

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Forecasting the Future

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Association Changes  
Name, Advocates For  
All Renewables**  
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# Balancing Electricity Supply and Demand



**Matt Hotzler**  
Manager

Electricity is essential for nearly every aspect of daily life – so essential that we rarely think about how it's produced and delivered to our homes. You might be surprised to learn that behind the scenes, a network of experts is working daily (and even by the minute) to anticipate how much electricity you need before you even use it.

We're all connected to the electric grid, so ensuring the right amount of electricity for all involves a complex process of forecasting energy demand, planning for capacity, and securing enough supply to meet Americans' needs.

## Powerful Sources

First, electricity must be generated at a power plant using either traditional sources, such as coal, natural gas, or nuclear energy, or from renewable sources, such as solar, wind or hydropower.

At H-D Electric Cooperative, we work closely with East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our local wholesale power partner, to secure enough electricity for our communities, using a diverse mix of energy sources to generate the power we deliver to your home or business. By maintaining a diverse energy mix – [coal, natural gas, wind, solar, and hydropower] – Basin Electric Power Cooperative has options to ensure reliable power at a competitive cost.

On a larger scale, electricity supply and demand across the country are managed through a market that includes long-term planning agreements, where electricity is bought and sold just like other common goods and services. Because H-D Electric works with our wholesale power partner, which is also a cooperative, we can pool resources and expertise to deliver affordable power to our local communities.

Electricity supply changes throughout the day because demand fluctuates based on consumers' needs. For example, H-D Electric knows that we need to ensure more electricity in the mornings when you're starting your day, and in the evenings when you're cooking dinner, running appliances, and watching TV. Demand also increases when weather patterns change, such as extremely warm or cold temperatures.

## Managing Supply and Demand Across the Grid

Across the country, other electric utilities are managing the same task of balancing supply and demand, which is why we have a larger network of key players to ensure enough power is delivered across the grid.

In most cases, the amount of electricity generated and how much it is sent to specific areas are coordinated and monitored by regional transmission organizations (RTOs), independent system operators (ISOs), or power pools such as ours and Southwest Power Pool (SPP). In some areas, individual electric utilities perform these tasks.

SPP acts as an air traffic controller for the electric grid. They forecast when you, your neighbors, and communities across a large region need more power. These organizations take measured steps to ensure enough supply to meet demand.

## Looking Ahead

As the energy sector undergoes rapid change, it's important for all consumers to understand the basics of electricity supply and demand.

Electricity use in the U.S. is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, with the demand for electricity expected to at least double by 2050. At the same time, energy policies push the early retirement of always-available generation sources, which will compromise reliable electricity.

H-D Electric remains committed to providing affordable, reliable energy to the members we serve. That's why we are preparing now for increased demand and other challenges that could compromise our local electric supply.

A couple of important things to remember is getting signed up for the water heater control program. We will install a controller to shut off your water heater during peak times to save energy and reduce costs for H-D Electric. The best thing is when you have the right-sized water heater, you shouldn't notice the control; your water stays hot. Another thing to know is if you have an electric car charger, set your car to charge between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. With a level 2 charger, this gives your car plenty of time to charge and it happens outside of H-D's peak.

Managing the balancing act of electricity supply and demand is a complex job, which is why we have a network of utilities, power plant operators, and energy traffic managers in place to direct the electricity we need and keep the electric grid balanced.

COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS

H-D ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 018-905)

**General Manager:** Matt Hotzler

**Headquarters Employees:**

Annie Aberle – Finance and  
Administration Manager  
Michelle Prins – Billing Clerk  
Heidi Brewer-Grimlie – Accounting Clerk  
Jami Bolden – Receptionist/Cashier  
Roger Cutshaw – Engineer  
Darren Matthies – Building Property  
Worker

**Operations:**

Troy Kwasniewski – Operations Manager  
Todd Sprang – Line Foreman

**Line Crew:**

Pat Kirby – Operations Support  
Kevin Holida – Lead Lineworker  
Joe Raml – Lead Lineworker  
Cody Scarrott – Lineworker  
Derek Bille – Lineworker  
Eric Page – Lineworker  
Joseph Jordan Jr. – Apprentice Lineworker  
Matt Miller – Lead Equipment Operator/  
Mechanic  
Brady Mellendorf – Equipment Operator/  
Mechanic

**Member Services:**

Tom Lundberg – Member Services  
Manager

Noah Reichling – Electrician Foreman  
Jim Thompson – Lead Electrician  
Deaven Boots – Apprentice Electrician  
Jon Zirbel – Meter/Load Management

**Board of Directors:**

President Bert Rogness – Astoria  
Vice President Terry Strohfus – Hazel  
Secretary Roxanne Bass – Castlewood  
Treasurer Steven Hansen – Clear Lake  
Dale Williams – Estelline  
Casper Niemann – Lake Norden  
Kevin DeBoer – Clear Lake  
Calvin Musch – Revillo  
Todd Moritz – Clear Lake

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Design assistance by SDREA.

# Mark Your Calendar The Date Has Been Set!

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

**H-D Electric Headquarters**

**Clear Lake, S.D.**

**Registration at 6:30 p.m.**

**Meeting at 7 p.m.**

## 2025 H-D Electric Director Election to be Held in March

H-D Director elections will be held at the H-D Electric annual meeting on March 25, 2025. This year's annual meeting will be at H-D Electric Headquarters in Clear Lake, S.D.

Director Nominations are by petition only. Petition forms are available at the H-D Electric office and must be signed by at least fifteen members (individuals of joint memberships count as one membership). Petitions will be available after Jan. 9, 2025, and must be returned to the office by Feb. 28, 2025. However, because of publication deadlines, in order to have the candidate profile published in the March Cooperative Connections – Annual Meeting report magazine, petitions should be submitted at or prior to Jan. 29, 2025.

### Three director districts for this year are the following.

- **District 1** including the following townships – Brandtford Township, Oxford Township and Opdahl Township, Hamlin County, S.D.; and Kampeska Township, Codington County, S.D.
- **District 2** including the following townships – Hayti Township, Florence Township and Castlewood Township, Hamlin County, S.D.
- **District 6** including the following townships – Lowe Township, Antelope Valley Township, Glenwood Township, and Herrick Township, Deuel County, S.D.; Adams Township, Grant County, S.D.; and Mehurin Township, Lac Qui Parle County, Minn.

## Operating Statistics

	October 2023	October 2024
Customers .....	3,826	3,868
Amount Collected.....	\$1,169,452	\$1,228,070
Average Bill .....	\$305.66	\$317.49
Average Kilowatt-Hour .....	2,527	2,671
Kilowatt-Hours Purchased.....	10,253,530	10,910,223
Kilowatt-Hours Sold .....	9,668,012	10,332,903

# Snow Safety

There is no end to the terms for “really big snowstorm,” and those terms come in handy, particularly in America’s snowiest cities. Just check out these average annual snowfall totals in towns of at least 10,000 residents, according to the Farmer’s Almanac:

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – 119.3 inches  
Syracuse, New York – 114.3 inches  
Juneau, Alaska – 93.6 inches  
Flagstaff, Arizona – 87.6 inches  
Duluth, Minnesota – 83.5 inches  
Erie, Pennsylvania – 80.9 inches  
Burlington, Vermont – 80.2 inches  
Muskegon, Michigan – 79.3 inches  
Casper, Wyoming – 77 inches  
Portland, Maine – 70 inches

But with really big snow storms – and even everyday, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of death by shoveling. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right?

Not really, says the American Heart Association. While most people won’t have a problem, shoveling snow can put some people at risk of heart attack. Sudden exertion, like moving hundreds of pounds of snow after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury.

And, there’s the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

**National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:**

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it’s lighter.
- Push the snow rather than lifting it.
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel.

- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Know the signs of a heart attack, stop immediately and call 911 if you’re experiencing any of them; every minute counts.

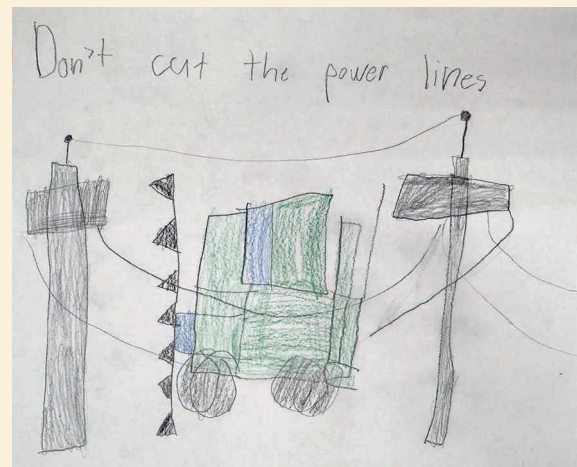
Don’t pick up that shovel without a doctor’s permission if you have a history of heart disease. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

### Snow Blower Safety

In addition to possible heart strain from pushing a heavy snow blower, stay safe with these tips:

- If the blower jams, turn it off.
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts.
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space.
- Add fuel outdoors, before starting, and never add fuel when it is running.
- Never leave it unattended when it is running.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### “Don’t Cut the Power Lines!”

#### David Raak, Age 7 ½

David Raak cautions readers to be careful when working around power lines. Thank you for your picture, David! David’s parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central 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.



# Crockpot GREATNESS

## CROCKPOT CORN

### Ingredients:

3 16-oz. packages frozen corn  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter  
2 tbsps. sugar  
2 tbsps. water

### Method

Place corn in crockpot. Cut cream cheese and butter into small cubes. Add cream cheese, butter, sugar and water to corn. Stir. Cook on high for 45 minutes. Stir. Turn to low and cook for three more hours, stirring occasionally.

**Elaine Rieck**  
Harrisburg, S.D.

## CROCKPOT BAKED BEANS

### Ingredients:

2 cans black beans  
2 cans red beans (drained)  
2 cans great northern  
1 can baked beans with brown sugar  
1 lb. diced ham  
1 heaping tsp. mustard (regular)  
2 full tbsps. ketchup  
Garlic powder (optional)  
1 small onion (chopped)

### Method

Mix all ingredients in crockpot except ham. Cook 2 hours on high. Mix in ham and cook another hour on high. Enjoy!

**Rose Tucker**  
Hot Springs, S.D.

## CHICKEN FIESTA SLOW COOKER RECIPE

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts  
1 package slow cooker fiesta chicken seasoning mix  
2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) diced tomatoes, undrained  
1 can (15 3/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained  
1 can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed

### Method

Place chicken in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, tomatoes, corn and beans until blended. Pour over chicken. Cover. Cook eight hours on LOW or four hours on HIGH. Remove chicken from slow cooker. Shred chicken, using two forks. Return chicken to slow cooker; mix well. Serve over cooked rice with assorted toppings, if desired.

**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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Uncover Savings With a DIY Energy Audit



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

**Q:** How do I perform an energy audit on my home?

**A:** A home energy audit may sound daunting, but it can be as easy as creating a checklist of improvements based on what you see around your home.

Here's what you'll need to find opportunities to save energy and money: a flashlight, dust mask, tape measure and cooking thermometer. I recommend taking notes on your phone or a notepad.

First, check the heating and cooling equipment. Determine the age and efficiency of the equipment by looking up the model number on the nameplate. The average lifespan of HVAC equipment is 10 to 30 years, depending on the type of equipment and how well it's maintained. If your equipment is older, it may be time to budget for an upgrade. Check the filter and replace it if needed.

Then, check the envelope of your home, which separates the heated or cooled areas from the exterior, for drafts and air leakage. Feel around windows and trim for any drafts. Pay special attention to spots where different building materials come together. Check under sinks for gaps around pipes. Seal with weatherstripping, caulk or expanding foam as needed.

Make sure to replace incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with LEDs. LEDs use significantly less energy and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Check for leaking faucets and make sure aerators and showerheads are high-efficiency models in good condition. The gallons-per-minute (GPM) ratings should be etched onto them. To reduce wasted energy from using more hot water than needed, aerators should be 0.5 to 1.5 GPM, and showerheads should be no more than 2 GPM.

Next, look in the attic, while wearing a dust mask, to make sure it's insulated. You may be able to see

enough from the access area using a cellphone with the flash on to take pictures. Use the tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be a minimum of 12 inches deep. This can vary depending on the type of insulation used and your geography.

Insulation can become compacted over time. It should be evenly distributed throughout the attic. Loose fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy and evenly dispersed. Rolled batt insulation should fit tightly together without gaps.

Also, exterior walls should be insulated. If your home is older than the 1960s, the walls are probably not insulated. Homes from the 1960s or 1970s likely need more insulation. Sometimes you can see wall insulation by removing an outlet cover or switch plate and using a flashlight to look for insulation inside the wall cavity. Turn off the power at the electrical panel to avoid the risk of electric shock. Wall insulation can be blown in from the inside or the outside of the home. This is a job for a professional.

If you have a basement or crawlspace, head there next. Unfinished basements should have insulation on the rim joists, at minimum. This is the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the home's first-story floor. Use closed-cell spray foam or a combination of rigid foam and spray foam to insulate rim joists. Crawlspace should have insulation on the underside of the floor between the floor joists. Insulation should be properly supported in contact with the floor with no air gaps. Water pipes and ductwork should also be insulated.

Lastly, check the temperature of your water by running it for three minutes at the faucet closest to your water heater. Then fill a cup and measure with a cooking thermometer. Hot water should be between 120 and 140 degrees. You can reduce the temperature on your water heater to reduce energy waste and prevent scalding.

Once your home energy audit is finished, review your findings and start prioritizing home energy efficiency projects. For step-by-step instructions, visit [www.energy.gov/save](http://www.energy.gov/save).





A historic photo shows a man standing in front of an auger used to dig holes for utility poles.  
*Photo submitted by Moreau-Grand Electric*



Janet Gesinger  
*Photo by Frank Turner*

## When the Lights Turned On: Janet Gesinger Remembers the Days Before Power

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdrea.coop)

Memory is a fickle thing. It's funny how a certain smell or simple photo can evoke vivid memories of an age long past. After all, how can a memory be lost when we can't even remember losing it?

At the age of 89, Janet Gesinger doesn't remember the exact moment when Cam Wal Electric, her local rural electric cooperative, introduced electricity to her childhood farm and ranch 13 miles west of Gettysburg, but she does remember the days without it.

"It's amazing that I can remember some things from my childhood so vividly, but I couldn't tell you what I had for lunch last week," Gesinger laughed.

Gesinger remembers growing up on the farm during a time when the glow of kerosene lamps helped her family navigate the dark and a cistern well kept their food cool.

"I don't know how we could see with the little lamps, but we did," she said. "People were careful because they knew

what the risks were, carrying around those lamps."

At the age of 9, Gesinger and her three older siblings lost their mother. The profound loss meant that Gesinger had to step up to help her siblings and father keep the farm and ranch going.

"I ended up helping my dad outside more than I did anything inside the house," she said. "We lived in such a remote place. There weren't even gravel roads back then. If I ever wanted to leave the farm, I had to help my brother milk cows and do chores so he would take me into town."

In high school, Gesinger's horizons broadened past the farm, and she began working as a waitress at the Medicine Rock Café where she met her late husband, Robert Gesinger. A year later the couple married and moved to Robert's family farm and ranch just a few miles north of Ridgeview in 1954. The Ridgeview community gained power just one year earlier in 1953, and Janet continues to live there now as a member of Moreau-Grand Electric.

When Janet moved to Ridgeview it was a bustling, small town with a grain elevator, a grocery store with a post office in it, a liquor store, a school, and electricity. Today, nearly all those amenities are a distant memory, but the rural electricity that continues to power the homes of the roughly 25 residents of Ridgeview, including Janet, remains.

"Ridgeview had gotten electricity just before we got married," she said.

Once she lived in a home with electricity, Janet found it hard to imagine life without it. One winter storm in 2010 wreaked havoc on the rural landscape and broke more than 200 utility poles, leaving Robert and Janet without power for 21 days.

"By day three of the outage, we ended up getting a PTO driven generator that could hook up to the tractor," Janet said. "Robert was sure glad when the power came back on, because that way we didn't have to fuel the tractor twice a day to run it – and the cost of diesel to run it."

Reflecting on her experiences, Janet acknowledges the transformative impact of electricity on rural life and finds it hard to imagine a world without electricity.

"It's an amazing convenience that we rely on," Janet said. "People today couldn't live without it because what in the world would ever replace it? We have a lot of technology in this world, but there is nothing that can replace electricity."



PLANNING AHEAD

# FORECASTING THE FUTURE

## Basin Electric's Vision for Reliable Energy

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Keeping the lights on in a dynamic world isn't as simple as flipping a switch. It requires a forward-thinking approach, almost like gazing into a crystal ball, to anticipate future energy demand. Energy infrastructure projects begin long before the first shovel breaks ground, and it's a challenge that Basin Electric Power Cooperative confronts every day to ensure consistent and

reliable power amid an ever-changing landscape of new technologies and growing membership.

A new plant or transmission line can take years of planning and coordination by Basin Electric and its member cooperatives. The process is similar to predicting the weather; it all begins with a forecast to determine what energy demand is brewing on the horizon.

Basin Electric works with the members and other stakeholders to

develop highly accurate load forecasts. Those load forecasts are then compared against our existing resource portfolio. If any gaps are identified, resource alternatives are identified and reviewed against each other to arrive at the best resource portfolio outcome.

"Once a need for a new generation project or transmission project has been identified, Basin Electric assembles a project team," explained Matt Ehrman, vice president of engineering and construction at Basin Electric.

"Developing and defining project scope is vital to project success as it's really the foundation for the project," Ehrman continued. "Good upfront planning minimizes project execution

An aerial view of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV near Williston, N.D.  
Photo submitted by  
Basin Electric Power Cooperative.



risks later, so Basin places a lot of emphasis on the development work that happens before any detailed engineering design can begin.”

Basin Electric is currently undertaking one of its largest single-site electric generation projects in the last 40 years near Williston, North Dakota, known as Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Once completed, this project will add 580 megawatts of natural gas generation capacity to Basin Electric’s energy portfolio. Although the project broke ground in March 2023, planning for the project began in 2021, standing as a testament to the cooperative’s long-term mindset and commitment to meeting its load forecast.

So what goes into the planning of such a major project? Ehrman says everything from identifying project objectives to permitting and contracting strategies to engineering studies all take place within the years leading up to new infrastructure.

“In the case of a generation project, the project site, fuel, water, and transmission sources are identified during the project development phase,” Ehrman said. “After the development phase is complete, the more detailed engineering design work can begin. This is when the engineers really begin to dig into the details of how to arrange and interconnect all of the many different types of equipment



The first gas turbine delivery for Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV.  
Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

required for a given project. Eventually, those design details are used to develop construction specifications, contractors are selected and construction begins.”

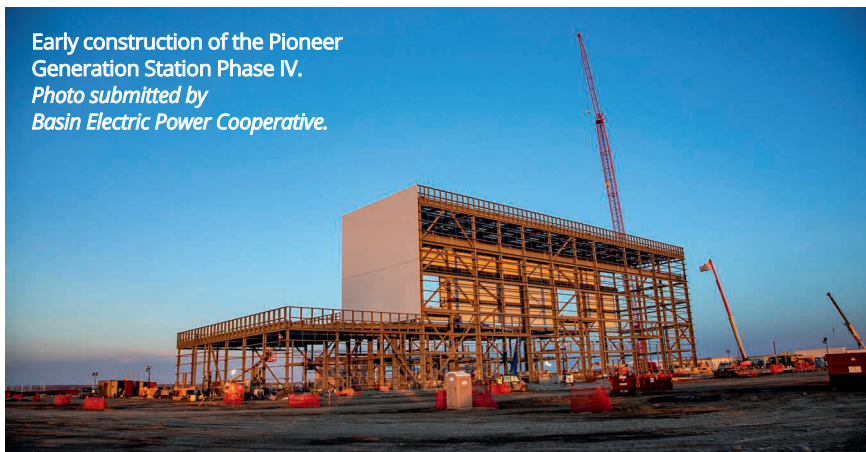
Beyond the demanding complexity of the project itself, Basin Electric’s project team must also navigate regulatory matters and policy. While many projects share similarities, no two are identical when navigating federal, state, and local permitting requirements.

“Large generation and transmission projects can take years to permit, and the permitting duration depends on the project,” Ehrman said. “Basin’s

teams have successfully permitted and executed many projects over the years and as a result have learned a lot about those processes in our service territory.”

Slated to be operational in 2025, Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV will come on board during a time when electricity demand is increasing significantly. The completion of the project will expand Basin Electric’s resource portfolio, which uses a vast diversity of generation resources to serve its member cooperatives. Even still, Ehrman said it still takes a massive effort to stay prepared for what the future may bring.

“Planning and building energy infrastructure is a massive team effort that involves teams from Basin and its membership,” he said. “These are complex projects, and there are challenges involved in all phases of the projects. Basin has extremely talented, dedicated and hard-working teams developing these projects that really enjoy working out all the technical and non-technical details while mitigating risks to achieve success and deliver the best possible outcome for the membership.”



Early construction of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV.  
Photo submitted by  
Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

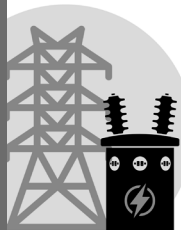
## ONCE THE POWER IS OUT HOW IS IT SAFELY RESTORED?

When conditions are favorable for a storm, severe weather can take down power lines or disrupt your electric service in several ways.

It can happen when wind causes trees or branches to fall into power lines or when ice buildup on wires causes the lines to sway and "gallop." When lightning strikes, transformers and other electric equipment can be affected.

Slick road conditions can also play a role when vehicles strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer and cause a disruption in service.

Please know that when the power does go out, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Here are the steps we take in the assessment and restoration process:



### STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE

We assess the damage to utility equipment and power lines across the service area

### STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS

We address immediate safety risks, including downed power lines



### STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

We ensure that public health and safety facilities are operational

### STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS

We repair (usually in this order): transmission towers and lines, substations, distribution lines, and then service lines to properties



If you see a downed power line, always assume it is live and deadly.

## Basin Electric and H-D Electric Scholarships

H-D Electric Cooperative will award one \$1,000 scholarship and three \$500 scholarships. To be eligible you must be a dependent of a member. One of these scholarships will give preference to a student in an electrical/energy related field. Applications are available and must be completed and returned to H-D Electric by **Feb. 17, 2025**.

Recipients will be chosen according to criteria such as SAT/ACT scores, overall grade point averages, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals and a written recommendation by a third party. Only the applications which provide all of the above information will be considered, so it is important to read the application thoroughly and complete every detail.

The applicant must be a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.

To apply, you must complete the required criteria and the scholarship application, which can be obtained from local high school guidance counselors, calling H-D Electric at 605-874-2171 or 800-358-7233, writing H-D Electric, PO Box 1007, Clear Lake, SD 57226 or via our Web site at [www.h-delectric.coop](http://www.h-delectric.coop).

**Applications must be completed and returned to the office of H-D Electric by Feb. 17, 2025.**





## Reporting An Outage

**Normal Business Hours:** If your electricity is off for longer than 10 minutes, contact our business office at 1-605-874-2171 or 1-800-358-7233. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**After Hours, Weekends, and Holidays:** Please call H-D Electric's office numbers 1-605-874-2171 or 1-800-358-7233 and your call will be transferred to our 24-hour Dispatch Service Center. Once the service center confirms the outage they will contact H-D Electric's crew who will be dispatched to your location as soon as possible.

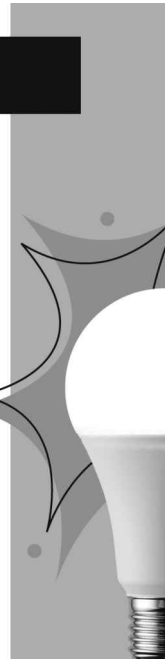
We ask that when you are calling to report an outage, please have your account number and service address to verify your location.

We don't want to miss your reported outage so please don't report via email, please call the office phone numbers. H-D Electric's email messages are only monitored by office staff during regular business hours Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## What are the Responsibilities of Your Electric Cooperative Director?

As the opportunity draws near to elect your director representatives, it is an appropriate time to think about the role of a cooperative director and their responsibilities and the dedication it takes to fulfill this important role.

The elected director of the cooperative provides an important and necessary link between the members and those that are hired and paid to carry out the day-to-day activities of the cooperative. The director serves as an extension of the rights and responsibilities of the cooperative member. Joining with the other directors of the cooperative, they try with honesty, consistency, and good conscience to make decisions and set policies which are in the best interest of the cooperative and the members.

A director should establish communication with the members they represent. They need to understand their concerns and issues and welcome the member's opinions. A director is expected to read and be familiar with information, data and reports relating to their cooperative, along with state and national associations.

The responsibility of being a cooperative director requires dedication and willingness to spend a possible 25 to 30 days

each year in meeting these responsibilities. This commitment itself means a director is expected to attend regular monthly board meetings, which are typically held on the third Friday of each month and often last most of the day. It also requires attending the annual meeting and other periodic special meetings as needed.

Directors are encouraged to attend director seminars and training which help broaden the ability to make informed decisions on the issues facing the cooperative. These seminars may have topics on matters relating to financing, electric rates, power requirements, legal risk, and regional and national issues of concern to rural electric members.

Outside meeting activities involve East River Electric Power Cooperative, South Dakota Rural Electric Association, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and the Cooperative Finance Corporation. These co-op organizations and associations are all run by member representatives. Members of the H-D Electric board may be selected to be directors on these boards to represent the co-op and take part in the decisions made on behalf of those organizations. This is part of our cooperative system. Participation on these boards not only requires a dedication of time, but it also requires the director to be knowledgeable on a wide range of state and national issues.

With the annual meeting coming up on March 25, 2025, please give some thought to the election of your representative on the board of H-D Electric. Think about what it takes to make the decisions required of them and the time they must spend to be prepared to make those decisions that will affect the whole cooperative.



# LOOKING AHEAD

An aerial view of the Wild Springs Solar Project near New Underwood, S.D.  
Photo submitted by East River Electric

## Wind Energy Association Changes Name, Advocates For All Renewables

**Jacob Boyko**

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The South Dakota Wind Energy Association is getting a fresh coat of paint this year with a rebrand that will expand the association's advocacy mission to include more forms of renewable energy.

As solar energy generation in the state increases with new and upcoming projects, expanding the association — now called the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association — to include other forms of renewable energy and battery storage was the clear way forward according to association president and Sioux Valley Energy Director Gary Fish.

"The association started out as being very wind oriented, and that's our legacy," Fish explained. "But we also have somewhat migrated to having an energy portfolio where wind coexists

with coal, natural gas and solar, and that was the driver behind changing our name."

The change comes in the wake of South Dakota's first large-scale solar farm near New Underwood, which began commercial operation in March 2024. Basin Electric Power Cooperative will purchase 114 megawatts of the 128-megawatt renewable project.

The association began with the

leadership of East River Electric Power Cooperative in the mid-2000s as the generation and transmission co-op looked for ways to develop wind generation in the state to serve its growing member utilities and bring economic development and job opportunities to the state.

"Wind energy was at that time starting to become a more viable utility-scale source of power generation," said Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric.

A look on the ground as crews prepare the Wild Springs Solar Project for power generation.  
Photo submitted by East River Electric





“East River led an effort to build an association of stakeholders in South Dakota that can help advocate for the wind industry.”

It’s a mission that’s propelled South Dakota to being the state with the third highest renewable energy makeup, with more than 54% of instate power generated from renewable wind and solar resources.

“We’ve gone from essentially zero wind energy to more than 3,000 megawatts of installed capacity in the state,” Studer said. “We have far surpassed what our original goal was.”

In the South Dakota Wind Energy Association’s initial stages, the board was composed mostly of utilities and developers focused on studying potential economic benefits and the infrastructure needs that come with increasing generation.

“I think everyone knew we had a great wind resource, but the real issue was having additional transmission to get the power out,” Fish said. “Could we build

the towers? Yes. Could we get the power to market? That was the challenge.”

As the association successfully made the case for wind energy, the membership grew to include other G&Ts and investor-owned utilities, landowner groups, turbine manufacturers, servicing companies and others from the wind energy supply chain.

One of the first large-scale renewable energy wins for the South Dakota Wind Energy Association and rural electric cooperatives was the 2011 commissioning of the 172-megawatt Crow Lake Project north of White Lake, South Dakota. The association membership helped support the launch of South Dakota Wind Partners to bring local residents an opportunity to invest in and own several turbines in the project.

According to East River Electric, the program generated about \$16 million worth of local investment.

“It was a very unique and successful

project that the South Dakota Wind Energy Association had involvement in and advocated for,” Studer said. “The people that invested got tax equity benefits over time, and after about 10 years they sold it back to Basin Electric and got their investments back.”

Moving forward, the association will continue to advocate for a renewable energy-friendly business environment to propel South Dakota energy projects forward.

“South Dakota Renewable Energy Association is here to make sure our state’s tax policies are fair, that developers still want to come here and develop renewable energy projects, and that there’s a market for all of the supply chain that’s needed for wind energy and now for solar, as well as the necessary transmission,” Studer continued.

A new South Dakota Renewable Energy Association website and promotional material will debut within the next several months.



The Crow Lake Wind Project near White Lake, S.D., is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States. The \$363 million wind project went into operation in 2011.

*Photo submitted by East River Electric*



# RENEWABLE ENERGY

## Purchasing Credits Means Renewable Energy Anywhere

**Jacob Boyko**

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Did you know there's a way your home or business can operate with 100% renewable energy?

With renewable energy credits, or RECs, electric cooperative members can purchase the renewable aspects of their utility's energy and run on 100% green energy without needing to install on-site solar panels or wind generation.

"A REC is a renewable attribute of a megawatt hour of electricity," explained

Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations at Sioux Valley Energy. "One megawatt hour produced by any renewable generator provides one REC."

Basin Electric Power Cooperative – the generation and transmission cooperative that sells electricity to South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives – reported about 21% of its energy sales in 2023 was renewable energy. Since it's impossible to pinpoint the exact generation origin of each individual electron moving along a distribution line and entering a home or business, there's no way to tell what

is actually being powered by renewable energy and what isn't.

However, by having a renewable energy credit program where members can claim rights to the renewable energy generated, members who participate can affirm they are being powered by renewable energy. It's kind of like "calling dibs" on something; everybody is purchasing reliable power, but the members who "call dibs" are purchasing the renewable power.

One Sioux Valley Energy member that makes use of the renewable energy credit program is Marmen Energy in Brandon, South Dakota. Through the program, the wind tower manufacturer's operations are powered 100% by renewable energy.

"We get all renewable energy to power our facility," Marmen Energy Plant Manager Danny Lueders said. "We build renewable energy wind towers – how



could we not get the renewable energy credit program?”

At a scale like Marmen's, which produces between 300 and 400 wind towers annually, being 100% renewable is a statistic that not only makes a statement, but increases demand for more renewable energy.

“It makes sense for us to have it and support that industry all the way through,” Lueders continued. “It's an industry we're heavily involved with and we want to do everything we can to support and promote that industry.”

Support for renewable energy through the REC program has other benefits; the extra funds Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative generated from selling allocated RECs made it possible to purchase a solar demonstration trailer to educate the public about the benefits and drawbacks of solar energy and the need for a diversified mix of energy resources.

“We sell the RECs on the open market so others can satisfy their renewable mandates and so we can fund future renewable energy projects,” Rushmore Electric CFO Mark Miller added.

On the market, RECs vary in price, usually between \$1 and \$3. The generation source – wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, waste heat recovery – as well as the year the REC's production year affect the commodity's value.

“They have a shelf life,” Miller explained. “They're valuable in the first year because some states mandate RECs that are current.”

States like Minnesota with renewable energy standards require utilities to retire their RECs to meet the energy standards, or buy

credits on the market to reach the mandated renewable energy percentage of their energy mix.

In South Dakota, a state without renewable energy mandates but with more than 54% of in-state power generated by renewable resources, the Marmen Energy CEO simply believes continuing to support renewable energy is the right thing to do.

“South Dakota is a strong proponent of renewable energy,” Lueders said. “The amount of industry renewables are supporting throughout the state of South Dakota is a strong issue, from an economic footprint and continuing to grow South Dakota's self-reliance on homemade energy.”



(Right) Jay Buchholz, Key Account & Community Relations Executive for Sioux Valley Energy, presents Marmen Energy employees Vincent Trudel, Chief Operating Officer, Yannick Laroche, Fabrication Manager, with renewable energy credit certificates.

(Below) Marmen Energy's Brandon, S.D., manufacturing plant purchases renewable energy credits to cover 100% of its operations, meaning all wind towers produced here are built using 100% renewable energy. *Images submitted by Sioux Valley Energy*



## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a Blackstone electric grill!

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

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



**JAN. 11**  
**Snow Queen Coronation**  
7 p.m.  
Aberdeen Civic Theater  
Aberdeen, SD  
SDSnowQueen.com

Photo courtesy of South Dakota Snow Queen Festival

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.

**UNTIL DEC. 26**  
**Christmas at the Capitol**  
8 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Pierre, SD  
605-773-3178

**UNTIL DEC. 29**  
**Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum**  
Hill City, SD  
605-665-3636

**UNTIL DEC. 31**  
**Olde Tyme Christmas at participating businesses, Lane of Lights Viewing**  
Hill City, SD

**UNTIL DEC. 31**  
**Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens**  
5-9 p.m.  
Brookings, SD

**UNTIL DEC. 31**  
**Hall of Trees**  
12-4 p.m. Mon.-Sat.  
The Mead Museum  
Yankton, SD

**DEC. 31**  
**American Legion Post 15 Save the Last Dance 2024**  
8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.  
El Riad Shrine  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-336-3470

**DEC. 31-JAN. 1**  
**New Year's Eve in Deadwood**  
Deadwood, SD  
800-999-1876

**JAN. 5, FEB. 2**  
**American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast**  
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.  
1600 W. Russel St.  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-336-3470

**JAN. 7-9**  
**Dakota Farm Show**  
Tue. & Wed. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thurs. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
USD DakotaDome  
Vermillion, SD

**JAN. 11.**  
**Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament**  
Meadowood Lanes  
Rapid City, SD  
605-393-2081

**JAN. 15**  
**46th Ranchers Workshop**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Community Events Center  
White River, SD  
605-259-3252 ext. 3

**JAN. 18**  
**Breakin' the Winter Blues Chili Cookoff**  
Main Street  
Hill City, SD

**JAN. 26**  
**Souper Supper Fundraiser Rapid Valley United Methodist Church**  
5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Tickets \$6  
5103 Longview Dr.  
Rapid City, SD

**JAN. 31-FEB. 8**  
**Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo**  
Central States Fairground  
Rapid City, SD  
605-355-3861

**FEB. 14-17**  
**11th Annual Frost Fest**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Brookings, SD  
605-692-7444

**FEB. 22**  
**Bellator Titans Charter Casino Night Fundraiser**  
6-11 p.m.  
316 2nd St.  
Aberdeen, SD

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