

Cooperative Connections

AgritourismSD seeks to attract visitors from far and near

Education and Entertainment on the Farm

Pages 8-9

College Students Deal with Change

Pages 12-13



Spring Into Action



Jordan Lamb

jlamb@oaheelectric.com

Warmer temperatures have arrived at last! Between planting season, outdoor activities and graduations, I am sure many of you will have the urge to get out and get moving. Here at Oahe Electric Cooperative, we also look forward to getting some fresh air.

A few things we are up to:

- Developing a four-year (near-term) and 20-year (long-term) plan
- Continuation of overhead to underground conversions
- Tree trimming
- Securing low interest loans to replace aging infrastructure

As we continue to look forward with our members in mind, I encourage you to plan ahead as well for your spring and summer activities. Our crews will be working hard on replacing aging infrastructure and attending to maintenance while the nice weather lasts! A few things to prepare for that will help your cooperative:

New Service Installation

- If you are building a new home, shop or bin site, please call ahead of time so we can arrange a date to install new services to your address.
- If you are purchasing an existing property, please call ahead so we can get a meter reading on the closing date.

Oahe Electric Cooperative offers incentives for new residential and commercial services to help cover some of the up-front costs. If you have a project you would like to consider, feel free to give us a call.

Outdoor Activities

- When driving vehicles, motorcycles or ATVs, please watch out for our linemen parked alongside roadways and in road ditches while they complete their work.
- If you see damages to a pole, insulator, cross arm or a downed power line all together, please notify us immediately at 605-962-6243. While waiting for crews, stay away from the damaged facility and alert others nearby so they are aware of the danger.
- When in the fields planting, spraying or moving from field to field, please watch out for overhead powerlines and power poles. If you strike a line or pole, and the line is on your equipment, DO NOT ASSUME THE LINE IS DEAD. Stay in your cab, notify police and do not exit the cab unless the equipment is on fire. If the equipment is on fire, exit the cab onto the platform and JUMP off the platform to the ground below without touching the ground and farm equipment at the same time. Keep your feet close together, and hop away from the danger to avoid ground-step potential.

It is a busy time of year for us all, and our member safety as well as our staff is our number one priority. Enjoy the great weather and have a great spring and start to your summer!

As we continue to look forward with our members in mind, I encourage you to plan ahead as well for your spring and summer activities.

Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 019-042)

Board of Directors:

- James Feller – President
605-962-6207
- Blaine Livermont – Treasurer
605-945-2910
- Ryan Noyes – Assistant Secretary
605-280-3500
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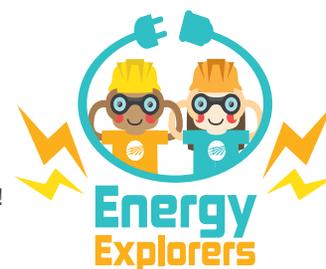
Our Mission

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.

THANK A LINEWORKER!

This month, we're recognizing lineworkers for the amazing job they do to make sure we have electricity! Think about all the ways you use electricity every day. Do you use a phone, watch TV, play video games or turn on lights? You're able to do *all* of these things because of lineworkers.

Below is space to write a short thank you note to your local lineworkers. Write your note, then ask an adult to help you send it back to us so we can share it with our crews.



WE ♥ OUR
LINEWORKERS

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, audiotope, 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: mail - U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Remodeling? Keep Efficiency in Mind

Sunny days are prime time for tackling remodeling projects, upgrades and repairs around your home. If you're planning a project, make a point of adding energy efficiency features along the way. Here are a few ideas:

- Add insulation around recessed lights so heated or conditioned air doesn't leak out of them and the weather can't sneak in.
- Install programmable thermostats when you add rooms to the house. While you're at it, have the thermostats in the rest of your home upgraded to programmable models.
- Your contractor will install more insulation in any new spaces you're adding than your builder did during the original construction of your home. Consider adding insulation to already-insulated areas, like the crawlspace and attic, to meet new energy efficiency standards.
- A new kitchen means shiny new appliances. Select those rated as energy efficient by ENERGY STAR®, which use less energy than unrated models.
- If your older home still has single-pane windows, consider an upgrade. Double-pane windows are more energy efficient because they better shield your home from the outdoors - and keep your conditioned air indoors.
- Replace old lightbulbs in your most-used rooms with LEDs. They last 10 years or longer and save considerable energy when compared to incandescent bulbs.
- Work with a contractor who understands how passive solar design can affect your energy bills. Rooftop solar panels, sunrooms and skylights are popular additions.
- Add or upgrade ventilation fans in bathrooms. This can improve air quality throughout the home - not just in the bathrooms - by removing moisture from the air.
- Consider having a home energy audit conducted. Audits can help you evaluate your home for energy wasters, suggest ways to remedy inefficiencies and recommend additions that will make your house more comfortable and cheaper to heat and cool.



Generate Safely.

Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



Don't Grill Too Close to the House

Mia Phillips, 5 years old

Mia is the granddaughter of Jim and Hans Moore of Rapid City. They are members of Black Hills Electric.

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.



A Craving for Casseroles

Chicken and Rice

- 1 bag Success Brown Rice
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/3 cup chopped onions
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 package (4 ounces) mushrooms, sliced
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 4 cups baby spinach leaves
- 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken breast
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper

Prepare rice according to package directions. In small bowl, combine ricotta, Parmesan and parsley; reserve. In large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onions and garlic; saute 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and wine to skillet. Continue cooking 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add spinach and chicken. Stir until spinach is wilted and chicken is heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in rice, salt and pepper. Serve casserole topped with dollops of reserved cheese mixture.

SuccessRice.com

Meat Lovers Pizza Casserole

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 can (15 oz) pizza sauce
- 8 oz. elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
- 2 c. (8 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 pkg (3 1/2 oz) sliced pepperoni, quartered
- 1/2 tsp. salt

In a large skillet, cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in remaining ingredients. Transfer to a greased 2-quart baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until heated through. Yields 6 servings.

Gail Lee, Brookings

Chicken Doritos Casserole

- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 can Ro-tel tomatoes, drained (canned tomatoes with jalapenos-mild)
- 1/2 packet taco seasoning (or more, to taste)
- 1 bag of regular nacho cheese Doritos

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except Doritos. In a greased 2 quart baking dish, put a layer of crushed Doritos (about 2 cups), then a layer of the chicken mixture. Top with more shredded cheese, cover, and bake 30-35 minutes until bubbling hot. Enjoy!

Alana Neville, Milesville, SD

Garden Cafe Casserole

- 1 bag hash browns
- 1 onion
- 1 green pepper
- 1 box mushrooms
- 1 tomato
- 1/2 lb. deli turkey (cut in pieces)
- 1 lb. bacon (fried and cut in pieces)
- 2-3 cups cheese (Monterey Jack, Colby, Cheddar)

Place thawed hash browns in the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Saute onion, green pepper, and mushrooms. Place the meat and tomato on top of the potatoes. Then onion, green pepper and mushrooms. Top with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Joanna Gum, Clear Lake, SD

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

Have a Successful Planting Season Rooted in Safety



Matt Eldridge

Operations Manager

meldridge@oaheelectric.com

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Oahe Electric and the Safe Electricity program (www.safeelectricity.org) urge them to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines.

Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks - helpful safety steps include using a spotter and designating preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Simply working too close to a power line is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call Oahe Electric for help. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives.

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave

the area. For more tips and information on how to stay safe this planting season, visit SafeElectricity.org.

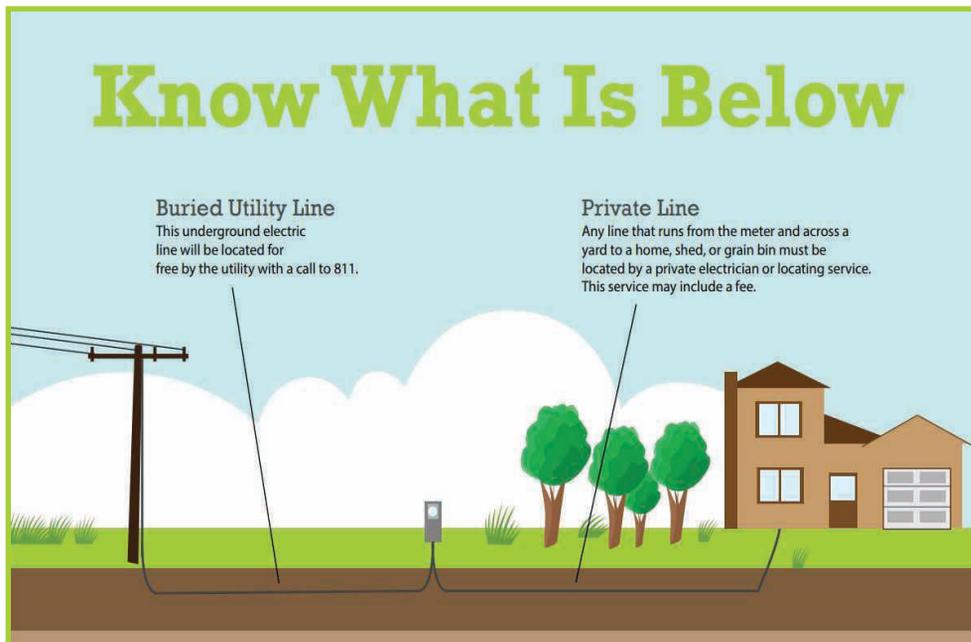
Primary Versus Secondary Lines

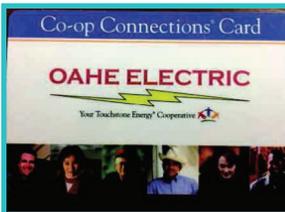
Oahe Electric is a member of South Dakota One Call, a communication link among utilities, contractors and private individuals who work with or around underground lines or pipes. **If you plan to dig a hole or trench more than a foot deep on your property, you must phone South Dakota One Call (811) at least 48 hours before you plan to excavate.** They have up-to-date records on electric, gas, phone and other utilities. They can help you avoid loss of service by accidentally severing one of these lines or pipes. Your call may also avert a possible serious incident.

When requesting an underground locate, please be aware of the difference between primary and secondary lines.

Primary lines are the lines owned and maintained by Oahe Electric that lead up to your meter. These lines are located for free and maintained at the cost of the cooperative. These lines are located by calling 811.

Secondary lines are lines after the meter that lead up to your home, shed, barn, wells, etc. The member owns these lines, and these lines are **located and repaired at the cost of the member.** In order to locate secondary lines, a member will need to hire an electrician. Oahe Electric does not have the equipment to locate these lines.





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.
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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.
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Retail

Fastenal	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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Thank You!

Without the continued support of our community, we would not be able to make this amazing event happen each year. In a year full of unknowns, we were still able to put on the Bull Riding and give back once again to make a difference in other's lives. Thank you again for your continued support and we look forward to another amazing year in 2021.

- Dallas Heninger Memorial Bull Riding

Winner Question of the Month

The Question of the Month winners for the March 2021 publication was Jerry Berg. He correctly answered the question, "When are Operation Round Up applications due?" The correct answer is April 30, 2021.

"Thank you for the gift package for the question of the month. We appreciate it and also the great service you provide."

- Jerry & Sharon Berg

Question of the Month

This month's question is: What are the sign up months for budget billing?

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

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!



The AgritourismSD program blends the state's top two economic drivers: agriculture and tourism. Photos provided by SD Tourism.

AGRITOURISM

New Program Blends South Dakota's Top Two Economic Drivers

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Amy Kruse already had a baby before she actually became a mother. That baby was proudly named Circle View Guest Ranch. That's the bed and breakfast establishment in Interior run by Amy and her husband, Philip.

"Before I had three kids, this was my baby," Kruse said on a recent Thursday afternoon while taking a break from getting the nearly 3,000-acre ranch spiffed up for weekend visitors and the busy travel season. "I got out of college and we got married and we came here 18 years ago. It's a lot of work to operate the ranch and make things run to give our guests a memorable experience, but it's worth it to see them enjoy themselves and have a great time in South Dakota."

While Kruse has long been engaged in her own form of what's called agritourism, she's an enthusiastic supporter of a new initiative designed to promote the accelerated growth of more agritourism enterprises across the state.

In 2017, the South Dakota Agritourism Work Group was formed to create an intensive program aimed at providing education, training and various support services to agribusiness owners interested in expanding their operations to include recreational, entertainment, educational, hospitality, cultural, on-farm sales and other activities for the general public. As tourism and agriculture are the two most significant business sectors in the state, organizers felt it only made sense to combine the two.

Spearheaded by South Dakota State University Extension and the state Office of Tourism, other local, state and federal agencies and entities joined in the effort. A partial list of participating organizations includes the Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers of South

Dakota, Experience Sioux Falls, Southeast Technical Institute, the South Dakota Specialty Producers Association, the South Dakota Value Added Ag Development Center and others.

According to Program Coordinator Stacy Hadrick of SDSU, AgritourismSD kicks off this month and consists of eight two-day, in-person workshops taking place over the course of 24 months where instructors provide the basic skills and tools that have been demonstrated to help increase the chances of success. The curriculum includes field visits to venues that already have a sustained track record of running thriving agritourism businesses.

The Circle View Guest Ranch, a member of West River Electric Association, is one of those venues. During the program's second year, the facility is slated to serve as a case study on how to launch and grow an agritourism operation and participants can have direct personal conversations with operators who will offer solid advice on every aspect of their business. Kruse said she looks forward to sharing some of the approaches and strategies that she and Philip have used to keep visitors coming to the ranch. The program, which kicks off this month, is designed to educate and train those associated with the ag industry on how to start, manage and operate an agritourism enterprise.

"This is such an excellent time to do something like this because things are opening up and people are ready to travel and escape the cities, get off the interstate and explore the back roads and see the tremendous beauty of our state," Kruse said. "They're craving an authentic experience after being shut down for so long."

Kruse added that she is eager to coach and encourage the group, but she also plans to shoot straight. That means giving the partici-



pants a healthy dose of unvarnished reality so they'll have a clear understanding of the commitment required.

"I think it's a wonderful program for our state. We're going to show them how we make things work with the overnight facilities and with the animals and their interactions with our guests," she said. "The business pretty much runs our lives for seven to eight months out of the year, and if you do it right it's all-consuming. But it's also extremely rewarding to see families have a terrific time bonding with each other, bonding with the natural landscape and the animals. It can be extremely rewarding for our guests and for our family as we're always making new friends. But you have to be committed."

Amy and her husband operate 12 guest rooms and three cabins with an average of 30 guests at any given time from April through September. She explained the cattle ranch and the bed-and-breakfast are separate businesses all set on 2,800 acres of land that includes prairie terrain in addition to Badlands formations, a river valley, rock beds, rolling hills, grazing pastures and tree groves.

For more effective statewide coordination, the AgritourismSD program organizers have developed a hub system, selecting the communities of Wall, Faulkton and Timber Lake to serve as regional organization centers. Participating business owners work through these hubs and meet six times over two years to share ideas and

discuss strategies for attracting visitors to their communities.

Robin Bickel is the hub coach for the Timber Lake area. A member of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, Bickel runs a Red Angus cattle ranch in Firesteel that has been in the family for four generations. She said her interest in getting involved was to pursue potential economic growth not only for her ranch but for the entire area as well. She also sees agritourism as an incentive to both keep and attract young families to rural communities.

"If working ranches can find ways to expand and diversify their businesses, it may present opportunities for those young people who have left to come back to the family farm and be able to generate enough revenue to sustain multiple families on one place," she said.

Aside from the potential for added revenue, Bickel said she is eager to share with the rest of the world the wonders of rural life and the rural lifestyle she experiences each day.

"I think there's an increased interest people have about where their food and fiber come from, and we need to find a way to make that connection between the producer and consumer," she said. "We have such a rich history and so many natural resources to share. It's insane how many people can't see the sky full of stars at night where they live and can't see the prairie grass waving in the wind and



rolling across a hillside. There are people interested in things we take for granted. There are people in Nebraska that have a prairie chicken dance tour where people actually pay to see the chickens. I think there are many opportunities for our state if we commit ourselves and do it right."

For more information on the program, contact Jacey Ellsworth, Industry Outreach and Development Representative, at 605-773-3301 or Jacey.Ellsworth@TravelSouthDakota.com.

The Silent Killer



Russ Hohn

Member Services Manager
rhohn@oaheelectric.com

It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. With the lowest survival rate among cancers, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 21,000 people die from radon-induced lung cancer each year. In 2005, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a national health advisory on radon.

Radon gas does not cause itchy eyes or a runny nose, but it does damage your lungs. Exposure for long periods dramatically increase your chances of lung cancer. Since COVID-19, many family members are spending more time at home which increases their exposure. You're inhaling the air as you work, cook, clean, bathe and sleep.

Smoking remains the number one cause of lung cancer – however, radon is second every year. For individuals that smoke, excess radon can increase their chance of lung cancer by nine times.

Radon gas is difficult to control because the levels in your home change from day to day. Seasonal changes along with weather can fluctuate the level. The soil under your home or building may contain radioactive elements found in common minerals and rocks. Uranium hidden in the soil breaks down over time, and radon gas is released as part of the decay process. Radon has many paths to enter your structure. Cracks in the foundation, gaps in walls and crawl space areas are just a few. Without a high rate of air flow through your structure all the time, radon can build up inside and reach unsafe levels.

The EPA sets a level of unsafe radon gas at or

above four pCi. If your home has levels higher than this, mitigation efforts are necessary to reduce exposure. Levels below two pCi are considered normal. Mitigation efforts depend on the property, radon levels and where the gas is entering your building. Some people install whole house fans and ventilation systems, however using a professional mitigation contractor is the safest way to reduce levels. A radon detector is placed in the lowest lived-in area for a period of time. The detector is then removed and sent to laboratory for analysis, where testing is done to provide levels during the time frame. Short term test kits are convenient because they provide test results quickly. However, this test is for a shorter period.

Every home will have different levels of radon. Changes in the environment, installing new doors and windows, exhaust fans, changes to your heating and cooling system and new additions can affect the level. Meaning that no two houses, even though they may be next to each other, will have the same radon level.

Radon is a threat to you and your family! You cannot see it or smell it. Radon is a carcinogen. Regardless of construction methods, this gas can enter your home. Do your part; research radon gas dangers and perform some sort of test to determine levels. **It is a silent killer!**

Thank you again for your patronage and support. Have a wonderful spring season!

God Bless,
Rj

Radon gas is difficult to control because the levels in your home change from day to day.



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're 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/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 into 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 & Online Bill Pay

You can also view and pay your bill online the day they are generated. Subscribers are able to sign up to receive an e-statement and access our account management tool by going to our web site at 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 SD 57522 by May 21, 2021, 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

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 _____

Oahe Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Be sure to include a
 voided check with
 this form.**

Rural POWER

Leadership Program Aimed at Boosting Co-op Leadership

Intentional listening is a skill Billie Sutton has honed over the course of his adult life. And as he leaned into recent conversations with electric cooperative leaders across the state, the former legislator from Burke started noticing a trend.

He picked up on a common refrain: cooperatives are having a hard time finding qualified candidates to run for positions on their governing boards.

As not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives don't have pockets deep enough to dangle large compensation packages in front of potential board candidates. This reality tends to narrow the field of interested parties.

After hearing this a few too many times, Sutton decided to take action and do something about it. He began working to develop a leadership program through his non-profit Billie Sutton Leadership Institute to encourage and inspire rural co-op members to consider campaigning for a board position.

The new year-long leadership development program is called "Rural POWER: Powering Opportunities While Energizing Rural." It will be held alongside the third leadership class offered by the Institute. The first program in 2019 attracted more than 100 applicants to fill 12 spots. Last year's class drew roughly 70 applicants but was hampered by the impact of the pandemic.

Sutton surmised that the high interest level in the Institute's first two programs stems from a desire to return to a more community-focused style of leadership and steer away from a brand of politics that appears to be growing more openly hostile.

His supposition comes from the comments he heard not only during his six years serving in the state senate but also from voters during his gubernatorial campaign three years ago in which he received more than 167,000 votes while losing the race to Gov. Kristi Noem.



Billie Sutton and his wife, Kelsea (foreground) are shown with the Institute's inaugural class of rural leaders.

"I think people were excited about a new style of leadership I brought to the table that's focused on service, finding common ground, overcoming adversity and getting things done on behalf of the people. I think people are tired of politics as usual," he said.

For the Institute's inaugural class, applicants ranged in age from 18 to 60 and represented a plethora of professional backgrounds: health care, teaching, education administration, local elected officials, ranchers and more. Sutton said he hopes the new program will also attract interest from a diverse set of applicants.

Rural POWER will kick off this summer and is sponsored by the South Dakota Farmers Union. Participants will engage in educational leadership training opportunities emphasizing community building and

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serving neighbors, while learning from cooperative leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to rural development. They will gain the knowledge and enthusiasm to re-imagine and re-energize rural South Dakota, Sutton said.



Rural POWER aims to provide leadership training that will help re-invent and re-energize rural South Dakota.

The program has an advocate in Melissa Maher, general manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake. Maher notes that while most of the state's electric co-ops qualify as "rural," that doesn't mean they are merely small-time mom-and-pop operations. For instance, Moreau-Grand Electric is a member-owned business with more than \$47 million in assets.

Maher said it's important that electric co-ops be run by managers and board members dedicated to the task at hand. Board directors are democratically elected by the members in their respective districts and charged with the responsibility of developing the policies that guide the future of the co-op. They also have certain legal, fiduciary and industry-related issues they must deal with during the course of carrying out their duties.

"These are positions of responsibility and leadership, and you need qualified people because they're making big decisions," Maher said, adding that serving on a co-op board requires considerable time and attention. "If someone is interested in being nominated, you have to be up front and honest about that fact. That's one of the first things people ask, and the honest answer is that it's a commitment."

Those who succeed in meeting their board responsibilities recognize and appreciate the fact they're contributing to the advancement of their entire service area by providing an essential commodity. Maher said it also takes a certain type of personality and temperament to be a successful board member.

"They have to learn protocol and there can be situations like dealing with personnel issues where they have to be discreet. They have to be the type of person who can agree to disagree and walk away and not let it get to them," Maher said. "They have to study up on the issues. We send out information a week ahead of time so that the board members can brush up on things and we can have a productive conversation. They need to care enough to be engaged and prepared."

Suzie Jones Pranger serves as executive director of the Institute. Today, Jones Pranger is an attorney living in rural Hartford, but she grew up on her family's farm in Burke and remembers her grandfather's involvement in her local co-op, Rosebud Electric.

"Even as a kid, I knew our power came from the local co-op, and I knew my family had a legacy of service to the co-op and our neighbors through my Grandpa's longtime position on the board," she said. "But what I never considered growing up is the need for subsequent generations to become active and continue to power our rural communities and our South Dakota way of life. Rural POWER will help build a pipeline of rural leaders ready to step up and take on leadership positions."

Kevin Mikkelsen, general manager of Rosebud Electric, is also supportive of the program and believes there is a lot of potential in the leadership program, especially when it comes to drawing some younger participants.

"I'm hoping the program sheds some light



on how cooperatives function and how they work on behalf of all the member-owners," he said. "All around the state, we really need to see some younger folks get involved and provide a new perspective and help us discover new and more effective ways to carry out our mission as co-ops, whether it's electric co-ops or ag-based co-ops."

Visit suttonleadership.org/rural-power to learn more about the program or to apply.

Oahe Awards \$3,500 in Scholarships

Oahe Electric believes in investing in the future and making a direct impact on the community by helping member dependent students afford a higher education.

Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. has awarded Malia Schumacher a \$1,000 scholarship, which is funded jointly by Oahe Electric and Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, N.D., and is for use during the 2021-2022 school year.

In addition to the \$1,000 scholarship with Basin Electric, Oahe Electric also awarded five \$500 scholarships. These scholarships were awarded to Trenton Ramsey and Haley Husted, both seniors at Highmore Harrold High School in Highmore; Landon Severson of Sully Buttes High School in Onida; Raegan Wiebe of TF Riggs High School in Pierre and Elle Hoops of Huron High School.

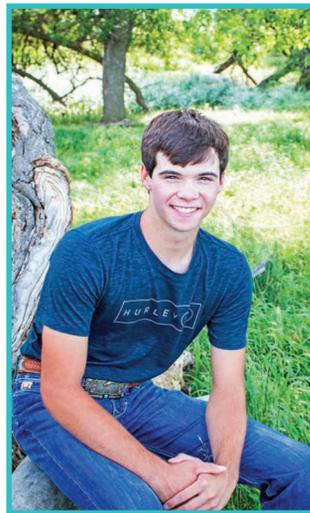
We know that all of our scholarship winners will make a difference in our communities for the better and we are so proud of all of the applicants and the amazing member dependents we have.

Oahe Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Malia is the daughter of Melanie and Marvin Schumacher and is a senior at homeschool/TF Riggs. Some of the activities she participates in are Prairie Wranglers 4-H Club, Community Bible Church, Hosanna Dance Studio, piano and theatre. Malia plans on attending South Dakota State University in the fall majoring in human biology to become a physician assistant.

Congratulations, Malia, and keep up the great work!



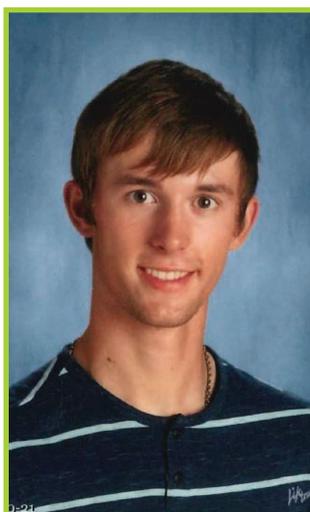
Trenton is the son of Troy and Renee Ramsey and throughout his high school career he has been involved in FFA, FBLA, 4-H, National Honor Society and High School Rodeo Club. He was voted class president and crowned homecoming king. He plans on attending Lake Area Technical College in Watertown to major in agricultural business.

Congratulations, Trenton! We wish you the best of luck in your career goals!



Haley is the daughter of Vickie and Chad Husted and was involved in volleyball, National Honor Society, Rodeo Club, basketball, church group, theatre, Snow Queen, FFA and student council. She plans on attending Black Hills State University this fall to major in public relations to eventually be a media coordinator.

Congratulations, Haley, and we hope you realize your dreams and find much success!



Landon is the son of Sarah and Douglas Severson and throughout his high school years has been involved in football, basketball, FFA, National Honor Society, band and student council. He plans on attending South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to major in mechanical engineering.

Congratulations, Landon, and good luck achieving your goals, we wish you the best of luck on your journey!



Elle Hoops is a senior at Huron High School. Next year, she plans to attend the University of South Dakota. There, she will major in human biology. Her ultimate goal is to graduate, enter medical school and become a dermatologist. She is the president of her local National Honor Society chapter, vice-president of Huron FFA, as well as active on the Junior Advisory Council for South Dakota Farmers Union. Elle's parents are Dave and Debbie Hoops of Huron.

Best wishes, Elle, as you achieve your goals and set out on future endeavors!



Raegan is the daughter of Jeri and Troy Wiebe and spends her time being involved in the Governor to Governor program, student senate, volleyball, studio dance, National Honor Society, and volunteering at various organizations. She plans on attending the University of South Dakota to major in biology with the goal of being a dermatologist.

Congratulations on your achievements, Raegan, and best luck with your future goals!

Practice Safety When DIY-ing



Valerie Marso

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Who doesn't love a good DIY before and after? These days, many of us are spending more time at home and finding new, creative ways to enhance our living space. Tackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started! Whether you're giving the front door a fresh look or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is so incredibly satisfying. But many of these projects do not come without risks. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work.

Start by selecting a designated work area. The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is your friend. Investing a few bucks in PPE is essential for most home projects. Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, ear plugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. (Ditch the sandals or flip flops for this!)

Work slowly and clean as you go. If you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less desirable results than

you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials, tools that aren't in use and any tripping hazards.

Be cautious with power tools. Annually, eight percent of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock. Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
- Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
- If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
- Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
- When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.

Remember, you should only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level. For projects that require extensive electrical work, we strongly recommend you hire a licensed, qualified electrician for assistance.

Have a safe spring and don't forget to take pictures of your DIY projects!

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

April 22-May 2

Beauty & the Beast, Sioux Empire Community Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-6000

April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

April 24

Party for the Planet, Great Plains Zoo, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7003

April 30-May 2, May 6-8

Radium Girls, Pierre Players Community Theatre, Pierre, SD
605-224-7826

May 8

Davis Flea Market & Artisan Fair, Main Street, Davis, SD
605-940-0069

May 8

Wells Fargo Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, Falls Park, Sioux Falls, SD
605-271-0468

May 8 NEW DATE

Winefest Renaissance, Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-8714

May 9

Mother's Day Tours, Historic Adams House & Days of '76 Museum, Deadwood, SD
605-578-37241

May 13

Vermilion-Area Farmers Market - Plant Sale, High & Cherry Streets, Vermilion, SD
605-659-3399



State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, May 21-23, 2021

May 15

Red Dirt Music Festival featuring Casey Donahew, Ian Munsick and Randy Burghardt Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD
605-559-0386

May 21-23

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

May 21-23

State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks & Recreation Areas, SD
605-773-3391

May 22

Frühlingsfest & Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

May 22

La Framboise Island Bike Race, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD
605-224-7054

May 31

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD
605-641-5591

June 3-6

Wheel Jam, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7340

June 4-5

State BBQ Championships, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7354

June 4-6

Black Hills Blues Stomp & Swamp Romp, Rush No More RV Resort & Campground, Sturgis, SD
605-347-2916

June 4-6

Lake Andes Fish Days, City-wide, Lake Andes, SD
605-487-7694

June 5-6

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD
605-770-5720

June 5-6

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD
866-489-9241

June 19

South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD
605-945-2333

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.