

# 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:** Karen Kath, Campbell, MN  
 Doug Diekmann, Beardsley, MN  
 Russ Armstrong, Wheaton, MN  
 Terry Monson, Veblen, SD  
 Michael Marks, Norcross, MN  
 Tom Frisch, Dumont, MN

### 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

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Subscription information: Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Wheaton Post Office, Wheaton, MN, 56296 and at additional mailing offices.

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. 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 

## Traverse Electric Cooperative May 2020 Board Meeting Highlights

The May board meeting was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 8 AM. Absent: None.

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

The minutes of the April board meeting were approved.

The April check register was approved.

Homan reported on the East River board meeting.

Janorschke presented the Manager's Report, which included:

Rescheduled the annual meeting date to July 27th at the Traverse Electric office from 3:30-7:00 PM.

- REED Fund review.
- East River capital credit retirement and rates.
- NRECA update and review of Heroes Act.
- MREA and MN legislative update.
- SDREA and SD legislative update.
- Discussed our RUS loan.

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

- April 30, 2020 accounts receivable balances were reviewed.
- A list of new members was reviewed.
- COVID-19 update. Lobby remains closed.
- Annual audit review during week of May 18-22.

Reviewed and approved the April Financial Report.

Reviewed the Quarter 1 2020 budget analysis.

Janorschke gave the Operations Report. Items discussed included:

- Outages were reviewed.
- Crews are working on pole changes, transformer changes, service upgrades, and tree trimming.
- Pole inspections are complete.
- There are about 75 meters left to change.
- Work order inspections done.
- Discussed the Hwy 75 ditch widening project.
- One of our transformers was hit.
- Our safety program was reviewed. Crew observations were done.

Reviewed the 2019 Service Reliability Report.

Reviewed the 2019 State of Safety Report.

Selected the 2020 CRC voting delegate.

Discussed MREA's bylaw changes.

A list of upcoming meetings and attendees was reviewed.



# Focus on These Safe Practices Away From the Workplace

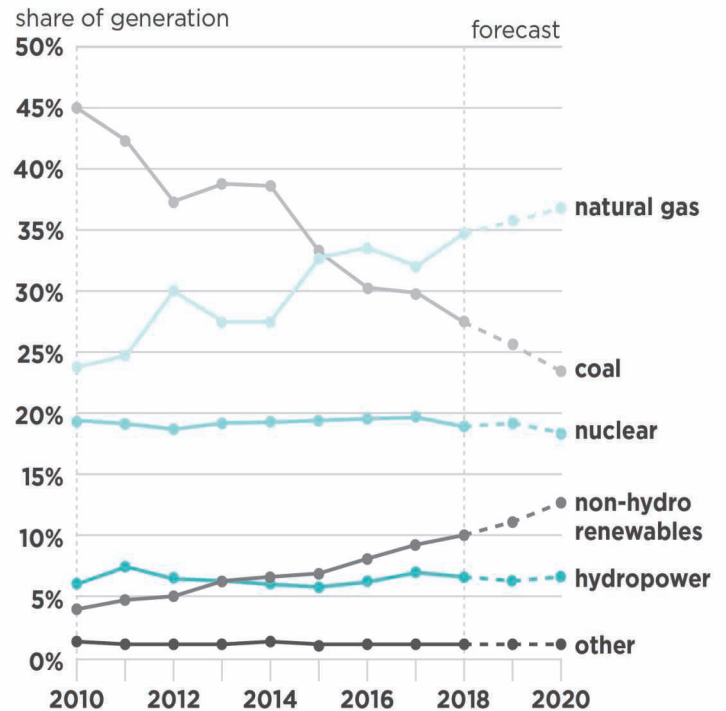
While your local electric cooperative often focuses on electrical safety and provides reminders to keep you free from harm, there are many other dangers lurking out there that don't necessarily pertain to electrical power.

Read on to see the National Safety Council's list of the top causes of preventable injuries and death away from the workplace. Keep these in mind and help protect you and your family from danger.

- **Poisoning.** In 2011, accidental poisonings overtook car crashes for the first time as the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for all ages combined. Poisoning deaths are caused by gases, chemicals and other substances, but prescription drug overdose is by far the leading cause.
- **Vehicle crashes.** Roadway crashes are the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death overall in the U.S. Impaired driving, distracted driving, exceeding the speed limit and inexperience can often cause a life to be cut tragically short in the blink of an eye.
- **Falls.** Falling is the third-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death over all age groups across the country, but it's the No. 1 cause of death for those who are 65 and older who sometimes have health complications and problems with balancing.
- **Choking and suffocation.** Choking on food or other objects is a primary cause. Suffocation and choking rank higher among the elderly and infants.
- **Drowning.** This is the No. 1 cause of death for children ages 1-4, mostly due to children falling into pools or being left alone unattended in bathtubs.
- **Fires and burns.** Fires often start at night, when families are asleep and most vulnerable. A working smoke alarm will cut in half the chances of dying in a fire.
- **Natural and environmental incidents.** Weather-related disasters claim hundreds of lives per year. You should learn all you can about emergency preparedness and always have an emergency kit on hand.

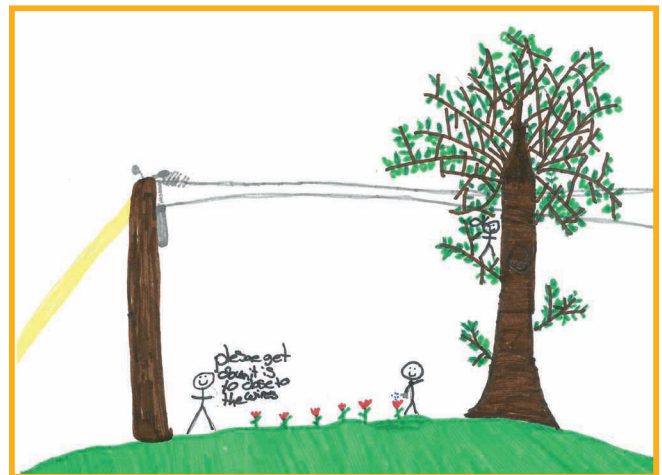
Source: National Safety Council

## U.S. ELECTRICITY GENERATION BY ENERGY SOURCE (2010-2020)



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, January 2019  
 Note: Confidence interval derived from NYMEX options market information

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Please get down - it is too close to the wires!"**

**Forrest Hawk, 9 years old**

Forrest Hawk is the grandson of Steve and Pru Hawk. They are members of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc., Martin, S.D.

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.

# Protein-Packed Salads

## Ranch, Bacon, Parmesan Salad

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 16 oz. Farfalle (bowtie) pasta | ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese |
| 1 cup prepared ranch dressing    | 1 carrot, peeled and diced     |
| 6 slices bacon                   | 1 stalk celery, diced          |
|                                  | 1 red onion, diced             |

Fill large pot with lightly salted water, bring to rolling boil over high heat. Once water is boiling, stir in bow tie pasta and return to boil. Cook pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until pasta has cooked through, but still firm to the bite, about 12 mins. Drain well in a colander set in the sink. Transfer to a bowl, refrigerate until cool, at least 30 mins. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet, cook over med.-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 mins. Drain bacon slices on a paper towel-lined plate, let cool, and chop. In a large salad bowl, stir together the ranch dressing, bacon, Parmesan cheese, carrot, celery, and red onion. Lightly stir in cooled pasta to coat with dressing, and refrigerate 2 hours.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

## Rotini Salad

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 box rotini   | sliced turkey, deli style |
| celery, green pepper, radishes, cucumber, onion, carrots | mushrooms, chopped        |
|  | cheddar cheese, shredded  |

Cook rotini as directed on package. Chop vegetables. Put all ingredients into a large bowl. Add 1 bottle zesty Italian dressing. Let chill, enjoy. Can add almost any fresh vegetable.

Mary Jessen, Holabird, SD

## Broccoli Bacon Salad

- |                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Dressing:       | 2 T. vinegar                          |
| 1 cup real mayo | Brown 1 pkg. bacon, break into pieces |
| ¼ cup sugar     |                                       |

Wash two fresh heads of broccoli and cut into bite size pieces. Add ½ cup raisins, ¼ cup purple onion, 1 cup shredded cheese, pepper to taste. Mix well.

Karen Jacobs, Tolstoy, SD

## Ring Tuna Salad

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 pkg. ring macaroni cooked and drained | 1 cup green olives sliced                       |
| 4 green onions chopped                  | 2 6 oz. cans Albacore tuna                      |
| 1 cup frozen peas cooked and drained    | 2 T. salad dressing mixed with 1 tsp. olive oil |

Cook, drain and cool macaroni. Mix first 5 ingredients then add salad dressing and olive oil, which has been whipped together. Store in refrigerator.

Darlene Price, Prairie City, SD

## Chicken, Onion, Quinoa Salad

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dressing:                   | 1 tsp. canola oil              |
| ¼ cup apple cider vinegar   | 1 white onion, sliced          |
| 2 T. olive oil              | 3 cups baby kale               |
| 1 T. lemon juice            | 1 red skinned apple, chopped   |
| 1 tsp. honey                | 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped |
| 1 tsp. Dijon mustard        | ½ tsp. salt                    |
| 1-½ cups red quinoa, rinsed | ¼ tsp. pepper                  |
| 2-½ cups vegetable broth    |                                |

To make the dressing: In a large bowl, whisk vinegar, olive oil, lemon juice, honey and Dijon mustard until well combined. Set aside. In a saucepan, bring quinoa and broth to boil. Simmer, covered, for 12-15 minutes, or until all of the broth has been absorbed. Let cool completely. In a medium skillet, heat canola oil over medium-high heat. Saute onion for 3-5 minutes, or until it is softened and translucent. Remove from heat; let cool completely. In a large bowl, toss onion, kale, apple, chicken, salt and pepper with dressing. Stir in cooled quinoa. [www.onions-usa.org](http://www.onions-usa.org).

Please send your favorite vegetarian, garden produce and pasta 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.

# Sealing Air Leaks Step-by-Step



**Pat Keegan**

Collaborative Efficiency

**Exterior doors and windows that open deserve your attention.**

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency.

For more information on sealing air leaks, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

**Dear Pat and Brad: I love my older home, but it's drafty and uncomfortable at times. What can I do to reduce drafts that won't cost me an arm and a leg? – Cris**

Dear Cris: This is a common problem, particularly in older homes. In many homes, about half of the conditioned air leaks to the outside every hour. The good news, especially if you don't want to spend a lot of money, or if you're hesitant to invite contractors into your home right now, is that you can seal air leaks on your own with a little time and effort.

Here are three steps to get you started.

## Step 1: Find the Leaks

The first step is a thorough search of the interior and exterior of the home. Look for gaps and holes in exterior walls, flooring and ceiling. These will often occur where different building materials meet, such as the top of cement foundation walls or around windows and doors. Another common source of air leaks is where pipes or wiring penetrate a wall, floor or ceiling. Ductwork located in unheated crawl spaces or attics can also contain air leaks.

Exterior doors and windows that open deserve your attention. Open each door or window and place a dollar bill between the door or window sash and the frame. If you can pull the bill out easily when the door or window is closed again, the seal is not tight enough. Also, a window that rattles when it's closed or when it's windy probably isn't sealed sufficiently.

The best way to find all air leaks is to hire an energy auditor to do a blower door test. The blower door is a large fan mounted in a doorway to depressurize the house. The auditor can then find the leaks and may even be able to recommend ways to seal them.

It's possible to conduct your own pressure test. The Department of Energy provides detailed instructions at [www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/detecting-air-leaks](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/detecting-air-leaks).

## Step 2: Gather the Materials You'll Need

Here's a quick list of materials to get you started:

- **Caulk:** You'll need a caulk gun (\$4+) and caulk (\$4-\$10). We recommend indoor/outdoor waterproof silicone or latex caulk that is water-soluble until it cures and is paintable when dry.
- **Expanding spray foam:** One can typically costs \$4 to \$6. This is an effective way to plug leaks, but keep in mind, it's a messy job.
- **Weather stripping:** Prices vary depending on type and length of the materials, but there's a variety of weather stripping options made of vinyl, metal and felt, or open-cell foam.
- **Pre-cut foam socket sealers:** You can typically purchase a pack of 24 sealers for about \$3.
- **Chimney plug balloon:** Prices range from \$50 to \$90. You may need one of these if your chimney flue doesn't seal well. Buy a square or round one to match the shape of your flue.
- **Adhesive plastic window insulation sheets:** Prices range from \$2 to \$14 depending on size. You may use these later in the year for windows that can't be sealed and don't have storm windows.

## Step 3: Do it!

If you are unfamiliar with how to apply any of these materials, we recommend watching online tutorial videos. Sealing air leaks is one of the best ways to boost your home's energy efficiency. Whether you're a DIY pro or novice, with a few simple steps (and low-cost materials), you'll be well on your way to a sealed, more efficient home.





The Woman Suffrage Monument, located in Nashville's Centennial Park, features five women who were in Nashville during the final ratification effort: Anne Dallas Dudley, Frankie Pierce, Sue Shelton White, Abby Crawford Milton and Carrie Chapman Catt. Photo by Robin Conover

# Co-ops Celebrate the 19th Amendment

## Women Played Instrumental Role in Cooperative Movement

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was approved by Congress on June 4, 1919, but it took more than a year for the measure granting women the right to vote to gain ratification by 36 states. On Aug. 18, 2020, the nation marks the centennial of this human rights milestone.

Rural America was built on family-run farms and businesses. While dads and husbands are often celebrated throughout history and heritage, wives and mothers have been full partners in creating thousands of communities. In fact, electric co-ops have served as incubators for the leadership skills that guide our communities today.

“Historically, rural wives were isolated and only had interaction with their husbands and children, but they helped run farms, ranches and their homes,” said Betsy Huber, CEO of the National Grange.

Founded in 1867, the Grange chapters took root as fraternal community organizations committed to promoting sound agricultural concepts.

“Women could hold any office in the Grange,” said Huber.

By the early 1900’s, organizations like the Grange were providing rural women meaningful leadership opportunities and fueling passions for full engagement in public life that included political participation.

With the rise of suffragist sentiments, in the early 20th century, the Grange routinely included women in governance decisions. When electric cooperatives were organized years later, many of the principles honored by rural organizations were among the fundamental tenets included in co-op charters. Family memberships were vested in heads of households, regardless of gender, and women were among the founding members of many co-ops.

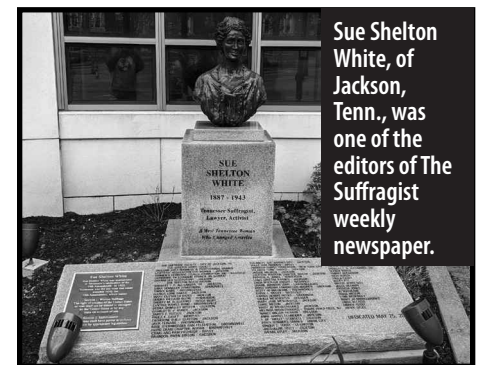
When President Franklin Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, farm magazines published stories about the news. Maye Shaw of Quitman, Texas, was a former teacher and regular reader who knew life on the farm would be easier with electric power.

She wrote Rep. Morgan G. Sanders for information and persuaded her husband Virgil Shaw to look into it. By 1937, they both were riding through the surrounding countryside recruiting members and collecting \$5 sign-up fees. Mr. Shaw eventually became the founding general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative, which now serves nearly 36,000 meters.

Today, America’s electric cooperatives support Co-ops Vote, a grassroots movement designed to encourage voter registration, political engagement and participation in local, state and national affairs for everyone.

“We provide the information to co-op consumer-members to find out how, where and when to vote, and information on the issues that affect rural communities,” said Laura Vogel, an NRECA senior political advisor. “We do not tell people who to vote for, and we don’t endorse candidates.”

Many electric co-ops are supporting National Voter Registration Day,



Sue Shelton White, of Jackson, Tenn., was one of the editors of *The Suffragist* weekly newspaper.

September 22, to encourage political participation leading up to the November elections.

“With so many uncertainties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic fueling concerns about how voting will proceed this fall, electric co-ops can play vital roles in reminding members of important dates and explaining rule changes,” said Vogel. “There will be great opportunities to meet community needs.”



Wild Springs Solar Farm will capture the sun's rays to produce electrical power for South Dakota homes, farms and businesses.

# CATCHING RAYS

## Wild Springs Solar Farm to Produce Renewable Power

**Billy Gibson**

Contributing Writer

Business leaders know that diversification is the key to containing costs and surviving sharp economic slumps over the long haul.

That's especially true when it comes to producing the power that keeps South Dakotans supplied with the juice they need to run their homes, farms, irrigation pumps, offices and shops.

Those utilities tasked with keeping the power flowing day and night look for diversification when determining the raw materials they'll use to generate electricity.

The ability to draw from a variety of available resources – coal, natural gas, solar, wind, hydro, biomass, etc. – stabilizes the production process and helps to levelize costs as market rates for any or all of these resources rise and fall over time. This “all-of-the-above” strategy, in turn, makes it easier for producers to engage in long-range forecasting, planning and purchasing for the ultimate benefit of consumers.

That's why it made perfect financial sense for Basin Electric to strike a power purchase agreement with Geronimo Energy, a renewable power generation developer based in Minnesota.

Geronimo Energy is in the early phases of constructing a solar farm called Wild Springs that is expected to generate 128 megawatts (MW) of clean renewable power. When construction is completed in 2022, the \$190 million facility will be the largest grid-scale solar installation in South Dakota.

According to Basin Electric officials, the not-for-profit wholesale power provider jumped at the opportunity to join forces with Geronimo Energy and expand its renewable power portfolio.

“We are excited about adding large-scale solar to our already



Vic Simmons, CEO of Rushmore Electric, delivers a presentation on the Wild Springs Solar Farm.

diverse generation mix,” said Basin CEO and General Manager Paul Sukut. “The board’s decision to add solar to our resource portfolio is to continue with our all-of-the-above strategy, as well as solar generation becoming a more economic energy source.”

Basin Electric transmits electricity to 141 member co-op distribution systems in nine states. It also transmits wholesale power to two South Dakota generation and transmission (G&T) co-ops: Rushmore Electric and East River Electric. Those two G&Ts then transmit the power supply to their respective distribution cooperatives. Rushmore Electric is the power provider for West River Electric, which is the closest distribution co-op in proximity to the solar farm. West River Electric owns more than 2,500 miles of power lines and poles in western South Dakota.

Wild Springs will be built on more than 1,000 acres within West River’s service area near the town of New Underwood in Pennington County and will help stabilize costs for thousands of



ratepayers throughout the region.

West River CEO/General Manager Dick Johnson said he's happy to have a new neighbor and that the project has garnered the support of community leaders as it will create roughly 150 construction jobs. But he said he's even happier for the members who will benefit from the renewable power generated by the solar farm.

The facility is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 85,000 metric tons annually, which is the equivalent of taking 18,000 cars off the road every year.

"We're excited that West River's service area will be home to the Wild Springs Solar Project," said Johnson. "This solar energy project will benefit our cooperative family, as well as our local communities. As not-for-profit co-ops that are owned by our members, everything we do goes back to the people we serve."

Johnson pointed out that the project is expected to produce \$17 million in economic benefits through its first 20 years in terms of tax revenue, job creation and contributions to charitable funds. The list of benefits also includes an education fund that plans to donate \$500,000 to local school districts.

Officials at Rushmore Electric said the power purchase agreement is a perfect fit in line with the cooperative's mission and long-term strategy.

"Our cooperative network is always looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to meet the needs of our membership and renewable energy is an important part of that strategy," said General Manager Vic Simmons. "This project is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power."

Geronimo Energy recently completed the 200 MW Crocker Wind Farm in Clark County and also developed the Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services in Hughes County.

Geronimo Energy President David Reamer said industry analysts often tend to doubt the viability of solar power in the region, but he said the Wild Springs project shows that consumers in more northern climates can also benefit from the renewable resource.

## 7 Efficient Home Improvement Projects to Help Save Money

The best home upgrades make spaces more livable and energy-efficient and are also cost-effective. Making energy-efficient improvements is a savvy way to save money on utility bills, curb energy consumption and add to the house's value. Consider a variety of home improvement projects, both big and small, that can reduce the financial burden of maintaining your home throughout the year and improve energy efficiency.

**Add Insulation** - A cost-effective way to save on heating and cooling bills is adding a layer of insulation in the attic where heat loss is typically greatest due to hot air rising. While many newer homes are adequately insulated, those that are several decades old (or older) may benefit from an upgrade in not only the attic but other common problem areas where air can escape such as basements, crawl spaces, fireplaces and ductwork.

**Seal Doors and Windows** - Windows and doors are common culprits for energy loss. While a complete replacement of doors and windows can be pricey, adding exterior caulk and weather stripping to fill in gaps where air can escape around these openings can make a noticeable difference for a fraction of the cost and make it cheaper to heat and cool your home.

**Install Skylights** - Skylights are a cost-effective option for transforming any room with natural light while also saving energy. For example, Sun Tunnel Skylights can be installed in 90 minutes and funnel natural light from the roof through the attic and into the room below with an aesthetic that resembles recessed lighting. Customizable with six diffuser film styles to complement interior design, the skylights can make a home more energy-efficient by reducing reliance on artificial lighting.



**Reflective Window Film** - When the sun shines through windows, it can heat up the home's interior quickly and trigger the air conditioner to turn on. Window coverings, such as blackout curtains, can help, but adding low-e reflective window film to your windowpanes, particularly southern-facing ones, can provide an additional shield from the sun and reduce energy costs.

**Install a Programmable Thermostat** - A programmable thermostat is an efficient way to control the climate inside your home. Today's smart thermostats not only let homeowners control temperatures from their smart devices but can also learn daily habits and adjust the temperature accordingly with no other manual adjustments necessary.

**Replace Appliances** - Because appliances like refrigerators and ovens are major energy users, investing in more efficient models provides both cost and energy savings. Additionally, homes more than 15 years old could benefit from updates to the air conditioner or heater as systems 15-20 years old or older may be candidates for replacement.

**Ceiling Fans** - In comparison to running your air conditioner consistently, the cost of running a ceiling fan (or several) is significantly less. Particularly on days that may not require cooling the entire house completely, fans can provide a gentle breeze and circulate air in the spaces you use most often. Simply adjust the switch to the counterclockwise position to ensure it's pushing air downward during warmer months.

For more information and home improvement ideas, visit [whyskylights.com/livlighter](http://whyskylights.com/livlighter).



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS

This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



**Take notice** of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



**Do not** shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



**Know** where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



**Be especially careful** in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.



**Do not** place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



**Do not** place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.

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\*Limited tank warranty is extended for residential single family dwelling applications from ten (10) years to lifetime with product registration (limited parts warranty is extended for residential single family dwelling applications from one (1) year to six (6) years with registration). Warranty registration must be completed within 90 days of installation. Some states may not require warranty registration. Limited lifetime tank warranty applies to the original purchaser for as long as the purchaser owns the home. See warranty certificate for complete information. Warranty information can be located in the "Use and Care Instructions" found under the Specs/Docs tab of the product page on Rheem.com

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## Member Comments

Thank you for the scholarship award. I plan on attending USD in the fall. This money will help greatly on my education journey!

Thanks.  
Emily Kaufman  
Webster, SD

Thank you for all the years of really good service!

Roxanne Bertram  
Browns Valley, MN

Thank you for the great service the last 48 years.

Sandy Gronfeld  
Graceville, MN

Thank you for fixing our light.

Sandy Conroy  
Dumont, MN



## Notice of Summer Office Hours

Summer office hours will be 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. starting May 1 and ending Sept. 30.

## Always Call Before You Dig.



811

# Renewable Energy Update

## *Harnessing the wind, water and sun*

The future of how we receive electricity is changing. The energy we see all around us - from the sun, the wind and water - is rapidly being harnessed to power our lives.

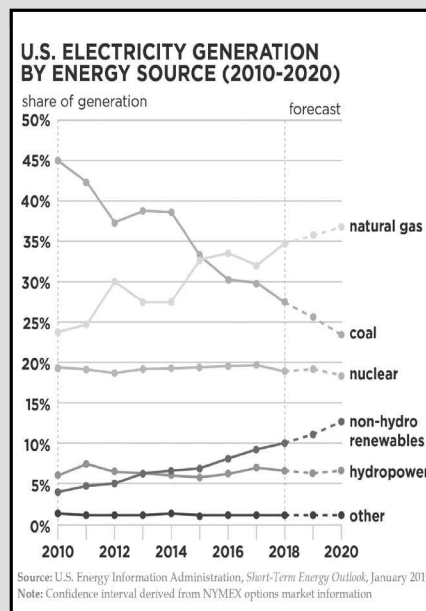
Looking at the numbers, we see that renewable energy generation has steadily increased over the last decade. As of 2019, almost 18 percent of all energy generated in the U.S. came from renewable sources, according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA). This is a significant jump from only 10 percent in 2010. To break it down by energy type: wind energy makes up 7.3 percent of the total energy generated, hydro-power makes up 6.6 percent, solar energy makes up 1.8 percent and other sources like biomass and geothermal energy make up 1.8 percent. And those percentages will continue to grow as a result of several factors.

The largest contributing factor is that the costs of building renewable energy projects have become cheaper. Additionally, many states across the country have set guidelines and

policies for producing a certain percentage of energy from renewable sources by a set goal year. Lastly, many large corporations like Google, Amazon and Facebook have started to invest in large-scale renewable energy projects. In addition to receiving a return on their investment, these companies are able to show a concern for sustainability to their consumers. Combined, the declining costs, state policies and large-scale action have brought the industry to where it is today.

Although the growth trends for renewable energy have been steady for nearly a decade, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought uncertainties. Projects have been delayed, or even canceled, because of manufacturing and construction issues. Financial market concerns further worsen the impacts of COVID-19.

New solar installations are expected to drop 20 percent this year, according to industry analysts. Similarly, but not as steep, wind energy installations are expected to drop 6 percent. The overall decline of renewable



energy projects also means many lost jobs. Research from BW Research Partnership shows that over 100,000 jobs were lost in March 2020 alone, and there is a potential for more than half a million jobs lost as a result of COVID-19 through the rest of the year.

Despite these drawbacks, there is hope for the renewable market. Forecasts by the EIA show that electricity produced in the U.S. will decline by 5 percent in 2020. However, despite the overall drop in production, renewable energy will still grow 11 percent this year in the electricity power sector.

### Energy Efficiency

#### Tip of the Month

Installing a smart power strip is an easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.



### May Financial Information

	May 2019	May 2020	YTD 2020
Total Revenue	\$868,642.11	\$839,513.15	\$4,625,607.27
Cost of Power	\$541,932.97	\$496,344.95	\$2,797,327.61
Total Cost of Service	\$ 891,600.43	\$815,944.09	\$4,321,198.20
Operating Margins	(\$21,758.32)	\$23,591.06	\$304,409.07
Total Margins	(\$11,576.42)	\$24,404.10	\$ 338,327.23
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Purchased	9,094,998	8,391,218	49,964,947
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Sales	8,619,798	7,973,100	47,634,415
Line Loss	5%	5%	4%





Due to recent unusual weather patterns, grain bin safety is more important than ever.

# GRAIN BIN SAFETY

## Unusually wet year makes grain bin safety on the farm more important than ever

Susan Smith

Contributing Writer

Wet conditions during last year's harvest meant grain went into bins under conditions that aren't ideal.

Wet grain can cause crusting or bridging in bins. Producers try to scrape the crust away from the side, causing a landslide of grain sucking the producer in as it falls. Or they could be working in a bin not realizing they are standing on a bridge of grain that when it falls has nothing beneath it but air. This can also cause entrapment.

Many of these accidents happen in winter and early spring, said Beth Locken, director of safety and environmental at Agtegra Cooperative in Aberdeen. She calls that time period the second harvest when farmers are cleaning out bins for the coming year's crops. While South Dakota and North Dakota don't see the number of entrapment accidents as corn-belt states like Iowa and Illinois, grain bin entrapments are not picky, Locken said.

"We've already seen one (death in South Dakota) in 2020 already and that's too many," she said.

During the third week in February 2020, decreed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue as National Grain Bin Safety Week, Christopher Bauman died at his farm near Elkton while emptying corn. Bauman had a wife and three children.

After Bauman died, Locken and Scott Wheelhouse, safety director of the Agfirst Farmers Cooperative in Aurora, began



Training is an important element in responding to grain bin accidents on the farm.



talking about creating a local day-long seminar on grain bin safety. The morning would focus on a refresher course for first responders who already are trained to rescue someone trapped in a grain bin but maybe haven't had hands-on experience recently, Wheelhouse said. In the afternoon, producers from the area would get information on general grain bin safety and use of rescue equipment.

"We really want to emphasize we don't just want your business, we want your friendship," Wheelhouse said. "We want you alive."

AgTegra sold grain bin entry kits at cost to local producers this year, a service Wheelhouse would like to offer his customers as well. The kits sell for \$460 and include resources on how to use them.

"Mostly the benefit we get out of it is hoping we can educate the family and keep them safe," Locken said.

Purdue University releases an annual report on entrapment injuries and fatalities. The number increased by 9.8 percent in 2019. From 2017 to 2018 the number jumped 23 percent. In the last decade, 370 people died in grain bin accidents.



The number of grain bin accidents increased nearly 10 percent in 2019.

About 10 years ago, Agtegra donated to fire departments in its coverage area grain bin rescue tubes that fit around a submerged person. That includes about 70 departments in northeast and northwest North Dakota and areas along Highways 12 and 281 and I-90. Agtegra deployed a technical rescue team for the last 10 years.



The risks of working around grain bins may be forgotten during the high pressure of an average work day on the farm.

## Training paid off during a March grain entrapment.

The team membership and training is widespread for Agtegra employees and first responders.

"Immediate response is of the essence," Locken said. "If something happens on a farmer's bin site, they're not going to call AgTegra, they're going to call the fire department," Locken said.

That widespread training paid off during a March grain entrapment near Pierre.

"We were there providing guidance and additional equipment. We were inside the bin with the fire department just trying to get the victim out of there," she said. "We worked for about five hours and that was a successful response. Not all of them are like that, unfortunately."

The first rule of grain bin safety is not to go into the bin in the first place.

"We always say any time someone needs to go into a bin, stop and talk about it," Locken said. "Have absolutely more than one person there. Make sure the person has a harness and rope attached to the harness and to something attached to the bin that's not going to move."

Locken said turning off equipment like an auger is another good rule of thumb. That way grain isn't being pulled out of the bin as a person works in it.

John Keimig, SDSU Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist, conducts safety programs for 4-H youth. He educates children of producers so they know the rules and can keep an eye on their parents. Most producers know the risks of working around grain bins, he said, but might not consider them during the high pressure of a typical farm day.

"Adults know better," he said. "We get in a hurry. We don't always think and particularly in grain storage that can become very bad very quickly. By working together, we can help each other out if we have to go into a bin and we can save lives."



State officials say the problem of meth addiction disproportionately affects women and Native American populations.

## METH. WE TREAT IT.

### Front Line Treatment Providers Stay Focused on Their Goal

By Billy Gibson

Contributing Writer

To a public growing desensitized to increasingly sensational news accounts, one particular police report stood out.

Probably because of the cattle prod.

Back in June, Sioux Falls police arrested a couple accused of using a cattle prod to discipline their four children, ages 11 to 17. The astonishing accusations also included the couple giving methamphetamine and marijuana to the youngsters in their charge.

It was another in a steady stream of stories serving as an indication of the widespread use of methamphetamine and the deleterious effects of drug abuse in the state.

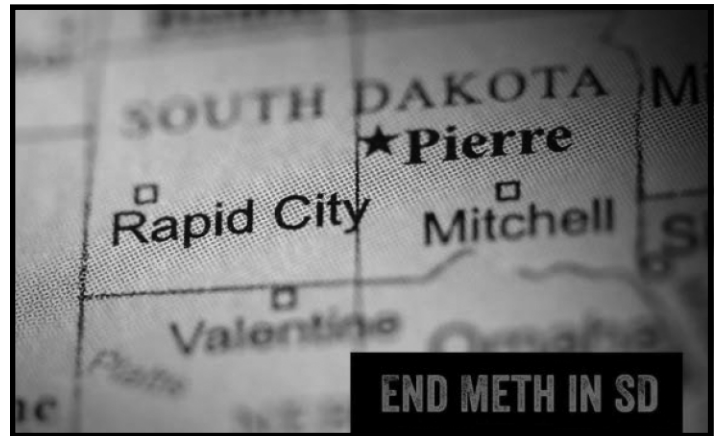
Meth, especially, is a social and public health menace that has not mysteriously disappeared since the coronavirus outbreak, although it has morphed a bit as the pandemic has spread.

State and federal officials report that the impact of the virus has brought both good news and bad news.

On one hand, the curtailing of international and national travel, the economic downturn and the tightening of borders have all combined to reduce the supply of the powerful drug on city and rural streets.

On the other hand, the street price for the drug is escalating due to increased demand and shortened supply. As those hooked on the drug seek any means of securing it and as general anxiety levels rise, officials fear that a jump in criminal activity is inevitable.

In Los Angeles, for example, meth prices doubled recently as narcotic traffic from Mexican cartels slowed down significantly.



Price increases were also seen in states like Virginia, West Virginia, New Mexico, Kentucky, Tennessee and many others.

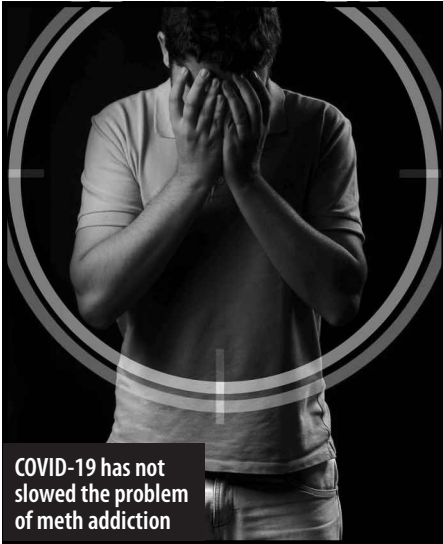
While the world turned its attention to the coronavirus earlier this year and now braces for a second wave, others dedicated to battling meth abuse over the long haul have never steered their focus away from their goals.

A statewide campaign to raise awareness of the meth problem was launched last fall as officials began recognizing that the manufacture, distribution and consumption of meth was becoming a plague for far too many South Dakotans. The troubling trend was placing both rural towns and the larger population centers at risk.

The campaign was in response to disturbing figures that painted the picture of a national and international progression that was finally at the point of breaching the state's borders in record numbers.

For instance, officials reported that in 2018 more than 3,600 individuals were arrested in the state for possessing, transporting or





COVID-19 has not slowed the problem of meth addiction

distributing a collective 100 lbs. of methamphetamine. The Centers for Disease Control proclaimed that meth was taking the lives of more South Dakotans than any other illegal drug and that twice as many teens from 12 to 17 years old were using meth compared to the national average.

Additionally, 83 percent of court admissions for controlled substances in 2019 involved meth, as the state saw a 200 percent increase in people seeking treatment with the primary diagnosis of meth addiction between 2014 and 2018.

Meanwhile, law enforcement seized 24 lbs. of meth in the Rapid City area in 2018, over 20 lbs. in Sioux Falls, and almost 1 lb. in Pierre. It takes just .0003 lb. of the drug to cause a fatal overdose. From January to August of 2019, there were 2,243 meth-related arrests across 50 counties. In 2002, that number was just 467.

More recently, figures show that meth is impacting Native American and female populations at a disproportionate level.

For instance, officials report that more than 90 percent of inmates at the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre are substance abusers. Overall, roughly



**“Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there.”**

Carol Regier

one-third of those inmates incarcerated in the state prison system are there because of some form of drug addiction.

Recently, the female inmates have campaigned to push for more programs to help addicts within the system.

Inmate Heather Shooter, who belongs to the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe, is one of several convicts who have been instrumental in an initiative called Sober is Sacred, in which inspirational speakers, performers and other guests call for additional counseling and treatment programs to help those hooked on meth. The program follows a similar one launched at the Mike Durfee State Prison for men in Springfield called Fathers Against Meth.

Shooter said that when her time is served this fall she plans to enter the Full Circle Substance Abuse Center in Rapid City and spread the message of a drug-free life.

Dave Flute, the state's Secretary of Tribal Affairs and former Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribal chairman, has described the meth plague as having reached epidemic proportions on the state's reservations. He spoke last fall at the second State-Tribal Meth Summit in Mission and assured the audience that the governor's administration is working closely with Native American tribes to combat the problem.

Carol Regier, CEO of the Keystone Treatment Center with facilities in Canton and Sioux Falls, said her program often works with tribal communities in South Dakota and surrounding states. She echoed Flute's comments that the governor's office has been deeply engaged.

“We've had discussions with the governor and the state has been very supportive of our work, going back to the Rounds administration,” she said, noting, “But we did make up our own catch phrase: ‘Meth. We Treat It.’”

She pegged meth abuse as “by far” the most toxic culprit when it comes to addiction and the social maladies that

spring from it.

“Besides alcohol, meth is our number one problem. It's very addictive and caustic and people who get hooked rarely defeat it without qualified help,” she said.

Regier said the in-patient program offered at Keystone typically lasts a month to 45 days and includes components of the 12-step Narcotics Anonymous plan. It also



focuses on spiritual, physical and mental health, she said. After therapy, patients are supported and encouraged to participate in after-care and continued counseling.

Keystone has 126 beds, and Regier said there is a steady stream of patients seeking treatment for their addiction. The pace hasn't slowed with the coronavirus.

“There was a period where it seemed people were afraid to come in, but they've started to come in now,” she said. “We've seen an escalation in alcohol and drug abuse during the pandemic as people are having to deal with loneliness, joblessness, personal relationships and other drastic changes in their lives and in the country.”

From her vantage point standing on the front lines of the drug addiction battle, Regier strikes a positive tone. She encourages those who feel they need treatment to get it. She assures that most treatment plans are covered by medical insurance and that grants and other resources are available to help addicts break free from the grip of addictions.

“Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there. We hear heartbreaking stories, but on the good side we see people who have turned their lives around,” she said. “For all of us committed to helping drug addicts get well, we have the same commitment: getting people back to normal so they can live healthier, more fulfilling lives. Treatment works.”

## Register to Win!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### September 3-5

South Dakota State Fair:  
Perfect Vision of Fun,  
1060 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD  
800-529-0900  
www.sdstatefair.com

### July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA  
Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood,  
SD, 1-888-838-BULL,  
www.DAYSOF76.com

### July 26

15th Annual Car Show  
Langford, SD, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
605-493-6597

### July 31-August 1

Senior Games, Yankton,  
SD, Contact Kristi Hauer at  
605-665-4685

### July 31-August 1

Plein Air & Arts in the Garden,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
605-354-3826

### August 1

Rockin' Ribfest BBQ  
Competition, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

### August 1

Foothills Classic, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-350-1687

### August 1, 22

The Murder of Miss Kitty  
Comedy Mystery Dinner  
Theatre, Holiday Inn Express  
& Suites, Deadwood, SD,  
605-580-5799

### August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks,  
SD, www.threshingshow.com



**August 8-10:**  
Red Power Round Up  
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-460-0197

Photo courtesy: South Dakota Department of Agriculture

### August 8-10

Red Power Round Up,  
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD,  
605-460-0197

### August 9

Online Only Bechyn Czech  
Festival, Online Concert,  
7 p.m., Bechyn,  
Minn., 320-522-1218  
www.facebook.com/Bechyn-  
MinnesotaWorld

### August 14-16

Astronomy Festival, Badlands  
National Park, Wall, SD,  
605-433-5241

### August 21-22

Harvest Festival, Elkton, SD,  
605-524-2681

### August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car  
Races plus Wissota MWM,  
Dakota State Fair Speedway,  
Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

### September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam  
Threshing Show, 1 p.m.,  
47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake,  
SD, 605-881-8405

### September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival,  
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792,  
www.twinriversoldiron.org

### September 13

20th Annual Antique Tractor  
and Car Parade, 1 p.m.,  
Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

### September 25-27

Coal Springs Threshing  
Bee Featuring Massy Harris  
Tractors, Meadow, SD,  
605-788-2229

### September 26

10th Annual ROCS Fall  
Festival, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.,  
Springfield, SD,  
605-464-7379

### September 26

Wheelin' to Wall, Wall  
Community Center, Wall, SD

### October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative  
Rural Communities  
Conference, Millbank, SD,  
<https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.