

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Mitchell Technical College launches careers in a wide range of fields including training for linemen like Lacreek Electric's Matt Kruid.  
*Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Tech Training

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# Beat the Peak



**Brad Kool**  
CEO

If you look around your home, you likely notice more devices and equipment that require electricity than ever before. Our connected lives are increasingly dependent on more electricity to function. At the same time, as demand for electricity rises, Butte Electric Cooperative must deliver an uninterrupted 24/7 power supply—regardless of market conditions or other circumstances.

As you know, your electricity use fluctuates throughout the day based on your habits and lifestyle. Butte Electric Cooperative must be able to provide enough electricity to meet the energy needs of all our members during times of highest energy use, also called peak events. These peak events are typically in the morning as people start their day and in the evening as they return to their homes.

What you may not know is that electric utilities, including Butte Electric, typically pay more for electricity during those morning and evening peak events. In addition, the electricity demand is even higher when it's especially cold outside, and heating systems must run longer to warm our homes.

Another way to explain peak events is to think of a major concert. We know costs go up when there is strong demand for tickets (or electricity in this case), and prices are subject to the basic economic laws of supply and demand. When a lot of people want the same thing, it's more expensive. When they don't, it's cheaper—like a bargain matinee or a happy hour special at a restaurant.

In 2019, we created the Peak Time Rebate (PTR) Program as a way to reward members when they reduce electricity use during peak events. The concept is simple; we issue a \$1 rebate for every kWh you reduce during a peak event, usually lasting 2-4 hours and occurring a few times a month. Since inception, we've awarded over \$85,000 in rebates to participating members. It's free to join, and there's never a penalty for not reducing electricity during peak events. If you're interested in joining the 1,000+ members enrolled in the PTR Program, you can sign-up by visiting [www.butteelectric.com/peak-time-rebate-program](http://www.butteelectric.com/peak-time-rebate-program).

[com/peak-time-rebate-program](http://www.butteelectric.com/peak-time-rebate-program).

During peak events when the cost to produce and purchase power is higher, consider simple steps to save energy, such as turning your thermostat down a few notches, turning off unnecessary lights, and waiting to use large appliances until off-peak times.

You can also save energy by plugging electronics and equipment such as computers, printers, and TVs into a power strip, then turning it off at the switch during peak hours. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings to sync up with off-peak periods. When we all work together to reduce energy use during periods of high electricity demand, we can relieve pressure on the grid and save a little money along the way.

Another benefit of this time-of-use approach to electricity use allows greater control over your bill. Reducing the peak impacts the power-supply cost to every co-op member. This is particularly noticeable as energy costs have risen across the country. Together, conserving energy and making small changes can truly make a difference.

Remember, taking simple steps to save energy throughout the day and shifting energy-intensive chores to off-peak hours is a smart choice for you and our community.



Consider running large appliances like dishwashers during off-peak times to help reduce stress on the electric grid.

**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

**BUTTE ELECTRIC**

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**Visit Washington, D.C., this summer for FREE!**

**Attention all area high school students whose parents or guardians are members of Butte Electric Cooperative:** An all-expenses-paid opportunity of a lifetime to Washington, D.C., will take place June 17-23, 2023.



The difference between electric cooperatives and other utilities is that “giving something back to the community” is part of our business plan. So, why do electric cooperatives bring high school students to Washington? Because they’re committed to giving our next generation of community leaders the political insight and hands-on leadership experience they need to flourish. The student who wins this trip will return from D.C. as a leader, well-equipped to make a difference.

The Rural Electric Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., every June since the late 1950s. Students compete for this unique opportunity and are selected by their local electric cooperative.

The featured speakers during National Youth Day provide insight into the important roles electric cooperatives play in their community. Students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as a citizen by meeting their representatives and senators while exploring the sights around the nation’s capitol.

During the trip, you’ll see tons of sites, meet teens from across the country and gain perspective on community and cooperatives! To apply, fill out the application at [www.butteelectric.com/youth-tour](http://www.butteelectric.com/youth-tour). Applications are due February 28, 2023, to 3540 Old Belle Road, Spearfish, SD 57783. For questions and more information, contact Communications Director Laine Mitchell at (605)269-0689 or [lainem@butteelectric.com](mailto:lainem@butteelectric.com).

## Check out this handy electrical fire check list

Electrical Fires do not have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

Smoke Alarms – Smoke alarms save lives!

- ✓ Do you have enough smoke alarms?
- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do you test them?

Switches and Outlets – Be on the look-out for signs of trouble.

- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do they make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?
- ✓ Are they warm to the touch?
- ✓ Do plugs fit snugly?

Cords – Never use damaged cords.

- ✓ Is there fraying or cracking?
- ✓ Are they pinched or pierced?
- ✓ Do you use extension cords all the time?
- ✓ Are cords getting enough air?

Lamps and Appliances – Use them safely.

- ✓ Are you using the right bulbs?
- ✓ Do you use space heaters safely?
- ✓ Are appliance cords protected from damage?

Electrical Panel – Know the basics.

- ✓ Do you have AFCIs?
- ✓ Have you tested your AFCIs?
- ✓ Are all circuit breakers and fuses the proper size?



## KEEPING UP WITH ELECTRIC METERING TECHNOLOGY



South Dakota's electric cooperatives recently held an electric meter school in Pierre where more than 45 co-op employees learned about the latest technology in residential and industrial kilowatt hour metering processes. Metering is a key component of providing reliable, safe and affordable power to cooperative members all across the state.

To view scenes from this important training program and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Take care when flying kites

### Jaclyn Koistinen

Jaclyn Koistinen, 11, is already thinking ahead to spring when kite-flying is a popular activity. She warns kids and adults both to take care when putting that kite in the air. Jaclyn is the daughter of Patrick and Jenilee Koistinen, members of H-D Electric based in Clear Lake.

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.

# BRUNCH SWEET BRUNCH

## CRAB QUICHE

**Ingredients:**  
 1 (6 oz.) can crab meat (rinsed and drained)  
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
 1/4 c. chopped green onion (or fresh chives)  
 4 eggs.  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1 tsp. dry mustard  
 1 c. milk (or half-n-half)

## METHOD

Grease or spray pie pan. Combine crab, cheese and onion. Press into pie pan and up the sides. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt and mustard. Pour mixture into pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in 400 degree oven about 30 minutes or until set. Let set 5 minutes before cutting and serving.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis**

## PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH

**Ingredients:**  
 1 (21 oz.) box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 c.)  
 2 c. pecans  
 1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 1/2 c. light corn syrup  
 1/4 c. margarine  
 1/2 tsp. baking soda

## METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9x13 inch pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir. Microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container.

**Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre**

## CINNAMON APPLE BRUNCH BAKE

**Ingredients:**  
 1 can (21 oz.) apple pie filling  
 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
 3 tbsp. butter, melted  
 2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon  
 1 1/2 tbsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract  
 1 can (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits  
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

## METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple pie filling, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl. Spread 1/2 of the apple mixture in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Arrange biscuit pieces, points up, over apple mixture. Spread remaining apple mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

**mccormick.com**

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

### Q: Are there ways to reduce energy use on a farm?

A: The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep the country running, but the business brings many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm efficiency, consider the following areas.

#### MOTORS AND PUMPS

Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce costs. Adding variable frequency drives (VFDs) allow you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity. VFDs can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

#### IRRIGATION

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping and reducing the amount of water and energy consumed. The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed. This can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting. Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

#### LIGHTS

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night. LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.

#### HEATER CONTROLS

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with

temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use. To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only when needed instead of running constantly. Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group



#### EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

New farming technologies that offer efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating. Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

#### REBATES

About 80 percent of U.S. farms are located in counties served by electric cooperatives. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use.

Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times.



The Dirty Boot Band has entertained thousands of music lovers across the state and region. *Photo by DBB*

## Dirty Boot Band makes music a joyful family affair

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

Even The Grinch gets into the groove when the Dirty Boot Band takes the stage.

The family-based musical septet was playing a gig last December at Tiger's Tap in Fort Pierre when a fellow clad in a luminous green Grinch costume got up and danced a little jig.

That was okay with lead singer Sheridan Nickolas, who grinned at the gyrating Grinch while she kept strumming her Taylor six-string.

This particular set was one of about 50 gigs the DBB played last year with dates that found them venturing from one end of the state to the other. Audiences in places like Platte, Hayes, Mitchell and more heard the band belting out a blend of vintage country hits like Delta Dawn, Momma Tried and The Highway Song along with originals like Little Black Pickup Truck and To the Man I Loved.

They've played atop long-bed trailers, in hayfields, in senior citizen centers, shopping malls, bars and restaurants, and consider it an honor to respond to

invitations and play music for anyone wanting to have a fun time.

Hailing from the Onida and Fort Pierre area, the DBB is made up of cousins from the Weinheimer and Nickolas families who decided to form a group in the winter of 2020. The current line-up includes Jacob, Sam and Simon Weinheimer collaborating with Sheridan, Adelynn, Jace and Ty Nickolas.

Together, they work hard on honing their musical chops, memorizing lyrics, smoothing out their chord progressions, tightening their harmonies and even working on original tunes. When they're not touring around the state, the band mates are busy doing farm chores and tackling their academic subjects as students of the Seton Home Study School.

Somehow, they still find the time to compete in sports and pursue a side hustle of making baked goods and selling homemade jewelry.

Sheridan, a senior, is an ace softball pitcher and also likes to hunt.

"During hunting season, we do chores on the farm and do our school work, but



In lieu of a traditional gratuity for entertaining their audience at the Trader Days festival in Fort Pierre, members of the band received a free helicopter ride sponsored by an anonymous supporter. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

we also clean pheasants at the lodge," she said, referring to a family-owned hunting lodge, preserve and skeet range. "And in the spring it's calving season, so we're always checking on the cows."

She said the group plans on continuing to play more gigs and entertain more people as long as their limited time allows. And as they keep developing their chops, they're taking inspiration in the knowledge that their music is good enough to make a grinchy heart grow a few sizes when they play.



Mitchell Tech facilities were used for the annual electric cooperative rubber gloving school last summer. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Mitchell Tech prepares linemen to deliver the 'right stuff' for members

**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

It's rare that you find a cooperative lineman in the state of South Dakota who hasn't been through the training program at Mitchell Technical College.

Mike Puetz doesn't remember all the names and faces, but his mentorship has played a key role in turning loads of wannabe linemen into highly skilled craftsmen over the past 25 years.

Puetz serves as head of the lineman training department at MTC and is giving some thought to hanging up his hooks in the next year or so. When he reflects on his teaching career, he swells with pride at how the program has improved exponentially over time.

There have been many milestones in the emergence of the lineman education program rising to become one of the best of its kind in the country.

Back in 2018, for instance, the power line construction and maintenance school was named winner of the inaugural Siemens-Aspen Community College

STEM award. The honor is given by the Aspen Institute to eight colleges nationwide that provide "outstanding preparation" for students in high-demand jobs and provides selected schools with \$50,000 to apply toward scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

"That was definitely a shock," Puetz said. "There's a lot of good programs out there, and for us to be chosen for that prestigious award was unbelievable. We work hard to be able to say we have a very strong program, and that just gave us some validation that we're moving in the right direction. It's icing on the cake."

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, has worked with Puetz for 15 years. He's hard-pressed to find many co-op linemen who haven't trained under Puetz.

"Mike has been around so long, and I'd estimate about 80 percent of the electric co-op linemen out there today have been trained by him," Patterson said. "They do a fantastic job of teaching the fundamentals, whether a student ends

up at a municipal, an investor-owned or a co-op. And our superintendents do an exceptional job of working with the graduates to help them gain the field experience they need to serve our members with a mindset of safety and efficiency."

Over the years, Puetz said, MTC has not only distinguished itself among similar programs but has also greatly expanded its array of academic and technical career tracks. There are tracks for construction and manufacturing, business and service industries, health sciences, engineering technologies and agriculture and transportation.



Sioux Valley Energy's Cole Anderson learned his trade at MTC.



At left, Mike Puetz has trained hundreds of future linemen. Above, Mitchell Technical College is well equipped to give electric linemen the real-world skills they need to succeed. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cole Anderson is a lineman at Sioux Valley Energy based in Madison. He graduated from the training program four years ago and recalls why he selected MTC to learn the ropes of line work.

“I had an uncle who was a lineman in another state and I knew that’s what I always wanted to do,” said Anderson, a graduate of Chester Area High School. “I started looking at schools and noticed they had limited positions open and they were always taken very quickly. That told me how good their reputation was.”

Anderson received his certification in May of 2018, joined the cooperative as a 1,000 hour lineman, and eventually worked his way into a journeyman position.

Oddly enough, he met Puetz a year before he enrolled at MTC. While still in high school, Anderson was on a tour of the facility when he happened to encounter Puetz in the hallway. The two shook hands and after a brief conversation, Puetz said: “If I don’t see you here next year, I’m coming to track you down.”

Anderson said he finds himself frequently relying on his lineman education and remembering the things Puetz taught him, including those lessons that don’t necessarily have to do with line work.

“I think he’s awesome. He’s big on work ethic and he always told us that no matter what we did in life, a good work ethic will allow you to accomplish your goals and stand out from the rest,” Anderson said. “He also had a thing about belts. You had to wear a belt. If he saw you and you didn’t have one on, he’d take his off and give it to you.”

Anderson and his wife, Sarah, recently built a new home outside of Madison and are expecting a baby boy in March. He said he’s grateful for the outstanding

instruction he received during his education phase and is also thankful to have a position at an outstanding organization within the electric cooperative system.

“I just feel fortunate. It’s been a great experience all the way through,” he said. “I think it’s a privilege to be able to do a job I enjoy and to work with professionals who know their craft, and an organization that is focused on delivering the highest quality service to its members.”

For more information about MTC, visit [www.mitchelltech.edu](http://www.mitchelltech.edu).



MTC is a prime training ground for future co-op linemen. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORD SCRAMBLE

Electricity is essential for our daily lives, but it can also be dangerous if you don't play it safe!

Read the safety tips below and unscramble the **bolded** text to complete the phrase. Use the answer key to double check your work.



1. Never place extension **rdsoc** under rugs or carpet.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Make sure electrical cords are not **yrafde** or broken.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Smoke **maalsr** should be tested every month.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **itpr** on them.  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **shetear**.  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer Key: 1) cords 2) frayed 3) alarms 4) trip 5) heaters 6) water

## Electric Co-ops Go the Extra Mile for You

Electric co-ops serve **8 consumers** per mile of power lines. Other electric utilities serve **32 consumers** per mile. Even though we serve fewer consumers along the lines, that won't stop us from going the extra mile for you, our members we're proud to serve.



## Reminder! Scholarship Applications Due Soon

Butte Electric Cooperative values leadership development in our service territory by helping our community youth obtain a higher education. The Butte Electric Scholarship Program is designed to recognize and encourage the achievements of the members and their children.

Scholarship applications are due February 17, 2023, by 3:00 PM to 3540 Old Belle Rd, Spearfish, SD 57783. To view a complete list of requirements and applications, visit [www.butteelectric.com/scholarships](http://www.butteelectric.com/scholarships). Please contact Laine Mitchell at [lainem@butteelectric.com](mailto:lainem@butteelectric.com) or (605)269-0680 or contact the guidance counselor at your school for more information.

### Energy Efficiency

#### TIP OF THE MONTH

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.





# NATIVE TOURISM

## Native Tourism Alliance shines spotlight on tribal nation culture

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

Sure, many of the 15 million travelers who visit South Dakota each year may have marveled at the Mount Rushmore Memorial, snapped a selfie at Wall Drug or beheld the fast-moving waters in Falls Park.

But how many of them have witnessed the whirling splendor of a wacipi, the traditional Native American celebration of life? How many have paused to watch a Native artist crafting a colorful piece of beaded jewelry?

Several years ago, a blind spot was noticed in the Department of Tourism’s efforts to attract visitors – not much attention was being focused on the state’s nine federally-recognized tribal nations.

In an effort to address that oversight, the department teamed up with the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies

and the tribes to develop a sustainable indigenous tourism industry by letting visitors know there are many points of interest available for exploration far beyond the beaten paths.

The five-year plan has been described as a “groundbreaking endeavor” and is one of the first initiatives of its kind under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act and was unveiled in August of 2021. More than 60 state, local and federal organizations collaborated to formulate the strategy as a catalyst for economic growth.

“I think the Alliance is a potential revenue source for our tribes, and it’s a way for us to generate income, alleviate poverty and help conserve our natural resources and culture,” said Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

The plan identified five guiding principles:

### Native Tourism Alliance

**CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 590, Eagle Butte, SD 57625  
605-964-4155

**CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 50, Fort Thompson, SD 57339  
605-245-2221

**FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 283, Flandreau, SD 57028-0283  
605-997-3891

**LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 187, Lower Brule, SD 57548  
605-473-5561

**OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 2070, Pine Ridge, SD 57770  
605-867-5821

**ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 430, Rosebud, SD 57570  
605-747-2381

**SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE**  
PO Box 509, Agency Village, SD 57262  
605-698-3911

**STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538  
701-854-8500

**YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 1153, Wagner, SD 57380  
605-384-3641

- 
- Unity - Reunification of the Očhéthi Šakówi Oyate through shared history, commonalities, and collaboration on developing regional tourism.
  - Preservation - Promotion of art and culture in order to enhance self-identity and pride as well as preserve the culture, including language and traditional knowledge.
  - Woksape - Recognition of Elders as the driving force of traditional knowledge and wisdom in the development of regional tourism and educating the youth to be stewards of the language and culture.
  - Education - Creation of cross-cultural bridges and educating the World about Native American communities.
  - Self-sufficiency - Development of opportunities for Tribal Nations to become self-sufficient and create pathways to enhance livelihood.

Organizers gathered together and developed detailed goals and methods to achieve those goals. Planners were forced to start from the ground floor as not much data existed to determine the present status of Indigenous tourism.

They initially identified a “rich mix” of 145 existing natural, cultural and heritage attractions and special events to promote, in addition to potential agritourism initiatives.

Nearing the halfway point in the plan’s prescribed timetable, stakeholders report substantial progress and greater interest from visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Calvin Bloemendaal, who has represented the South Dakota Department of Tourism in the Alliance from its inception, pointed out several specific measures of success.

Chief among them is the creation of a nine-day motorcoach tour of tribal territory that starts in Rapid City and terminates in Bismarck. The tour, coordinated with assistance by the tourism department, will begin this summer and will be operated through Destination America and Trafalgar Tours.

“It’s one of the first tours of its kind,” Bloemendaal said. “Destination America caters to an upscale clientele of individuals who like to travel a lot and have been to a lot of places. They’re looking for something unique and interesting they haven’t seen before.”

He also mentioned the progress that has been made in building a network of support for tribal tourism and the development of themed destination experiences.

There’s also a marketing guide that is part of the department’s general ongoing promotional efforts. More than 30,000 of the helpful guides were printed and are being distributed at visitor centers, trade shows and other industry events.

“I was at a trade show in Denver and people were extremely interested in this idea and gravitating toward it. The guide is an effective tool that inspires people to visit,” he said. “We’re making a lot of headway as far as putting together pitches and itineraries to attract more tour operators to the state.”





# CULTURE ON DISPLAY

The Mead Cultural Center has a variety of exhibits and programs to appeal to every interest. *Photos by Mead Museum*

## Mead Cultural Education Center has something for every interest

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The action seems to never cease at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.

Between three very popular permanent exhibits, community-based special events and temporary displays that come and go, the constant swirl of activity keeps Rob Marlow on his toes.

Marlow is program director at the museum, which is known affectionately to local supporters and frequenters as “The Mead.” He was finally catching his breath after the Christmastime crush when he and his team had to quickly turn their attention to installing a new traveling exhibit called “Crossroads: Changes in Rural America,” the product of a collaboration between the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program and the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Previously, the touring exhibit spent several months on display at the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

on the SDSU campus in Brookings and will show at The Mead through the first week of March.

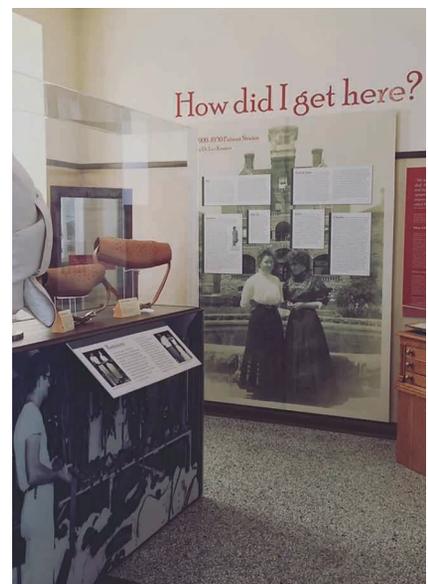
Other stops include the Sturgis Public Library from March 11 through April 30 and the Fort Sisseton Historic State Park from May 6 through June 25.

Marlow explained that the exhibit describes how the U.S. population has shifted away from rural and agrarian communities and moved toward more urban and suburban centers since 1900. It showcases the many ways agriculture-based towns and villages across the country have responded to those changes and in many cases have thrived.

As they’ve felt the impact of the long-term demographic trends, rural communities have been pro-active and intentional in finding new opportunities for growth, innovation and economic development.

“A lot of people who don’t live in rural towns have a perception that they’re barely hanging on by a thread, and that’s not always the situation. The reality is that while it hasn’t been easy,

farmers and ranchers and small town leaders have rolled up their sleeves and met these challenges head-on, to the point that we see many folks coming back to a lifestyle with a slower pace, more freedom, more comfort and more room to roam. It’s really a super success



A display focusing on the historic Yankton State Hospital is a popular attraction at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.



This display was created by the local Lego club and attracted a lot of interest during the Christmas season. *Photos by Mead Museum*

story, and this exhibit shows that. We're excited to have it here at The Mead," Marlow said.

Meanwhile, curious crowds continue to flock to the museum's three permanent exhibits, which include Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods and Medicine; Journey Forward: Connecting Cultures; and the Children's Transportation Museum.

Marlow said visitors and guests generally have a special fascination with the story of how the Mead Building in Yankton was once home to the state's largest mental health facility for women.

The permanent display designed by Jane Bobzin, Carol Ryan and Stan Hoffart opened in 2020 and tracks the history of the facility that dates back to 1879.

It highlights the accomplishments of hospital superintendent Dr. Leonard Mead and Dr. Leo Kanner, considered to be the "Father of American Child Psychiatry" for his innovative work in the field of autism.

"We get a lot of positive reviews and feedback about that display. People walk away learning a lot about the history of the facility and how the hospital provided treatment for those with mental disorders at the time," Marlow said.

Throughout the calendar year, the facility hosts a variety of seasonal events and activities such as the Hall of Trees held each year from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

This past Christmas, nearly 70 local businesses, social organizations and other sponsors decorated trees to reflect the spirit of the season. More than 1,300 visitors cast their vote for best-of-show by dropping a token in a box in front of their favorite tree. Registration fees paid by the competing tree decorators go toward providing free museum admission to those 17 and under.

The 2022 Hall of Trees exhibit also included a 1,400-piece Lego display built by the Yankton Community

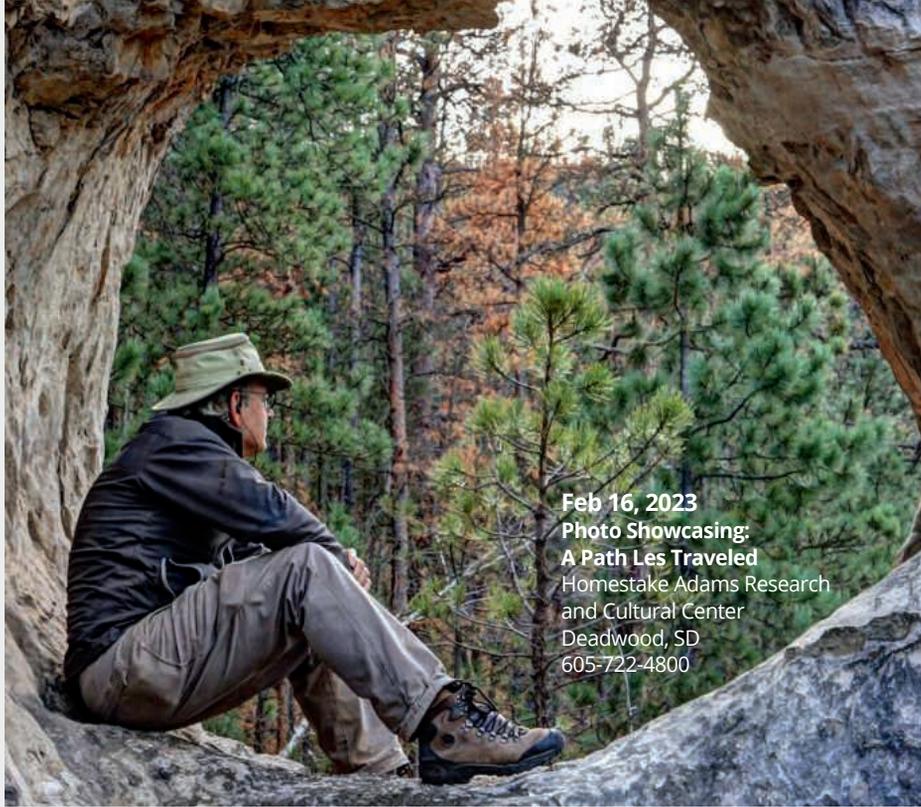
**"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building. We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."**

*- Rob Marlow*

Library Lego Club led by local brickmeister Tom Cihak. Last year's display featured an assortment of Tonka trucks.

Another popular seasonal event occurs during Halloween and is centered around "haunted history" tours of the Mead Building and an "overnight experience" where guests gather together with their sleeping bags and snacks, share ghost stories and listen for signs of any paranormal activity taking place in the crooks and crevices of the structure.

"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building," Marlow said. "We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."



**Feb 16, 2023**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

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.

**FEB. 3-4**  
**TOOTSIE**  
 Show Dates:  
 Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 2 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 4**  
**Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby**  
 9 a.m. registration  
 Hendricks City Public  
 Lake Access  
 Hendricks, MN  
 507-828-2113

**FEB. 4**  
**James River Gobblers  
 Hunting Heritage Banquet**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-999-3208

**FEB. 10-11**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
 Mardi Gras Events & Parade  
 Sponsored by Deadwood  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Main Street  
 Deadwood, SD

**FEB. 11**  
**Songs of Romance**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 16**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 12 p.m.-1 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 24**  
**Calamity's Shindig**  
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 28**  
**BIG Career & Internship Fair**  
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Ramkota Hotel  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 4**  
**Annual Ag Day**  
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**MARCH 18**  
**Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run**  
 12 p.m.  
 Main Street  
 Presho, SD

**MARCH 25-26**  
**Greater Sioux Falls Model  
 Train Show**  
 Multi-Cultural Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 30**  
**"The Wildest Banquet  
 Auction in the Midwest"**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 South Dakota Military  
 Heritage Alliance  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-339-1203

**APRIL 1**  
**Mozart Requiem**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

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