

Cooperative Connections



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We're Thankful for Our Sister Cooperatives



John Lee, CEO

jlee@butteelectric.com

When you think about Butte Electric, you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work right here in the community we serve. But you may not realize that Butte is actually part of a much larger cooperative network that brings additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op.

Cooperation among cooperatives

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources in order to restore power to our community. And Butte reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is “cooperation among cooperatives.” This is a way that co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

Another area in which Butte benefits from cooperation among cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) “Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program” (RC3), we are able to access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats.

Butte’s ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

Bright spot

The Solar Utility Network Deployment Acceleration (SUNDA) project is another example of an area where Butte has benefitted from collaboration with other electric co-ops.

Through the SUNDA project, electric co-ops were able to collect data and case studies that provide insight into challenges and solutions related to solar energy technologies. Now, electric cooperatives across the country, including Butte, have access to a set of knowledge and resources to more efficiently tailor our renewable energy mix to meet the needs of our local communities.

Global impact

Lastly, communities across the globe have benefitted from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of electric co-ops in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve – and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

Butte Electric

Cooperative Connections

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Incumbents Re-Elected

Butte Electric Cooperative held its 79th annual meeting Oct. 22, 2019 at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center with 170 members going through the registration line.



James Mortenson
Belle Fourche



Dan Marrs
Whitewood



Steve Smeenk
Newell

The event began with the American

West serving a delicious roast beef supper to 450 members and guests. Board President Cris Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. CEO John Lee welcomed everyone and director Dan Marrs gave the invocation.

Reports were heard from Board Assistant Secretary Steve Smeenk, Treasurer Dan Hefner, Board President Cris Miller and CEO John Lee. Vice Chairman of the PUC Chris Nelson was the guest speaker.

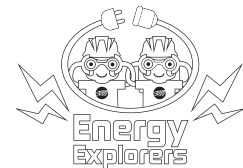
Incumbent directors James Mortenson of Spearfish, Dan Marrs of Whitewood and Steve Smeenk of Newell were each re-elected to three-year terms.

Vender-supplied door prizes were given out at the end of the evening and the pre-registration prize, a TV, was awarded to Walter Kolb.

Cooperative Kids' Corner

Happy Holidays
 from Your
 Electric Co-op

Wishing you a merry and
 bright holiday season!



Energy Tip | Remember to decorate your tree with energy-saving LED holiday lights.

Electrical Safety Tips for the Holidays

The holiday season is here and Christmas is just weeks away. While it's certainly the best time of the year to spend time with family and friends before the New Year, it's also important that you think about keeping your friends and family safe around all the electricity you'll likely be using. Here are a few essential electrical safety tips for the holidays.

- Before you use any electrical decorations, you should inspect them for damage. Look for damaged sockets, cracked sockets, loose connections and bare or loose wires. All of these things could cause a fire or a serious shock.
- Once you've confirmed that all your electrical decorations aren't damaged, you should count how many outlets you have in your home and where they're located. You should plan out your displays based on the number of outlets and their location. When putting up the displays, be sure to follow the care and manufacturer's use instructions that came with the electrical decorations. Be sure to use the extension cords with the right amperage rating to match the amperage needs of your electrical products.
- When you're installing outdoor decorations, you should be very careful when you're decorating near any power lines. You and your equipment should be at least 10 feet from any power lines.
- Don't overload your home's electrical outlets. Every year, many homeowners end up overloading the electrical outlets in their home because they go overboard when it comes to decorating. Faulty wires and overloaded electrical outlets are the most common causes of fire during the holidays. You should only plug a single high-wattage appliance into every outlet. This will help you prevent overloading the outlets in your home.
- You should never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights. Connecting more than three strings can cause a fire or trip circuit breakers. You should think about buying LED lights, which are cooler than incandescent lights and use less energy. Be sure that the spotlights that you use to illuminate decorations are far from flammable items, protected from weather, and are well-ventilated. Make sure that you always unplug your decorations before you replace the fuses or bulbs. Turn off the outdoor and indoor electrical decorations before you go to sleep or leave home.
- Be sure that any electrical decorations and extension cords were made to be useable outdoors. Keep all light strings and extension cords away from water and snow. When decorating outdoors, you should use fiberglass or wooden ladders rather than metal ladders. You should plug outdoor decorations and electric lights into circuits protected by circuit interrupters. You should buy portable outdoor GFCIs if the circuits aren't GFCI protected.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to keep your family and friends safe during the holidays.

Source: www.protectamerica.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't drive on power lines."

Anna Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Anna is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, 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.

Holiday Favorites

Fanny Farmer Fudge

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 1 cup butter (use butter, not margarine) |
| 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk | 2 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1-1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional) |
| 2 cups milk chocolate chips | |

Mix sugar and milk together; bring to rolling boil. Boil for 6 minutes. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and butter. Beat with electric mixer until very creamy. Add vanilla and stir well. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan (glass works best) sprayed with cooking spray. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before cutting. Store in airtight container. Will keep for months in refrigerator and still be smooth and creamy.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre, SD

Andes Mint Cookies

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2-1/2 cups flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3/4 cup cocoa powder | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. peppermint extract |
| 2 sticks and 2 T. butter, softened | 1 cup chocolate chips |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 1 cup mint chips or chopped Andes mints |
| 1 cup brown sugar | |

Sift flour, cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl and set aside. Using a hand mixer, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and peppermint extracts, mixing well. Add dry mixture to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate and mint chips. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet and with 2 fingers, press down to about 1-inch thick. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 18 minutes or until no longer glossy.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Vanilla Pecan Pie

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 refrigerated pie crust | Vanilla Extract, divided |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 3 eggs, divided | 3 T. butter, melted |
| 3/4 cup sugar, divided | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Pure | 2 cups pecan pieces, toasted |

Prepare crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly on bottom of crust. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Beat remaining 2 eggs and sugar in large bowl with wire whisk until smooth. Add corn syrup, butter, remaining vanilla and salt; stir until well blended. Sprinkle pecans evenly over cream cheese layer. Slowly pour corn syrup mixture over nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set in center. Makes 10 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 506, Total Fat 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Cholesterol 96mg, Sodium 307mg, Carbohydrates 43g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Filled Graham Crackers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 lb. box honey graham crackers | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |

Line up 22 (unbroken) graham crackers on a sheet of waxed paper. Place remaining crackers in a zip-lock bag and crush fine with a rolling pin. Combine brown sugar, butter, milk and egg. Bring to a boil then cook an additional 7 minutes. Remove from heat; add crushed crackers and vanilla. When mixture has cooled a little, spread filling on 11 of the crackers and top with the other 11. Leave uncovered to keep them crisp or cover for softer crackers.

Mardelle Brown, Redfield, SD

Please send your favorite soup, brunch or seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Bright Ideas for Smart Home Lighting



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time.

Dear Pat and Brad: I've heard a lot about smart lighting for the home. What is it and will it save energy? – Julian

Dear Julian: It seems like every device is getting smarter these days. Since smart-home lighting is so new, many of us could use a little introduction.

At its heart, smart lighting covers a range of bulbs, controls and lighting systems that are programmable through an app on a mobile device, computer or smart speaker. Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time. Some smart lighting systems can dim at various times. Some can be connected to a sensor or motion detector so that a light goes on when a door is opened or someone enters a room. Some smart lighting systems can change color so you can set up a holiday light show indoors or outdoors. It can also be practical, providing lighting that matches sunlight during the day and is more relaxing in the evening. You may even be able to play music directly from the bulb!

In most cases, you control smart lighting through your home Wi-Fi. You can communicate to individual smart bulbs or to a hub that, in turn, controls individual bulbs. In some cases, you can use Bluetooth® on your phone to control smart lighting, but you'll need to be within range of the bulb or hub. Smart lighting can also be used outdoors, but the range of your control device could limit this approach.

If the smart bulbs are the type that connect through a hub or connect directly to your Wi-Fi network, you should be able to control them via smart speakers like Google Home, Amazon Echo or Apple HomePod and remotely through the internet or smartphone. While a hub-based system is more expensive, it allows lights to be grouped by floor or room and also uses less bandwidth on your network than running many separate bulbs. Some hub kits also allow you to use regular bulbs instead of requiring more-expensive smart bulbs, which could save you money.

Will smart lighting save energy? That depends on how you light your home and control your lighting now and on how you would control the smart lighting you install in the future. If you use smart lighting to turn lights off when they aren't needed, like when rooms are empty or no one's home, or to reduce the wattage, you will save energy.

How much energy can you save? Lighting accounts for about 6 percent of electricity use in the average home, which means your total cost for all the lighting in your home might only be \$100 per year. If you have some high wattage bulbs that are on for long periods of time every day, your lighting use could be significantly higher than average.

Investments in smart lighting are not likely to pay back as quickly as some energy efficiency measures that control heating or air conditioning. Smart bulbs are more expensive than typical LED bulbs, ranging from \$15 to \$80, and a hub can cost of up to \$125, so it could take a long time to make your money back. Chances are, you're better off investing in smart lighting for the features than the energy savings.

One alternative to smart lighting is smart wall outlets or wall switches. For example, you can plug a lamp with a standard bulb into a smart wall outlet or you can have several lights wired to one smart switch. The downside to smart switches and outlets is that installation could be more challenging and you may not have as many options and features that come with smart lighting.

Another strategy for smart lighting that has been around for a long time and is reasonably priced is to use occupancy sensors, motion sensors or timers as control devices.

The wide number of options and costs makes it difficult to select the best smart lighting for your situation.



Photos, posters, memorabilia and vintage electric appliances are all part of the Power to the People exhibit.

Power to the People

Electrifying Rural South Dakota Exhibit Opens at Museum

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum in Brookings opened its “Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota” exhibit in October.

The exhibit explores how electricity changed life on the farm, especially for dairies and hatcheries. It displays how farms used wind turbines to produce electricity and the history of rural electric cooperatives. The museum’s farmhouse kitchen is open for the public to explore a 1949 kitchen. It also shows how electric washing machines changed how we do laundry.

“Today, our society is very dependent on electricity, but imagine turning on the lights for the very first time. Many people in South Dakota can remember that day because a vast number of farms did not have access to electricity until the 1950s. We hope visitors of all generations walk away with a better understanding that wind energy in South Dakota is not new and how much electricity not only brought new technology but better sanitary conditions for families and livestock,” stated Gwen McCausland, director of the Agricultural Heritage Museum.

This exhibit teaches the science of electricity with an interactive circuit board and a pedal-powered light meter sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D., East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D., Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, S.D., and H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, S.D.

This exhibit was sponsored in part by Coral Bonnemann, a long supporter of the Agricultural Heritage Museum along with Basin Electric, East River Electric, Sioux Valley Energy, and H-D Electric. This exhibit would not have been possible without the private collection of photographs and artifacts from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D., and William Lee of Colman, S.D.

Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota will be on display for 18 months.

Joseph J. Bonnemann and Coral (Coffey) Bonnemann are natives of Huron, S.D. Joe started college at South Dakota State University in Brookings and then spent time in the Army in the late 1940s, before returning to school. After earning a B.S. degree in agronomy (now plant science) in 1951, Joe was employed at the USDA-ARS experiment station near Newell, S.D. He returned to the SDSU campus in 1961 to supervise the Crop Performance Testing program. Joe retired in 1992. He also completed work for his M.S. in agronomy in 1964, a summer-school graduate of the first graduating class of “SDSU.” Joe passed away in 2014. Coral Ellen Coffey Bonnemann earned a B.S. degree in medical technology from SDSU in 1953. She served on the board of directors of the Brookings Hospital and Brookview Manor, 1972-89, including terms both as secretary and president. She was active in matters of hospital governance on the state and national levels for over 10 years during that time. The Bonnemanns have three children.

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum’s mission is to inspire a passion for the diverse history, culture and science of agriculture in South Dakota. It is the official state museum for preserving the history of agriculture and rural life of South Dakota. It is a department of South Dakota State University. It is located in the historic Stock Judging Pavilion on the SDSU campus at 977 11th Street, Brookings, S.D. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 605-688-6226 or visit www.agmuseum.com.





Riverview Christmas Tree Farm is located near Canton, S.D., near the Big Sioux River.

OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Cut-Your-Own Tree Opportunities

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Traditions can be an important part of the holidays and for many, nothing matches the aroma and feel of a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Many have taken advantage of the cut-your-own tradition at the Black Hills National Forest. But for those not wanting to trek across the Rushmore State to the Black Hills, Christmas tree farms closer to home have been part of holidays.

In eastern South Dakota, families have been cutting their own trees at the Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at Canton, S.D., since 1989.

The tree farm is a family business that was opened in 1989 by Bill and Darlene Keizer. The business is now operated by the Todd and Shari Gannon family.

Families search the acres of trees looking for the perfect tree for their family. Five tree varieties ranging in sizes from six to 10 feet provide families several options. The tree farm provides the saw for cutting the tree and a tractor/trailer brings the family and their tree back to the farm's lodge to enjoy hot drinks and holiday treats.

The farm is open four weekends in November and December. In 2019, the farm will be open Saturdays (Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15) from Noon to 5 p.m. as well as Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28 (2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and Black Friday, Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



Photo by SD Tourism

Visitors to the tree farm can enjoy the beautiful scenery, shopping for holiday crafts and Christmas wreaths. They can also pet the animals in the pen and see Santa!

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm Tree Varieties

- Fraser Fir
- Balsam Fir
- Canaan Fir
- White Pine
- Black Hills Spruce

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm features cut-your-own trees, ranging from six to nine feet tall, sell for \$9 to \$11 per foot, depending on the variety. Pre-cut trees, ranging from six to 10 feet tall sell for \$7 to \$8 per foot.

Learn more about Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at <http://www.riverviewtreefarm.com/>

Tips for Trees Cut at Black Hills National Forest

Cutting Guidelines

- The maximum tree height is 20 feet.
- Cut the stump within six inches of the ground.
- Cut and scatter the limbs and other unused parts of the tree so they lie within a foot of the ground.

Setting Up Your Tree

- Keep your tree as fresh as possible.
- Store your tree upright in a bucket of water in the garage or basement until you are ready to move it indoors.
- In the house, keep the tree well watered at all times.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, stoves or heating vents.

Kinds of trees available:

- **Ponderosa pine** is noted for its full shape and long graceful needles. It grows almost everywhere in the Black Hills.
- **Spruce** is very popular as a holiday tree. It grows at higher elevations and on wetter, north-facing slopes and drainage bottoms. Spruce has a classic tapered form and its short needles allow for easy stringing of lights and ornaments.
- **Juniper** is a shorter tree found at lower elevations in the southern and western parts of the Black Hills. Many people like its full shape and bluish-green coloring.

Cut Your Own Fresh Christmas Tree This Year From the Black Hills National Forest

Christmas tree tags will be available Nov. 12 to Dec. 24, 2019, at Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming.

The Black Hills National Forest will also continue the Fourth-Grade Free Christmas Tree Program again this holiday season.

Fourth-graders are eligible for a FREE Christmas tree permit through the Every Kid Outdoors initiative. Every Kid Outdoors is a nationwide call to action to build the next generation of conservationists. All fourth graders are eligible to receive a fourth-grade pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year.

In order for students to receive a free Christmas tree permit, they must present a valid fourth grade pass or paper voucher printed from the Every Kid Outdoors website: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>. To obtain the voucher, visit the website, click on the "Get your pass" button and follow the instructions. Print out the paper voucher and bring it with you to a district office or the supervisor's office on the Black Hills National Forest.

White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available and can be cut in many parts of the National Forest.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost \$10, up to a maximum of five permits are allowed per individual and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground.

The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the cutting area; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.


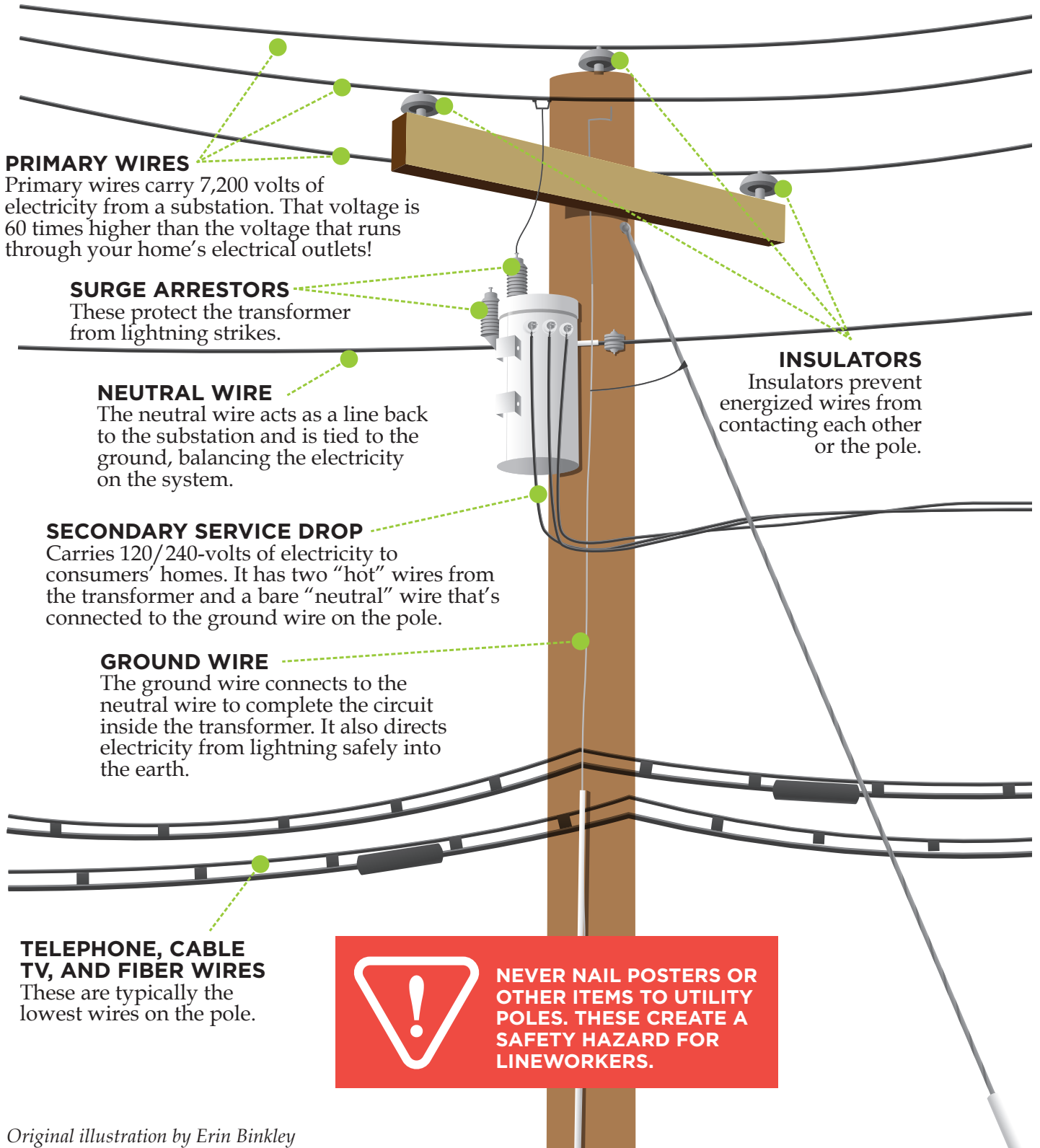
Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits. Please note that Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Dec. 24 is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices. Private vendors may sell tags until Dec. 24.

Tags are available by mail from the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, SD, 57730. Enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$10 for each tree permit, up to a maximum of five trees per individual as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Forest Service will mail tags and cutting instructions.

WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINeworkERS.

Original illustration by Erin Binkley

A Threat to Cooperatives' Tax-Exempt Status

Due to an unintended consequence of current federal tax law, many electric co-ops are finding themselves in a precarious position.

Imagine working hard to secure funding for an important local project only to turn around and give a large chunk of that money back in taxes.

That's the situation many cooperatives may face because of recent tax law changes. And it could jeopardize the not-for-profit tax status of cooperatives that receive federal or state government funding of any kind, including disaster relief aid, energy efficiency grants, economic development support and rural broadband development grants.

In order to maintain tax-exempt status, an electric cooperative must receive at least 85 percent of all revenue from its members. However, an unintended consequence of a 2017 change to federal tax law modified the calculation for some contributions by a government entity or civic group.

Now, grants and other contributions may be considered non-member revenue and could threaten a co-op's tax-exempt status. This would have a profound impact on co-ops and their members. Here are two examples:

Otsego Electric Cooperative received a \$10 million broadband grant from the state of New York, which will put the co-op well over the 15% limit for non-member revenue in 2019. Otsego will lose its tax-exempt status if the RURAL Act is not passed this year, CEO Tim Johnson said in April. Twenty-one percent of the grant money will have to be used to pay taxes.

West Florida Electric Cooperative Association has received \$24 million in expedited reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) this year for storm recovery work in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018. That's about 40% of the co-op's projected annual revenue. Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative to the south is in the same tax position, and three other Florida co-ops could surpass the 15% threshold by year's end. It's unfair to classify the FEMA reimbursement as revenue—it was for expenses that West Florida incurred to restore service to a large swath of its members after the category 5 hurricane pounded the Florida panhandle.

Encouraging Congress to fix the tax code to exempt government grants from being defined as member revenue is one of the highest priorities of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing America's electric co-ops. Legislation called the Rural Act has been introduced in both the House and the Senate, attracting large groups of bipartisan cosponsors. However, getting it enacted into law will be a heavy lift, given the political sensitivity of tax issues on Capitol Hill.

Congress must act now to correct this unintended consequence and protect the tax status of electric co-ops. In doing so, Congress would preserve the full value of government grants that deliver societal benefits to our communities.

You can play an important role in encouraging Congress to act. Voice your support for the Rural Act by visiting www.action.coop/ruralact.

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.



Dan Riedinger

NRECA

You can play an important role in encouraging Congress to act. Voice your support for the Rural Act by visiting www.action.coop/ruralact.

Keeping Good Cheer

Holiday Safety and Crime Protection

National Neighborhood Watch

<https://nnw.org/holiday-safety>

The jolly man in red is the only visitor that's supposed to be entering homes stealthily this Christmas, shimmying down chimneys and stealing bites of cookies washed down with gulps of milk.

But, for too many, St. Nick isn't the only unexpected holiday visitor. Porch pirates are stealing holiday joy and other criminals are itching to find untended digital portals into homes.

A 2017 study titled "Package Theft Report: Porch Pirates, Purchase Habits and privacy" by Schorr.com found that nearly 1 in 3 Americans say they have experienced package theft. A separate study by www.insurancequotes.com found that around 25.9 million Americans have had a package delivered during the holiday shopping season stolen, up from 23.5 million reported porch thefts in 2015.

General Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

Courtesy of the Knoxville, Tenn., Police Department

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters or under doormats.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.



Packages left on doorsteps can attract holiday thieves.

- Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
- Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
- Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

Strangers at Your Door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.

Avoid Porch Theft:

Five tips to Protect Your Packages

- Network with Neighbors
- Have Packages Delivered to Work
- Leave Specific Drop-off Instructions
- Use a Smart Lock
- Install Security Cameras

Keeping Your Devices Secure

- **Use Security Software.** Install anti-virus software, anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set your preference to update these protections often. Installing these types of programs will help protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files and passwords. These programs install security patches for your operating system and other software programs.
- **Avoid Phishing Emails.** Don't open files, click on links or download programs sent by strangers. Opening a file from someone you don't know could expose your system to a computer virus or spyware that captures your passwords or other information you type.
- **Be Wise about Wi-Fi.** Before you send personal information over your laptop or smartphone on a public wireless network in a coffee shop, library, airport, hotel or other public place, see if your information will be protected. If you use an encrypted website, it protects only the information you send to and from that site. If you use a secure wireless network, all the information you send on that network is protected.
- **Lock Up Your Laptop.** Keep financial information on your laptop only when necessary. Don't use an automatic login feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. That way, if your laptop is stolen, it will be harder for a thief to get at your personal information.
- **Read Privacy Policies.** Yes, they can be long and complex, but they tell you how the site maintains accuracy, access, security and control of the personal information it collects; how it uses the information and whether it provides information to third parties. If you don't see or understand a site's privacy policy, consider doing business elsewhere.



Outdoor decorations can also be targets of holiday grinch.

- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Leaving for the Holidays

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

After the Holidays

- Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.

What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate

- Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
- Know exactly what's in the missing box.
- If you see the thief, pay attention to

Six Ways to Grinch-Proof Your Holiday Light Displays

- **Shut down at night**
- **Set up surveillance**
- **Crime-proof your yard**
- **Consider bringing in valuable items at night**
- **Stay connected**
- **Report, report, report**

what his or her vehicle looks like and its license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.

- Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home.
- If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.

Source: *National Neighborhood Watch, A Division of the National Sheriffs' Association*



Wall Elementary students eat their lunch, complete with locally raised beef.

BEEF: IT'S FOR LUNCH

Beef to School Program Launched

Jocelyn Romey

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Local beef is on the lunchtime menu for Wall, S.D., students, thanks to the efforts – and donations – of local producers and businesses.

“We consider this a must-do for the kids and our community,” said Ken Charfauros, owner of Wall Meats Processing, who with others, spearheaded the Beef to School program in the school in January 2019.

The program has grown from that first 90-pounds of locally raised beef eaten by more than 200 students in the school. It is now a sustainable program in Wall and serves as an example to area schools that value the educational and financial benefits of serving up beef from local ranches. Other South Dakota schools currently in the pilot phase of implementing this program are in Custer, Edgemont, Faith, New Underwood and Philip.

In 2018, Wall Meats Processing partnered with the school, Wall FFA and the Ag Committee of Wall Economic Development Corporation to plan and implement the project. Three months later, ranchers began donating the beef and Wall Meat Processing contributed the cost of processing and delivering. This community partnership has grown more effective and continues to provide



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson joined Wall students for lunch to learn about the district's Beef to School program.

local beef to the school district.

Wall Economic Development believes that the purpose of this project is to provide an educational opportunity and help develop the local economy. Students receive an education on what they eat and where it comes from. They are also able to actively learn about beef nutrition through outreach conversations.

“This program is a good educational piece for FFA students and a good project for future farmers,” said Charfauros.

But it's not just the students who are learning. Charfauros said his staff and those involved in developing this program are also learning how to effectively cut healthy meat selections that fit every school's requirements. The Wall School District requires meat that has a 90 percent lean to 10 percent fat ratio. However, other schools who are in the pilot phase of the program may require different ratios. How the meat is cut and delivered is determined by local schools as well as federal and state regulations.

Another purpose of this program is to benefit the community. Charfauros commented that the local economy profits when local people buy local things and



that money is saved when the school district does not have to pay federal fees for meat being delivered from out of state.

“The major thing about local food is that it helps your local economy. That money goes back to the community and gets spent several times,” said local rancher Josh Geigle, who participated in the Wall Beef to School program.

Due to the current success of the Beef to School program, South Dakota's leadership is taking notice. State Rep. Johnson

and Sens. Thune and Rounds along with the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development reached out to Charfauros to discuss the program's achievements. From Charfauros' outreach, more school districts are showing interest in adopting the program and promoting beef nutrition, student education and local economic development.

“This is an outreach program to our communities, our producers and our kids,” Charfauros said.



Members of the Wall FFA Chapter along with area beef producers, the Wall Economic Development Corporation and Wall Meats Processing partnered with the Wall School District to implement the Wall Beef to School program in 2018.

October 19-January 5

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

November 15-December 18

Black Hills Christmas Tree Permit Season, Custer, SD, 605-673-9200

November 26-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

November 29

Annual Holiday Open House, Cultural Heritage Center, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3458

November 29-30

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

November 30

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 5-8

Hatchery Holidays will host "Music from the Booth House" Area musicians will entertain, Hot beverages and cookies will be served, Pond Gift Shop will be open with unique gifts available for purchase, D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery & Archives, Spearfish, SD

December 7

Festival of Trees, City Hall, Newell, SD

December 7

JuleFest 2019, Scandinavian Christmas Festival and Bazaar, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Lefse, Smorgasbord Breakfast and Lunch, Homemade Crafts and Baked Goods, Coffee and Pastries served all day, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Spearfish, SD, 307-290-0867

December 14: Frontier Christmas, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

Photo courtesy: travelouthdakota.com

December 7

Rapid City Garden Club's 58th Annual Wreath & Centerpiece Sale, Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 7

Gordy Pratt & Dalcyce Sellers Christmas Concert, 2 p.m., Suggested Donation: \$10 at the door, High Plains Western Heritage Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-9378

December 7-8

Living Christmas Tree, Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-229-6349

December 7-24

Christmas Shoppers Village, Includes many area artisans, Open every day, during business hours, High Plains Western Heritage Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-9378

December 7-8, 14-15, 21-24 and 27-28

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

December 14

Paul Higbee: "Belle Fourche's Doolittle Raider, Don Smith"- Co-Sponsor: Jon Pochop with Ameriprise Financial, Presentation & Book Signing, 1 p.m., Open to the Public, No Admission Fee, High Plains Western Heritage Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-9378

December 14-15

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas, Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

December 15

Christmas Concert, Orion & Stacey Potter and Company, 3 p.m., Tickets: \$15 General Admission, \$20 Reserved Seating, High Plains Western Heritage Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-9378

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

December 22

"Campfire Concerto" High Plains Live! Featuring: Paul Larsen, Kenny Putnam, Boyd Bristo & Chet Murray, 2 p.m., Tickets: \$30, All Seats Reserved, High Plains Western Heritage Center, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-9378

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

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.