

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**

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Rescuing Animals

Pages 12-13

Photo by Frank Turner

Mini Split Systems: Efficient Solutions for Versatile Climate Control



Valerie Marso
Chief Financial Officer

Mini split systems, also known as ductless mini splits, have gained popularity as a flexible and energy-efficient solution for heating and cooling. Unlike traditional HVAC systems that rely on extensive ductwork, mini splits consist of a compact outdoor compressor/condenser unit and one or more indoor air-handling units, connected by a conduit. This setup allows for targeted climate control in specific areas or “zones” of a building.

Key Applications and Benefits

1. Home Additions and Renovations

Mini splits are ideal for spaces where extending ductwork is impractical or expensive—like newly added sunrooms, garages, or attic conversions. They offer precise temperature control without major construction.

2. Older Homes Without Ductwork

In historic homes where installing ducts would compromise structure or aesthetics, ductless systems provide a modern, minimally invasive alternative.

3. Multi-Zone Cooling and Heating

With the ability to control temperatures independently in different rooms, mini splits are excellent for households with varying comfort preferences or rooms that are used infrequently.

4. Supplementing Existing HVAC Systems

If certain rooms are always too hot or cold, mini splits can serve as a supplemental system to boost comfort without overloading the central HVAC unit.



5. Small Apartments and Studios

For compact spaces, mini splits offer a quiet, efficient, and unobtrusive way to manage climate, often with better energy savings compared to window units or portable heaters.

Advantages

- **Energy Efficiency:** Mini splits use inverter-driven compressors, which adjust power usage based on demand, reducing energy waste.
- **Improved Air Quality:** Many models include multi-stage filtration to reduce dust, allergens, and bacteria.
- **Easy Installation:** With no ductwork required, installation is often quicker and less invasive.
- **Quiet Operation:** Indoor units are typically very quiet, making them suitable for bedrooms, offices, or media rooms.

Mini split systems offer a smart solution for a range of climate control challenges AND may qualify for a rebate. Whether for a new space, an old home, or a specific comfort need, they provide reliable, efficient performance without the complexities of traditional ducted systems

See rebates for mini split systems and more on page 10.

New Faces at Your Cooperative

If you're out and about in our service area this summer, you might notice a couple of new faces! Please join us in welcoming Rowdy Menning and Justin Trebbe, our summer interns at Oahe Electric.

Both Rowdy and Justin plan on enrolling in the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program at Mitchell Technical College. In the meantime, they're getting hands-on experience alongside our linemen and learning what it means to serve a community through reliable electric service.

We're excited to have them on board and look forward to watching them grow in the industry.

Welcome, Rowdy and Justin!



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

Board of Directors:

James Feller – Assistant Secretary
605.962.6207
Brandon Haag – President
605.215.6758
Ryan Noyes – Treasurer
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Our Mission

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



Lineman's Lens

At Oahe Electric, safety is more than a policy — it's a commitment. Each month, employees participate in safety meetings that cover a wide range of important topics, from CPR and first aid to office safety, bloodborne pathogens, flagger training, and climber certification. These sessions help ensure that all staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Recently, Oahe Electric linemen completed their annual pole-top and bucket rescue training. This critical hands-on exercise prepares linemen to respond quickly and effectively if a fellow worker is injured while working at height. The goal: safely bring an injured coworker from the top of a utility pole or out of a bucket truck to the ground, where first aid can be administered until emergency responders arrive.

One by one, each lineman gears up, climbs a 35-foot pole, and practices rescuing a 175-pound training dummy. The dummy must be properly secured and safely lowered to the ground, simulating a real-life emergency. On the ground, teammates stand ready to deliver emergency care, just as they would in an actual incident.

Bucket rescue training focuses on operating the backup controls located on the truck body to lower the bucket safely if the worker inside is incapacitated.

This training is not just a routine exercise — it's a life-saving skill. Pole-top and bucket rescue are vital components of our safety program, reinforcing the importance of using tools and techniques correctly every single day. At Oahe Electric, we're proud of our linemen and staff who take safety seriously — for themselves, for their teammates, and for the communities they serve.

Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

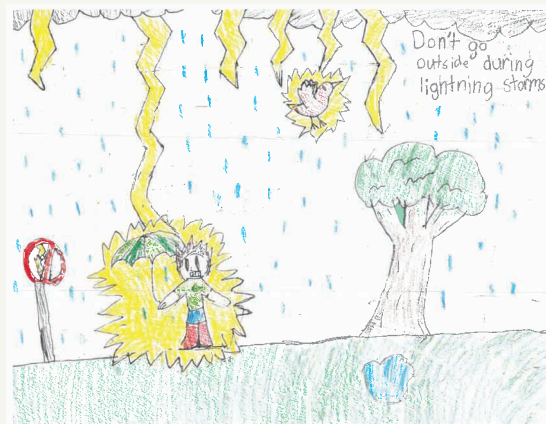
Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child’s bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



"Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, S.D.

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

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

McCormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Construction Season in Full Swing at Oahe Electric



Matt Eldridge
Chief Operations Officer

With the arrival of spring, construction season is ramping up across our service area — and things are no different here at Oahe Electric. We've partnered with K & H Electric to install 12 miles of underground three-phase power lines, marking a significant upgrade in reliability and capacity for our system.

Our first major project is underway in Sully County on 190th Street, just south of our Okobojo Substation. We're converting a single-phase overhead power line to a three-phase underground line, which will create a critical tie line between the Okobojo and Logan Substations. This will enhance system reliability and improve service in the area.

Another key project is taking place on Highway 1804 north of Pierre, where we're upgrading an existing three-phase overhead line to underground. This stretch covers approximately five miles and will significantly increase the durability and safety of the infrastructure in that region.

The remaining two miles of underground line installations are spread across our service territory. These are targeted replacements for aging underground lines that have begun to show signs of failure, ensuring continued dependable service for our members.

With these large-scale upgrades and ongoing new service installations, the Oahe Electric crew has a busy summer ahead.

If you are in need of a new electrical service or looking to upgrade your existing service, don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact us at 1-800-640-6243.

Operation Round Up® Disburses Funds

Members of the Operation Round Up® Board of Trustees at Oahe Electric recently awarded \$8,000 in funding to four local organizations, continuing a long-standing tradition of giving back to the community.

Operation Round Up® is funded by Oahe Electric members who voluntarily round up their monthly electric bills. On average, members contribute a combined total of \$850 each month, with individual annual contributions ranging from just \$0.12 to \$11.88. The program is overseen by a four-member Board of Trustees.

This year, four organizations submitted funding requests totaling \$10,000. The board granted a total of \$8,000, distributed among the following groups:

- Citizens Involvement Council, dba Pierre Area Referral Service – To assist with utility bill payments for those in need
- Community Organized Resources for Educating Youth – To help fund the Freshman Impact program
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe – To support soup kitchen operations
- Sotera Youth and Family Services – To assist with shelter operation costs

Since the program began distributing funds in 2009, Operation Round Up® has returned \$161,800 to the community — one small donation at a time, making a big difference. We're proud of our members for continuing to make a difference where it matters most.



We Want to Hear From You!

Oahe Electric Cooperative is always looking for ways to better serve our members — and that starts with your feedback. We invite you to take a short, confidential survey to share your thoughts on how we're doing and how we can improve.

Your input will help shape the future of how electric cooperatives like ours serve their communities. The survey takes just 5–10 minutes to complete and is based on your personal experiences with Oahe Electric.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to share your thoughts — your voice matters!



YOU GOTTA HAVE A FIDDLE IN THE BAND

Keeping Old-Time Music Alive One Jam at a Time

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdea.coop

“If you’re gonna play in Texas, you gotta have a fiddle in the band,” the classic Alabama song goes — and South Dakota is no exception. The Fiddlers of South Dakota, a group of traveling fiddle enthusiasts and musicians, carry that spirit, bringing the joys of acoustic music and an old-time charm to parades, festivals and hometown celebrations across the state through the summer months.

One of these traveling musicians, Ken Nelson of South Shore who joined the group in 2010, describes the group as a “loose-knit group of people who like to get together and jam.” In total, the group has more than 30 members from eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. And it’s not just fiddlers — the ensemble includes other acoustic instruments, including mandolin, bass, banjo and harmonica.

According to Nelson, the group’s repertoire draws from old-time traditions — breakdowns, waltzes, reels and jigs — the kind of music once played on porches, at barn dances and around campfires.

The Fiddlers of South Dakota
playing old-time tunes at
Newton Hills State Park.
Photo submitted by Ken Nelson

“You could call it old-time music,” Nelson said. “It’s not really bluegrass or folk music. It’s hard to describe it until you hear it.”

Whether the song is an Irish jig or a Croatian polka, Nelson said the music never fails to connect with the audience.

Nelson said that connection is what drives these musicians to travel hundreds of miles to gigs across the state — from Fort Sisseton’s Historic Festival to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet, to Prairie Village’s Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree in Madison. It’s not a living, he said, but more of a passion — a way to stay connected to music, to community, and to his fellow fiddlers.

“We play everywhere we can,” he said. “And everybody enjoys it. We usually only make enough money to pay for the gas but that’s all we really care about.”

“Once We played for Potato Days over in Clark,” Nelson laughed. “We were set up right next to the potato wrestling pit. We had to make sure we were sitting far enough back so that when mashed potato started flying, we didn’t get splashed.”

The Fiddlers of South Dakota expect to perform next at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet in July. Nelson said the public is not only welcome to attend the show, but acoustic string players of all ages are encouraged to join the organization’s jam sessions and informal performances such as at Luce Cabin at Lake Herman State Park or after their performance in Fort Sisseton.

“We’re always trying to incorporate new players into the group,” he said. “Sometimes young students come and play with us, and they’re always welcome. It’s fun and humbling to have young players, sometimes as young as 10 or 11, join in, because, if you don’t include the young people, it’s not going to last.”



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdfa.coop

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”

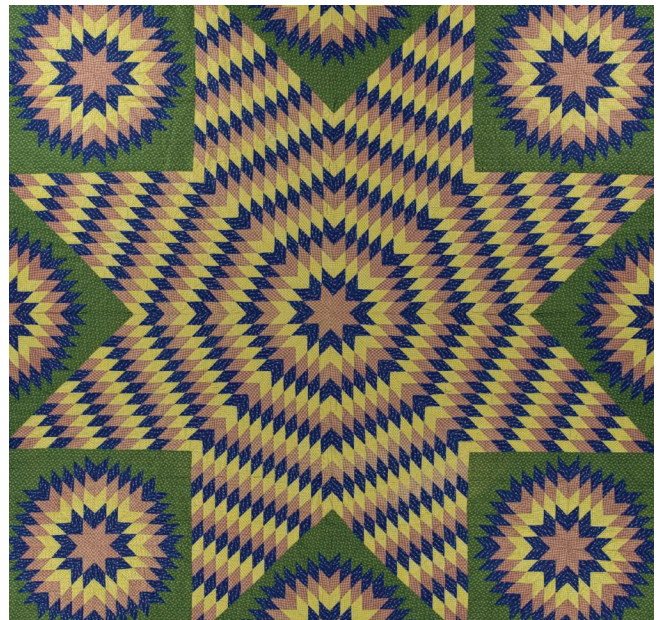


Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."

Oahe Electric Members' Incentives & Rebates

Effective 08/2024

ELECTRIC HEATING SYSTEMS

All heating equipment must be new. Members are eligible for one heating rebate once every 10 years per structure. (One additional rebate for ductless heat pump/ minisplit under 2 tons is allowed)

1. Electric Furnace OR Electric Boiler OR Resistance Heat (7.5 KW minimum)

- 100% efficient
- \$200 Rebate
- 5.5¢ per kwh for heating usage

2. Air Source Heat Pump / Ductless Air Source Heat Pump (Minisplit) WITH Electric Furnace Backup (Must be 2 ton or above)

- 250% efficient
- \$600 Rebate
- 5.5¢ per kwh for heating and cooling usage
- Must meet the DOE manufacturing standards for HSPF efficiency

3. Ductless Air Source Heat Pump (Minisplit under 2 tons) - must have existing submeter or qualifying new build.

- 250% efficient
- \$300 Rebate
- 5.5¢ per kwh for heating usage
- Must meet the DOE manufacturing standards for HSPF efficiency

4. Geothermal Source Heat Pump

- 350% efficient
- \$600 Rebate
- 5.5¢ per kwh for heating and cooling usage

SUB METERS

All electric heating and cooling systems will have their usage recorded by a sub meter. Oahe Electric must be notified by member or electrician of the need for sub meter installation.

- Sub meter must be installed on the outside of the structure.
- If breaker to sub meter is turned off, all usage will be billed at the regular rate of 9¢ per kwh, instead of the reduced rate of 5.5¢ per kwh
- Air conditioning must be controlled by load management to receive reduced rate of 5.5 cents per kwh. Minisplits are not able to be controlled.

WATER HEATERS

All water heaters must have a lifetime warranty or a 10-year manufacturer warranty for tank leakage, a minimum of 50-gallon capacity and be controlled by load management. Members are only eligible for rebates once every 10 years per structure.

- \$6 per gallon rebate
- \$4 monthly bill credit

COMMERCIAL LIGHTING

Commercial accounts are eligible when replacing less efficient lighting with more efficient lighting. Must have a minimum of 250 watts in lighting reduction to qualify.

- 20 cents per watt reduction rebate
- Maximum payment per structure is \$1,000

THIRD-PARTY IRRIGATION AND/OR GRAIN DRYER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Must be able to receive notice regarding load control via email, text or voice with less than a 15-minute delay. Also must provide Oahe Electric with customer bypass information.

- One-time, \$750 rebate per device

Cove Heat

Oahe Electric Cooperative is offering great deals on our remaining Cove Heat inventory!

Call Oahe Electric at 1.800.640.6243 to learn more!

Oahe Electric to Hold Director Elections

The annual meeting of the members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held on September 13, 2025.

During the annual meeting, the members present will be electing two board members to fill two, three-year position. Any individual who satisfies the qualifications and complies with the nominating procedures set forth to the right, should be prepared to:

- Attend regular monthly board meetings held at Oahe Electric headquarters in Blunt, SD.
- Attend annual and other special meetings as needed
- Attend director seminars or other outside meetings that provide necessary education on matters related to financing, electric rates, power requirements and legal issues of concern to rural electric members.
- Provide an important and necessary link between member-owners and management staff of the Cooperative.
- Serve as an extension of the rights and responsibilities of the cooperative member-owner. Joining with other directors of the cooperative, they try with honesty, consistency, and good conscience to make decisions and set policy for the cooperative which are in the best interests of the cooperative and the membership as a whole.

Petitions are available at the headquarters in Blunt. Should there be any questions concerning the bylaw procedures or if you would like to request a petition, feel free to call or stop in at the office.

Petitions are due by July 30, 2025.

Bylaws Governing Director Elections

Section 4. Qualifications. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative who:

1. It is not a member and a bona fide resident of the area served by the Cooperative; or
2. Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative; or
3. Is an employee of the Cooperative, or who has, within five years of the proposed election or appointment, been an employee of the Cooperative.

The determination of residency, as required by this section, shall be determined by application of objective criteria to be set forth in policy adopted by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Nominations. Any Fifteen (15) or more members acting together may make nominations by petition received at the principal office of the Cooperative not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the principal office of the Cooperative. The Secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting, or separately, but at least 10 days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated by petition. There shall be no nominations from the floor unless no petition has been filed for a vacancy. In that event only, nomination shall be taken from the floor for that vacancy, and nominations shall not be closed until at least one minute has passed during which no additional nomination has been made. No member may nominate more than one candidate.

Your Co-op's Thank You Notes

On behalf of LifeScape, the employees of East River Electric Power Cooperative would like to thank you for your support and generous donation for the 61st Annual LifeScape Benefit. This year was a great success! The support and dedication of businesses like yours is truly appreciated, not only by the East River employees, but also your community. With your help, over \$37,000 will be donated to LifeScape.

We look forward to your continued support for this worthy organization. The funds we raise help local children lead fulfilling lives. We are looking forward to next year's 62nd annual benefit!

Sincerely,

East River Employees' Committee

Dear Oahe Electric,

Thank you for awarding me your scholarship! I am extremely grateful for this scholarship and I look forward to pushing myself to succeed. Thanks to your generosity, I will be attending USD next year to major in Health Sciences, on the PA Path. I cannot express my gratitude enough!

Sincerely,

Grace Hanten

Thank you so much for awarding me your scholarship. This generous amount of money will be extremely helpful in my future education. I will be studying Medical Biology next year at USD and hope to later practice as a rural physician in South Dakota. This award brings me another step closer to my goal!

Thanks again,

Sara Maher

Dear Oahe Electric, Thank you for the gift certificate for the 1 Stop Travel Plaza that I received at the Member Appreciation Luncheon. I look forward to using it. Thank you for all you do for the members of the cooperative and thanks for keeping the lights on.

Sincerely,

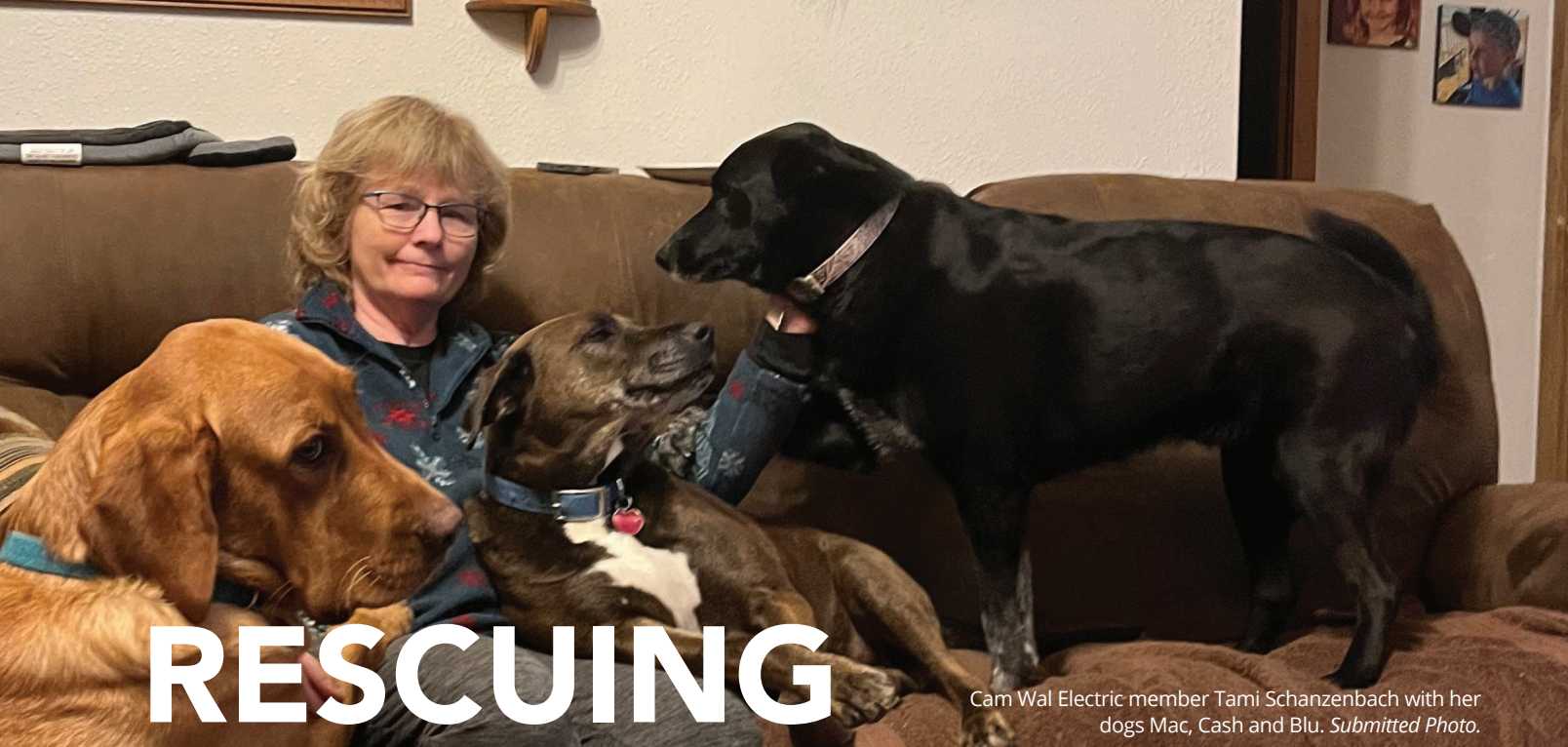
Renae Wolf

Oahe Electric,

Please sincerely thank the board for their acknowledgement and gift to help others.

We appreciate you,

*Corwin Jones
Executive Director
Pierre Area Referral Service (PARS)*



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

"I figured it would be something myself and my children would be up to, and ever since then, I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

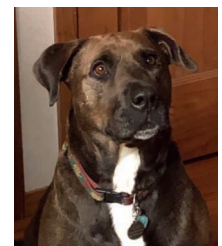
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

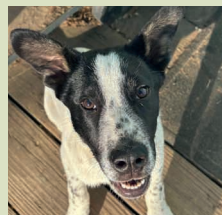
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.

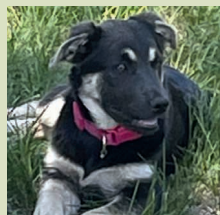


Looking for a new home...

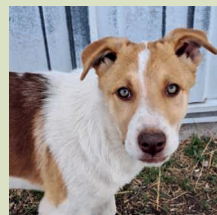
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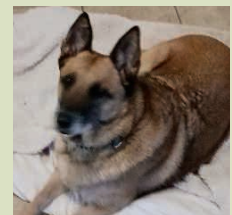
Buddy



Margot



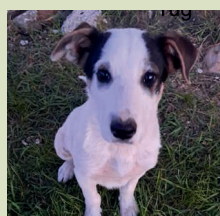
Chopper



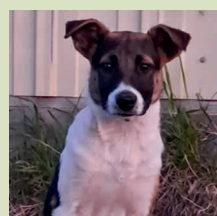
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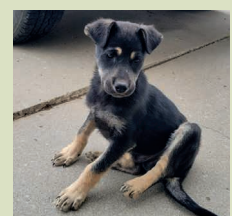
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



Central Electric Cooperative's distribution lines power members' farms and ranches throughout much of Central South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

REMEMBERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

Central South Dakota Rancher Looks Back to Days Before Power

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Near Big Bend Dam in central South Dakota, farmer and rancher Clayton Knippling works the same land his father and grandfather had decades before.

The work he and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons do on the sprawling acre family ranch looks very different than it did back then, though. That's because today the ranch has electricity.

Back in the 1940s and early 1950s,

having electricity was a luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by people in towns and cities, or rural folks who happened to live along major highways. With their homestead several miles northeast of Fort Thompson, the Knippings understood their odds of getting connected to a utility were slim for the time being. Their lives were powered by an old diesel generator out in the barn – enough to keep the kitchen refrigerator humming and a couple of light bulbs lit.

“I remember being told, ‘Shut that

refrigerator door! You're wasting cold air!’” Knippling laughed, thinking back to that overworked generator.

But as soon as the electric cooperative crews visited the ranch, that generator was permanently retired and would never run again.

Knippling thought back to that day in the early 1950s when he was about six years old. He remembers watching the trench-diggers from Tri-County Electric – merged into Central Electric in 2000 – trench their way to each outbuilding. Hours later, he would see those buildings shining bright in the darkness for the first time ever.

Having electricity didn't change the work out in the fields. Knippling said a lot of the work is the same in 2025 as it was in 1955. But back at the homestead, Tri-County Electric brought the Knippling ranch into the

20th century.

“We even had a welder after that,” Knippling recalled. “That took 220 volts, and I don’t think our old generator was putting off that. We could then fix our own iron.”

Electricity was a game-changer for the Knippings’ water needs. Seizing the opportunity, they dug a new, deeper well with an electric pump for better quality water and ran lines out to each building.

“[Before we had electricity] there was a stool and a nail where a tin cup sat, and there was a bucket of water and everybody that came through would drink out of that cup, so if somebody got a cold, we all got it,” Knippling laughed.

“Electricity allowed us to put in a pressure tank and then run the water lines to every house so we weren’t carrying a bucket anymore.”

The ranch also transitioned to all-electric pivot irrigation and pumps along the Missouri River. Today, Knippling Land and Cattle

irrigates 1,300 acres of farm land – an unimaginable figure before there was co-op power.

In the winter, the new electric block heaters for the diesel engines ensured there was always at least one tractor that would start up.

Life was just a little bit brighter, warmer and simpler with co-op power.

An advocate for rural life and progression, Clayton has also served the last 42 years on the board of directors for Midstate Communications, the local member-owned telecom cooperative, in an effort to equalize the disparities between urban and rural life.

“It changed the world back in the ‘50s when electricity came,” Clayton said. “A lot of kids left the farm because it was too rural. If you came from a farm, you didn’t want to come back. After electricity came, it became easier for younger people to stay on the farm.”



Clayton Knippling farms and raises cattle southeast of Fort Thompson on the same ranchland where he grew up, just 15 miles from his childhood home where Tri-County Electric first hooked up their power in the early 1950s.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Pivot irrigation systems, like the one shown here along S.D. Highway 50 southeast of Fort Thompson, use electricity to rotate on a center pivot. Use of the systems can increase yields while reducing wasted water.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

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: _____



JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, SD

Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota

JUNE 20-21

Volunteer Fire Dept. Car Show

Fri. Cruise Night, Sat. Car Show
Marion, SD
Brad Schardin
605-413-5653

JUNE 25-28

Crystal Springs Rodeo

Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28

Buckhorn Rodeo

Britton, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29

Leola Rhubarb Festival

Leola, SD

JUNE 27-29

Bowdle Tower Days

Bowdle, SD

JULY 1-5

106th Annual Black Hills Roundup

Rodeo, Parades, Concerts & Fun
Belle Fourche, SD

JULY 9-12

Aberdeen Senior Games

605-626-7015

JULY 11-12

Frontier Days

White River, SD

JULY 12

39th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K

7 a.m.
Spearfish, SD
605-722-4558

JULY 12

Friendship Days Vendor Market

BBQ Cook Off, Prize Raffle
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
White Lake, SD

JULY 12

Fedora Fire Department Annual Appreciation Day

5 p.m.
Meal, Pie Auction & Bingo
Fedora, SD

JULY 17-20

Danish Days

Daneville Heritage Museum
Viborg, SD
danevilleheritage.com

JULY 19

6th Annual Wakonda

American Legion Tractor Pull

3 p.m. Start
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull
Wakonda, SD

JULY 19-21

Burke Stampede Rodeo

Stampede Arena
Burke, SD
605-840-0824

JULY 25-27

Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape

Tripp Co. Fairgrounds
Winner, SD
605-842-5830

JULY 25-27

Clear Lake Days

Clear Lake, SD
ClearLakeDays.com

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 26

South Dakota Chislic Festival

10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Freeman, SD
www.sdchislicfestival.com

JULY 26

Richmond Lake Association's Annual Pontoon Poker Run

Aberdeen, SD
605-225-0609

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.

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.