

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota Art

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Rate Stability Foreseen For LREA Members



Tim McIntyre
General Manager

Your co-op is working for you! Rates at Lake Region Electric are staying the same for 2023, and we are giving additional money back!

It's been a tough winter. Everywhere we look, prices are increasing, so being able to share good news with the members of Lake Region Electric sure feels great! The management team and board of directors have reviewed the work plan for the upcoming year and made projections for operating and other costs to come up with a budget that will cover the needs of Lake Region for 2023.

This year's budget does not include any rate increase, and we predict rates to remain flat in the foreseeable future for the members of Lake Region Electric. You read that correctly. Even though the cost of business is increasing, we are able to keep rates flat for you, our members, while continuing to provide reliable service.

And the good news keeps on coming! In 2022, Basin Electric experienced higher than expected year-end margins due to surplus sales within the energy market and greater than normal performance from their subsidiary Dakota Gasification Company (DGC.) This excess

revenue was not due to the cost of power to their members but because Basin is a cooperative, they return excess margins to their members just like Lake Region does.

After considering options for the excess money coming from Basin, the Lake Region Board of Directors decided it makes the most sense to return the value to our members and approved \$400,000 to be returned to members in the form of bill credits. This is completely separate from margins returned in the form of Capital Credits. This is the value of being a part of your electric cooperative!

These credits will be seen on your March bill that you receive at the beginning of April. Further details of these bill credits will be coming in a postcard soon, so please keep your eyes on the mail for that.

Hats off to the electric cooperative system that we are part of! I am proud to work with such a wonderful organization, from the directors and employees to the member-owners.

Thank You & God Bless,
Timothy McIntyre

Welcome to our new members!

Bonnie O Anderson
Lillian Anderson
Garret & Sam Thompson
Kenneth & Roseanne Okroi
Verna Knapp Family Trust
Carol Schilling
Nicholas Heitmann



**TOGETHER
TOWARDS
TOMORROW**

LREA 82nd Annual Meeting

Save The Date
June 8, 2023 7:00 P.M.
Britton, SD

Further details to be announced.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

Board of Directors

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Lake Region Electric Association Inc.

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24 hour Dispatching/Outage Line
1-800-657-5869



*The Charles Johnson
Education and Training Trust*



ATTENTION TRADE STUDENTS FREE MONEY FOR SCHOOL

The scholarship through the Charles Johnson Trust is awarded to persons who intend to further their education in order to return to the area with the knowledge and skills necessary to flourish in the trades industries. The scholarship is focused on the Day County community but may be expanded to enhance economic development and community growth in Northeast South Dakota. This scholarship may be awarded to qualifying high school students as well as nontraditional students, someone who has been finished with high school for more than one year who wishes to further their education.

The Charles Johnson Trust was established to promote education, training, hiring and placement of persons to work and establish life-long careers in the manufacturing and fabrication, or trades industry in the Day County area. This scholarship is named in honor of Charles Johnson who was instrumental in the development of industry in Webster. Lake Region Electric Association shares in Charles Johnson's vision and promotion of local manufacturing and industry that support our community.

The students to be recognized with this award are to be of good character and must be planning to pursue careers in manufacturing and technology including, but not limited to: Precision Machining, Welding, Electronics, Robotics, Energy Technology, Engineering, Construction Management, etc. Previous scholarship recipients have been awarded between \$1,000 - \$4,000 towards their educational needs. Applicants for this scholarship do not need to be members of LREA.

Applications for this scholarship should be submitted before April 1st.

The Charles Johnson Education/Training Trust board of trustees include Jim Block, Tim McIntyre, and Kermit Pearson. To apply for this scholarship, contact Laura at Lake Region Electric Association or Webster Area High School Counselor Chelsea Larson. Applications are also available on the Lake Region Electric website: www.lakeregion.coop

Criteria for the Award:

- Minimum 2.0 GPA
- Qualifying course of study related to manufacturing or technology
- Essay of goals and future plans
- Character qualities possessed by applicant
- Academic orientation
- Intent to return to Day County, or surrounding community in northeast South Dakota



BILLING FYI



MONTHLY KILOWATT HOUR (KWH) CHARGE

LREA has two-tier rate:
- First 1,400 kwh billed at 10.69* cents
- Usage above 1,400 kwh billed at 10.09* cents
- A reduced electric heat rate of 5.56* cents/kwh is also available

*kwh rates vary, based on the member's rate class.

Kilowatt-hour (kwh) is a unit used to measure electrical energy expended or used over time..

One kilowatt-hour is the equivalent of one kilowatt of power transferred or consumed in an hour.

MONTHLY BASE CHARGE

These costs are collected as a set fee regardless of the amount of electricity a member may use.

The base charge covers our fixed expenses such as the cost to cover wire, poles, substations, transformer, switches, etc.

In order to help maintain the financial health of your cooperative, LREA must recover a portion of the cost of delivering electricity to all members as well as have the ability to prepare for the cooperative's future.

Spring Planting Safety

Farming equipment has become more massive and technologically advanced over time. While these welcome improvements help farmers cover more ground in less time, taller equipment and longer extensions can bring added challenges around power lines.

As farmers prepare to enter the fields for planting, we urge everyone working in the agricultural field to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.



Follow the 10-foot distance rule

To stay safe around overhead power lines, follow safe work practices at all times to help prevent serious and even deadly accidents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line, but to the full 360 degrees around it. Not only can electricity change paths if direct contact is made, it can also happen when someone or something gets too close to a power line, and the current jumps, also known as arcing.

Other precautions

In addition to the 10-foot rule, take these steps to help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to deenergize the power.
- If it is not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make

a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Hop away with feet together as far as you can.

- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 9-1-1 and do not approach the scene.
- Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.
- Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.
- When working around power lines, always use a spotter, who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low, never try to move it; instead, contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.



Take care when plugging in appliances

Stella Nilson

Stella Nilson gives good advice on circuit safety. Overloading circuits is a major cause of residential fires, and she warns people to take care when plugging in appliances. Stella is the daughter of Kyle and Alision Nilson, members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber 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.



SEAFOOD SPECIALTY

SEAFOOD PARTY DIP**Ingredients:**

1 pkg. mock crab sticks
 1 pkg. mock crab pieces
 1 pkg. mock lobster
 1 pkg. salad shrimp
 1 can water chestnuts
 1 medium onion (optional)
 1 c. real mayonnaise
 2 pkg. Philly cream cheese
 Dried parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste

METHOD

Grind crab, lobster, shrimp, and water chestnuts. Chop onion. Using a mixer, blend mayo and cream cheese until smooth. Add parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Combine with seafood. Mix well and refrigerate. Serve with various kinds of crackers.

Kari Larson Reder, Warner, S.D.

WALLEYE CAKES**Ingredients:**

8 oz. walleye (cooked, cooled, and flaked)
 1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 4 eggs
 1 c. cooked wild rice
 1/2 c. Parmesan cheese
 4 green onions (chopped)
 1 sleeve saltine crackers (crushed)
 1 tsp. crushed garlic
 2 tsps. seasonings (salt, pepper)
 2 tbsp. oil or butter

METHOD

In large bowl, combine walleye, mayo, rice, onion, garlic, and cheese. Add eggs and seasonings. Fold in crushed saltines until the mixture is firm enough to form cakes. Fry in olive oil for 2-3 minutes on each side or until crispy. Serve with topping: 1/2 c. mayo, 1 tsp. garlic powder, and 1 oz. crumbled blue cheese. Mix together.

Dar Duncan, Milbank, S.D.

SHRIMP PASTA**Ingredients:**

1 can (14 1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste
 1 c. water
 2 tsps. sugar
 1 tsp. basil leaves
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. oregano leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
 8 oz. pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti
 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

METHOD

Mix tomatoes, tomato paste, water, sugar, basil, garlic powder, oregano, salt and red pepper in large saucepan. Bring to boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta as directed on package, adding shrimp during last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain. Return pasta and shrimp to saucepot. Pour tomato sauce over shrimp and pasta. Toss gently to coat well. Serve immediately with shredded Parmesan cheese, if desired.

mccormick.com

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

Employee Spotlight: LREA Line Foreman Dan Williams

Laura London

Lake Region Electric

Dan Williams didn't start off with the intention of becoming a lineman. He initially started school at Mitchell Technical Institute studying the natural gas field. It quickly became apparent to Dan that his career was going elsewhere, so he looked into some of the other programs. He was very interested in the Power Line program and once he started on that course, there was no mistaking that was the right fit for him. Dan graduated from MTI in 1999 and worked his first year in Nebraska before moving to Miller, S.D. where he worked for six years. Dan and his family decided it was time to come home and returned to his beloved hometown of Webster. He started working as a journeyman lineman for Lake Region Electric in the middle of 2006. Dan was promoted to line foreman in December 2014. Though being a foreman has its challenges, Dan absolutely loves the guys that he works with.

"You won't find a better bunch of guys to work with," he said. "No matter what is going on, I know I can depend on them."

Dan reiterated something we have heard before—linemen are a different breed. Something that surprised Dan after he started working for electric cooperatives in South Dakota is the dedication and outpouring of help to get the power on after a storm.

"People are ready to pack their bags and head out for a week or ten days to



LREA Line Foreman Dan Williams, who can often be heard announcing area football games, is pictured with his family.



go to another part of the state where they have outages after storms," he said. "It's incredible!"

Dan recounted at least seven times he has gone on "storm jobs" to help out other cooperatives and a couple times other co-ops sent guys to our area to help restore power. Cooperation Among Cooperatives is not just a principle written on a piece of paper and touted by the administration, this is a code that linemen live by. "One other thing I've

enjoyed is the fact of how many friends I have met through the years from other co-ops and how they have turned into life-long friendships," says Dan.

Dan also enjoys working with the members of Lake Region Electric.

"It's enjoyable to get out there and see our members and visit with them almost every day, knowing they appreciate what we are doing," he added.

Dan recognizes that advancements in technology and equipment have helped Lake Region Electric progress and be efficient when making sure the power is on for our members.

Dan and his wife Stephanie have two children, their daughter Paige is studying Radiologic Technology at Mitchell Technical College and their son Carter is a junior at Webster Area High School. Dan has never regretted moving back to Webster. He loves the people, and he loves the area. The main drawback to this type of work has been occasionally having to miss out on some family time like holidays, birthdays, and sporting events. Dan enjoys a variety of activities such as fishing, hunting and some wood working. You may have even heard him announcing a football game in Webster over the past couple of years.

Thank you Dan for your dedication to the members of Lake Region Electric!

How To Read Your Monthly Lake Region Electric Bill

Occasionally we get calls from people who don't understand how to read their electric bill. We encourage our members to call if they have questions or don't quite understand something, but many people don't call, and we want to try to clear a few things up about how to read your bill. There is a lot of information on your bill, other than the amount you have to pay!

Lake Region breaks their bill down into several areas. Your bill may differ slightly than the example pictured because of different sizes and types of service but they all read the same.

The top left of the bill depicts our logo and contact information, below that is your name and billing address. It's always a good idea to make sure your name, address, etc. is correct. The top right shows your **Account Number**, the **Statement Date** (date the statement is printed) and the **Due Date**. The due date is just that, the day that your payment is due to the Lake Region office. Payments received after the due date printed on your bill are considered late and may be subject to a penalty. Below that is a section called the **Billing Summary**. This area shows what your **previous balance** was, the amount you paid and the manner in which you paid. For example, bills paid by ACH will say "Payment by Bank Draft." The next line shows any unpaid balance from the month prior. **Current Charges** is the total amount you were billed for the month including your base rate(s), charges for all of your services, usage and credits. Directly below the Billing Summary is a message center. This is where important reminders and useful tips will be printed.

The middle section lists your Service Details. In the green bar at the top of each service you see several things that help Lake Region identify the service being billed. "**Loc**" stands for location, this is a mapping location used by Lake Region. The next item, "**Desc**" is a description of what or where the service is. Some common descriptions are "farm, shop, house, rental..." Members who have more than one service can change the description by going on to their SmartHub or by calling our office. "**Rate**" is the rate classification for your service. Lake Region has multiple rate classes, but two common rates are Residential Single and Dual Heat. **Meter** is the number on your meter that we use to track your usage. Many homes, farms and businesses have more than one meter. **KWH** is kilowatt hours; the unit we use to measure your power usage. The previous reading is subtracted from the current reading to get your kwh usage for the billing period. Your usage is then

Annotations on the right side of the bill:

- Your account number**: Points to the Account Number 123000.
- Due payment is due**: Points to the Due Date 03/15/2023.
- Last month's bill total and payment**: Points to the Previous Balance 287.71.
- How much you owe this month**: Points to the Total Amount Due 447.78.
- Main Meter**: Points to the Loc: ASB103 section.
- Usage x rate/kwh**: Points to the Meter Reading Details for Loc: ASB103.
- Rental Yard Light**: Points to the Rental Yard Light credit.
- Water Heater Credit**: Points to the Water Heater Credit.
- Meter reading - Current usage for main meter**: Points to the Current KWH Reading 13123.
- Total for main meter kwh usage + monthly other charges**: Points to the Total KWH Usage/Multiplier 13123.
- Heat meter kwh usage x appropriate multiplier = heat usage**: Points to the Heat Meter Credit.
- Total charges for Heat Meter at discounted rate, to be added to main charges**: Points to the Heat Meter Credit.
- Amount you owe when paid on time**: Points to the Amount Due After 447.78.
- Amount you owe if paid LATE**: Points to the Amount Due After 447.78.

Bottom section instructions:

Send this bottom portion in with a check payment

1. Mail your payment in the return envelope provided OR
2. Pay in person at the LREA office OR
3. Place your payment in the drop box at the LREA office OR
4. Pay by bank or credit card draft. Make arrangements at the LREA office OR
5. Pay online at <https://lakeregion.smarthub.coop/Login.html>

Call us with questions (605) 345-3379

multiplied by your kwh rate. Meters have a "multiplier" on them. A **multiplier** is what calculates your KWH usage from raw meter reads. It takes the raw meter read based on size of service and multiplies it for billing. Kwh from sub meters, like **Dual Heat**, are subtracted from the main meter.

The **Detail of Charges** gives a break down of your charges for the billing period. This is where you will see your base charge, charges for usage, rental charges and taxes, as well as credit for water heater control.

The bottom section is a payment remit slip and should be detached and submitted with payments by check or cash. This shows your account number and the amount due if paid by the due date. Late payments are assessed a fee and should be made for the amount that appears in the section titled "Amount Due After..." If your payment is set up on autopay, or if you have credit that covers your charges, this will say Do Not Pay.

Lake Region Electric accepts Master Card, Visa, Check, Money Order or Cash. We recommend cash payments be brought into the office so that we can give you a receipt. Members can set their payments up to automatically withdraw from their bank account, credit or debit card. Payments can also be made over the phone 1-844-834-4459 or through SmartHub at <https://lakeregion.smarthub.coop/Login.html>.

If you have questions about your bill, call our office 605-345-3379, 1-800-657-5869 or stop by 1212 Main Street, Webster!

TRASHYARD TREASURES

Lee Lindsley of Piedmont turns trash into treasure when he isn't on the clock working for the South Dakota Department of Transportation.

South Dakota Man Welds Junkyard Scraps Into Pieces of Art

Frank Turner

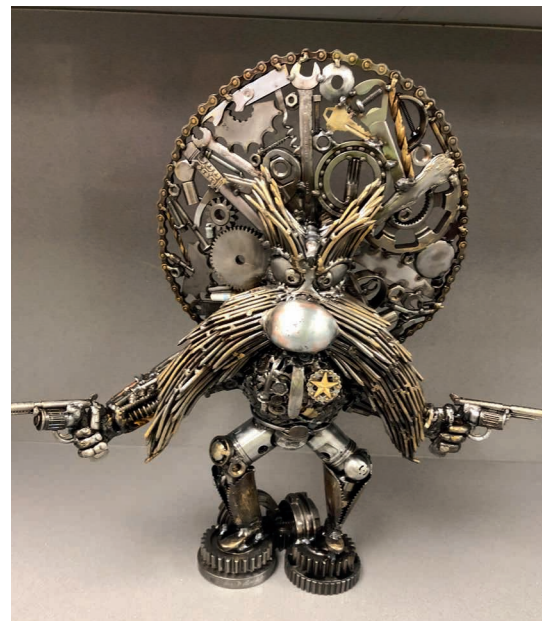
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Lee Lindsley has a real talent for welding trash into treasure. Given the time, Lindsley can sculpt even the most unwanted junkyard scrap – busted gears, rusted lug nuts and mangled bicycle chains – into an artistic masterpiece.

By day, Lindsley works as a region inspector for the South Dakota Department of Transportation in the Black Hills, but by night, he can be found in his shop putting hours of work into his metallic puzzles, welding them together piece by piece.

When not on the clock, Lindsley is busy tackling his next project, investing anywhere from 30 to 100 hours into each sculpture. The end result often portrays a snapshot of rural life in the Black Hills: a life-size hunting dog made from a mix of old tools and spent rifle rounds, a miniature snowmobile standing on a displaced piston and a gun-slinging Yosemite Sam with a beard fashioned from old nails.

“Metal sculpting is some-



Famous cartoon character Yosemite Sam is one of Lindsley's favorite metal creations.

thing that anyone can do if they put their mind to it,” said Lindsley. “All I do is throw parts of junk together.”

In many ways, Lindsley’s passion for sculpting and welding echoes the resourcefulness of the very artwork he makes. When Lindsley began his metal sculpting journey, he didn’t have a formal education or even a background in art to guide him. Instead, he relied on his welding skills and the bits of scrap he had available to make his remarkable artwork.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity.”

It was Lindsley’s second cousin Chris Degen, a teacher at Mitchell Technical College, who inspired Lindsley’s first foray into metal sculpting four years ago. Degen recalls gifting Lindsley’s son, a former lineman, a simple lineman made from nuts and bolts during the holidays. The quirky Christmas gift became a catalyst for the two to start creating new projects and bouncing new ideas off each other. According to Degen, Lindsley just ran away with the idea.

“He went crazy with it,” Degen laughed. “Lee started making sculptures that went way above and beyond what I was doing. I would put an hour into my project, and he would put one hundred into his.”

Taking another step forward in his hobby, Lindsley began researching works and art pieces posted online by world-famous metal sculptors, including metal sculptors John Lopez – a South Dakotan – and Brian Mock, whose masterpieces provided Lindsley a roadmap of what can be accomplished.

Since embarking on his metal sculpting journey, Lindsley has completed more than 18 metal sculptures, and his hobby continues to blossom. For the first time ever, Lindsley put one of his sculptures

up for sale in A1 Al’s Pheasant Ranch in Emery S.D. Since November, Lindsley’s metal hunting dog has stood proudly in one of the ranch’s hunting cabins, waiting for a buyer, and although the dog hasn’t left the shelf just yet, Lindsley said he is

excited to see his work out in the open and visible to the public eye.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity,” he said. “We will see what happens.”



Lindsley’s metal German shepherd sits proudly in his workshop.

LREA's Pearson Honored with Legacy of Leadership Award

By Laura London

Kermit Pearson, Lake Region Electric Association's board president, has been recognized for his contributions to the advancement and advocacy of electric cooperatives throughout the state of South Dakota and beyond. This distinguished award highlights outstanding cooperative leaders who lend their talents, time, expertise, and passion toward improving the quality of their cooperative organizations and their communities. Legacy of Leadership award winners routinely demonstrate their dedication and commitment to serving the collective interests of others above their own.

In addition to his involvement at Lake Region Electric, Kermit currently holds leadership positions on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative boards of directors. He is dedicated to the cooperative cause and has held leadership positions on various cooperative organization boards at the local and regional levels for over 42 years.

Kermit has served on Lake Region Electric Cooperative's board of directors since 1981 where he currently serves as board president. In 1989 Lake Region's board of directors voted for him to represent the local co-op on East River Electric's board of directors, where he continues to serve as one of its longest-tenured board members. In 1997 he became East River Electric's representative on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative's board of directors where he continues to serve as Basin's board vice president. With Basin, he has served on subsidiary boards including



SDREA Board President Don Heeren presents Pearson with the Legacy of Leadership Award for his dedication to the cooperative community.

Prairie Winds, Dakota Coal Company/Montana Limestone, and Dakota Gasification Company boards.

Throughout his tenure, Kermit has been a champion for innovation and service to members of rural communities. He continues to be a voice that moves the cooperatives forward while ensuring that decisions made at the Basin Electric level are in the best interest of the East River Electric regional membership and the Lake Region Electric local membership.

Timothy McIntyre, manager of Lake Region Electric, said of Kermit, "It has been a pleasure to be the manager at Lake Region Electric under Kermit's oversight and governance that he provides as president of the board of directors. He continually and consistently governs using the seven Cooperative Principles as a guide.

Kermit's strong sense of responsibility to the membership is reflected in the stability that our cooperative has been able to maintain, even with the adversity that we have been facing over the past couple of years."

Over the last 42 years of serving the region's electric cooperatives, Kermit has been a decision-maker and voice offering guidance as technological advancement has molded the industry and provided benefits to local members. Kermit was instrumental in the conversion to automatic meter reading. Prior to its introduction, members were responsible for tracking their electrical usage and calculating their bills for payment. The conversion was transformative for members, improving their experience and quality of life.

Through his service on the Basin Electric Board of Directors, Kermit

has provided strategic direction that has benefitted electric cooperative members across Basin's 9-state footprint.

"[Kermit] continually and consistently governs using the seven Cooperative Principles as a guide."

- Timothy McIntyre

He has ensured that consumers across the region have reaped the benefits of reliable, affordable generation and transmission services. During his time on Basin's board, the cooperative has successfully integrated into a regional transmission organization, modernized its financing options, and added new renewable energy generation while maintaining and updating its traditional generation resources. Basin Electric has grown considerably during Kermit's time on the board, and he has played a pivotal role in ensuring that this

growth was accomplished in the most cost-effective manner possible. Kermit's accomplishments at Lake Region, East River Electric, and Basin Electric have earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the nation's foremost cooperative leaders.

"As a community leadership advocate and mentor, Kermit encourages others to get involved in their co-ops and dedicate their time, voice, and experience to the cooperative mission," said East River Electric Power Cooperative board of directors and management staff. He views membership as an opportunity to be a representative and influence policy and direction as well as contribute to the cooperative culture. He knows that individuals stepping forward and making a commitment to serve is what it takes to ensure members continue to receive reliable and affordable energy, and he shares this sentiment with others whenever he can. He truly believes in the work he does, and he inspires others with the example he demonstrates.

Fellow Lake Region board member Andrea Kilker believes in the legacy of leadership that Kermit demonstrates. "Kermit listens: he listens to all voices. He listens to learn and understand, truly seeking everyone's perspective. Kermit asks powerful questions with a goal of seeking information to help him make decisions. I am very grateful for the wisdom and leadership Kermit provides."

Kermit has been an active participant in the agricultural community throughout his lifetime, devoting countless hours to improving life in his local community as well as across the state and region. In September 2018, Kermit was inducted into the South Dakota Co-op Hall of Fame. His legacy of leadership and influence is quite astounding. He is proud yet humble to have been nominated and honored with such an award.



POWER OUTAGE?

Call Us!

Do not assume that we know about it.

To report an outage, call our office. Phones are answered 24/7.

605-345-3379 1-800-657-5869

You can report an outage through our website, if you are unable to place a call, but the reporting may be delayed if it comes in after hours.

WWW.LAKEREGION.COOP

Do NOT report outages through Facebook. Our Facebook page is a great source for information, but is not monitored 24 hours a day.



THE STORY OF DUDE DAD

Taylor and Heidi Calmus play with their kids (Theo, Juno and Otto) on a playset Taylor built. The family will welcome another baby in March.

Howard Grows More Than Corn

Tara Miller

Central Electric Cooperative

His kids may only know him as dad, but Jimmy Kimmel, the entire internet and 7 million followers can't be wrong – Howard native Taylor Calmus has evolved into a new-age celebrity. Better known as Dude Dad, Calmus is an accomplished actor, video producer, digital content creator, author, builder, television show host and comedian. Besides making regular appearances on Jimmy Kimmel Live, Calmus has also shared the screen with home remodeling experts Chip and Joanna Gaines, acclaimed actor Anthony Anderson and several YouTube stars.

Calmus is the son of Larry and Julie Calmus. He grew up west of Howard with siblings Zach and Maggie, and graduated from Howard High School in 2005. He now lives in Fort Collins, CO, but Calmus credits much of his creativity to his rural upbringing.

"Growing up in rural South Dakota was awesome because it forced us to create our own fun. My parents were big advocates of that. They would say, 'Go outside and

find something to do.' It enabled us to be creative," Calmus said.

His mom, Julie, agrees. "We were sticklers. We didn't let them play Nintendo or watch tv all day." Instead, the kids often spent time outside constructing BMX bike ramps, among other things.

Building Strong Connections

Now a dad himself, Calmus enjoys putting his ingenuity and building skills to work for his kids. "Building things with your kids is one of the best ways to bond with them," he said. "I've made carnival rides, backyard bike parks, multiple tree houses, a boat, just so many things. Being a dad gives you permission to imagine the impossible like kids do. It allows me to connect with them."

Calmus and his wife Heidi, who is originally from Fargo, have three children and another baby due in March. Heidi is often the subject of her husband's videos. Calmus puts his acting skills to work, sporting a long brunette wig as he comedically embellishes her life. Luckily, Heidi is a good sport, and they often share reaction videos in which she critiques his performance.

The couple went on tour this year, performing comedy shows as a team in North Dakota, South Dakota and Colorado. Calmus said without his wife, they would not have experienced this level of success. "Heidi believed in me before I did. Without her, Dude Dad wouldn't exist today."

The Evolution of Dude Dad

Success didn't happen overnight, Calmus explained. Early on, he would often pick up work doing set construction for tv shows and movie projects to make ends meet.

"When I moved away, I worked hard to make it in Hollywood as an actor, and I had some success," he said. "Then, when Heidi was pregnant with our second child, it was clear to me that I needed to do something more stable to support a family. That's when we created Dude Dad."

Mastering the Dude Dad brand took a great deal of time and commitment. Calmus constantly brainstormed new ideas for videos that would align with the brand and appeal to viewers. After all, the more views his content generates, the more income he earns from paid advertising on the various platforms.

A humble individual, Calmus doesn't necessarily consider himself famous. He said, "I think my content caught on faster in



Taylor and Heidi perform stand-up comedy as a team. They recently sold out shows in Fargo, Sioux Falls, and Fort Collins.

South Dakota because I have family here.”

But the numbers don't lie. Dude Dad content has more than 1 billion views on Facebook and roughly 150 million views on YouTube. So, his reach is far greater than just the state of South Dakota.

“With TikTok and other apps, there are a billion new creators every year, so it's a challenge all the time,” Calmus said. “Anybody can make videos online now, but not everybody can stand in front of an audience and perform comedy. It's been a fun and rewarding challenge. Now we get to see the people who are connecting with our content.”

Calmus authored a book entitled “A Dude's Guide to Baby Size” to help expectant dads understand their baby's size throughout pregnancy. He shares guy-friendly size comparisons for reference, such as a lug nut, a tape measure, a pound of ground beef and a football.

Giving Back

Because of his success, Calmus has been able to give back in unique ways. In 2019, he partnered with HGTV “Fixer Upper” star Chip Gaines to raise \$1.49 million for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. This partnership led to Calmus's television show, Super Dad, where he helps other dads build custom backyard play areas for their children.

Calmus is also a champion for Horizon Health Foundation's Smiles for Miles program. He helped the non-profit raise more than \$20,000 in a single day to provide free dental care for local kids.

Most recently, Taylor and Heidi performed

a live show in Fort Collins and donated the proceeds to a neighborhood family who sadly lost their father.

“He left behind two little kids who are friends with our kids, and we just wanted to be there for them however we could,” Calmus shared.

Making the Family Proud

Reggie Gassman, Calmus's uncle, is the Manager of Customer Electrical Services at Sioux Valley Energy in eastern South Dakota. He said he's proud of his nephew's accomplishments.

“When the kids were little, Taylor and Zach were already making home movies. His success creating videos doesn't surprise me at all,” Gassman said. “He takes something from normal, everyday life and sees it from a different angle.”

Gassman joked, “I told Taylor acting genes run in the family because I was named best actor in the junior class play. That's like the Emmys of Canova!”

Calmus said both sides of his family – Calmus and Gassman – are naturally funny and talented in different ways. While Gassmans are widely known for their baseball skills, his uncle Kurt (and his mustache) have famously inspired some of Dude Dad's most iconic characters.

He's Still Just Taylor

Despite his growing list of accomplishments, he's still the same guy his family knows and loves.

Calmus's mom Julie shared, “Since he was two years old, Taylor was always entertaining people and goofing around. His older brother Zach is just as clever, so there's always laughter when the family gets together. It's pretty cool he's been able to make a living doing that.”

She said when strangers recognize her son as Dude Dad, she chuckles. “He's still just Taylor to us.”



“Husbands of Target” is a viral video with more than 80 million views that Taylor developed in collaboration with other digital content creators.



Britton-Hecla fourth grade students have a good laugh during the Co-ops in The Classroom presentation.

Students Learn About Electricity in a Shocking Way

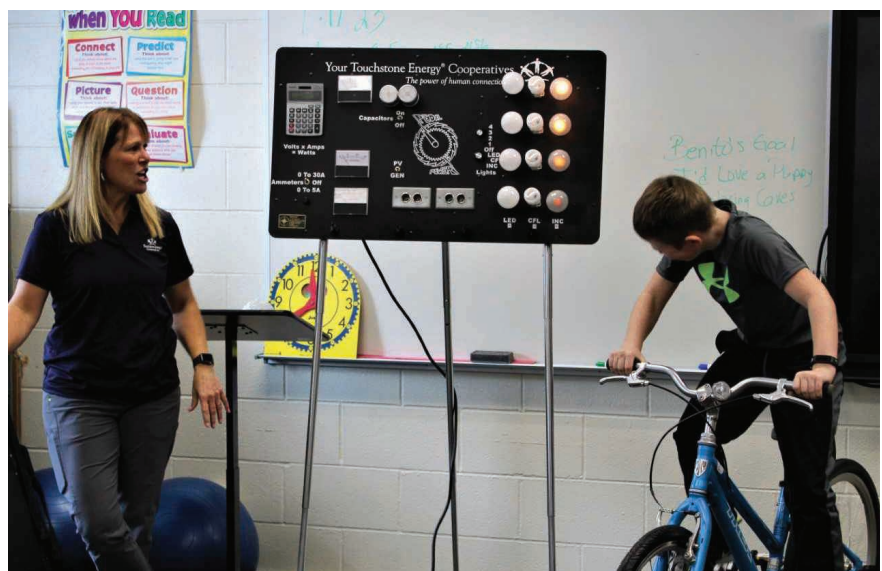
Laura London
Lake Region Electric

"I'm looking for volunteers," says Jennifer Gross of East River Electric to a classroom full of curious students. Eager hands start raising as a universal sign of "Pick me, pick me!" Then comes the disclaimer, "You might feel a little pain, so if pain doesn't sound good to you at 10:36 in the morning, you shouldn't volunteer!" Surprisingly, this announcement does not deter any of the students; more often than not, this encourages even more students to raise their hands. The children trust that the friendly faces from the electric company won't actually do anything to harm them, and they are right. This particular experiment causes no more pain than the children get from dragging their socks across the floor then touching their sibling in an attempt to shock them.

Lake Region Electric teams up with our power transmission provider, East River Electric to bring the Co-ops in

The Classroom program to local schools. Co-ops in The Classroom is designed to help children learn the importance of respecting electricity through hands-on lessons. The program teaches students ways to conserve electricity, how to

be safe around electricity, helps them recognize where electricity comes from and also introduces them to careers in the electrical industry, the cooperative business model and cooperative principles.



Students learn about generation and conservation through pedal power.



Webster Area students experiment with electricity.

The equipment that Gross brings include a bicycle connected to stationary mount and a pedal power generator to demonstrate power generation and turns the concept of electricity from abstract into something tangible.

“By providing the energy needed to make a light bulb turn on, the students are able to quantify how much more energy an incandescent light bulb requires than a CFL or LED,” says Gross

“Co-ops in The Classroom is designed to help children learn the importance of respecting electricity though hands-on lessons.”

- Laura London

Gross always reminds the children that we want them using energy efficient LED bulbs in their homes. We try to make sure all of the students have the opportunity to see how hard it is to pedal the bike in order to power incandescent bulbs, as opposed to LED bulbs. “Oh man, that’s hard!” is the sentiment groaned by nearly every student once the dial is turned to the incandescent side.

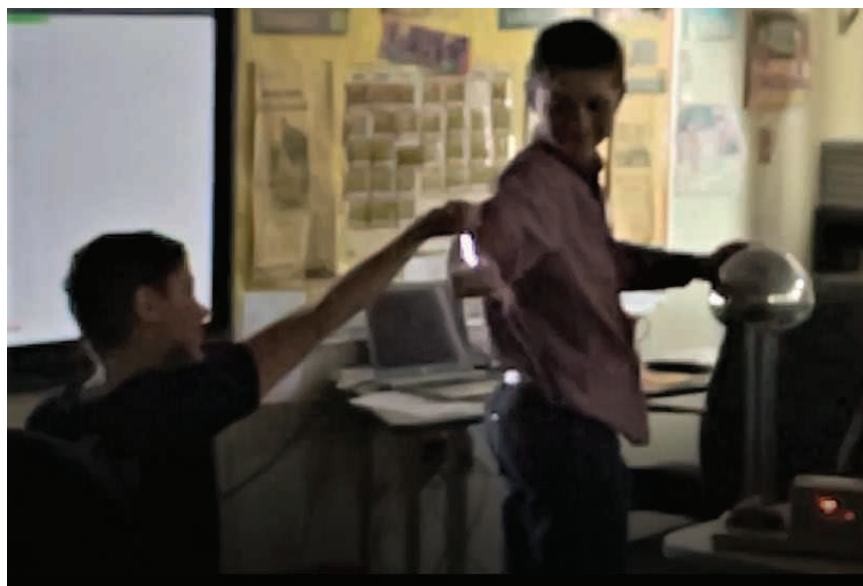
Another crowd-pleaser is a device called a Van de Graaff generator to demonstrate the movement of electrons, with some shocking results. Not only

does it provide a visible and audible example of how electricity moves, but students also get a thrill out of seeing their hair stand up and shocking their friends. This part of the presentation teaches about insulators and conductors, helping the children understand that even though we are having fun with the little bit of static electricity being produced, that man-made electricity is very dangerous, and can cause serious harm. Jennifer shares with the students a true story of a farmer who was fatally injured after his equipment came in contact with power lines and he did not exit his tractor safely. It’s a tough story to hear but it is a good illustration about what to do if a vehicle you are in comes

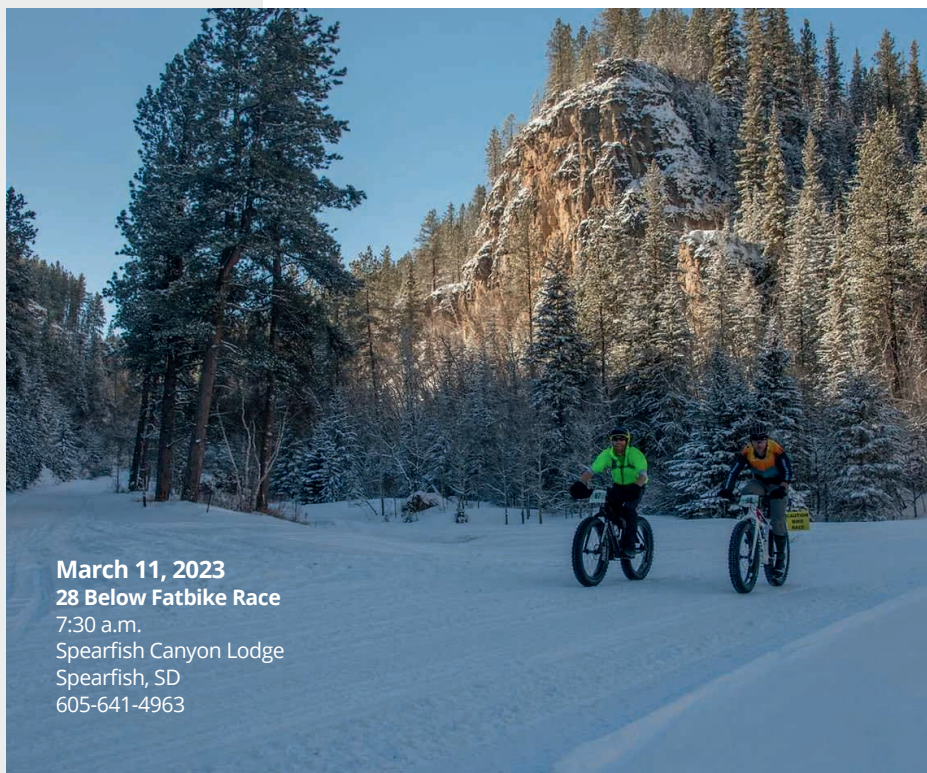
into contact with power lines.

This program is always well received by the students and faculty. Teachers are able to use the information provided to students to emphasize lessons that they learn in the classroom. One class we visited was in a part of their curriculum where they were building circuits, so this helped them with the concept of insulators and conductors. The information is useful to all ages, but Co-ops in The Classroom is directed to students in 4th and 5th grade.

Lake Region Electric appreciates the opportunity to connect with our youth in an educational, informative, and somewhat shocking way!



Students transfer electricity from one person to another by the touch of a hand.



March 11, 2023
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD
 605-641-4963

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.

MARCH 1-7
"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibit & Silent Auction
 Vermillion Public Library
 Vermillion, SD
 605-658-6654

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

MARCH 4
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

MARCH 11
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD
 605-895-2559

MARCH 18
Shriners Kids Fun Day
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Scherr-Howe Event Center
 Mobridge, SD
 605-845-2500

MARCH 18
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

MARCH 21
Knee High Naturalist: Birds
 Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center
 Custer, SD

MARCH 24-25
Schmeckfest
 Freeman Academy Campus
 Freeman, SD
 605-321-7351

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

MARCH 31-APRIL 2
70th Annual Hayes Play: Trouble in Tumbleweed
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD
 605-280-6556

APRIL 1
East Dakota Chapter NWTF 30th Banquet
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

APRIL 2-4
"The Psychic-a Murder Mystery of Sorts" Community Theater Performance
 Town Players Theater
 Watertown, SD
 605-882-2076

APRIL 21-22
Junkin' Market Days, Spring Market
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

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