

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Crazy about Curling

Win or lose, there's  
no bad curling  
Pages 8-9

Saddle making  
for the pros  
Pages 12-13

Many curling enthusiasts  
contend the world would  
be a more peaceful place if  
everyone "threw the stone."

# OAHE MEMBERS AND LOCALLY SITED GENERATION



**Jordan Lamb**  
jlamb@  
oaheelectric.com

Many of our members have received inquiries about potential siting of generation on their property. While renewable energy is affordable to install and generate power for our members, there are both pros and cons that must be accounted for and it is important that our members fully understand both sides of this conundrum.

When a renewable project is sited in Oahe Territory, there are several benefits that Oahe Members and local communities receive. A recent wind installation provided both short term jobs in concrete, electrical and road infrastructure. Long term jobs for the area were also provided in plant maintenance and long term generator plant managers to ensure safe and efficient delivery of the renewable energy. These dollars stay in local communities and tend to support local businesses.

Generator installations also are required to pay several forms of taxes to both local and state agencies related to construction fees in permitting, property tax and generation tax to name a few. If the project attained a lease agreement with a local farmer or land owner, those dollars are also kept locally.

In the intermediate ground lies transmission congestion. When a new project is sited, it often cannot attain firm transmission service. This means that anytime transmission lines are at full capacity, it can affect the price of the generation output. Some times this price may be very cheap, even negative, which means that the generator owner pays the off-taker to take the electricity. Other times this may drive up the price, similar to what we saw last February, to over \$1-2 per kWh (our residential rate is 9 cents/kWh today). Depending on where the congestion occurs, it could benefit or hurt Oahe Members

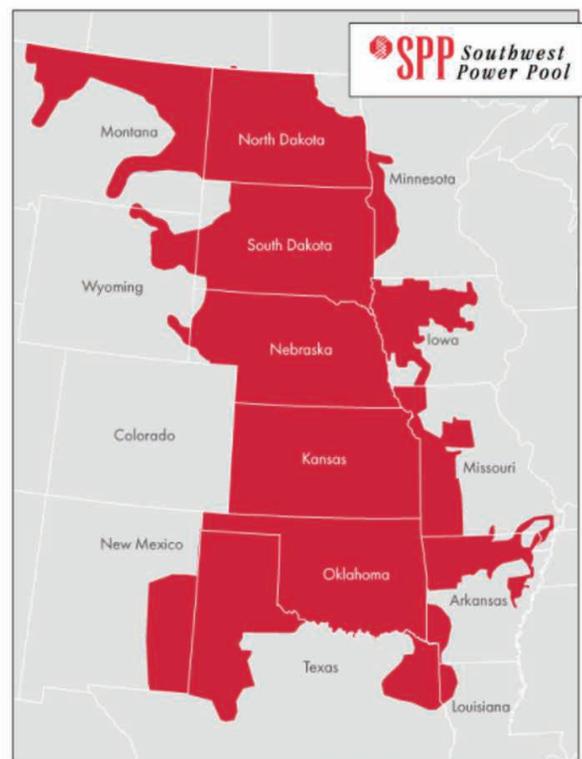
On the other side of this fence lies some obvious and not so obvious implications. Many local members do not like the appearance of renewable projects, the most often mentioned being wind. Generator installations can have long term negative impacts on property valuation due to this. There is also concern for long term cleanup requirements. Typical renewable projects have in contract to clean up after the end of life, but there is concern if an entity went bankrupt prior to the facility end of life that there would be no clean up efforts to return ground to its prior condition.

The more complex issue is related to transmission required to outlet new generation. As part of Southwest Power Pool (SPP), load customers, in our case Oahe Members, pay for transmission within a given zone. If a transmission line goes through our zone or service area, our members pay for a por-

tion of that line. SPP encompasses the Midwest (see graphic below).

Recently, there has been a push from Washington, D.C., to site renewable wind in the wind rich Midwest and build transmission to supply this generation to the generation short areas along the East and West coastlines. The D.C. argument here is that these generators sited in the Midwest are similar to what I noted earlier above. The issue here is that the local area load pays for the generation. Generation we currently do not have enough load for. Essentially, we are paying for transmission outlets to serve coastal areas, areas short on generation, and coastal areas should be paying for this transmission, not Oahe Members. Current SPP tariff and common Regional Transmission Organization tariffs require local load to pay for new generation generally in the entire United States.

While renewables can bring affordable priced power that puts downward pressure on Oahe rates, we must be cautious to identify issues and determine upfront where the construction costs ultimately are pinned. Oahe, East River and Basin Electric Cooperatives have voiced our concerns and continue to evaluate options moving forward with our members as our #1 priority.



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

#### Board of Directors:

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605.962.6207

Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary  
605.215.6758

Ryan Noyes – Treasurer  
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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.

## Oahe Electric Now Accepting Lineman's Scholarship Applications

Oahe Electric Cooperative is offering a **\$1,000** scholarship for a full-time student registered or planning to register in a power line construction and maintenance program.

The purpose of this scholarship is to emphasize and support the education of future power line workers in South Dakota. Oahe Electric has committed to providing funds for financial assistance to students

enrolled in power line maintenance programs with the hopes that graduates of that program will pursue a career with rural electric cooperatives in the area.

Applicants for the scholarship must be a member or a member dependent of Oahe Electric OR a student from the Hughes or Sully County areas. Applications for the 2022-2023 academic year are being accepted until **Feb. 11, 2022**.

## Oahe Electric Now Accepting Applications for 2022 Scholarships

Oahe Electric, in conjunction with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is offering **one \$2,000** college scholarship to a lucky dependent of an Oahe Electric member(s). In addition to this scholarship, Oahe Electric is offering **four \$1,000** college scholarships. The scholarship program recognizes and encourages the academic achievements of students in our region. It also serves as an investment in the economic future of rural areas.

Applicants for the scholarships must be a U.S. citizen and a dependent of Oahe Electric members.

Applicants also must be students enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

The scholarship recipients are chosen based on a combination of their written essay, SAT/ACT scores, overall grade-point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals and a written recommendation by a third party. Applicants for the 2022-2023 academic year are being accepted until **Feb. 11, 2022**.

For more information regarding these scholarships, contact Samantha at Oahe Electric in Blunt at 1-800-640-6243 or [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com). Applications can also be downloaded by visiting our website at [www.oaheelectric.com](http://www.oaheelectric.com).

## MEMBER THANK YOU

Oahe Electric,

Thank you for selecting me for the \$500 scholarship. It will go to use towards my tuition.

Sincerely,  
Regan Bollweg

# Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

Though they may make for a pretty seasonal backdrop, snow and ice can complicate even modest travel plans. It's unsafe to drive when visibility is vastly reduced or when you can't fully control your car. According to AAA, wintry weather and its byproduct - hazardous road conditions - are a factor in nearly a half-million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths each year. With those figures in mind, here are some tips to minimize the risk to yourself and other motorists during winter weather.

**Don't drive unless you must.** It really isn't worth the risk to your safety and that of others to venture out onto potentially unsafe roads for any circumstance that isn't urgent. Pay attention to weather reports so you can run any time-sensitive errands and stock up on supplies before adverse conditions arrive. If you must drive to work, that's one thing. But don't tempt fate if you can help it.

**If you have to drive, eliminate distractions.** Keep your phone out of reach or set it to airplane mode - a good practice year-round but especially important when roads are dicey.

**Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear** in your car, including water, nonperishable food, warm clothing, a flashlight, glass scraper, blankets and medications.

**Before you set out,** alert others to your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

**Make sure your tires are** properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

**Keep your gas tank** at least half full to prevent a frozen fuel line, which could leave you stranded.

**Don't use cruise control** when driving on any slippery surface.

**Drive slowly.** Lower your speed to counteract the reduced traction that accompanies snow and ice. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly can help avoid skids. Since it takes longer to slow down on icy roads, take your time to slow down for a stop sign or light.

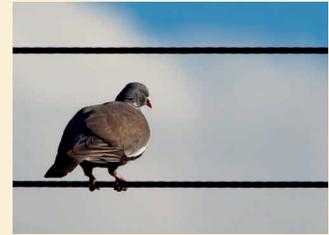
**A final note for winter driving:** Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area such as a garage. Exercise caution and good judgment to stay safe as you negotiate whatever conditions winter brings this year.

## POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

### TRUE OR FALSE?

*Power lines are insulated for contact.*

**False.** While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

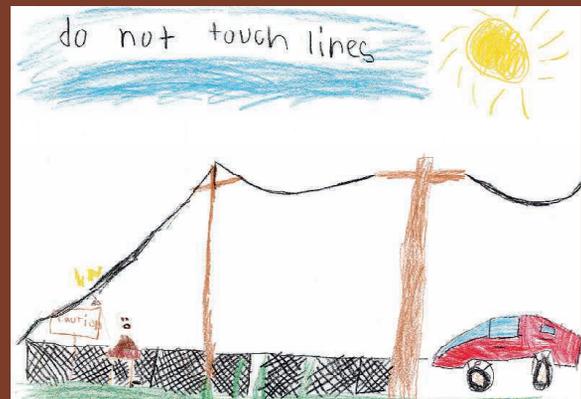


*I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.*

**True.** You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is space. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

*I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.*

**True.** Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space - and lots of it - is the best insulator.



## Don't touch power lines

### Luke Walden

Luke Walden reminds co-op members that it's important to never touch power lines under any conditions. Luke is from Brandon, where he and his parents Blake and Jennifer are all members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



# BRUNCH TIME!

## CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

Ingredients:  
 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped  
 6 eggs  
 1 cup milk  
 1 tablespoon McCormick® Oregano Leaves  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Coarse Ground Black Pepper  
 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese  
 1 cup crumbled feta cheese  
 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped  
 1 tablespoon oil  
 1 package (20 oz) refrigerated shredded hash browns  
 3 tbsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

### METHOD

Cook and stir sausage in large skillet on medium heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add onion and bell pepper; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Set aside. Beat eggs in large bowl with wire whisk. Add milk, oregano, salt and pepper; mix well. Add sausage mixture, cheeses and tomatoes; mix well. Set aside. Pour oil into same skillet, swirling to coat the pan. Spread hash browns in bottom and up sides of pan. Pour egg mixture over potatoes. Cover. Cook on medium heat 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set.

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

Please send your favorite seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## BRUNCH EGG BAKE

Ingredients:  
 12 slices, bread, crusts removed  
 2 cups diced ham or bacon, crisp and chopped  
 1 - 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained  
 1 green pepper, chopped  
 1 onion, chopped  
 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded  
 5 eggs  
 2-1/2 cups milk  
 salt and pepper  
 paprika

### METHOD

Butter six slices of bread and put face down in 9 x 13 inch pan, lightly sprayed with cooking spray. Cover the bread with the ham, mushrooms, green pepper, onion and cheese. Dice the remaining bread and spread over the top. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper and pour over the top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

## COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:  
 1 cup quick oats  
 1 cup old fashioned oats  
 1/2 cup raisins  
 1/3 cup brown sugar  
 1 tsp cinnamon  
 2 cup milk

### METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and let sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold. May add walnuts and apples or other fresh berries when serving, if desired.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg



**Valerie Marso**

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'Tis the season of cold weather, higher electric bills and empty houses. A couple of popular questions we get may seem very different but actually have similar answers:

1. Why is my bill so high?

2. What was the average for the people who lived here prior to us?

The simple answer? Personal living habits can have a huge impact on what your bill is. Now don't get me wrong, the temperature also plays a part in that if you have electric heat and actually even if you don't! When it is cold out, the difference between the temperature outside, and what you want the temperature to be inside is greater than what it is in the summertime. For example, even if it is 110 outside in July and you want it to be 65 in your house the difference your cooling system has to make up is only 45 degrees. In the wintertime, if it is -5 out and you want it to be 65 inside, the difference your heating system has to make up for is 70 degrees! This is also the explanation when people go south for a couple of months (or even a couple of weeks) and leave their thermostat on 55. If

it is cold here (which is generally why people go south for a while) there is a big temperature void to fill. Just because no one is there doesn't mean there won't be an electric bill. Also, in the wintertime people may be running tank heaters, plugging in vehicles among other variables that come along with the cold.

The easiest way to track what you use and how your living habits effect your electric bill is with SmartHub! You can see your daily usage and think about what changed to make your usage go up or down (ie - weather, running a dish washer or clothes dryer, plugging in a space heater, etc). Then it won't be a surprise when you open your bill either.

Some things you can't control (weather) but some things you definitely can. You choose how long and how often you shower, what your water heater thermostat is set to, what your heating/cooling thermostat is set to (did you get a programmable thermostat for Christmas?) How efficient are your appliances? Do you only run the dishwasher or washing machine with full loads? Do you turn off lights when you leave a room or your garage? Can you make your supper in a crockpot versus the oven?

All of these choices have an impact on your electric bill. For most people, the majority of your bill stems directly from usage/kWh. There is a portion that will always be there even if there is no usage which is referred to as a

facility charge. What is that, you ask? There is a cost to operate and maintain our electric system. Whether you use a lot or a little, the cost of getting power to your location remains the same and that is why there are two separate components - kWh charge to cover the amount of electricity consumed and a facility charge to cover basic costs of getting electric service to you. As is the case with everything, the cost of getting service to new consumers continues to increase and we do keep a close watch on these costs and do adjust our facility charge from time to time.

There are also other things that may impact your bill that are less apparent. Open south facing curtains and let that sunshine in! Seal up drafty windows and other leaks (gaps around chimneys, doors, recessed lights in insulated ceilings, etc).

So all the above factors answer question 1. What about question 2? As you have now learned, personal habits have a significant impact on your bill. Which is also why there is no such thing as average! You can take two of the same exact houses, put the same number of people in them, and end up with two completely different bills! Why? Personal living habits.

Please call us at 1.800.640.6243 if you have any questions regarding your electric bill, we are always happy to help you!

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

"How many board of trustee positions are open this year for the Operation Round Up® Board?"

Please submit your answer via email to [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com) with the subject line of "Question of the Month." A surprise gift will be sent to the winner!

## WINNER OF QUESTION OF THE MONTH

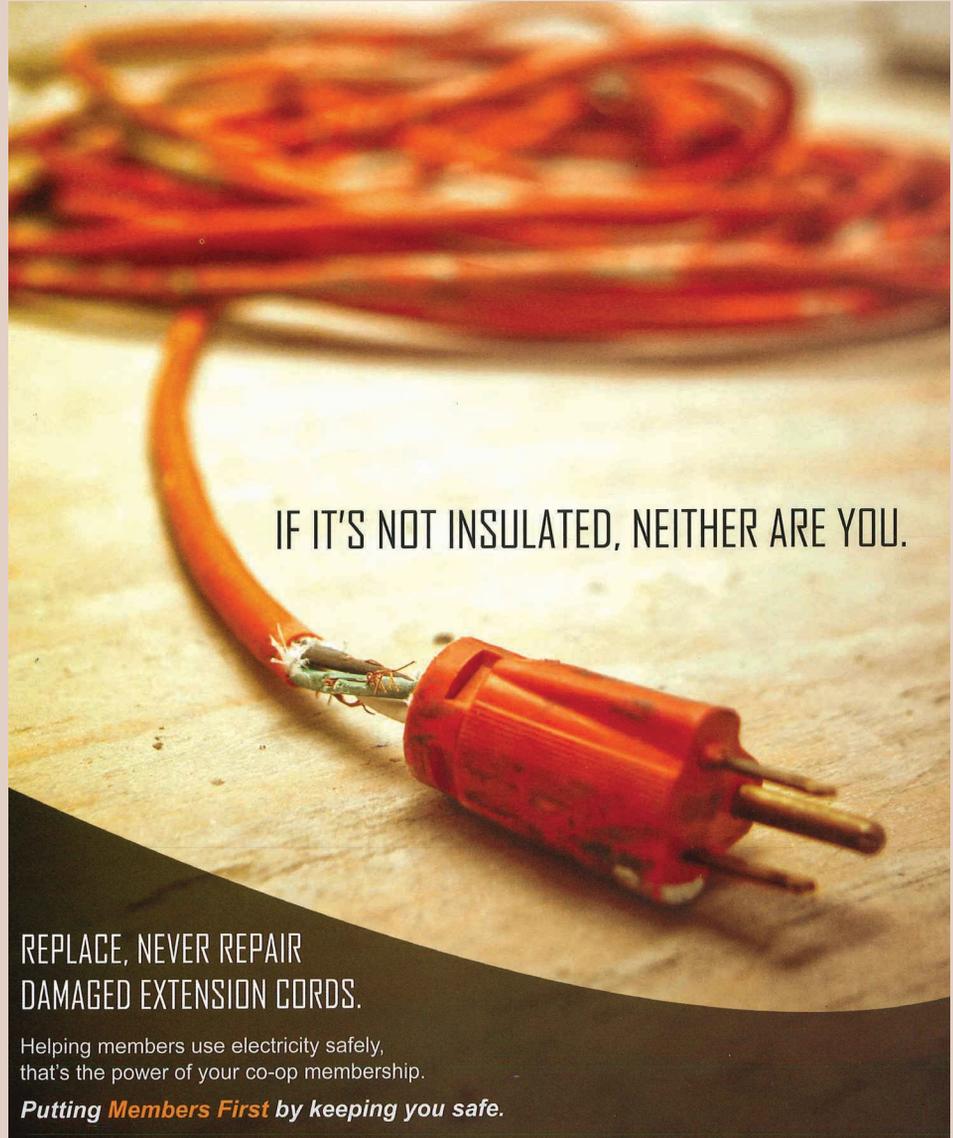
The Question of the Month winners for the December 2021 publication were Thomas and Irma LeFaive.

Congratulations and we hope you enjoyed your prizes!

## LIKE US!

You can now keep in touch with your cooperative on Facebook! We will share with you the latest news, events, power outage updates, energy efficiency tips, money-saving rebates, load management information, legislative alerts, safety tips and much more!

We hope you "like" Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. on Facebook!



IF IT'S NOT INSULATED, NEITHER ARE YOU.

REPLACE, NEVER REPAIR  
DAMAGED EXTENSION CORDS.

Helping members use electricity safely,  
that's the power of your co-op membership.

**Putting Members First** by keeping you safe.

### Statement of Non-Discrimination

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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



# STICKS AND STONES

Members of the Aberdeen Curling Club hold a public instructional session to teach both the young and old the finer points of their sport.

## Curling clubs seek to educate the public and spread the word about the joy of throwing stones

**Billy Gibson**

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

Looking for a sure-fire way to achieve permanent world peace and lasting harmony?

Make curling mandatory.

At least Bryan Rau thinks that's just the ticket to putting an end to international animosity. Rau serves on the board of the Aberdeen Curling Club and describes being hooked the moment he threw his first stone in competition eight years ago.

"When I touched that first stone it was like 10,000 volts going through me. I kicked out the hack and threw that stone down the ice and it was just incredible," he said. "I think if everybody curled, the whole world would be different. Everybody would get along. There's no bad curling. No matter where you play, whether you win or lose, it's all good curling. It's a game that's played with honor and pride. You don't have to be a jock or a talented athlete. It's a sport that's

made for everyone. I've seen people play from 8 to 85."

Bryan and his fellow board member, Steve Gascoigne, spent a recent afternoon in Gascoigne's garage taking in a documentary called "Sticks and Stones: Battle for the Soul of Curling." When they're not playing the game, they enjoy talking about it.

As for his role as the club's ice master, Gascoigne can wax eloquently about how to prepare the perfect sheet of competition ice. He describes the tedious and exacting process that involves various measures of zammung, scraping, mopping, pebbling (twice), watering and nipping.

And if you can't control your stone after Gascoigne and his crew have spent 45 minutes working their magic, more practice may be in order.

The job of a stone hitting its target largely falls on the shoulders of the skip. A typical four-member team includes the lead, second, vice skip and skip. Each player throws two 44-pound stones and the vice skip



Aberdeen Curling Club members Danny Wolfgram, John Hilton, Alex Wolfgram and John Peterson recently completed an "eight ender," which is often compared to a perfect game in baseball.

## Curling club contacts

**Sioux Falls Curling Club**  
605-271-7539  
www.scheelsiceplex.com

**Aberdeen Curling Club**  
605-228-1717  
www.curlaberdeen.com

**Rushmore Curling Club**  
605-484-4477  
www.rushmorecurling.org

**Yankton Curling Club**  
(605) 665-0229  
www.yanktonice.org

**MN Curling Association**  
www.mncurling.org



Many curling clubs have two common goals: dedicated ice and a desire to teach others the rules and techniques of their sport.

stands in when it's the skip's turn to throw. The direction of the stone's path can be altered by sweepers who brush the surface in a way that can make the stone lose speed, gain speed or curl left or right.

The last stone is called the hammer and can be used to earn points with a favorable position near "the button" or knock the opponent's stone out of the target area.

But beyond the technical aspects of the sport or tallying wins or losses, each of the four most active clubs across the state share the same goal of educating the public about the sport and getting younger folks hooked on curling.

Rau, for instance, is a long-time Scout master and is working with his local troop to get the kids involved. He and Gascoigne and other members of the club visit the Boys and Girls club, school groups and others to

teach youngsters how to play the sport, share their positive experiences and answer their questions.

The same spirit of advocacy is also found at the Yankton Curling Club, which was started last winter by Mike and Julianna Ford along with a small group of other enthusiasts.

Julianna serves as president of the group and fell in love with the sport when she was a high school student in her native Alberta. She describes failing to make the roster of the volleyball and basketball teams but eventually finding a home with the curling squad.

"Our gym class went to the local ice rink and I loved it," she recalled. "It was a lot more strategic than physical and it was something I could compete in."

She later moved to Sioux Falls, married Mike, and the two helped create the existing club in that city.

Several years later they moved to Yankton for Mike's work and soon started another club. The Yankton group lists about 45 members and is also heavily involved in growing the sport in their community.

"We're reaching out to schools, clubs and nursing homes," Julianna said. "There are handicapped leagues and elderly people can play by using a stick to throw the stone. It's a sport that's literally for everyone."

The Fords don't often find themselves on different sides of the ice, but when they do they try to keep the competitive fires closer to an ember than a raging flame.

So, bottom line...who's better?

"No comment," Julianna said, before commenting with a chuckle, "but I'm the one who went to Arena Nationals."

# Stay in the Know!



**Matt Eldridge**  
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. For example, if we are experiencing a widespread outage, we can call members in certain areas to see whether or not they have power, helping us to narrow down our search for whatever is causing the outage, in turn reducing the overall outage time.

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 a phone call or email, if we have your updated contact information.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. Emails are also used to notify registered members of co-op event details. 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 us at 1-800-640-6243 or emailing us at [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com). 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.

## SMALL CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

**What is Operation Round Up?** Operation Round Up® is just what the name implies: each month, Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. simply "rounds up" the electric bills of voluntarily participating members to the next highest dollar. For example, a member's monthly bill of \$132.68 would automatically be rounded up to \$133, with the additional 32 cents going to the Operation Round Up Fund.

**How do I participate?** Oahe Electric's Operation Round Up® program is an opt-out program – meaning that you are automatically enrolled, with nothing else needing done to participate! If you have not interested in donating, you can call the office at 1-800-640-6243 and request to be removed from the program.

**How much will it cost members?** The most a member can contribute is 99 cents per month x 12 months = \$11.88/year – this doesn't sound like much, but with this small change, thousands of dollars can be generated and will mean a big difference to the people and organi-

zations in our area.

**Where will the money go?** 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® funds will be distributed.

**Who is eligible for funds?** The funds are used to address charitable community needs, whether it is disaster relief for an individual, or an organization funding a special project. Since the program's first disbursement in 2009, the program has distributed over \$108,000. The region served by the fund is primarily the electrical area served by Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., including Hughes and Sully counties.

**How do I apply for funds?** The easy-to-complete applications for funding are currently available and can be requested by phone at 605-962-6243. Applica-

tions can also be found on our website at [www.oaheelectric.com](http://www.oaheelectric.com). All applications are due by **April 30, 2022**. Completed applications may be mailed to: Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522, faxed to: 605-962-6306, or emailed to: [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com). After the deadline, the Board of Trustees will meet and allocate the funds to those they feel are in the most need.

**How do I get involved?** There are currently two, five-year Board of Trustees position openings. Trustees normally have to commit one afternoon a year to review fund request applications in person, with the possibility of correspondence regarding emergency fund requests throughout the year. If you are interested in offering your time to this endeavor, please contact Samantha Irvine, Operation Round Up Coordinator, at 1.800.640.6243 or [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com).

Together, by giving a few cents each month, Oahe Electric members can make a big impact on life in our area!



# Before You Buy: Electric "Tankless" Water Heaters



**Russ Hohn**  
rhohn@  
oaheelectric.com

Conversations with Oahe Electric members this past month have caused me to draft this article. Like all articles on the internet; it must be true? Unfortunately, not so. Tankless water heaters, both gas and electric, have been around for a few years. However, the true facts on installation costs and operating costs are never mentioned. Whether the unit is purchased online or from a large retail store, these important questions are never discussed. Their selling point is "don't heat water unless you need it!"

The following information is relevant to standard electric water heaters in comparison to electric tankless water heaters. A household of four will normally have an electric water heater that is around fifty gallons. This unit has two heating elements, one on the upper part of the tank and one on the lower part of the tank. These heating elements are rated in watts, and each is normally 3,800 watts or four thousand watts. Standard operation for a standard electric water heater is that only one element "heats" at a time. Pay attention to the size of heating elements I just mentioned! These heating elements will shut off /on as needed to provide you with your hot water needs. A household with more people will normally have an electric water heater around eighty gallons. This unit will have two heating elements and will operate in the same manner. Only one element will heat at a time, again switching between upper and lower as needed. The most energy you can use at any given time is the wattage rating of your electric heating elements per hour. 4000-watt element is equal to 4 kWhs per hour x .09 cents per kWh = .36 cents per hour to operate and normally operate for 3 hours per day = \$1.08 x

30 days = \$32.40 for the month.

Let us look at the electric tankless water heater. A tankless unit that would replace a standard 50-gallon electric water heater will have a 27,000-watt heating element! A tankless unit that would replace a standard 80-gallon electric water heater will have a 31,000-watt heating element! I have personally seen these units cost \$2.60 per day. They use a tremendous amount of electricity when they work.

Now let us educate ourselves on the installation cost because no one mentioned this! In a standard house, you will have one electric breaker panel rated at two hundred amps. Many times, this panel is not large enough to handle the electric tankless unit, so you will have to install another 150- or 200-amp breaker panel just for the tankless unit. Also, when you install another breaker panel of this size, you will also have to install another secondary wire circuit from the electric meter to your home to energize the new breaker panel. Some electric companies have a different electric rate for people with tankless water heaters, costing them even more. This gets expensive, people!

Anyone, that calls me and asks questions regarding the tankless unit receives this for an answer, **DO NOT PURCHASE AN ELECTRIC TANKLESS WATER HEATER**. If your mind is set on a tankless water heater, please purchase a propane or natural gas unit! I know it sounds odd for me to promote something other than electric equipment. If it is not good for Oahe Electric and its membership, I will not support it.

Feel free to call or email rhohn@oaheelectric.com or 605-280-3375.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year and thank you for your patronage and support. God Bless!



# STILL IN THE SADDLE

At age 77, Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre is nearing the completion of his 2,000th saddle and has no plans to slow down anytime soon. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## Saddle-maker Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre delights in helping bronc riders bring home championship buckles and purses

**Billy Gibson**

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Dave Dahl will probably never win a hand model contest. Dahl's digits are gnarled, bent and puffy after nearly a half-century of hard labor producing bronc saddles for dozens of rodeo champions.

Dahl is quick to point out, however, that looks can be very deceiving: his mitts are as strong and dependable and productive as they've ever been, seasoned with decades of experience. At the age of 77, Dahl is still going strong creating saddles out of his shop in downtown Fort Pierre. Incredibly, he's still keeping his customary pace of hand-crafting nearly 60 high-

performance saddles a year.

"Somebody once said if your hands aren't moving, you ain't making money," Dahl chuckled.

During the last week of December, Dahl was busy dashing out his 56th saddle of 2021. That saddle, commissioned by a Canadian bronc riding champion, was No. 1,924 of Dahl's career. Yes, Dahl does keep count, stamping every saddle that leaves the shop. He's already anticipating reaching the 2,000 mark.

He's considering loaning that milestone saddle to Fort Pierre's Casey Tibbs Museum so that visitors can see the brand that's catapulted dozens of rodeo competitors to the top.

"There's actually two that are marked 1,000," Dahl said. Turns out that Glen

O'Neill ended up with the first one, but then Dahl's daughter Darcy Harper also received a commemorative version for roping events. Incidentally, No. 1,800 is displayed in the North Dakota Rodeo Hall of Fame where Dahl was inducted in 2017 for both his riding and his other contributions to the sport.

The list of riders who have won titles from the swells of a Dahl saddle is endless and includes champions from Alberta to Aberdeen to Australia: CoBurn Bradshaw, Cody DeMoss, Clay Elliott, Chuck Schmidt, Jake Watson, Tom Reeves, Jeff Willert, Taos Muncy, Zeke Thurston, Cort Scheer, Wade Sundell, Kyle Whitaker and so many more that Dahl can hardly keep up. Eight Dahl saddles were at the 2021 PRCA Nationals in Las Vegas.

Pro riders enjoy collecting purses and Dahl delights in helping them reach their goals. He knows how hard it is not only to stay on a spirited bucking bronc

for a few seconds but also how difficult it is to make a dollar at it.

Dahl recalls his own limited days as a card-carrying professional when he won several buckles on the PRCA circuit before taking his saddle-making business full-time in the summer of 1974.

Bronc riding set a fire in Dahl's soul at an early age, growing up on the family farm in Keene, N.D., as one of 11 children. He competed for New Town High School and later went on to claim a national collegiate title as team captain for Black Hills State in 1967. A year after graduating with a bachelor's degree, Dahl also won the South Dakota Rodeo Association's saddle bronc title.

While he taught school for three years, Dahl eventually decided to make saddle-crafting his life's work. Dahl's friend and fellow rider Dick Jones got him interested in the craft and the two set up shop in an old abandoned drug store building next to the bank in Fort Pierre. In 1986, the bank decided to open a drive-through lane so the business moved across the street to its present location where Dahl runs Diamond D Saddle Shop and also manages a western clothing store adjacent to the shop.

Dahl plans on keeping his hands hard at work with no end in sight. He stays



Dahl's phone number is on the speed-dial list of collegiate rodeo coaches in several states across the country. At left, Dahl applies his trademark stamp to one of his saddles.

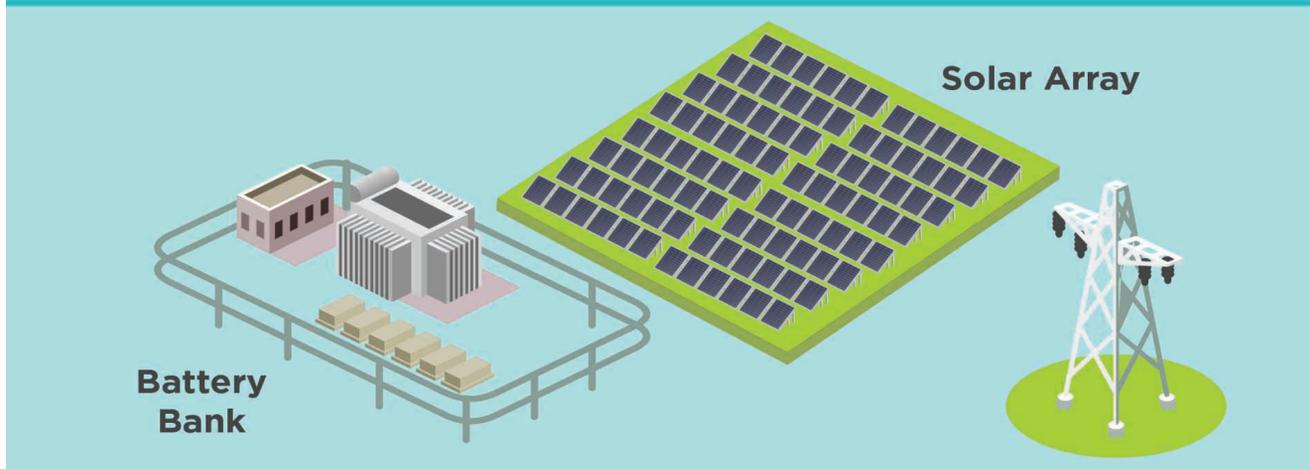
as busy as ever while participation in rodeo continues on an upward growth trajectory. College rodeo coaches in Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other states have Dahl on their speed-dial lists. He said he recently received a call from someone wanting him to fit a saddle for her 11-year-old child.

"It's just really a booming sport," he

said. "The training is better, there are better horses, there's better TV coverage of the sport and there's more money out there to be made. There are still a lot of ranch kids who grew up on horses and know how to ride. And they like to compete to see who's the best. There's so much work and I still enjoy it, so I don't plan on jumping out of the saddle anytime soon."

### THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

A new form of battery storage technology, known as the iron-air battery, could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundred of hours. Long-duration energy storage will be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the electric grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when needed.



## New Tech Alert: Iron-Air batteries hold the promise of providing long-term energy storage capability

Maria Kanevsky

As the electric grid continues to evolve, new technologies are being developed to help advance the grid of the future. One of these technologies is a new form of battery storage technology called the iron-air battery, which could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours.

Current battery technologies can only offer storage for tens of hours, meaning the innovative iron-air battery could provide energy for roughly 10 times longer than existing grid-scale batteries. This new technology could help ensure grid reliability even with extreme weather, such as hurricanes or powerful thunderstorms. Long-duration energy storage will also be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be

available when we need it. New iron-air batteries could provide the missing link by storing excess energy to be used when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

The battery technology itself is made up of thousands of small iron pellets that develop rust when exposed to oxygen. This process discharges the battery. When the oxygen is removed, the pellets revert back to iron, which then charges the battery. According to Form Energy, the startup company developing this new technology, this process is known as the principle of "reversible rusting." Since the battery technology mainly uses the abundant and cheap resources of water, air and iron, the technology is relatively low-cost. These resources also make the technology relatively safe since there are no heavy metals, and also make the batteries simpler to recycle.

A key feature of these batteries is their

low cost, with Form Energy promising a price of less than \$20 per kWh. That price is about one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion battery technology, which is currently the cheapest battery technology on the market.

Individual iron-air batteries are about the size of a washing machine, making it easy to group many batteries together into a larger, scalable system. The size of the battery module group can vary, depending on the storage needed at a specific site. This means the batteries can be placed in a variety of areas, from rural to urban, to meet energy needs.

While this technology may be a solution for long-duration energy storage, the battery is not yet ready at the commercial level - although it is close. Form Energy estimates the battery should be ready by 2025.

Given the importance of long-duration energy storage for future of the grid, other start-ups are also looking to develop long-duration battery storage technology.

In the meantime, electric utilities can start to understand where this technology may potentially fit within their own systems to make the grid more resilient.

## Electric co-ops hold discussions with lawmakers and community leaders

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session, electric cooperative leaders from across the state held several local forums to engage in wide-ranging discussions with elected officials.

Representatives from Basin Electric, East River, Rushmore Electric, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and many distribution cooperatives invited lawmakers and community leaders to engage in a dialogue focusing on the latest developments in the electric utility industry.

Electric cooperatives will continue to participate in meetings and forums throughout the Legislative Session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 10.

Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric in Mitchell, served as host of the last of the pre-session forums. Schlimgen welcomed the local lawmakers in attendance and went over some of the programs the co-op is pursuing to provide better service to its members.

Schlimgen showed a slide of the cooperative's small solar array constructed outside the headquarters office. He said the array allows the cooperative to offer members a first-hand look at how solar energy works. Members are also shown statistical data on how much electricity the array is producing at any given time.

This kind of real-time information



Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric based in Mitchell, describes how the cooperative is investing in an electric all-terrain vehicle to educate members about how EVs work and their potential for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

is important for members to understand how renewable resources such as solar and wind produce clean power, Schlimgen said. It's also important for members to understand the limitations of these sources.

"We discovered the first year we had this array that it performed at about 20 percent below the projections that were given by the manufacturer," he said.

Schlimgen also shared photos of the cooperative's Polaris Electric Ranger XP Kinetic UTV. He said the vehicle is rated at 110 horsepower and has a towing capacity of 2,500 lbs.: "This is something we can use on a practical level and also show members when they request more information about electric-powered vehicles."

House Majority Leader Kent Peterson was in attendance and noted lawmakers have considered presenting a bill regarding the licensing of electric UTVs.

"Given the rapid growth of the EV industry, this is something we'll have to consider at some point. It's great to have an opportunity like this to talk with the co-ops directly and get the useful information we need to make the right decisions," Peterson said.

Trevor Jones, general manager of SDREA, previewed some of the legislative issues that could be addressed during the 2022 session, including

issues surrounding the expansion of a network of electric vehicle charging stations and tax exemptions for data centers that consume large amounts of electrical power.

Chris Studer of East River Electric provided an overview of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Credit program. Participating consumers can sign up to receive credits or Green Tags for using renewable energy that comes from several wind farms that supply energy to the cooperative. Studer said the cost of participating in the program can vary among distribution co-ops.

Sen. Josh Klumb of Dist. 20 expressed his thanks to the co-op for organizing and hosting the forum.

"The application of these new technologies is something that will have a direct impact on our citizens for generations to come. In terms of doing our jobs as legislators, there's simply no substitute for this kind of interaction."



Chris Studer of East River Electric details the cooperative's REC Program.



**Valentine's Day  
February 14**

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**JANUARY 22**  
**Reba McEntire**  
Denny Sanford Premier Center,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

**JANUARY 28-29**  
**Deadwood Pro Snocross Races**  
Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,  
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**JANUARY 28-29**  
**27th Annual Dinner Theater**  
Reliance Legion Hall, Reliance,  
SD, call 605-730-0553 for  
more info and tickets

**JANUARY 28-31**  
**Lead Winterfest**  
Various Locations, Lead, SD,  
call 605-584-1100

**JANUARY 28-  
FEBRUARY 6**  
**Black Hills Stock Show &  
Rodeo**  
Central States Fairgrounds &  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center,  
Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

**JANUARY 29-30**  
**DTGCA Gun Show**  
National Field Archery Building,  
Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

**FEBRUARY 4-6**  
**Fiddler on the Roof**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux  
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**FEBRUARY 5**  
**Lake Hendricks  
Improvement Association  
Ice Fishing Derby**  
Hendricks, MN, contact Tim at  
507-828-2113 for registration  
and more information

**FEBRUARY 9-12**  
**Watertown Winter Farm  
Show**  
Codington County Extension  
Complex, Watertown, SD,  
605-886-5814

**FEBRUARY 11**  
**Calamity's Shindig**  
Homestake Adams Research  
& Cultural Center, Deadwood,  
SD, 605-722-4800

**FEBRUARY 11-12**  
**Bulls & Broncs**  
Expo Center at the W.H. Lyon  
Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD,  
605-367-7178

**FEBRUARY 11-13**  
**Black Hills Sports Show &  
Outdoor Expo**  
Monument Arena, Rapid City,  
SD, visit [bhsportsshow.com](http://bhsportsshow.com)  
for more information

**FEBRUARY 12**  
**Lakota Games on Ice**  
3200 Indian Village Road,  
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

**FEBRUARY 12-13**  
**DTGCA Sioux Falls Trophy  
Show (The Big One)**  
Sioux Falls Convention Center,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-280-2438

**FEBRUARY 18-28**  
**Black Hills Film Festival**  
Various Locations in Rapid  
City, Hot Springs, Hill City and  
Spearfish, SD, visit [www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org](http://www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org) for more  
information

**FEBRUARY 19**  
**Sioux Empire on Tap**  
Denny Sanford Premier  
Center, Sioux Falls, SD, visit  
[siouxempireontap.com](http://siouxempireontap.com) for  
more info and tickets

**FEBRUARY 25-26**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**FEBRUARY 25-27,  
MARCH 3-5**  
**Making God Laugh**  
Grand Opera House, Pierre,  
SD, 605-224-7826

**FEBRUARY 26**  
**The Music of John Williams**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux  
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 3-5**  
**The 39 Steps**  
Orpheum Theater Center,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 10-13**  
**Annual Sioux Empire  
Sportsmen's Show**  
Sioux Falls Arena &  
Convention Center, Sioux  
Falls, SD, visit [www.siouxfallssportsshow.com](http://www.siouxfallssportsshow.com) for more  
info and tickets

**MARCH 12**  
**28 Below Fatbike Race,  
Ride and Tour**  
Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,  
SD, visit [www.28below.com](http://www.28below.com)  
for more info and to register

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