

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Wings of Valor

A Veteran's Hunting  
Retreat

Pages 8-9

Celebrating American  
Indian Heritage

Pages 12-13



# A Lineworker's Timeline: Restoring a Power Outage



**Matt Sleep**  
CEO

It doesn't take long sitting in the dark to realize how dependent we are on electricity. It makes our lives better - and easier - in so many ways.

Since starting at Butte Electric in April, I didn't have to wait long to know it's always a good feeling for everyone at the co-op to help get those lights back on. But what does it take to get them back on anyway? Why does it take so long sometimes? Most people will never experience or witness the work that goes into restoring power. Hopefully, after reading this, you will have a better understanding of the process and the work that our line crews have to do to restore power.

The electricity you use every day travels through hundreds of miles of line using thousands of poles to get to your home. That's a lot of exposure for something to happen and cause an outage. Just like your home, our system has breakers. Breakers help us reduce line exposure and allow us to split our system into sections. Doing so helps limit the size of the outages and keep as many people on as possible. Breakers also protect equipment on the line. If you've ever wondered why your lights blink a few times before going off, it's the breaker trying to give the fault a chance to clear the line before they open for good.

Now that the lights have blinked, the breaker has opened, and the power is off. So what happens?

At **6:35 p.m.**, your local line crew gets a phone call. Once they've identified where outage is, the line crew leaves the shop around **7:00 p.m.** They arrive onsite at **7:45 p.m.** and immediately verify if the breaker is open. After that, they start inspecting the line and equipment. Several things can cause an outage, including fallen trees, car accidents, lightning, animals, equipment failure, etc. At **8:30 p.m.**, the line crew located the cause of the outage. Turns out a 50-foot-tall ponderosa tree fell through the line. It's off the road, but luckily the pole is still intact. Before they can start, the crew has a safety briefing to discuss the job plan, identify hazards,

and make everyone aware of the grounds, their location, and the location of the breaker. After all safety procedures are in place around **9:00 p.m.**, the crew begins their work.

The wire isn't broken, but it's currently under the tree so they start to chop the tree and free the wire. While they work to clear the tree from the line, new material is on the way. They will need a crossarm, crossarm braces, new insulators, bolts, and ties to tie in the wire. At **10:30 p.m.**, the tree has been cleared, and the material has arrived. In this scenario, we can't use a bucket truck since the pole is off-road. So, one of the linemen puts on his belt and hooks and starts to climb to the top of the pole. He'll start inspecting the top of the pole for damage that couldn't be seen from the ground. He then starts to remove all the broken material from the pole. Once he has it cleaned up, the crew on the ground will start sending material up on the handline (a rope in a pulley that's long enough to go from the top of the pole to the ground in a loop). At **11:45 p.m.**, the repairs are now complete and it's time to go back to the breaker. Once there, a call over the radio is made for clearance to re-energize. They will check to make sure no one else is working on the line and then get the go-ahead to close the breaker. At **12:05 a.m.**, your power is restored, and the outage is over.

This is just one scenario; every outage is different. This example took around five and a half hours to restore. If the tree had broken a pole, it would have been even longer.

**Your co-op line crews are doing their best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible.**

We've become so dependent on electricity that every outage, whether it's short or long, can be stressful for those without power. The longer outages last, the more stressful and irritating it can become. I hope that I've provided a better understanding of the restoration process so you have an idea of what's happening while you wait. At Butte Electric Cooperative, we will always be committed to serving our members and communities by providing safe and reliable electricity—24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**BUTTE ELECTRIC**

(ISSN1531-1031)

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# Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. 83RD ANNUAL MEETING

5:30 PM • Friday, Oct. 27, 2023  
 Belle Fourche Area Community Center

Join us for the Butte Electric Annual Meeting and enjoy a free roast beef dinner and learn about the current happenings at Butte Electric Cooperative.

**AGENDA**

- Call to Order
- Invocation
- National Anthem
- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes
- Election
- Approval of Bylaw Changes
- Treasurer's Report
- President's Report
- New Business
- Door Prizes
- Election Report
- Adjourn

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# Drowsy Driving

**Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (Nov. 5-11, 2023)**, held every year during the first full week of November, is a good time to remember that drowsy driving is impaired driving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 25 adult drivers report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days, and many more admit to driving when they were sleep-deprived.

These startling figures show how prevalent drowsy driving is. What drivers may not realize is how much drowsy driving puts themselves – and others – at risk. In fact, an estimated 6,400 people died annually in crashes involving drowsy driving, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

### Impact of Drowsiness on Driving

Driving while drowsy is similar to driving under influence of alcohol.

- Drivers' reaction times, awareness of hazards and ability to sustain attention all worsen the drowsier the driver.
- Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08% – the U.S. legal limit.
- You are three times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued.

A driver might not even know when he or she is fatigued because signs of fatigue are hard to identify. Some people may also experience micro-sleep – short, involuntary periods of inattention. In the 4 or 5 seconds a driver experiences micro-sleep, at highway speed, the vehicle will travel the length of a football field.

### Prevalence of Drowsy Driving Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every year about 100,000 police-reported, drowsy-driving crashes result in nearly 800 fatalities and about 50,000 injuries. The real number may be much higher, however, as it is difficult to determine whether a driver was drowsy at the time of a crash.

A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety estimated that 328,000 drowsy driving crashes occur annually. That's more than three times the police-reported number. The same study found that 109,000 of those drowsy driving crashes resulted in an injury and about 6,400 were fatal. The researchers suggest the prevalence of drowsy driving fatalities is more than 350% greater than reported.

Beyond the human toll is the economic one. NHTSA estimates fatigue-related crashes resulting in injury or death cost society \$109 billion annually, not including property damage.

### Interventions for Drowsy Driving

Drowsy driving affects everyone, including adolescents and teens, who are not getting enough sleep (according to the CDC, it is recommended that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep each night). That means interventions focusing on this age group can help reduce drowsy

driving. One such intervention is for parents to incorporate discussions and rules on drowsy driving while completing their parent-teen driving agreements.

### Other ways to reduce drowsy driving include:

- **Crash avoidance technologies:** New and existing safety technologies, such as drowsiness alert and lane departure warnings, can detect common drowsy driving patterns and warn drivers to stay in their lane or take a break
- **University interventions:** College students receive less than average sleep, with some estimates at less than six hours a night; education programs aimed at college students may help curb drowsy driving and instill healthier behaviors that can last into adulthood
- **Getting more sleep:** According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, adults should get seven or more hours of sleep each night
- **Medication labels:** An article by Consumer Reports found that side-effect warnings are not always clear; new labeling guidelines may help drivers understand when to drive or not drive after taking these medications
- **Employers:** Workplaces with strong off-the-job safety and health programs can include key information on getting sufficient sleep and refraining from driving drowsy

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Don't Fly Kites Near Power Lines!

#### Jason Willman, Age 9

Jason Willman advises people it's not safe to fly kites around power lines. Jason is the son of Dave and April Willman from Yankton, S.D., members of Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

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.



# EASY CROCKPOT CREATIONS

## MOM'S ROAST

### Ingredients:

3-5 lbs. beef roast  
1 can beefy mushroom soup  
1 pkg. au jus (dry)

### Method

Place roast in crock pot at bedtime. Mix au jus and soup together and pour over the roast. Cook on low. Roast will be ready to serve in its own gravy for dinner tomorrow.

Elaine Rieck  
Harrisburg, S.D.

## CREAMY GARDEN ROTINI

### Ingredients:

1 lb. cooked and drained sausage or beef  
1 large can (26 oz.) cream of chicken soup  
1 soup can of milk  
1 can (14.5 oz.) chicken broth soup  
1 tbsp. Italian seasoning  
1 cup fresh mushrooms  
6 cups fresh spinach  
1 pkg. Garden Rotini

### Method

Add ingredients in the order given to the instant pot. Pressure cook on high for 20 minutes. Allow pressure to reduce to normal for 10 minutes, then serve! You will need an instant pot for this recipe!

Jean Cave  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

## CROCKPOT CASHEW CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

1 pkg. slow cookers limited edition cashew chicken seasoning  
2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs, cubed  
1 cup frozen chopped onion and pepper blend  
1/3 cup water  
3 tbsps. soy sauce  
2 tbsps. ketchup  
1 cup cashew pieces  
2 green onions, finely chopped

### Method

Place chicken and vegetables in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, water, soy sauce, and ketchup in bowl until well blended. Pour over chicken and vegetables; stir to coat. Cover. Cook eight hours on low or four hours on high. Stir in cashews. Sprinkle with green onions. Serve over cooked rice, if desired. If cooking on low, decrease water to 1/4 cup.

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

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

# Financial Report

Statement of Operations – Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2023

Assets	
Electric Plant in Service	\$81,636,012
Construction Work in Progress	\$547,009
Total Electric Plant	\$82,183,021
Less Reserve for Depreciation	\$28,599,541
Net Electric Plant	\$53,583,480
Investments in Associate Organizations	\$6,879,996
Other Investments	\$4,653,717
Total Other Investments	\$11,533,713
Cash - General Fund	\$443,198
Cash - Construction Fund	\$0
Temporary Investments	\$800,000
Accounts Receivable (Less Uncollectibles)	\$1,397,218
Material and Supplies	\$2,471,836
Prepayments	\$123,813
Interest Receivable	\$56,261
Total Current Assets	\$5,292,326
Deferred Charges	\$101,972
Other Accounts Receivable	\$0
Total Assets	\$70,511,491
Equities	
Patronage Capital	\$24,508,811
Other Equities	\$1,664,401
Total Equities	\$26,173,212

Margins	
Electric Operating Margins	\$2,538,218
Fixed Charges (Interest on Long-Term Debt)	\$1,254,431
Operating Margin (After Fixed Charges)	\$1,283,787
G&T and Other Capital Credits	\$962,867
Non-operating Margin	\$45,360
Net Margins	\$2,292,014
Long-Term Liabilities	
Long-Term Debt – RUS & CFC	\$38,767,111
Capital Lease	\$17,749
Current/Non-Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$904,272
Customer Deposits	\$402,685
Taxes	\$308,679
Other Current Liabilities	\$2,059,858
Total Current Liabilities	\$3,675,494
Deferred Credits	\$1,877,925
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$70,511,491

Facts and Figures ENDING JULY 31, 2023	
Number of Members	5556
Number of Meters	7,063
Miles of Line	1399.3
Transmission Line	63.15
Underground Line	568.48
Overhead Line	767.67
Meters per Mile of Line	5.05
New Services – 2022	245
Outage Time (Minutes per meter per year)	83
Taxes Paid	
Gross Revenue Tax	
Meade County	\$18,705
Lawrence County	\$114,987
Butte County	\$49,920
City of Newell	\$911
City of Spearfish	\$113,287
City of Sturgis	\$9,590
City of Belle Fourche	\$9,382
Total	\$316,782
2022 Real Estate Tax	
Butte County	\$34,768
Lawrence County	\$5,986
Meade County	\$7,357
Total	\$48,111



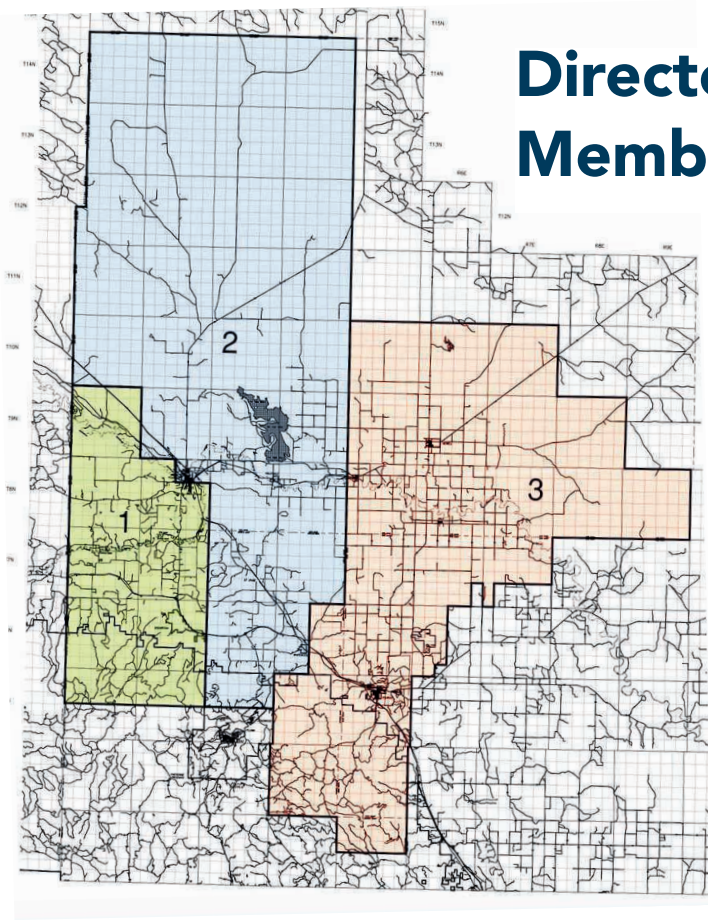
Residential .....	\$9,720,148
Large Commercial.....	\$3,638,897
Small Commercial.....	\$1,721,443
Other .....	\$41,240
Irrigation and Grain .....	\$519,794
Seasonal.....	\$254,793

Cost of Power.....	\$7,578,810
Depreciation.....	\$2,172,070
Distribution Expenses .....	\$1,696,658
Administrative & General Expense ...	\$1,137,805
Customer Accounts Expense .....	\$332,905
Customer Service & Info Expense ...	\$369,874
Transmission Expense.....	\$43,863
Other.....	\$26,381

**Total Operating Revenue: \$15,896,585**

**Total Operating Expenses: \$13,358,367**





## Directors Elected by the Members to Serve

The Butte Electric Cooperative board of directors consists of nine directors, elected by the cooperative's membership, who represent one of the cooperative's three districts. Each year at the annual meeting, cooperative members elect a director to represent each district for a three-year term. This year, the director seats held by Cris Miller, Chandy Olson, and Dan Hefner are up for re-election.

**DISTRICT 1**



**Cris Miller**  
Spearfish




**James Mortenson**  
Spearfish




**Travis Schenk**  
Spearfish


**DISTRICT 2**



**Chandy Olson**  
St. Onge




**Dan Marrs**  
Spearfish




**Tom Brunner**  
Nisland


**DISTRICT 3**



**Dan Hefner**  
Whitewood



**Steve Smeenk**  
Newell



**Paul Winkler**  
Newell





Veterans enjoying their stay at Wings of Valor.

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# WINGS OF VALOR

## A Veteran's Retreat

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Wings of Valor Lodge isn't just a hunting retreat offering veterans a good time and a free pheasant hunt, it's a place for them to come home.

The non-profit organization offers all U.S. military veterans an all-expense paid hunt in the heart of pheasant country, about five miles south of Parker, South Dakota.

The organization runs almost entirely on volunteers, donations and sponsorships and has already served more than 500 veterans from over 40 states since it began operations in 2019.

Sean Adams, the organization's president and co-founder, said the idea to open a hunting lodge came after discussions with the organization's now-CEO Bruce Weller back in 2018.

Weller owned a private hunting lodge called Birds, Bucks and Berries, and was host to Adams and other veterans during his annual veterans' hunt.

"Bruce was saying how the veterans' hunt was always the best day of the year, so I said, we can make every day the best day of the year if you want," said Adams.

Adams, who was grievously injured while serving in Afghanistan resulting in a double amputation of his legs in 2012, said he was well-versed in the non-profit community by the time he and Weller began discussing opening a hunting lodge that served veterans.

"I know pretty much how it works. If you do what you say, do it on time, do it well, serve veterans with a level of professionalism, and have a little faith, people will come," Adams said.

"From that conversation to Nov. 1, 2019, we worked on build site plans that I designed with one of the volunteers. We took a pavilion area that (Weller) used for weddings and put chalk lines everywhere, which is how we mapped out a building plan."

Adams said he rolled his wheelchair around each room, and if he hit a chalk line, he'd remark the line to ensure it was handicap accessible. That was in





**Above:** CPL USMC (RET) Sean Adams

**Right:** Sean Adams recovers in a hospital after suffering serious injuries in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2011.



January of 2019. Eleven months later, the lodge had been built and a group of veterans came to hunt under the newly established Wings of Valor Lodge.

Adams said a premise of Wings of Valor Lodge is to welcome veterans' home to something that's not chaotic, a place where they can find purpose and peace.

There's no religious angle, nor any requirements other than having taken the oath to serve our country for a veteran to have their travel expenses and entire hunting trip paid for by the non-profit.

"My generation fought in a war that was religious based," Adams explained. "We do have a spiritual setting, but we don't press anything. We never want a veteran to feel that they are oppressed by any sort of a faith."

Whether a veteran is religious, Christian, Muslim, atheist, or simply spiritual, they will be amongst others who understand what they've been through.

"No veteran is broken, they just need to come home," Adams said.

"God did not call the qualified, he called the unqualified that were willing to do

whatever was asked. Don't think because you did something overseas that your any worse than the pastor in the pulpit. We're all sinners on this earth."

Nature is also a powerful tool that Adams believes helps mend the mind, body and spirit. It's peaceful, which he said is the type of environment veterans need.

"You need all those to regroup yourself back in society. It's really hard to come out of a war, or wars, and describe that to the average human being," Adams said.

The lodge has hosted veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam to veterans who have served in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Operation Desert Storm.

Many of the veterans that have come to the lodge have never had a chance to heal or "come home", Adams said.

Some of those men were Marines that Adams served with directly a decade ago.

"They saw me in an IED blast. They didn't have time to heal. They were able to see that I was okay and it was time for them to start healing. They had given enough to the country. It was time to start the healing process," Adams said.

"We also had a veteran talk about Vietnam. He hadn't talked about it since 1968," Adams said.

Combat veterans, regardless of where they served or experienced warfare, establish a connection with one another at the lodge.

Older veterans find purpose in helping their younger counterparts. Adams said the connection can be overwhelming at times for the Vietnam veterans because of the newfound sense of purpose they find in these interactions.

Adams said raising kids and having companionship with your wife or husband is meaningful to veterans, but they often go without the relationships they had with their fellow soldiers they had beside them in the heat of battle.

"Giving someone millions of dollars, houses, or trip – that's great. But that's only mending the problem. Giving someone a sense of purpose is something we have to do," Adams said.

"When the Vietnam veterans tell my generation 'I get it, and it won't last forever', it gives the Vietnam guys a sense of purpose. The longer you hold it in the deeper it gets. That's something we realized at Walter Reed. We started getting off our medications the more we talked about what happened."

Adams said any veteran who wants to come and hunt at the Wings of Valor Lodge need only apply.

Individual applications come to the lodge free of charge. That means the organization will cover the cost of travel and any other expenses incurred to ensure the veteran doesn't pay a dime out of their own pocket.

To apply for a hunt or learn more about Wings of Valor Lodge, go to [www.wingsofvalorlodge.org](http://www.wingsofvalorlodge.org).



A handicap accessible bedroom at Wings of Valor lodge

## Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# 82ND ANNUAL MEETING

October 28, 2022 • Belle Fourche, South Dakota

The Eighty-Second Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at 6:00 p.m., on October 28, 2022, at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, pursuant to an official notice mailed to all members of the Cooperative at their last known address as shown on the records of the Cooperative.

Thomas Brunner, Secretary of the Board of Directors, advised there were 168 members registered and declared a quorum was present.

Cris Miller, President of the Board of Directors, called the 82nd Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. to order.

Secretary Brunner gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Secretary Brunner then introduced Brad Kool, CEO of Butte Electric, who welcomed the members to Belle Fourche.

Barb Clarkson's name was drawn for a \$20.00 attendance prize.

Secretary Brunner read the Official Notice and the Affidavit of Mailing of the Notice.

President Miller asked if the members would like the minutes of last year's meeting read or if someone would make a motion to dispense with the reading and approve the minutes. A motion was made by Joyce Hall, seconded by Travis Schenk, and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented.

Travis Schenk, Treasurer of the Board of Directors presented the Financial Report for the previous year. Treasurer Schenk pointed out that total revenue from energy sales was \$15.2 million for the year. Operating expenses were \$13 million. Net investment in plant is just over \$3,032,696 this year. Long-term debt is \$40,134,495 while the total electric plant owned is \$79,210,386. The number of meters has

reached the 6,738 mark as we continue to grow.

President Miller asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement as presented. A motion was made by Harold Baker, seconded by Larry Vavruska, and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements as presented.

Elwood Geiger's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

After introducing the members of the election and credentials committee, President Miller turned the election over to Attorney Ronda Miller.

Attorney Miller called on Karl Jensen to read the Certificate of the Credentials Committee.

Petitions were submitted by:

District 1 - James Mortenson

District 2 - Dan Marrs

District 3 - Steve Smeenk

Attorney Miller introduced the candidates. Attorney Miller asked for a motion that a unanimous ballot be cast for James Mortenson, Dan Marrs, and Steve Smeenk. A motion was made by Karl Jensen and seconded by Sallie Nicholas. The motion carried.

Lisa Johnson's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

President Miller introduced our guest speaker Kory Hammerbeck, CEO of Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative. Mr. Hammerbeck spoke on what Rushmore Electric has to offer to Butte Electric and on the power trends we will be facing in the upcoming year.

Rebecca Jeitz's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

President Miller and CEO Kool then gave the management report.

CEO Kool started by first thanking the Board of Directors for their continued dedication to keeping our electrical system efficient and affordable. He then introduced the Board members.

President Miller then talked about how the Cooperative has achieved a series of goals during the unprecedented growth in the last year. Our services grew by 2 percent in 2021 and as of quarter three, have exceeded that growth rate for 2022. We have also added 14 miles of line in the last year with 1,385 miles of energized line and currently have 555 miles of distribution underground line, 767 miles of distribution overhead line, 63 miles of transmission line, and 8 substations.

President Miller explained that even as the demand on our system increases, our priority remains to serve our members and provide reliable service.

CEO Kool talked about the commitment to providing the best service to our members. He emphasized customer satisfaction being held in the highest regard at Butte Electric, and the search continues for new ways to best serve the membership.

President Miller talked about the charitable programs Butte Electric has implemented. The new Operations Round-up program was launched in February, members have a choice to round up their bill to the nearest dollar to help fund non-profit organizations in the communities we serve. President Miller mentioned the employees volunteering a total of 442 hours to their communities and how the Board of Directors grants each employee \$500 every year to donate to an organization of their choice.

President Miller also announced there would be no rate increases for 2023, making 3 years without one.

CEO Kool announced the Spearfish Members Service Center will be relocating



to our Spearfish outpost off Exit 8. To conclude the speech CEO Kool recognized multiple employees and board members for their milestone years of service.

CEO Kool introduced special guests at the meeting.

Ellen Reddick's name was drawn for a \$20.00 attendance prize.

President Miller introduced Director James Mortenson to talk about the Butte Electric Scholarship program. Director Mortenson introduced the four scholarship winners. Director Mortenson drew for the Annual Meeting attendance scholarship. Kasey Schenk's name was drawn for the annual meeting attendance scholarship.

Drawings were made for several door prizes which were donated by businesses that sell supplies, equipment, and services to the cooperative.

The winner of the pre-registration prize, a TV, was Bruce Jennings.

President Miller called for unfinished business. There was no unfinished business, so he asked for new business to be brought before the meeting. There was no new business.

With no further business coming before the Board, President Miller asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Kurt Hall, seconded by Tom Casteel, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Cris Miller, President

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

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11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box  None

Full Name: Rural Utilities Service  
 Complete Mailing Address: Washington, DC, 20250

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)  
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)  
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 4)) PSN: 7530-01-000-9031 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

## CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, Thomas Brunner, do hereby certify that I am the duly elected, qualified Secretary of the Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter called the 'Cooperative'); that the foregoing is a complete and correct copy of the original minutes entered in the Minute Book of the Cooperative of the meeting of its members held October 28, 2022, that at the meeting a quorum of the members was present and acted throughout; and the resolutions contained in the minutes of the aforementioned meeting have not been modified or rescinded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name as Secretary and affixed the Corporate Seal of the Cooperative this 27th day of October, 2023.

(SEAL)

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

### UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

16. Electronic Copy Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
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 Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
 Signature: *Laine Mitchell*  
 Date: 10/1/23

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).



Dignity courtesy of Travel South Dakota

# DIGNITY

## Celebrating American Indian Heritage

Scott Waltman

Rising from the prairie land as it gives way to bluffs on the east side of the Missouri River is a spectacular sculpture commemorating both South Dakota's 125 anniversary and the state's original inhabitants.

Dignity of the Earth and Sky was built by Sturgis-based sculptor Dale Claude Lamphere, who used to be the state's poet laureate.

The sculpture was erected in 2016 after Norm and Eunabel McKie announced it as a gift to South Dakota upon the state's quasiquintennial in 2014.

Dignity towers 50 feet above the ground, beckoning motorists as they travel along Interstate 90. From the

east, it's the gateway to West River en route to the beautiful Black Hills. From the west, it's a sign to travelers that they are closer to the Minnesota border than the state's most popular playgrounds that range from Wall to Spearfish to Hot Springs.

Ashley Riehle of Sylvania, Ohio, which is on the northwestern outskirts of Toledo and just south of the Michigan

border, said the stretch of I-90 alone makes South Dakota one of the best road trip states in the nation.

She visited South Dakota in 2021, driving from Sioux Falls to the Black Hills and back and twice stopping at the Dignity monument. She planned to visit the sculpture during her drive but said the Chamberlain area also doubled as a logical place to take a break.

As a history buff, Riehle appreciates







Jeremy and Stacey Waltner of Freeman visit the Dignity of Earth and Sky sculpture in 2018.

both the beauty and the significance of Dignity.

“I thought it was great that South Dakota acknowledges the first people that occupied the state,” she said.

Many states don’t, she said, and she doesn’t know of any such significant recognitions in Ohio or Michigan.

Jeremy Waltner of Freeman, South Dakota, also appreciates the sculpture on multiple levels.

“It is as impressive as you can imagine just in terms of both size and impact,” he said.

Being a South Dakotan, he knew of Dignity and that he wanted to visit. But he also wanted to make sure his wife Stacey, daughter Ella and son Oliver could share the experience. They stopped during a trip west in summer 2018.

The sculpture pays homage to South Dakota’s Native American population, setting it apart from so many other tourist stops in the state, Waltner said.

“It’s education as much as it is art,” he said, adding that the context behind Dignity is critical.

Three Native American women from Rapid City served as models for the sculpture, which was created east of the town in an isolated area along the Cheyenne River.

Lamphere’s other creations include work in the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre and the Arch of Dreams in Sioux Falls. He’s done commissioned portraits of Bob and Dolores Hope, Burl Ives, Walter Annenberg, George and Eleanor McGovern and others, according to his website.

For Dignity, he had a specific goal.

“I wanted something that would really honor the indigenous people of the Great Plains, and I kept that in mind all the time. I made the work reflect the name that it has of Dignity, and I think that’s part of what makes it work so well,” Lamphere has said of his creation.

Riehle noted that the star quilt Dignity wears has meaning.

It’s comprised of more than 100 blue diamonds as Dignity holds it behind her back in her outstretched arms.

In Native American culture, star quilts are a sign of respect and are often given as gifts to honor somebody for a substantial achievement in their life.

Including the quilt was a nice touch that took some planning, Riehle said, because it’s a direct tie to the Lakota culture.

While there is a plaque at Dignity that briefly tells the story of the sculpture, Waltner said he’s not sure most people realize the history.

In fact, he said, he’s not sure if most people set out to visit Dignity or just happen across her as they zip through the heart of the state on the interstate.

“It’s South Dakota’s greatest conversational piece outside of two gigantic granite carvings in the Black Hills,” Waltner said, referring to Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

Either way, he said, people who take time to admire the grand piece of art wind up learning a little bit.

When he stopped with his family, he said there was a good crowd of people visiting about the sculpture, smiling as they looked on in awe and waiting in line so they could get their pictures taken

with Dignity.

Waltner said he has stopped to see the sculpture twice on his own.

Riehle met friends from Denver and Chicago in the Black Hills as part of her trip. She had been to South Dakota before but got to see and do much more in 2021. She visited Sioux Falls, Mitchell’s Corn Palace, Deadwood, the Badlands, Wall Drug, Spearfish Canyon, Custer State Park, the Chapel in the Hills, Pactola Lake, Palisades State Park and other popular places.

All were fun, but Dignity was special, she said, because it is a reflection of the true foundation of South Dakota’s history.

“So much history focuses on when the white settlers got there,” Riehle said.

Dignity is deeper.

The McKies donated \$1 million to the Dignity project. Less than a decade later, that investment helps the thousands upon thousands of people who stop just east of Chamberlain each year take a moment to remember and acknowledge the rich history of South Dakota’s first citizens.

## Additional Facts:

- November is National American Indian Heritage Month. It’s a time to remember and celebrate the important contributions of Native people and their cultures, traditions, and histories.
- The first state to declare and celebrate an American Indian Day was New York on the second Saturday in May 1916.
- In 1990, the month of November was approved by a joint resolution and signed by President George H. W. Bush as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”
- Central Electric Cooperative proudly powers Dignity and the rest area where thousands of visitors stop each year to celebrate the beauty of the American Indian.



Scott Pudwill, director of the Aberdeen Public School District's A-TEC Academy shows school board members one of three electric vehicles purchased for the academy's automotive class. *Photo courtesy of The Aberdeen Insider*

# The Rise of Career and Technical Education

**Scott Waltman**

Many high school graduates in South Dakota are veering from the traditional path to college and a four-year degree.

Career and technical education classes continue to grow in popularity with school districts expanding their offerings and academies and seeing more students interested in those classes.

During the 2021-22 school year, there were 25,282 South Dakota public school students taking some type of career or technical training class, according to information from the South Dakota Department of Education. That number includes students who took more than one class.

Those are the most recent complete numbers available from the state.

More and more, those classes get young people prepared for jobs that offer

good wages and benefits. The perception of what, decades ago, was called “tech school” has changed, and the number of students taking classes that focus on agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, and architecture and construction continues to rise.

In recent months, the Aberdeen Public School District expanded its A-TEC Academy on the campus of Central High School. The project cost roughly \$3.6 million.

New spaces for agriculture, family and consumer sciences, networking, and broadcast courses were added, though the district offers other career and technical education classes.

The agriculture program is especially popular, said Scott Pudwill, the district's A-TEC Academy director.

Before the expansion, he said, all of the ag classes were in one room. Now, ag

classes have a multipurpose space with tables and sinks and the academy has a new greenhouse.

Students were starting to put plant beds together at the end of September and, Pudwill said, the kids will be able to monitor them during the winter months with the new facility.

He said ag classes average about 105 students per term, which is nine weeks. The automotive program is almost as popular with about 400 students taking classes over the course of a school year, he said.

Career and technical education classes are also popular in the Harrisburg School District, said Breanne Lynch, the district's career and technical education coordinator.

Harrisburg offers classes in 13 of the 16 clusters the state has, she said, and about half of the 1,700 students in grades nine through 12 take career and tech classes.

If you included internships, work-based learning and other options, about 90% of high school students have a career or technical education-related class or experience during their four years, Lynch said.

The district continues to offer more



options. For example, Lynch said, a home builders academy opened in 2019. That first year, students built a full house. Now, they are working on tiny homes that will eventually go to veterans, she said.

In Aberdeen, A-TEC students have built cabins for the city's Wylie Park campground.

Both districts have partnerships with their local home builders associations.

Harrisburg's automotive program teams with Schulte Subaru in town. As is the case with many career and technical education classes, that gives students the chance to get hands-on experience.

Lynch said that when Schulte buys cars at auction, students have the chance to diagnose what problems there might be. They also do basic work like change the oil on district staff cars. That gives them experience in what it's like to work at a quick stop, she said.

Harrisburg students in the business management and administration cluster operate the Roar Store at the school. It offers snacks and drinks to students when meals aren't being served, Lynch said. For managing the store, including tasks like working with wholesalers to purchase products, the kids are paid in Roar Bucks they can spend at the store.

The aim of all of the career and technical education classes is to prepare students for the workforce, Lynch said. Workforce development is a prime focus of state leaders, she said.

Aberdeen Central's A-TEC Academy had a shop before the expansion. But students will get to try their hand at something new this school year.

The auto curriculum now has three electric cars, Pudwill said. Students will be able to build them, then the vehicles can be taken apart and used in future years.

Once finished, the cars will look somewhat like a dune buggy, he said. But they can be licensed and driven on streets and roads.

Even if students who take career and technical education classes choose another profession, they'll still have the skills to, for

example, make home or vehicle repairs, Pudwill said.

For those who go onto a postsecondary school, many of the programs are one or two years, Pudwill said. So students get into the workforce quicker while accruing less debt than they would at a traditional four-year college or university, he said.

Bobbie Jo Donovan is the college and career readiness manager for the Rapid City Public School District and past president of the South Dakota Association for Career and Technical Education. The number of high school students taking those courses is certainly on the uptick, she said.

One of the biggest challenges is finding qualified, certified teachers to lead the classes, she said.

Sometimes there's a community member with a strong background in a profession who isn't certified but would make a good teaching candidate, Donovan said. The state has programs to help those folks, who, because of their career experience, can often offer a wealth of knowledge to students, she said.

So many careers can start in high school with career and tech classes, Donovan said, and school districts want to be able to help those young people, she said.

Lynch said the Harrisburg district also offers opportunities to students in kindergarten

through eighth grade. Career learning can begin as early as age 4, so keeping students interested and curious in career and technical education options will pay dividends in the future, she said.

"We also know that students who take multiple CTE classes are more engaged in learning and see a higher graduation rate," said Nancy Van Der Weide, public information specialist with the state Department of education.

"Statewide, 82% of high school students graduated on time in the 2021-22 school year, but 94% of students who were actively involved in CTE graduated on time," she said.



Harrisburg students working on a car in the automotive class. Photo courtesy of Harrisburg School District



Students in the Harrisburg School District's home builders academy have built a full house. Photo courtesy of John Klemme



**Nov. 2-4**  
**Huron Ringneck Festival and**  
**Bird Dog Challenge**  
 Huron, SD  
 605-352-0000

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.

**OCT. 24-28**  
**Grey Goose Halloween Display**  
 6 p.m.  
 19988 Grey Goose Rd.  
 Pierre, SD

**OCT. 28**  
**Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival**  
 Hill City Visitor's Center  
 Hill City, SD  
 605-574-2368

**OCT. 28-29**  
**Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association**  
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-731-9155

**NOV. 3**  
**Plankinton Service Club Fun Night**  
 7 p.m.  
 Aurora County Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD

**NOV. 4-5**  
**Benson's Flea Market**  
 W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**NOV. 5**  
**American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 S.D. Military Heritage Alliance Building  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**NOV. 5**  
**Turkey Dinner/ Silent Auction**  
 11:45 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

**NOV. 10-12**  
**Christmas at the Barn**  
 10 a.m.  
 Groton, SD

**NOV. 10-11**  
**Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show**  
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**NOV. 11**  
**Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza**  
 Sisseton, SD

**NOV. 12**  
**Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball**  
 4-7 p.m.  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Chamberlain, SD  
 605-730-0553

**NOV. 24**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 7 p.m.  
 Dakota Avenue  
 Huron, SD

**NOV. 25**  
**Mid-Winter Fair**  
 Gregory Auditorium  
 Gregory, SD  
 605-830-9778

**NOV. 30-DEC. 3**  
**Hatchery Holidays**  
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery  
 Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction**  
 4 p.m.  
 Olive Grove Golf Course  
 Groton, SD

**DEC. 8-9**  
**Alexandria's Winter Festival**  
 5 p.m.  
 Alexandria, SD

**DEC. 8-9**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-941-4958

**DEC. 17**  
**Christmas Cantata**  
 3 p.m.  
 Hermosa United Church of Christ  
 Hermosa, SD

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