



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Invasive Species

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on the Missouri**  
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# Annual Meeting

## Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023



**Jordan Lamb**  
Chief Executive Officer

Oahe Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. Your cooperative is offering three separate locations to register, talk with our employees and member owners and enjoy a weekend cruise with your families. We are offering bill credits as part of annual meeting attendance and look forward to seeing you at one of our three drive through locations – Pierre, Onida and Blunt, or in person in Onida.

It has been a very busy year for Oahe Electric Cooperative, a few highlights for 2023 thus far:

1. The upcoming Construction Work Plan recently was approved by Rural Utility Services (RUS). This is a federal government agency that offers low interest rates to cooperative non-profit utilities for infrastructure. Our upcoming four to five year work plan focuses on grid hardening projects with a large portion of the total budget allocated to 3 phase overhead to underground conversions.
2. Material lead times are still a large concern for your cooperative. We continue to see pole deliveries delayed weeks to even months, and necessary equipment such as transformers, breakers and meters encroaching or even in cases exceeding 52+ week delivery time from order dates.
3. Cooperative values flourishing with not only longer-term members but also new members of our cooperative.

The most exciting part to see as a cooperative is item three. We had one of the largest turn-outs ever for our 2022 annual meeting from our members and have also seen an uptick in member engagement with your cooperative! We have seen several outstanding responses to damages to buildings amongst our rural communities, with cooperative employees, public safety police officers, EMTs and fire fighters, and our 24-hour dispatch service, respond to several events in our service territory over the past month. Member involvement in aiding efforts to keep your cooperative safe and operating efficiently and effectively to serve our members in these rural areas is second to none. Two of our more recent events both occurred on Sundays. The first involved an unfortunate incident at a local ethanol plant that required immediate response from not only Oahe Electric Cooperative and East River Electric Cooperative Staff, but also the public volunteers. Your quick response is greatly appreciated by us!

The second event on a Sunday occurred three days prior to writing this article. An unexpected thunderstorm moved through our northwest service area early that morning. We monitored our system and found no issues – until a member of ours alerted our staff to a hidden issue resulting from a direct lightning strike to a pole that did not trigger a power outage!

These 'phase floaters' often go unnoticed until we perform system patrolling after storms. Our cooperative was notified by a local member of ours, Terry Nelson (West Prairie Resort) immediately following the Sunday morning storm and potentially prevented a large impact to other members of our cooperative as well as public safety. We appreciate engagement from our member owners and a special thanks again to our local responders, communities, and your engagement as owners of our wonderful organization! We look forward to seeing you all at our upcoming annual meeting and also to 2024!



**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

**OAHE ELECTRIC**

(USPS No. 019-042)

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OAHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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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.

# Line Crew News



**Matt Eldridge**

Operations Manager

We are in the peak of construction season here at Oahe Electric. This summer the line crew has been very busy with numerous different projects. One of the major projects we have still going on is the Mid-Dakota/Whispering Pines overhead to underground line conversion. We were able to team up with K&H Electric out of Linton, North Dakota to convert 2.5 miles of overhead to underground power line. We have most of this project completed, except for cutting over the individual members to the new underground line. We are hoping to complete this in the next couple of weeks.

Another substantial undertaking for the summer is our Oil Circuit Recloser (OCR) Maintenance. Every three years Oahe Electric must test and clean our OCRs. An OCR is a circuit breaker device that we use on our powerlines to help sectionalize and protect our system. When there is a fault on the powerline this unit opens up so the line does not burn down. We have close to 150 of these hanging on the powerlines in the service territory. EIR Testing and Maintenance from Farmington, Minnesota is here assisting us with this project.

And once again this summer we are having pole testing done in our service territory. EXO, Inc. from Minnesota is here testing the poles in the Northwest part of our service territory. This year we will be testing around 4,500 poles. Over time, wooden poles can be damaged from weather, animals, insects, etc. By proactively inspecting and repairing or replacing poles, we can fix problems before they occur. Once the inspections are completed, we will start changing any rejected poles.

Between those three projects, installing new services and keeping the irrigation running, the summer is racing by. Before we know it the snow will be flying. If you are needing a new service or work done on your existing service, please reach out to us as soon as possible. You can reach us here at 1-800-640-6243.



# No One Can Take Your Place

## National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 17-23, 2023

The 2019 data for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the agricultural sector is still the most dangerous in America with 573 fatalities, or an equivalent of 23.1 deaths per 100,000 workers.

Fall harvest time can be one of the busiest and most dangerous seasons of the year for the agriculture industry. For this reason, the third week of September has been recognized as National Farm Safety and Health Week.

This annual promotion initiated by the National Safety Council has been proclaimed as such by each sitting U.S. President since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944. National Farm Safety and Health Week is led by the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), the agricultural partner of the National Safety Council.

### Did you know?

- Rural roads pose special dangers especially during harvest season. Watch out for slow-moving farm vehicles and be informed, aware, and patient while sharing rural roadways.
- Farm stress is real, and many things like weather events, tragedies, market uncertainty, or diseases can tip us out of our comfort zone.
- Every day, about 33 children are seriously injured in agricultural-related incidents.
- Hazardous gasses on farms can be found in silos, manure storages, grain bins, and other confined spaces. Be in the know about hazardous gasses and where they can be found on farms.

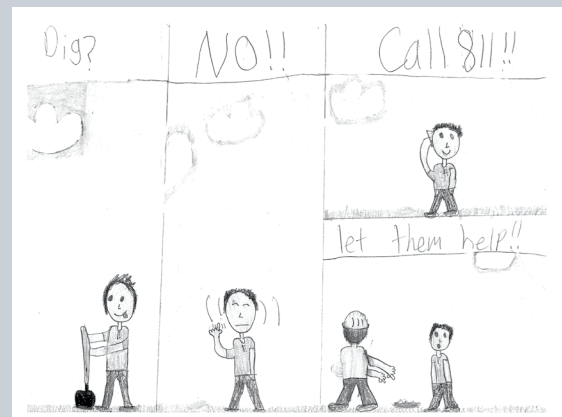
Farm and ranch life can be demanding and stressful. Over the past several years, it has reached a critical stage for the folks who grow America's food with COVID-19 pandemic impacts on top of natural disasters, extreme weather events, financial pressures due to fluctuating commodity prices, labor shortages, trade disruptions and a

long list of other factors. Given these ongoing challenges, it's no surprise that more farmers and farm families are experiencing stress and mental health concerns.

Today, safety professionals still use this promotional week to remind those working in our nation's most dangerous industry to be careful. Agriculture's death rate is why farmers and ranchers must use safe farming practices during harvest and throughout the year.

South Dakota's electric cooperatives urge our agricultural producers to make better safety and health decisions this harvest season and during the next year. Join us in promoting safety during the 80th annual **National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 17-23, 2023**.

During this time, please encourage others to adopt safe practices and behaviors as we prepare to prevent injuries during this harvest season.



### Call 811!

#### Evey Hinrichs, Age 9 3/4

Evey Hinrichs advises people it's not safe to dig before calling 811. Evey is the daughter of Kelby and Carrie Fey from Aberdeen, S.D., members of Northern Electric Cooperative.

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

# DIPS AND SPREADS

## SPINACH DIP

Ingredients:

- 16 oz. sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise (must be mayo)
- 1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 can water chestnuts, chopped
- 1 tbsp. minced onion
- 1 tsp. season salt
- 1/2 tsp. Accent
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- 2 dashes of hot sauce

**METHOD**

Serve with Club or Ritz crackers.

Linda Hubbard  
Rapid City, S.D.

## CREAMY CINNAMON DIP

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 container (8 oz.) sour cream
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tbsps. milk
- 2 tps. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. all natural pure vanilla extract

**METHOD**

Beat all ingredients in medium bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Spoon into serving bowl. Cover.

Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve with fresh fruit slices, cookies or pound cake or angel food cubes.

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

## CARAWAY CHEESE SPREAD

Ingredients:

- 1 container (12 oz.) Cheddar cheese spread, at room temperature
- 2 tps. minced onions
- 1 1/2 tps. whole caraway seed
- 1/2 tsp. Lawry's® Seasoned Salt

**METHOD**

Mix cheese spread and seasonings in medium bowl. Cover. Refrigerate at least 2 hours to blend flavors.

**Serving Suggestion:** Serve with assorted vegetables such as celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, jicama sticks, carrot sticks, endive leaves, and/or assorted crackers.

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

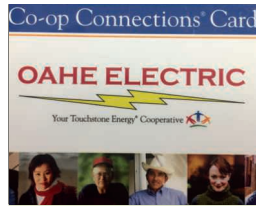
Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: Dept.  
of Energy



## Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors

### Automotive

<b>Graham Tire Company</b>	605-224-8643	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on regularly priced service work. Cannot be combined with any other offer.
<b>Lamb Motor Company</b>	800-952-2222	Onida	Receive a free alignment check with the purchase of 4 new tires.
<b>Napa Auto and Truck Parts/Farnam's Genuine Parts, Inc.</b>	605-224-8624	Pierre	Receive 10-50% off retail price.

### Food/Convenience Store

<b>Branding Iron Bistro</b>	605-494-3333	Pierre	Enjoy \$1 off your order. Limit one per visit.
<b>Gator's Pizza Pasta and Subs</b>	605-224-6262	Pierre	Purchase any large pizza at regular price and receive a FREE order of breadsticks.
<b>Grey Goose Store</b>	605-945-0794	Pierre	Receive a free 20 oz. fountain soda or coffee with the minimum of a \$30 gas or diesel purchase.
<b>The Corner</b>	605-258-2400	Onida	Buy one breakfast sandwich at regular price, get second half off.

### Health/Fitness and Beauty

<b>Anytime Fitness</b>	605-224-4011	Pierre	Receive a free two-week mini-membership.
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### Home/Garden

<b>Slumberland Furniture</b>	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
<b>Lee Real Estate</b>	605-222-6003	Perre	Receive a FREE Comparable Market Analysis for real estate properties, which gives members current market values for home, land and commercial properties.

### Services

<b>Inman's Water Technologies</b>	605-224-5111	Pierre	Receive a 10% 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.
<b>Olson Plumbing Inc.</b>	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
<b>Small Engine House</b>	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor

### Sports/Recreation

<b>Teton River Traders Gun Shop LLC</b>	605-224-1371	Ft. Pierre	2% discount. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discount.
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### Retail

<b>Fastenal</b>	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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# What's That Green Thingy in My Yard?



**Valerie Marso**  
Office Manager

You've seen those green metal boxes before, but do you know what they are? They could be an underground transformer that provides power to you and your neighbor, or it could be a meter pedestal that tracks your usage. These boxes pose no danger, but they must be recognized and respected for the electrical equipment they contain.

Do not open, tamper with or obstruct access to them. If there is any damage, such as a hole or broken lock, warning stickers missing or anything out of the ordinary, immediately report it to us. If you hit one DO NOT try to move it back.

While some homeowners consider these green boxes an eye-sore, it is important not to try to cover them up so linemen are able to maintain our equipment as needed. Do not bury, install fences around or plant immediately



around electrical boxes in an effort to disguise them. These barriers may make the cabinets difficult to find and block access, should routine maintenance need done or an emergency occur. It is important not to landscape around meter pedestals or underground transformers. A minimum clearance of at least 10 feet will

allow linemen enough room to work on equipment.

Teach your children never to touch, climb or play on any green box. Also, to never put fingers, sticks, or other objects through cracks.

It's important to check with Oahe Electric before planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems and digging where it might damage underground lines. We recommend that you call 811 at least two full business days before you dig for a site assessment and marking before proceeding with projects that might disrupt utility service.

Touching an intact green box won't hurt you, but if it is damaged and you don't realize it, it can be just as dangerous as a fallen power line. And some do get damaged from vehicles running into them, being hit by lawn mowers or being used to mount nonelectrical equipment on. Do NOT attach anything to our equipment. It will be removed.

Stay safe around the big green boxes and remember to report any damaged equipment for everyone's safety!





State run boat checks and washing stations aim to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels, in South Dakota.

## Zebra Mussels and Their Impact on the Missouri River

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdra.coop

The Missouri River in South Dakota, renowned for its outstanding recreational areas, fishing holes and scenic campgrounds, draws a wide swath of tourists from around the world. However, these welcoming public waters have become the home of one unwelcome intruder—the infamous zebra mussel.

Endemic to southeastern Europe, the zebra mussel made its journey to the United States Great Lakes in the '80s as an unlikely stowaway, clinging to the hulls of large ships and barges. Since their arrival, the mussels have proliferated across the Midwest, spreading from one river system to the next.

So how can a mollusk, merely the size of a fingernail, inflict millions of

dollars in economic damage to local recreation, agriculture and hydroelectric power generation? Martin Goding, Gavins Point Dam maintenance and operations manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, explains that one zebra mussel can spawn more than a million eggs in a season, overrunning the local ecosystem. Once established, the mussels latch onto every viable surface in the water—they envelop pipes, ruin beaches and disrupt hydroelectric dams.

In 2015, local governments detected South Dakota's first infestation of zebra mussels in Lewis and Clark Lake. Goding says this discovery ignited a fierce battle against the invasive species.

“We are in the war to eradicate the zebra mussel, but I don't think we're ever going to completely eliminate them,” said Goding. “They are multiplying faster than we can get rid of them.”



Zebra Mussels completely envelop Gavins Point Dam's water gates, adding up to an additional 30 tons of weight.





With few effective treatments at their disposal, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been forced to adjust to operating within a river infested with mussels. The change has significantly

increased the maintenance costs associated with running Gavins Point Dam. Pipes, essential for cooling the dam as it produces electricity, now require routine disassembly and cleaning. Over the course of six months of warm weather, the dam's lakeside gates collect an additional 30 tons of weight from the relentless accumulation of zebra mussel shells and the debris they carry.

"We have spent a million and a half dollars over the last five years just in maintenance to deal with this invasive species—and that's not even counting the cost of materials," said Goding. "Zebra mussels have really impacted the operation and turned maintenance into a nightmare."

Beyond maintenance, zebra mussels have also disrupted power generation. Outbreaks of zebra mussels within

the dam's infrastructure have resulted in unscheduled and forced outages, interrupting an energy source that has been historically reliable.

"One could safely say that Gavin Point Dam has lost a million dollars in power generation over the last five years," said Goding.

Since the initial invasion in 2015, some strategies have emerged to mitigate damage from the invasive species. The introduction of UV lights and the addition of strainers have curbed the presence of zebra mussels within the dam. Even still, the mussels have continued their spread northward through the Missouri River to Lake Sharpe near Pierre, S.D.

According to Goding, the experiences at Gavins Point Dam serve as a stark warning for dams and water systems yet to face infestation.

"Lewis and Clark Lake is beyond prevention," said Goding. "We have crossed that bridge and they are not going away."



# Your 2023 Annual Meeting

All registered members will receive a \$35 BILL CREDIT!

**DRIVE THRU**

**TIME:** Come and go from 3-5 p.m.

**LOCATIONS:** (see right for maps and more details)

- **Blunt:** Oahe Electric Headquarters
- **Onida:** Sully Buttes High School
- **Pierre:** North of Hwy 14/83, off 293rd Ave./Williams St.

Register, receive cooperative reports, get your bill credit and head for home! That quick and easy!

**IN PERSON**

**TIME:** Registration and refreshments from 3-5 p.m., followed by a business meeting at 5:15 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Sully Buttes High School Gym, Onida, S.D.

**ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS WILL BE ENTERED INTO DOOR PRIZE DRAWINGS FOR THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS' WORTH OF ADDITIONAL BILL CREDITS!**

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Saturday, September 16, 2023**  
 Your Attendance Choice:  
**IN PERSON or DRIVE THRU**

## MEETING LOCATIONS



**Blunt Location**  
 Turn south off HWY 14/83 onto S. Commercial St.  
 Proceed through Oahe Electric parking lot to register.  
 Exit onto HWY 14/83 via S. Canford St.

**Onida Location**  
 Turn south off E. Dogwood Ave  
 Proceed through SBHS parking lot to register.  
 Exit onto S. 11<sup>th</sup> St.



**Pierre Location**  
 Turn north off HWY 14/83 onto N. 293<sup>rd</sup> Ave./Williams St. (north of HWY across from Titan Machinery) – look for the Oahe Electric trucks.  
 Turn where indicated to register.  
 Exit onto N. 293<sup>rd</sup> Ave./Williams St.

### 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](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.

# Wind Energy is Soaring

## Wind is generating more electricity from larger turbines – here's what's next.

**Paul Wesslund**

Wind energy is big and getting bigger, in more ways than one.

In the U.S., wind currently generates twice the amount of electricity it did five years ago and provides 10% of the nation's electricity – a share expected to grow to more than 25% by 2050.

The basics behind wind power technology is a tall pole with rotor blades at the top. If you've taken a road trip across the Midwest, you've likely seen huge fields of those turbines, with white rotor blades spinning lazily around. But they're actually not lazy at all, and that's another way wind energy is big – in physical size.

### Bigger turbines make more electricity

Wind turbine blades seem to circle slowly due to an optical illusion resulting from how big they are. The tips of those rotors are likely to be moving at more than 150 miles per hour.

There's a reason for that size. Wind turbines are getting bigger and taller to capture more wind high in the air. The average wind turbine height has increased from about 190 feet in 2000 to nearly 300 feet today – as tall as the Statue of Liberty. During that time, the size of the rotor blades has doubled, making a circle more than 400 feet in diameter. That size growth has tripled the amount of electricity a wind turbine can produce, lowering the cost of wind power.

One wind turbine can generate enough electricity to power about 900 homes, and

they're being installed at a rate of about 3,000 a year. Today, there are more than 72,000 turbines in the U.S., primarily located in the middle part of the country. But that's about to change.

Federal and state governments are encouraging developers to build wind turbines out in the ocean, where winds are more constant and the rotors could be even larger. Sixteen projects have been proposed and one estimate shows there's enough potential for offshore wind to supply nearly all our electricity. Offshore wind turbines are generally even larger than those used on land.

### Protecting birds from wind turbines

Bigger sizes can cause problems, though, like transporting rotor blades that average more than 100 feet long. Delivering those monsters can cost more than \$30,000 in finding the right truck for the oversized load, planning the route, obtaining permits, checking clearances and recruiting escort vehicles. Researchers are already working on those problems. One solution is flexible blades that could be carried on three train cars. The blades could bend to allow the train to maneuver around curves.

As the wind industry has evolved, attention has been focused on preventing bird deaths caused from them flying into spinning rotors. This poses a dilemma for wildlife and nature groups, who are generally supportive of renewable energy. The National Audubon Society, for example, supports wind power as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but

urges careful planning to locate wind farms in ways that minimize risk to wildlife.

Besides large onshore and offshore wind farms, wind turbines can be used as a distributed energy resource. With support from the U.S. Department of Energy, there have been significant innovations in smaller-scale wind turbines to integrate some of the improvements seen in larger models, including longer blades to capture more wind and advanced composite materials. Smaller turbines can even be used to help power homes, farms, schools and businesses.

Across the U.S., several electric cooperatives and other rural utilities have deployed one or more large-scale wind turbines in their local service territories as a local utility-scale resource to supplement their wholesale power supply. These kinds of local resources can help boost resiliency, hedge or reduce power supply costs, and support local economic development.

We'll have to watch as wind energy and the technologies that power it evolve. For wind power, there will be opportunities for growth at both smaller and larger scales, as well as on land and offshore.





# Drone Spraying

## A Modern Tool in Today's Agriculture

Scott Waltman

As modern agriculture continues to evolve, drones are one of the newer tools farmers can use to help their land and crops.

The hovering, unmanned aircraft can be handy for small areas and places it's difficult for traditional spraying options to get to, according to those who offer the service to those in the ag sector.

Drones aren't the weapon of choice to spray chemicals on 1,500 acres of corn or soybeans, but that day is likely coming, said Derek Ver Helst, who operates Dakota Unmanned Aerial in Brandt.

Closer to the coasts, drones are already used for a multitude of purposes that aren't just fun and shooting videos. They are only going to become more prominent in ag-heavy states like the Dakotas, he said.

"The possibilities are pretty much

just limited by your imagination," Ver Helst said.

He said his background as an agronomist piqued his interest in spraying with drones. Dakota Unmanned Aerial is a side hustle he started about two years ago. He works as a senior conservation agronomist for AgSpire.

Nick Williams had a background in agriculture working for CHS Cooperative and selling farm equipment before starting Williams Drones southeast of Parkston in August 2020. Business has been good, he said, estimating that it has doubled each year.

"It's really taken off, it continues to grow," Williams said.

He and Ver Helst agree that farmers have been receptive to the relatively new option, willing to give it a try when the project isn't too big.

Williams said he does mostly ag-related work. In late July, he was staying busy with fungicide applications.

Drones are great near shelter belts and around wet areas. Those are places



that are hard for a land rig or spray plane to get to. Drones work better because they are smaller and more agile, he said.

A route is mapped out and the drone reads that information and flies mostly autonomously, Williams said.

He sets the height, speed, gallons of application per acre and swath width. Once a drone is in the air, it does almost all of the work, though Williams said he can control the height a little, if needed.

Drones have sensors and other features so they don't run into trees, equipment, wind turbines or structures, he said.

Depending on the amount of land to be sprayed, it can take longer to map a field than to spray it, Ver Helst said.

His drones carry 10 liters, but others have a capacity of 40 liters, he said. When a drone runs out of chemical, it returns back to the operator, who puts on a new tank, changes the battery and sends it back out, Ver Helst said. The drone will pick up spraying right where it left off, he said.

In 2016, land-grant university researchers and educators started work to increase the use of drones in agriculture, according to information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

That work continues today. It includes identifying and evaluating the most user-friendly and cost-effective drone platforms and sensors, according to the USDA.

Some drone operators offer swarm spraying, Van Helst and Williams said.

For instance, there could be five drones programmed to follow the same grid over a field, pasture or slough working in unison, Van Helst said. As one runs out of spray, it returns for a new tank of chemical and battery until the job is finished.

Van Helst said he doesn't do a lot of spraying. Most of it is on pastures.

But, he said, he has done some work in orchards and vineyards where grapes are grown.

Williams has branched out a little more. Last year, he said, he was hired to do a dust-control project at the Sanford Underground Research Facility in the Black Hills. That is the former Homestake gold mine near Lead.

And both men say drones can be used to combat one of South Dakota's least-popular commodities – mosquitos.

Drones can be used to spray for skeeters on fairgrounds, when there's a big city gathering and even in a residential area.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, they were even used to shower stadiums with antibacterial spray, Van Helst said.

One drone operator in Texas was contacted to see if drones could be used to drop fish food into a pond, Williams said.

He said his drones can cover about 20 acres an hour, though some can do 30 hours an acre. And he expects the new drones released next year will be able to spray 40 hours in an acre.

For large fields, a land rig or a spray plane is still a better bet, Williams said. A traditional ground sprayer can probably cover 70 acres an hour, he said.

Van Helt said his T-40 drone can handle about 100 acres a day.

One challenge in getting started is getting all of the licensing needed from the Federal Aviation Administration.

He spent about two years testing and writing exemptions and working through the legalities.

Commercial drone operators need a remote pilot certificate from the FAA. Another license is needed to dispense chemicals from a flying aircraft, Van Helst said.

He said he has procured 14 FAA exemptions and will need two more next year.

That's why some drone operators hire a business to navigate that process. That's the route Williams took.

Being a drone operator can be fun or frustrating, just like any other job, he said. He just checks the forecast and hopes it holds. Trying to spray when the wind is 20 mph or more just isn't going to work, he said.

Even so, Van Helst said, drones are a fantastic tool. Ground rigs and spray planes will always be needed, and drones are just one more option for farmers to tap.

"There's a right time and a right place for everything," he said.



# MINUTES OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF OAHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## August 20, 2022

The seventy-first Annual Meeting of the members of the Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter called the Cooperative) was held at the Sully Buttes High School in Onida (Sully County South Dakota) on the 20th day of August, 2022, pursuant to provisions of the bylaws and upon notice having been given by the secretary to all of the Members of the Cooperative.

A drive-thru format was offered in Blunt (Hughes County South Dakota), Onida (Sully County South Dakota), and Pierre (Hughes County South Dakota) in addition to the in-person meeting. Registration and polls were declared open at 3:00 p.m. Members received printed cooperative reports and ballots to cast their vote for the director election as they registered at all drive-thru locations and the in-person meeting. Registration ended and the polls closed promptly at 5:00 p.m.

There were two candidates for the one office of Director for a three-year term, James Feller of Blunt, South Dakota, and Troy Weibe of Pierre, South Dakota. Upon the closing of the polls, the canvassing committee members certified by their Certificate of Election, which is attached and made part of these minutes, declared James Feller to be elected to the office of Director for a three-year term.

The business meeting was called to order at 5:15pm by President Kirk Yackley, who presided.

President Yackley declared a quorum with 471 members registered.

The invocation was performed by Pastor John Fette.

On behalf of the cooperative, Treasurer Ryan Noyes presented Years of Service awards to the following individuals: Ross Sperry, Director, 15 years; Dan Lettau, Journeyman Lineman,

20 years; and James Feller, Director, 25 years

Secretary Ross Sperry presented the Proof of Mailing and the Count of Membership (2,141) on the date of the annual meeting.

President Yackley called for approval, without reading, of the minutes of the annual meeting of September 18, 2021, as printed in the annual meeting programs. A motion was duly made and seconded that the reading of the minutes of September 18, 2021, be waived and that the minutes be approved. Motion carried.

In video presentations, Office Manager Marso reported on the meaning of cooperative membership, as well as the financial condition of the cooperative. Operations Manager Eldridge reported on the projects the operations department worked on in the last year.

General Manager Jordan Lamb then took the podium, reported on the cooperative, as well as East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

President Yackley called for new business, of which there was none, after which he called for unfinished business, of which there was none.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

### NOTICE:

Oahe Electric Cooperative's annual meeting is accessible to the handicapped. If special assistance is needed, please contact Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt SD 57522 or call 1-800-640-6243.

## Official Notice: Annual Meeting of the Members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The annual meeting of the members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held at the Sully Buttes High School in Onida, SD, as well as drive thru locations in Blunt, SD and Pierre, SD, from 3 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. on September 16, 2023, to take action on the following matters:

1. Review of the minutes of the previous meeting.
2. Presentation and consideration of reports, officers, directors and committees.
3. Election of directors.

In conjunction with the election of directors, for a term of three years, the following members have been nominated for director by petition, pursuant to the bylaws:

For term of three years:

- Ryan Noyes, Pierre, SD
- Kirk Yackley, Onida, SD

4. All other business that may properly come before the meeting

# Know Your Director

## Ryan Noyes



1. **How long have you been a member of Oahe Electric Cooperative?**  
I have been a member of Oahe Electric for 8 years.
2. **What is your occupational background?**  
I served 10 years in the SD National Guard. My background in education involves teaching middle school science and coaching high school wrestling in Pierre for 16 years, 2 years in Lyman County as the elementary and middle school principal, 8 years as the elementary principal at Buchanan Elementary School, and this year, I will move to Riggs High School to be an assistant principal. I am starting my 27th year in education.
3. **Tell us about your family:**  
My wife, Ann is a 5th grade math teacher at Kennedy Elementary School. We have two daughters: Maria and Ellie. Maria recently finished sonography school and has accepted a position in Spirit Lake, Iowa. Ellie graduated from high school this year and will be attending college at Wayne State in Nebraska. Ellie's plans to major in Business.
4. **What is your community involvement?**  
Much of my time is spent working on school related items. I continue to help with youth wrestling and coach the SD AAU National Team during the summer.
5. **Do you have previous board experience?**  
I have been the Chairman for the Teacher Placement Center for over 20 years. I have attended school board meetings once per month for the past 10 years. In addition to my time on Oahe Electric's board, I also serve on the East River

Electric's Board of Directors.

6. **What are the important issues that you believe the Board of Directors needs to be focused on in the next few years for the cooperative?**  
We need to do all we can to honor our mission, which states the need to provide member/owners and the public with extraordinary value through competitively priced services and products and to enhance the quality of life and create growth opportunities in our service area.
7. **Thinking beyond the cooperative and the utility business, what do you think are some of the biggest challenges our local area faces?**  
Many South Dakota communities are facing a shortage of affordable housing and limited or very expensive health-care options. In addition, many local businesses are looking for help but have not been able to fill positions. Another challenge is that the cost of living continues to rise, and many entry level jobs don't pay enough for young families to get ahead. Finally, I read an article that stated how those wanting to get a start in agriculture today vs 1991 has gone up in cost by 500%. Clearly, buying land and livestock with today's prices would be difficult for those starting out.
8. **What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?**  
One of the pillars of Oahe Electric's Cooperative Principles is Concern for Community. It is here where the board focuses on member needs and sustainable development. Being interested in cooperatives and wanting to be involved, has inspired me to serve on Oahe Electric's board. I don't take lightly the opportunity to be a voice for the members, and to work cooperatively with the other board members to develop policies that grow the mission of Oahe Electric and move it progressively into the future.

## Kirk Yackley



1. **How long have you been a member of Oahe Electric Cooperative?**  
42 years
2. **What is your occupational background?**  
Farmer all my life
3. **Tell us about your family:**  
Jackie and I have been married 43 years. We have 3 boys and 1 girl who are out on their own and 2 teenage boys at home. Jackie works at a bank.
4. **What is your community involvement?**  
Serve on the cemetery board, have served on the Onida City Council. Member of the Lions Club. Served on Church Board. Support kids' extracurricular activities.
5. **Do you have previous board experience?**  
Same as above - Serve on the cemetery board, have served

on the Onida City Council. Member of the Lions Club. Served on Church Board. Support kids' extracurricular activities.

6. **What are the important issues that you believe the Board of Directors needs to be focused on in the next few years for the cooperative?**  
The changes in electric use (i.e., electric cars) and the amount of use that is increasing. Supplying this demand in an economical way. Key the staff and linemen we have and finding good replacements as they retire.
7. **Thinking beyond the cooperative and the utility business, what do you think are some of the biggest challenges our local area faces?**  
Local schools and the quality of our educational systems. Quality jobs for our young people is always important.
8. **What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?**  
A challenge by a retiring board member to "step up and be a good representative for the members." It took some time to learn the role of a board member, and the education is an ongoing thing.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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



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.

**SEPT 2**  
**Hidewood Valley Barn Dance**  
7 p.m.  
47236 183rd St  
Clear Lake, SD

**SEPT 4**  
**Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show**  
Steam Whistle Blows  
1 p.m.  
47236 183rd St  
Clear Lake, SD

**SEPT 8-10**  
**James Valley Threshing & Tractor Show**  
World's Largest Steam Traction Engine  
Andover, SD  
605-868-3242

**SEPT 9-10**  
**Old Iron - Fall Harvest Festival**  
Delmont, SD

**SEPT 10**  
**10th Annual Black Hill Beer Run**  
Spearfish Campground Pavilion  
Spearfish, SD  
605-642-7730

**SEPT 10**  
**100th Anniversary of Little Brown Church**  
11 a.m.  
Service, Potluck & Auction  
West of Hayes  
Hayes, SD

**SEPT 11-17**  
**Traditions & Olivia American Legion**  
Olivia, MN  
320-523-1000

**SEPT 11-17**  
**HOBO Days**  
Live Music-Fun  
Olivia, MN  
320-523-1000

**SEPT 16**  
**Midland Appreciation Day**  
Theme: Automobiles  
1:30 p.m.  
Midland, SD

**SEPT 17**  
**St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Church Bazaar**  
12 p.m.  
Hoven, SD

**SEPT 22-24**  
**Coal Springs Threshing Bee**  
Meadow, SD  
605-788-2229

**SEPT 23**  
**Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival**  
9 a.m.  
Springfield Community Building  
Springfield, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**Day of Wellness**  
10 a.m.  
Sturgis Armory  
Sturgis, SD

**SEPT 29-30**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-941-4958

**OCT 6-7**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vendor Show**  
Philip, SD  
605-441-1060

**OCT 7**  
**Spirit of Dakota Award**  
Huron Event Center  
Huron, SD  
605-352-6073

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