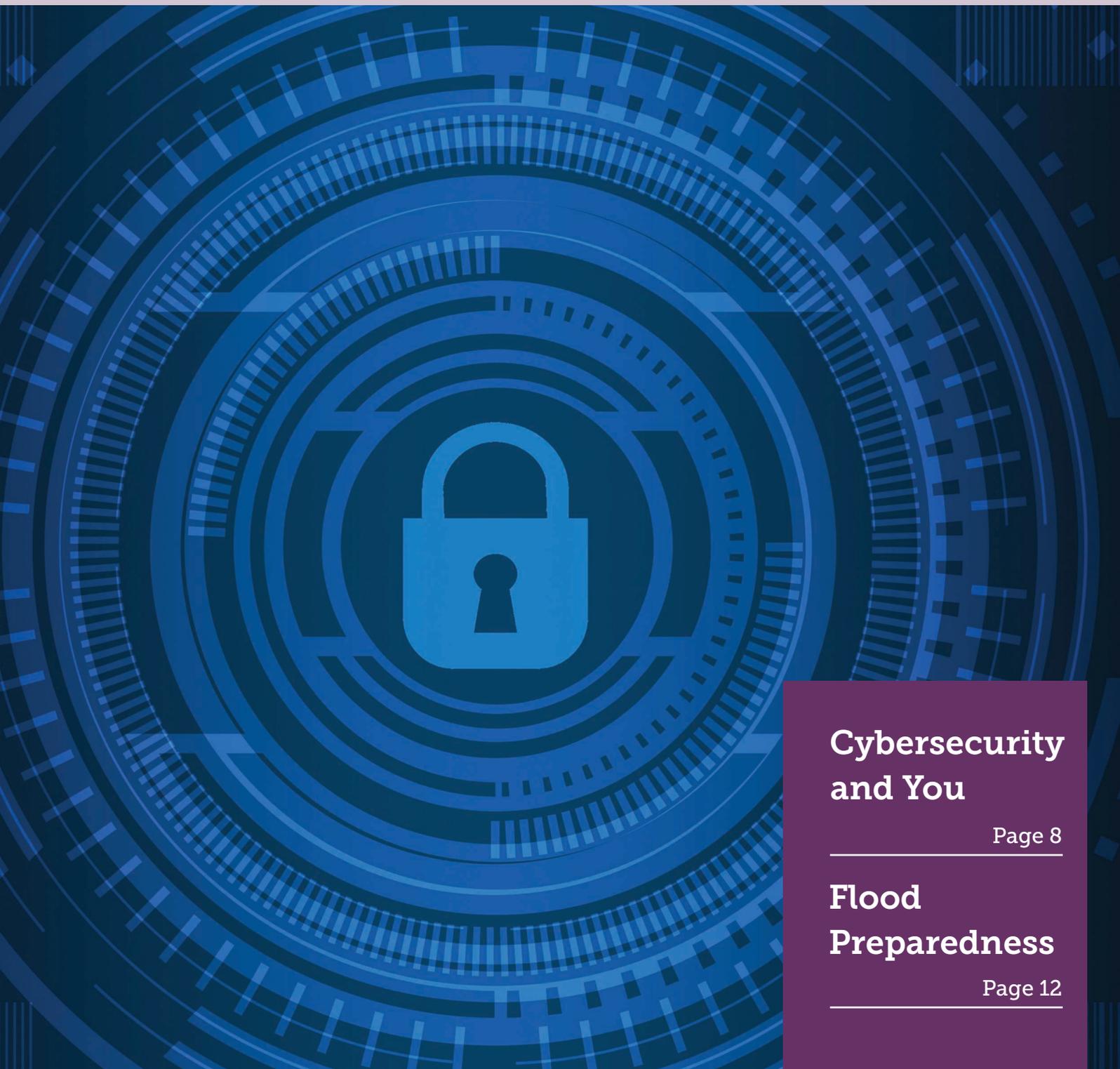




Cooperative Connections



**Cybersecurity
and You**

Page 8

**Flood
Preparedness**

Page 12

Electric Cooperatives to Purchase Power from South Dakota's Largest Solar Project



Rodney Haag

rhaag@oaheelectric.com

Oahe Electric Cooperative is adding solar power to its generation mix thanks to a 128 megawatt (MW) solar energy project that will be constructed near New Underwood, S.D., and is projected to be operational by 2022.

On Feb. 18, Geronimo Energy, a National Grid company, and Basin Electric

Power Cooperative announced the execution of a Power Purchase Agreement for the Wild Springs Solar Project. Oahe Electric is a member of Basin Electric, a wholesale generation cooperative that provides a large portion of our power supply. Once operational, Wild Springs will be the largest solar project in South Dakota. It will be located about 20 miles east of Rapid City in the service area of West River Electric Association, Inc., which is a distribution electric cooperative member of Basin Electric.

“We’re excited that West River’s service area will be home to the Wild Springs Solar Project,” said West River Electric Association CEO/General Manager Dick 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.”

In total, Basin Electric is a not-for-profit wholesale power provider to 141 member

cooperative systems in nine states. In South Dakota, Basin Electric transmits its power supply to two generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative. Those two G&T cooperatives then transmit the power supply to their respective distribution cooperatives, with Rushmore Electric being the G&T provider to West River Electric. The state’s 28 distribution co-ops power the homes, farms and businesses within their service areas.

“For the first time in its history, Basin Electric will buy

solar generation on a large scale to serve our members. The board’s decision to add solar generation 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. We are excited about adding solar to our already diverse generation mix,” said Paul Sukut, CEO and general manager of Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Oahe Electric is a member of East River Electric, the G&T that serves the eastern half of South Dakota and parts of western Minnesota. In 2019, nearly 38 percent of East River’s power supply mix came from wind and hydro-power generation. That percent is projected to increase as new renewable sources, including the Wild Springs project, are added to the mix.

“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 East River Electric General Manager Tom Boyko. “This project with Geronimo Energy is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power.”

The Wild Springs project has been supported by local and state community members and will bring significant economic benefits to the local area. Current estimations for the project’s economic benefits total more than \$17 million throughout the first 20 years of operation, including positive impacts in new tax revenue, construction jobs new full-time jobs, and charitable funds through the project’s Education Fund. The Wild Springs Education Fund alone will offer approximately \$500,000 in donations to the local school districts connected to the project above and beyond all tax revenue and local spending benefits.

“Historically, there has been a misconception that solar in the northern regions of the United States wasn’t feasible,” stated David Reamer, president for Geronimo Energy. “Both Geronimo and Basin Electric recognized that the addition of solar to its overall generation fleet not only offers customers a clean, economic option for their electricity, but it also diversifies a utility’s portfolio.”

Geronimo’s South Dakota operating project portfolio includes the recently completed Crocker Wind Farm, a 200 MW wind project located in Clark County, South Dakota. Geronimo also successfully developed the operational Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services.

“This project with Geronimo Energy is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power.”

Tom Boyko, East River Electric

Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 019-042)

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Our Mission

Oahe Electric delivers high quality, low-cost electric service to our local member-owners. As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, we are committed to meeting the highest standards of customer satisfaction. We do business with accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community. As an electric co-op, we are part of America's most trusted network of high quality energy providers.

Amid Trade Deals, Bankers' Confidence in Rural Economy Reaches Seven-Year High



Russ Hohn

rhohn@oaheelectric.com

Rural Mainstreet Index

The index, a 0-100 range in which 50 represents growth-neutral, is based on surveys of community bank CEOs in a 10-state region. (Source: Creighton University's Heider College of Business)

Recent U.S. trade deals have pushed bankers' confidence in rural America's economic health to a seven-year high, according to a monthly assessment.

A gauge of bank CEO expectations for the rural economy six months out rose to 58.1 in February from 50.1 in January, according to Creighton University's Rural Mainstreet Index. This month's results, however, don't reflect economic impacts of the coronavirus outbreak in China.

The signings of the Phase 1 trade pact with China and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement boosted the RMI's confidence index "across the region with expectations of higher international sales. The last time Creighton recorded economic confidence this high was when grain prices were double today's values in 2013," said Ernie Goss, a professor at Creighton University's College of Business, which produces the index.

RMI readings are based on a survey of bank CEOs in some 200 rural communities in 10 states with an average population of 1,300. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

February's overall index, a real-time analysis of the rural economy, remained above growth-neutral for the sixth straight month, though it declined to 51.6 from 55.9 in January. Low farm income was a factor in this month's reading, said Goss. He noted that 40.6 percent of bankers restructured loans, "while only 3.1 percent indicated that their banks had rejected a higher percentage of farmland loans. Approximately one-fourth of bankers indicated no change in lending practices."

February's survey asked bankers what percentage of farmland purchases were cash sales. On average, bank CEOs reported that 17.3 percent of farmland purchases in February were made in cash – down from 22 percent five years ago.

Statement of nondiscrimination

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

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Springtime Electrical Safety Tips

Now that the weather is warmer and people are spending more time outside, it's important to make sure certain electrical components are functioning properly and you are practicing good habits around electrical items both inside and outside of the home.

Focusing on electrical safety awareness can help ensure you are not injured due to an electrical malfunction.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), thousands of people in the United States are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes.

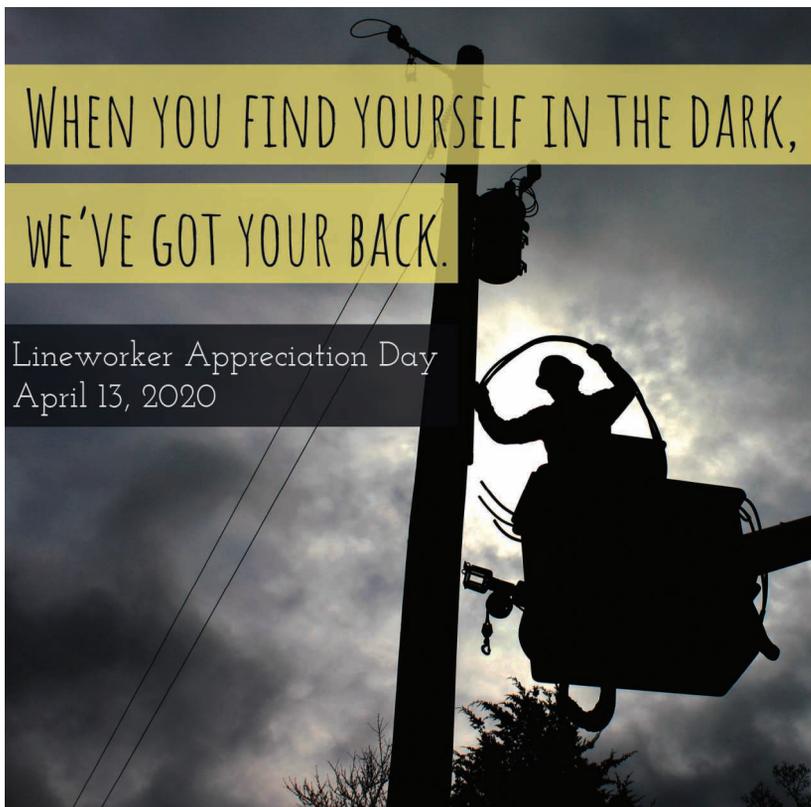
Here are some simple safety rules to remember:

- Ladders of every material should not come in contact with a power line, as it may result in a serious injury or death. Keeping a 10 feet distance from an overhead power line is a good rule of measure.
- If your power tools are not being used, make sure to unplug everything. If not, it's possible for the tools to overheat and cause a fire.
- Check for damaged cords on power tools. It is important to check if the cord is frayed or the plug is broken. This makes the tool dangerous to operate.
- Avoid wet areas while using any electrical item. Be aware of your surroundings, being sure to check for a running hose or sprinkler. Wet grass is particularly an issue.
- Teach kids to never fly a kite or climb a tree near a power line. If a kite gets tangled in overhead power lines, don't try to remove it yourself. Kite string can conduct an electrical current, which can cause serious injuries or death.
- Call 811 before you dig so underground utility lines can be properly marked. This free service is required by state law and should be done at least two business days before the digging begins.

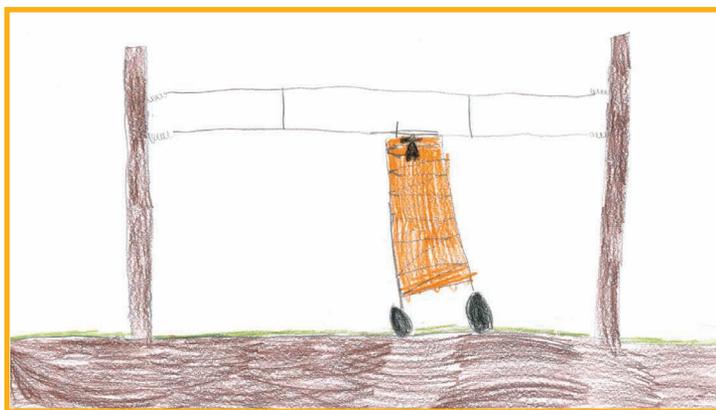
All electrical lines and equipment should be treated seriously and with caution.

Use these simple and easy to follow tips to stay safe this summer.

Source: www.mrelectric.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Do not cut power lines in half."

Annette Tschetter, 6 years old

Annette is the daughter of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter, Revillo, S.D. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Milbank, 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.

Appetizers and Beverages

Pink Rhubarb Punch

8 cups chopped rhubarb	2 cups boiling water
8 cups water	2 cups pineapple juice
2 cups sugar	1/4 cup lemon juice
3 T. strawberry gelatin	Lemon-lime soda

In large saucepan, bring rhubarb and water to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 10 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. In a large bowl, combine sugar, gelatin and boiling water until dissolved. Add pineapple and lemon juices. Stir in rhubarb liquid; chill. Just before serving, add soda or ginger ale as desired.

Joyce Romkema, Springfield, S.D.

Jalapeño/Bacon Poppers

10 jalapeños	1-1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1/2 tsp. garlic powder	1/2 lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/2 tsp. salt	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/4 tsp. pepper	
1/4 cup sliced green onions	

Slice each jalapeño in half lengthwise and use spoon to remove seeds and veins. Combine garlic powder, salt, pepper, green onions, Cheddar cheese, bacon and cream cheese. Spoon the mixture evenly in jalapeños and place on baking sheet. Bake at 400°F. for 20 minutes or until jalapeños are tender. Very flavorful but not hot to taste.

Tina Haug, Pierre, S.D.

Spring Radish-Onion Spread

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	1/4 tsp. paprika
1/4 cup butter, softened	1 cup shredded radishes
1/2 tsp. celery salt	1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	Assorted crackers, chips or fresh veggies

Combine first 5 ingredients. Fold in radishes and onions. Cover and chill before serving.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, S.D.

Jalapeño Cheddar Biscuits

2 cups flour	1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 T. baking powder	2 green onions, thinly sliced
1 tsp. baking soda	Honey Butter:
2 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Jalapeño Pepper, Ground	1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup buttermilk	3 T. honey
1/2 cup (1 stick) cold butter, cut into chunks	

For the biscuits, mix flour, baking powder, baking soda and jalapeño pepper in large bowl. Cut in butter with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add buttermilk; stir to form a soft dough. Stir in cheese and green onions. Drop dough by rounded 1/4 cupfuls about 2 inches apart onto parchment paper-lined baking sheet, forming 12 biscuits. Bake at 375°F. for 18 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack. Meanwhile, for the honey butter, mix butter and honey in small bowl until smooth. Serve with biscuits. Makes 12 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 270, Total Fat 18g, Fiber 1g, Cholesterol 51mg, Sodium 414mg, Carbohydrates 22g, Protein 5g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Mocha Freeze

2 cups vanilla ice cream, softened	1 T. chocolate syrup
1/4 cup cold strong coffee	1/2 cup crushed ice

In blender, combine all ingredients. Cover; blend until of desired consistency. Pour into glasses and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Becki Hauser, Tripp, S.D.

Please send your favorite casserole, dairy or dessert recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and co-op name.

Sign Up for Auto Pay and Win \$50

Auto Pay

Are you interested in making your life easier and maybe putting some extra cash in your pocket? Sounds like a dream, right? Make this dream a reality by signing up for auto pay for your electric bill and you will be entered into a drawing to receive \$50!

With the automatic bill payment plan, you won't have to spend time writing or mailing checks. Plus, your bill will be paid on time, even when you are on vacation. Actually, paying your utility bill won't take any time at all! Each month, the amount due for your electric bill will be paid automatically from your checking/savings account or credit or debit card. The payment will be listed on your monthly account statement and on your next bill from Oahe Electric.

Members who have already discovered how easy auto pay is have already been entered in to a separate drawing for a chance to win \$50! No additional work required! This is just our way of saying thank you for participating in the program.

SmartHub and Online Bill Pay

You can also view and pay your bill online the day they are generated. Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc members have the opportunity to view their bills online. Subscribers are able to sign up to receive an e-statement and access our new account manage-

ment tool by going to our website – www.oaheelectric.com, clicking on the Payment Options box and then on the SmartHub link. Once you have registered as a new user, you can easily access your account. The SmartHub option offers features such as viewing previous month's bills, downloading billing data, payment history and paying your bill via credit card. You can also sign up for automatic payments on SmartHub. You will still receive a paper statement unless you request otherwise. When the new bills are calculated for the month (around the 10th), you will receive notification via e-mail that your new account information is available online.

Budget Billing

Discover the convenience of having 12 equal monthly payments for your electric bill. The sign-up months for budget billing are May and June. If you would like more information, would like to sign up or if you would like to have your budget bill amount calculated, please call the office at 1-800-640-6243.

Auto Pay, SmartHub/Online Bill Pay and Budget Billing are just a few ways to make bill paying more convenient – use them together or separately. Just fill out the form below and return it to Oahe Electric, PO Box 216, Blunt, S.D., 57522 by May 22, 2020, to have your electric bill deducted from your checking or savings account and for your chance to win \$50!

(Please Print)

Since your electric bill will vary in amount, Oahe Electric will send you a statement showing the amount to be deducted from your account. The deduction will occur on the 20th of each month or the closest business day if the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday. Automatic bill payments will commence the month following receipt of this form.

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Member Account Number(s) _____

(List all account numbers you want paid automatically)

Please deduct my Automatic Bill Payment from my:

Checking Account (or) Savings Account (or) Credit/Debit Card

Be sure to include a voided check with this form.

Bank Account Number _____

Bank Name _____

Bank Address _____

Bank Phone Number _____

Bank Routing Number _____

OR

Type of Card Used for Payment: Mastercard (or) Visa (or) Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

I hereby authorize Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. to deduct my utility payment(s) from the checking/ savings account or Credit/Debit card listed above. I understand if at any time I wish to discontinue this service, I will notify Oahe Electric.

Signature _____

Date _____

Co-op Connections Card			
			
Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors			
Automotive			
Graham Tire Company	605-224-8643	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on regularly priced service work. Cannot be combined with any other offer.
Lamb Motor Company	800-952-2222	Onida	Receive a free alignment check with the purchase of 4 new tires.
Napa Auto and Truck Parts/Farnam's Genuine Parts, Inc.	605-224-8624	Pierre	Receive 10-50% off retail price.
Food/Convenience Store			
Branding Iron Bistro	605-494-3333	Pierre	Enjoy \$1 off your order. Limit one per visit.
Gator's Pizza Pasta and Subs	605-224-6262	Pierre	Purchase any large pizza at regular price and receive a FREE order of breadsticks.
Grey Goose Store	605-945-0794	Pierre	Receive a free 20 oz. fountain soda or coffee with the minimum of a \$30 gas or diesel purchase.
The Corner	605-258-2400	Onida	Buy one breakfast sandwich at regular price, get second half off.
Health/Fitness and Beauty			
Anytime Fitness	605-224-4011	Pierre	Receive a free two-week mini-membership.
Home/Garden			
The Pink Petal	605-224-1775	Pierre	10% discount on cash and carry purchases - fresh floral only.
Slumberland Furniture	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
Services			
Airtech Heating and Cooling	605-945-0160	Pierre	\$50 discount on any new heat pump OR \$15 discount on any service call
Apryl's Animal House	605-224-9203	Pierre	10% off a grooming or boarding
Inman's Water Technologies	605-224-5111	Pierre	Receive a 15% discount on the rental price of a water softener and/or reverse osmosis drinking water system by paying a year in advance. Receive 10% off of the purchase price of a new Water Softener or reverse osmosis drinking water system when you mention this ad. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discounts/specials.
Olson Plumbing Inc.	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
Small Engine House	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor
Sports/Recreation			
Teton River Traders Gun Shop LLC	605-224-1371	Ft. Pierre	2% discount. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discount.
Retail			
Fastenal	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products

Winner of Question of the Month

The Question of the Month winners for the February 2020 publication were Dayton and Jodi Bothwell.

They correctly submitted an answer for, "Name two things Oahe Electric gives rebates for." The correct answers were electric heating systems, lighting and water heaters.

Congratulations for providing the correct answer! They received an insulated grocery tote full of great prizes!



"Thank you, Oahe Electric, for the bag of goodies we won from your question of the month. We also want to thank you for the wonderful service you've given us over the years. Our grandsons, Nick, Bryson and Trey, are holding the bag."

Question of the Month!

This month's question is:

When and where is the first scheduled Member Appreciation Supper?

Please submit your answer via e-mail to oahe@oaheelectric.com with the subject line reading: Question of the Month. A winner will be chosen and surprise gift will be sent to them.

Like Us! 

You can now keep in touch with your cooperative on Facebook!



COOPERATIVE CYBERSECURITY

Kaley Lockwood

NRECA

Digital technologies and smart devices are facilitating greater information sharing by allowing people (and devices) to more efficiently communicate with each other. Internet-connected devices not only better enable us to stay in touch with loved ones, they simplify and streamline our lives by communicating with each other.

But greater connectivity comes with a cost.

Addressing the persistent and evolving reality of cyber threats is important for individuals and organizations alike. As people become increasingly interconnected and reliant on digital technologies, there are more opportunities for cyber threats that need to be addressed.

To this end, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) launched RC3, the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities program, to help electric cooperatives build stronger cybersecurity programs. With funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, RC3 is developing tools to help cooperatives develop a culture of cybersecurity.

Electric cooperatives, large and small, are investing time and

resources to build stronger cyber defenses and increase their resiliency to cyberattacks. As co-ops ramp up capabilities in the beneficial use of digital technologies, they are integrating best practices to safeguard consumer data and grid operations from cyberattacks.

Electric co-ops are responding to the challenge, but are you? Cybercrime affects everyone – organizations, businesses and even individuals. Taking steps to protect your home network and devices from cyberattacks now will save you time and money in the long run.

Here are a few tips to beef up your personal cybersecurity:

- Make sure you have antivirus software installed on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
- Don't send e-mails containing personal information, like your date of birth or Social Security Number, because that increases opportunities for mal-actors to steal your identify. Be careful when entering a credit card number into a website – if you do, make sure that it's a secure website. You can tell if it's secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."

- Attachments or links in an email can contain malware that can infect your computer. Never open an e-mail attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend.)
- Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website for security tips on how to keep children safe online (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002>).

- Always use a different password for each account. Stick to longer passwords that include a combination of numbers, special characters, with both lowercase and capital letters.

Kaley Lockwood writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.

Everyone plays a role in their organization's online safety and security, whether that be at home, school or work. You are the first line of defense.

Think Before You Click

- Always hover over a link first to be sure it is safe.
- Report suspicious emails or emails from an unknown sender to your spam filter and delete them from your inbox.



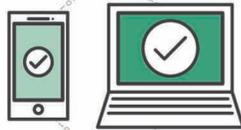
Defend Your Computer

- The best defense against viruses, malware and other online threats is keeping your equipment up to date.
- Work with our IT staff (or provider) to keep your software, including your web browser, and operating systems current.



Lockdown Your Log-in

- Create long and unique passwords. Use familiar phrases or song lyrics you'll remember.
- When possible, use 2-factor authentication as a second layer of defense.
- Change passwords regularly, and do not share them.



Protect Sensitive Information

- Use encryption to protect sensitive data.
- Limit the spread of any attack by only accessing files and folders you need.
- Do not put confidential information in emails, or instant and text messages.



Watch for Red Flags to Identify Potential Phish Attacks

- Phishing attempts seek to steal or compromise data and will often mimic a known sender.

Look for red flags:

1. the email is unexpected;
2. there is a sense of urgency conveyed;
3. there is an offer that seems too good to be true; and/or
4. there are typos and misspellings.



Practice Good Cyber Hygiene On the Go

- Treat all public Wi-Fi networks as a security risk, and don't make financial or other sensitive transactions over public networks.



Want more tips to improve your cyber hygiene?
Visit www.staysafeonline.org.

Small Change That Changes Lives

Several years ago, Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., implemented a program called Operation Round Up®. Operation Round Up® is just what the name implies. Each month, Oahe Electric Cooperative simply “rounds up” the electric bills of voluntarily participating consumers to the next highest dollar. The funds collected are then used to address charitable community needs, whether it is for an individual that may have experienced a personal tragedy, or an organization funding a special project. Since the program’s first disbursement in 2009, the program has distributed over \$100,000.

All Operation Round Up® donations are placed in a trust and are administered by an independent Board of Trustees. The board is made up of community leaders who serve on a voluntary basis. The board evaluates all requests for funds, determines who will receive funding and how all Operation Round Up® monies will be distributed. The region served by the Trust is primarily the electrical area served by Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., including Hughes and Sully counties. The most gratifying thing about Operation Round Up® is that it is an extension of the concept of neighbor helping neighbor that built our electric cooperative.

These easy-to-complete applications for funding are currently available and may be picked up at the office of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Blunt, S.D., or can be requested by phone at 605-962-6243. Applications can also be found on our website at www.oaheelectric.com. All applications are due by April 30, 2020. Completed applications may be mailed to: Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522. Applications may also be faxed to: 605-962-6306. After the deadline, the Board of Trustees will assemble and allocate the funds to those they feel are in the most need.

Save the Date Member Appreciation Supper

Oahe Electric’s board of directors and employees invite you to join us for a member appreciation supper! We will be gathering at the Grey Goose Social Club on Thursday, April 9, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. We will be serving your choice of a hamburger or hot dog, chips and a drink. All members are invited to come and enjoy the food, fun and company.



Dates for member appreciation suppers in the Onida and Blunt areas are to be determined.

Supporting Our Schools

In February, Oahe Electric along with cooperatives throughout the state, submitted their reports to the South Dakota Department of Revenue for our kilowatt hour tax liability.

At the beginning of June, payment will be made to each county’s treasurer’s office, which will then be forwarded directly on to the school districts. ABO Schools, Pierre School District and the Highmore-Harrold School will receive more than \$393,000 in tax revenue from Oahe Electric and its power suppliers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative.

Commitment to Community – just another important aspect that sets your electric cooperative apart.

National Lineman Appreciation Day

Monday, April 13, is National Lineman Appreciation Day! Tornadoes, ice storms and other devastating natural disasters certainly put the spotlight on the nation’s power lineworkers. We’re grateful to the courageous, hardworking men and women who work tirelessly to restore service following these difficult events as well as their daily work to keep power flowing. Oahe Electric is proud to recognize the dedication and commitment of our linemen! #ThankALineman



Back row, left to right: Journeyman linemen Brady Gaer and Duane Hjelm and Line Foreman Mark Bruning. Front row, left to right: Journeyman linemen Tyler Arbach, Tory Smith and Dan Lettau.

Stay in the Know



Matt Eldridge

Operations Manager
meldridge@oaheelectric.com

At Oahe Electric, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our consumer-members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. And while we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through phone messages or email, if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Oahe Electric has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by Oahe Electric to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by calling the office at 1-800-640-6243. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.

If you need help registering your account on the SmartHub website or saving your credit card information for the Auto Pay Program, please contact our office.



ELECTRICITY: A POWER-FULL VALUE

From individuals and families to farms, businesses and manufacturing facilities, we all depend on electricity to power our daily lives. Plus, electricity remains a great value, with minimal cost increases over the years compared to other common expenses.

RE-ENERGIZING RURAL



RESOLVE TO SAVE ENERGY

Make a home energy resolution and reap the benefits all year long!

Three easy ways to save energy:

1

Install a programmable thermostat.

You could save an estimated \$180 annually!



2

Ditch incandescents. Did you know incandescent bulbs release 90% of their energy as heat? Use LEDs instead.



3

Reduce energy used for water heating. Lower your water heater's temp and consider installing low-flow showerheads.



Source: energy.gov

Are You Flood Ready?

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Wisdom has it that April showers bring May flowers, but in much of South Dakota, April showers may bring more water woes to areas that exited 2019 with saturated soils.

In late February, the National Weather Service issued its spring flood outlook for rivers and streams in eastern South Dakota, portions of central South Dakota, and portions of west central Minnesota.

“Due to the very wet conditions across the area late last summer and into last fall, the chances for minor, moderate, or major flooding are above normal across the eastern and central parts of the area, with lesser chances across the west,” the NWS office in Aberdeen wrote in its release.

Of the 68 river gauges located in South Dakota, 37 show more than 50 percent chance of minor, moderate or major flooding in April and May. The areas shown at risk are in central and eastern South Dakota along the James, Big Sioux, Vermillion and White rivers. (View the map at https://water.weather.gov/ahps/region_long_range.php?state=sd&percent=50)

The flood threat through this spring, both in location and severity, will be determined by future rain or snowfall, and how fast the melting of snowpack occurs. In late February, the 90-day outlook through the end of May contained no strong indication of any abnormally warm/cold or moist/dry trends.

The chances for river flooding are near to above normal, with well above normal chances for the James River and Big Sioux River basins.

There is a wide range of snow depths across the area. Most areas west of the Missouri River have a trace to 2 inches, while east of the James River Valley is a thicker snow pack generally ranging from 8 to 20 inches.

With wet conditions last fall heading into the freeze-up, the soils were fairly well saturated as they froze, which will make them much more impervious to soaking up much of the snow melt as it occurs.



Flooding in southeastern South Dakota last fall, which followed spring flooding, inundated roads and farmland.

Flooding 411

Flooding is the nation’s most common natural disaster. Flooding can happen in every U.S. state and territory. However, all floods are not alike. Some can develop slowly during an extended period of rain, or in a warming trend following a heavy snow. Others, such as flash floods, can occur quickly, even without any visible signs of rain. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even a very small stream or dry creek bed can overflow and create flooding.

Prepare for Flooding

- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- Consider installing “check valves” to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Property insurance does not typically cover flood damage. Talk to your insurance provider about your policy and consider if you need additional coverage.
- Get a kit of emergency supplies and prepare a portable kit in case you have to evacuate.
- Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a thunderstorm hazard, including understanding the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and a severe thunderstorm warning.
- A flood watch or flash flood warning means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood in your area.

Be Prepared to Evacuate

- If time allows, bring in outside furniture and move your

3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR FLASH FLOOD SAFETY

During a flood, water levels and the rate at which the water is flowing can quickly change. Remain aware and monitor local radio and television.



[weather.gov/flood](https://www.weather.gov/flood)

1 GET TO HIGHER GROUND

Get out of the areas subject to flooding

2 DO NOT DRIVE INTO WATER

Do NOT drive or walk into flooded areas. It only takes 6" of water to knock you off your feet.

3 STAY INFORMED

Monitor local radar, television, weather radio, internet or social media for updates.

valuables to higher places in your home. Unplug electrical appliances, moving them to higher levels, if possible. However, do not touch an electric appliance if you are wet or standing in water.

- If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to evacuate.
- A flood warning means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate do so immediately.
- A flash flood warning means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately; do not wait for instructions.
- Visit NOAA Watch for more weather-related information.

Plan to Evacuate

- Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate.
- If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter.
- If you have a car, keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.

- Become familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.
- Take your emergency supply kit.
- Lock the door behind you.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for information.
- Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.
- Call or email the "out-of-state" contact in your family communications plan.
- Tell them where you are going.
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- Do not walk through moving water, if possible. Look for areas where the water is not moving. What might seem like a small amount of moving water can easily knock you down.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If your vehicle becomes surrounded by rising water, get out quickly and move to higher ground, if possible.

Stay Informed

- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However,

you should listen to NOAA Weather Radio, watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.

- If it has been raining hard for several hours or if it has been raining steadily for days there may be the potential for flooding. Use common sense and available information. If water is rising quickly or you see a moving wall of mud or debris, immediately move to higher ground.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible. The water may be contaminated or electrically charged. However, should you find yourself trapped in your vehicle in rising water get out immediately and seek higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines to avoid the risk of electric shock or electrocution.
- Do not return to your home until local authorities say it is safe. Even after flood waters recede, roads may be weakened and could collapse. Buildings may be unstable, and drinking water may be contaminated.
- Use common sense and exercise caution.

For more information on how you can be prepared for a flood, visit <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>.



White loose-fill fiberglass insulation is being blown into an attic. It must be installed properly to attain the desired R-value per inch thickness.

ENERGY TAX CREDITS

Tax Credits May Be Available for Your Projects

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

According to ENERGY STAR®’s website, the Non-Business Energy Property Tax Credits have been retroactively extended from Dec. 31, 2017, through Dec. 31, 2020.

The tax credit is 10 percent of the cost up to \$500 or a specific amount between \$50 and \$300, depending on the qualifying upgrade.

The credits expire Dec. 31, 2020, and must be made to an existing home and your principal residence.

The tax credits for residential renewable energy products are also still available through Dec. 31, 2021. This tax credit provides:

- 30 percent for systems placed in service by Dec. 31, 2019;
- 26 percent for systems placed in service after Dec. 31, 2019, and before Jan. 1, 2021;
- 22 percent for systems placed in service after Dec. 31, 2020 and before Jan. 1, 2022.

There are tax credits for certain:

- Geothermal Heat Pumps
- Small wind turbines (residential)
- Solar Energy Systems (including solar water heaters)
- Fuel Cells

The tax credit for builders of energy efficient homes and tax deductions for energy efficient commercial buildings have also been retroactively extended, through Dec. 31, 2020.



Residential Energy Property Costs:

Air-Source Heat Pumps

Heat pumps that are ENERGY STAR® certified meet the requirements for this tax credit.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

Requirements

- Split Systems:
 - HSPF \geq 8.5
 - EER \geq 12.5
 - SEER \geq 15
- Package systems:
 - HSPF \geq 8
 - EER \geq 12
 - SEER \geq 14

Central Air Conditioning

Air conditioners recognized as ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient meet the requirements for this tax credit. To verify tax credit eligibility, ask your HVAC contractor to provide the Manufacturer Certification Statement for the equipment you plan to purchase.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

Requirements

- Split Systems:
 - SEER \geq 16

- EER \geq 13

Package systems:

- SEER \geq 14
- EER \geq 12

Electric Heat Pump Water Heater

Most ENERGY STAR certified water heaters meet the requirements of this tax credit. Water heaters account for 12 percent of the energy consumed in your home.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

Requirements

- Energy factor \geq 2.2

Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan

An Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan is an efficient fan, or blower motor which blows the air that your furnace heats up through the duct system.

Tax Credit Amount: \$50

Requirements

Must use no more than 2 percent of the furnace's total energy.

Qualified Energy Efficiency Improvements:

Please note: Tax credit DOES NOT INCLUDE INSTALLATION for the following products.

Insulation

Adding adequate insulation is one of the most cost-effective home improvements that you can do.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500 (not including installation)

Requirements

- Typical bulk insulation products can qualify, such as batts, rolls, blow-in fibers, rigid boards, expanding spray, and pour-in-place.
- Products that air seal (reduce air

leaks) can also qualify, as long as they come with a Manufacturer's Certification Statement, including:

- Weather stripping
- Spray foam in a can, designed to air seal
- Caulk designed to air seal
- House wrap

NOTE: Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.

Roofs: Metal and Asphalt

This tax credit is for ENERGY STAR certified metal and asphalt roofs with pigmented coatings or cooling granules designed to reduce heat gain. Certified roof products reflect more of the sun's rays, which can lower roof surface temperature by up to 100° F, decreasing the amount of heat transferred into your home.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500 (Not including installation.)

Requirements

- "Metal roofs with appropriate pigmented coatings" and "asphalt roofs with appropriate cooling granules" that also meet ENERGY STAR requirements.

NOTE: Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.

Windows, Doors and Skylights

Windows, doors and skylights that earn the ENERGY STAR save energy, improve comfort and help protect the environment.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500, but windows are capped at \$200. (Not including installation)

Requirements

- Must be ENERGY STAR certified.
- You do not have to replace all the windows/doors/skylights in your home to qualify. And it doesn't need to be a replacement either - installing a new window where there wasn't one previously (like in an addition) qualifies.

NOTE: Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.



Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money.

Photo Credit: Certainteed

Photo Credit: Rare Form Properties

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

March 19-21

SD State A High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-224-9261

March 19-21

SD State AA High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261

March 19-21

SD State B High School Boys Basketball Tournament, Barnett Center, Aberdeen, SD, 605-224-9261

March 20-21, 27-28

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

March 21-22

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Gun Show, Gun Show, Codington County Ag Building, Watertown, SD, 701-361-9215

March 28

Annual Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

March 28

SD High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-224-9261

April 3-4

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876 or 800-999-1876

**March 18,
June 11,
Aug. 13 and
Oct. 8**

Kids Mystery Dinner Theater, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700



Photo courtesy: Children's Museum of S.D.

April 4-5

Zonta Spring Vendor & Craft Event, Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday Noon to 4 p.m., Northridge Plaza Mall, Pierre, SD, Contact Brenda Hemmelman at 605-222-1403, bkstand@pie.midco.net

April 11

Eggstravaganza, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

April 17-19

First Dakota Classic Archery Tournament, Yankton, SD, 605-260-9282

April 18

Black Hills Gold & Treasure Show, Rapid City, SD

April 24-26

35th Annual Korkow Ranch Rodeo School, Blunt, SD, Contact Jim Korkow at 605-224-5607

May 5-6

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

May 29-30

South Dakota Regional Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nick Brady at 605-978-6924

June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:
■ Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:
■ Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868
■ Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

June 16-21

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

June 25-27

31st Annual Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, Contact Steve Masat at 605-460-0197 or Dennis Schilling at 605-354-2867, redpowerroundup2020.com

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.