

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

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LAKE REGION RIPPLES COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc., PO Box 341, 1212 N Main St., Webster, SD 57274. Lake Region Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: As part of their membership, Lake Region Electric members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. (USPS 018-904) Periodicals Postage Paid at Webster, SD 57274 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Lake Region Ripples Cooperative Connections, PO Box 341, Webster, SD 57274. Telephone 605-345-3379; Toll Free 1-800-657-5869; Fax 605-345-4442 E-mail: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

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## The Charles Johnson Education & Training Trust

### Attention Trade Students

## Do you want Free Money for school?

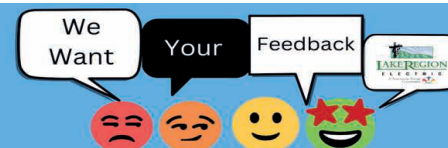
For information & applications

- ♦ Visit: [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop)
- ♦ Contact Laura at Lake Region Electric
- ♦ Contact your High School Counselor

## Criteria for Award

- ♦ Qualifying Course of study
- ♦ Positive Character Qualities
- ♦ Future goals & plans align with scholarship
- ♦ Minimum 2.0 GPA

## Applications are Due April 1



### Take Our Member Satisfaction Survey

Scan this QR Code with your mobile device.

or

Go to our website:  
[www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop)



## TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a member or employee of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond. They could win up to \$3,000!



View contest rules and  
Nominate your local hero at  
[WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM](http://WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM)

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Roxanne Hislaw  
Kathleen & Eric Lewis  
Conner & Grace Deutsch

Ohiyesa Eastman  
Marvin Erickson  
Glen Houston



## Langford Student Spends "A Day in the Life" of Lake Region Electrician

Ryder Smith, a junior at Langford High School, recently spent a day in the life of a Lake Region Electric Electrician.

"I had a great experience on my job shadow and learned a lot. I am now even more sure than I was before that being an electrician is the career for me."

Highlights of his day were watching the electricians wiring a shop outside of Webster and talking with the electricians about their experiences.

Ryder recommends other students and businesses consider a job shadow experience, "It helps students know for sure if they will like a career they are thinking about and also

lets the students see hands-on activities of what a day in that career looks like."

Langford School Counselor Megan Lynde coordinated the experience with Lake Region.

Megan works with students to help guide them to appropriate higher education and career paths. She appreciates area businesses like Lake Region for allowing students to job shadow.

Students interested in job shadowing, or an internship are encouraged to talk with their school counselor or contact Lake Region Electric by calling 605-345-3379 or by email at lakeregion@lakeregion.coop.



## Waubay's Caleb Weyh named Touchstone Energy's Scholar of The Week

Waubay High School Senior Caleb Weyh has been honored with Touchstone Energy's Scholar of The Week for the week of March 24 through March 30, 2024.

Caleb received \$250 from Lake Region Electric and was featured on Dakota News Now during the March 25 evening news broadcast and again on the March 26 morning broadcast.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to be considered for this scholarship," Caleb said.

Caleb is a well-rounded young man who has what it takes to be Scholar of The Week. He is a member of the National Honor Society and was elected by his peers to serve as Student Council President for the 2023-24 school year.

He is an ambitious young man, participating in many activities while maintaining a high GPA and taking dual-credit classes. Caleb not only lives and works on his family's farm, but is also involved in the Future Farmers of America program where he shows cattle at the national level and serves as a judge of livestock.

Caleb plans to continue his education at South Dakota State University in Brookings where he will pursue a degree in Animal Science. He had considered a couple of other schools further away, but in the end decided that SDSU has an excellent program that fits his needs.

His father, Curtis Weyh, was happy with Caleb's decision to stick closer to the homestead, which allows him the ability to be a helping hand during calving season.

Caleb credits his mother, Cindy Weyh, for much of his ambition



Lake Region Electric's Laura London and Waubay K-12 Principal Nancy Purdy present Caleb Weyh with a \$250 check.

and success.

"The person who has influenced me most is my mother, because she has served as both my mother and a teacher in my academic career."

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now and your local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. The program honors accomplished high school students throughout the region.

# Break Dirt Without Breaking the Law

As the warmer spring temperatures cause the ground to thaw, contractors and homeowners alike are likely to begin on projects that require some sort of digging.

By law, anyone who is digging in South Dakota needs to call 811 and have a locate ticket in their hand before moving any ground. If you're not the one that's digging and you've hired a landscaper to do the work instead, that landscaper should have a ticket in their name.

When someone calls 811, the call goes through a center in Dallas, Texas. That call center then notifies utilities in the area, according to South Dakota 811 Executive Director Codi Gregg.

An excavator or digger has to allow 48 hours for the utilities in the area they plan to dig into to come on site and mark the location of those underground utilities. On average, there are five to eight utilities notified per call.

If there's a potential loss of life or property, the allowed response time is shortened to a maximum of two hours during normal business hours.

"When the ticket goes in, the excavator is given a list of the utilities that are involved or are working or that are in that area where they're working," Gregg explained.

Those companies that own the utilities will make marks that identify the location. Those flags are also color coded according to the type of utility. As more and more overhead electrical lines are converted to underground lines, it's imperative that anyone who plans on doing a project that requires digging call 8-1-1 to avoid a dangerous and deadly situation.

"It's a free phone call for the excavator to make. There's no real reason for them not to make the phone call other than not being aware of it," Gregg said.

Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Chairwoman, echoed Gregg's comments, stating that making the call to 811 is the "most important and easiest call anyone can make before starting a digging project."

"This simple and imperative effort will help to prevent damages to vital underground utilities and safeguard critical services that our residents and economy depend on," Fiegen said. "During the 2024 construction season, I urge everyone to call 811 before you dig and protect all South Dakotans by abiding by our state laws and making safety our highest priority."

- Last year, there were 176,984 notices to the 811 Center of work occurring.
- South Dakota's 811 laws were established in 1993.
- In 2017, South Dakota 811 added damage reporting to our laws, stating if there was a damage, disturbance, or a dislocation of a utility – 811 was to be contacted to report the damage. It was also added that 911 was to be contacted first if there was a leak.
- Free accounts are offered upon request, allowing account holders to enter locate tickets themselves without calling an agent.
- A total of 1,944 utilities were reportedly damaged in 2023. Of that total, 375 excavators did not have a previous ticket.
- According to Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year and 60% of nationwide damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professional contractors not contacting 811 prior to digging.



## Don't Fly Drones Near Power Lines Lyndon Kaski, Age 8

Lyndon Kaski warns readers to stay away from power lines when flying drones. Great advice! Lyndon's parents are Jonathan and Amanda Kaski, members of Kingsbury Electric Cooperative.

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.



# SALSA SAVORY

## FRESH SALSA

### Ingredients:

4-6 med. to large tomatoes, seeded and chopped  
1 med. onion, chopped  
4 fresh jalapenos, seeded and finely chopped\*  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1 tbsp. dried parsley or fresh cilantro to taste  
1 tsp. salt

### Method

\*To prevent jalapenos from burning your fingers, lightly rub fingers with shortening, especially around fingernails.  
Serve with tortilla chips.

Linda Hubbard  
Rapid City, S.D.

## LUANN'S FRESH SALSA

### Ingredients:

4 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
1/4 cup finely chopped onion  
1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper  
1-2 tbsps. jalapeno or other hot pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
1 tsp. salt  
pepper to taste  
1 tbsp. lime juice or red wine vinegar  
1-2 tps. catsup  
dash garlic powder  
dash cayenne pepper  
1-2 tps. sugar  
cilantro ( optional)

### Method

Mix all ingredients. Serve with any tortilla or corn chips for dipping. Will keep approximately 1 week in the refrigerator.

Nancy Stenson  
Fort Pierre, S.D.

## TAMARIND PASILLA MANGO PINEAPPLE SALSA

### Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups diced fresh pineapple  
1 large mango, pitted and diced (about 1 1/4 cup)  
1 small red onion, diced  
1 small red bell pepper, diced  
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro  
1 med. jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
3 tbsps. fresh lime juice  
1 tbsp. honey  
4 1/2 teaspoons Tamarind Naturally Flavored & Pasilla Chile Seasoning

### Method

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Stir before serving. Serve with tortilla chips or use to top tacos or nachos.

McCormick

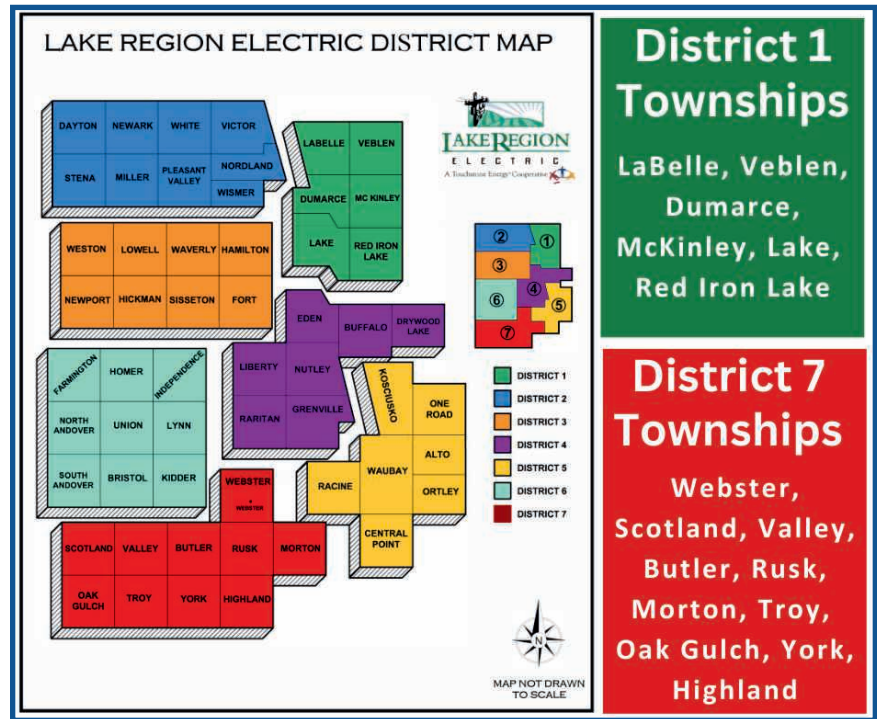
Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## Election to Be Held at 2024 Annual Meeting

Two Director seats will be up for election at the Lake Region Electric annual meeting in Langford, SD on June 6, 2024.

Our service area is divided into 7 districts, as shown on the Lake Region Electric Director Map. Each district is represented by an elected official. The seats up for election represent Districts 1 and 7. District One is currently represented by Andrea Kilker. District Seven is currently represented by Amy Kuecker. Both incumbents are eligible for re-election.

Individuals who wish to run for the board must file a petition signed by fifteen (15) active LREA members 45 days prior to the annual meeting. Director candidates must be an active member of LREA and agree to attend all meetings. Candidates will be published in the "Annual Meeting



### District 1 Townships

LaBelle, Veblen, Dumarce, McKinley, Lake, Red Iron Lake

### District 7 Townships

Webster, Scotland, Valley, Butler, Rusk, Morton, Troy, Oak Gulch, York, Highland

Notice to Members." Nominations can be accepted from the floor during the annual meeting. Those wishing to make a nomination from the floor must call the office in advance of the annual meeting to pre-check the candidate for eligibility.

Members living in these districts who

are interested in serving on the Lake Region Electric Association board of directors are encouraged to call 605-345-3379 toll free: 1-800-657-5869 or stop by our office at 1212 Main Street in Webster for more information or to request a petition.

## LREA Qualification and Nomination Bylaws

A full and true copy of the Bylaws of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. is available to all members in a 20-page booklet. The document can be viewed in digital format by visiting the website: [Lakeregion.coop](http://Lakeregion.coop) and clicking on "Cooperative Mission and Guiding Principles" from the drop-down menu of the "myCooperative tab" near the top of the home page. Any member who wishes to receive a printed copy can stop by the LREA office at 1212 Main Street, Webster or call and request that one be mailed to you 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869.

### SECTION 3. QUALIFICATIONS

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who is a close relative (father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchildren, first cousins or stepchild) of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative, or is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative and receiving service at his/her primary residential abode or primary business, which must be located in the directorate district that the director is to represent; PROVIDED, that the designated

representative of any non-human member, such as a corporation or its designee, shall notwithstanding that he/she does not receive services from the Cooperative at his/her primary residential abode, be eligible to become a director if (1) he/she is in substantial permanent occupancy, direction or use of the premises served by the Cooperative, and (2) is a permanent and year-round resident within the Cooperative's service area or residing not more than fifty (50) miles from the principal location of the non-human member that is being served by the



Cooperative; BUT PROVIDED FURTHER, that no more than one such person as the designated representative may serve on the Board at the same time and in the event that he/she should resign or is unwilling to so act, that directorship shall become vacant. No person may become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in the Cooperative who does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract, or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or a business providing electric services to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electric appliances, fixtures or supplies to, among others, the members of the Cooperative. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who is not at least eighteen (18) years of age. No ex-employee, either retired or terminated, will be eligible to become a director of the Cooperative for at least 5 years after their employment ends. If a nominee for director lacks eligibility under this paragraph or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, the chairperson presiding at the meeting at which such nominee would otherwise be voted upon shall disqualify such nominee.

If any person being considered for, or already holding, a directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this paragraph, the Board shall withhold such position, or cause such person to be removed therefrom, as the case may be. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board, unless such action is taken with respect to a matter which is affected by the provisions of this paragraph and in which one or more of the directors have an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.

## SECTION 4. NOMINATIONS

Any fifteen (15) or more members acting together may make nominations for Board of Directors by a petition filed not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the annual meeting. If no nominating petitions are filed, it shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days before the annual meeting at which directors are elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than four (4) nor more than eleven (11) members who shall be selected from districts in which the vacancy exists so as to insure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on the committee. The committee shall prepare and file a report, at least twenty (20) days before the annual meeting, of a list of nominations for directors in such districts where no nominating petitions have been filed.

The secretary shall mail, with the notice of meeting or separately but at least seven (7) days before the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names and addresses of candidates.

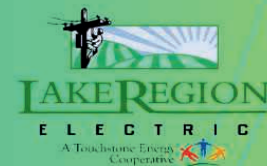
At the annual meeting, the chairman or his/her designee shall read the statement of the secretary as to number of directors to be elected and the names of nominees.

The chairman or his/her designee shall call for additional nominations from the floor and nominations shall cease after a reasonable time. No member may nominate more than one candidate. Any member intending to nominate a candidate from the floor shall notify the Cooperative prior to the opening of the meeting, to verify qualifications and willingness to serve.

# ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE

## JUNE 06, 2024

## Langford





Elliot and Janaye Rayman at their second annual Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser.

## One Lineman's After-hours Outreach

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the state, linemen are charged with keeping South Dakota's power going. It's a big responsibility: troubleshooting electrical systems, operating heavy equipment, and maintaining power lines. These workers are frequently asked to navigate high voltage and confront dangerous challenges in all kinds of extreme weather. In the face of these challenges, it takes a truly community-minded individual to ensure the community's lights stay on. Many of these crucial workers demonstrate their commitment to their community daily, both during and outside of work hours.

Butte Electric Journeyman Lineman Elliot Rayman, who has been with the cooperative for seven years, serves as just one example of an electric cooperative employee who has pulled extra hours for his local community of Spearfish, S.D. In addition to his role as a lineman, Elliot wears many hats in his community beyond just the hard hat of a co-op employee. He is a veteran of the National Guard, having served a deployment overseas. Elliot and his wife, Janaye, are also deeply involved in their community as the owners of Barefoot Fitness, a gym in the Spearfish community. Janaye, a cancer survivor, operates the gym and is an integral part of their community efforts.

Janaye and Elliot purchased Barefoot Fitness in 2018, fulfilling Janaye's long-standing dream of owning a gym. Shortly after their purchase, the couple learned that Janaye's cancer, previously in remission, had metastasized into Stage 4 breast cancer.

"In 2020, I had reoccurrence everywhere – brain, lungs, liver, bones," said Janaye. "Since then, I have been on a mission every day to heal and recover. It's also been my goal to help others every single day, day in and day out, and that's



what keeps me going. That's my job and it's what I love to do, so I'm not stopping."

"My wife is an inspiration to many people," added Elliot. "She is the strongest person I know."

Undeterred, Elliot and Janaye decided to press on and use their gym as a platform to engage with their local community. Despite Janaye's ongoing battle with breast cancer, the two started a new Barefoot Fitness tradition – an annual Memorial Day fundraiser to benefit South Dakota's gold star families, the families of fallen soldiers.

"After a few years of owning the gym, we decided we needed to give back to the community, because the community had really been there for us through everything," said Elliot. "We knew we had the ability and the platform to give back to the community through Barefoot Fitness, so we settled on a Memorial Day fundraiser that would benefit gold star families in our state."

This May, Elliot and Janaye will host their fourth Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser. Like previous years, the event will feature local catering from Spearfish businesses, such as Spearfish Brewing Company and Timmons Market. The event will also include an optional community workout for all ages.

"We kick off our day with the National Guard leading the pledge of allegiance and national anthem," said Janaye. "We do a prayer, and then we do our Memorial Day workout. It's a team workout that people are encouraged to complete with their family or friends."

According to Janaye and Elliot, the team workout is about more than just breaking a sweat. Instead, it's about remembering those who gave their lives for this country.

"You always hear about people doing things for veterans, but you never hear about the story on the other side of

that – the families," Janaye said. "A lot of times the family is forgotten so we really want to honor the families that also made a sacrifice."

At the end of the day, Elliot and Janaye said none of their efforts would be possible without the support they have received from the Spearfish community, the veteran community,

and the electric cooperative community.

"Butte Electric and the co-op world have helped us out so much," said Elliot. "The culture of the co-op community is huge: there is brotherhood – it's the way people help each other out. You just can't ask for a better group of people, and that's the same way with the veteran world."



Janaye and Elliot lead a community workout session, challenging participants to complete 300 weighted ball throws.

# Reviewing the Financial Health of Your Cooperative



**Tim McIntyre**  
General Manager

As I sat down to write this month's managers column, I looked back through the archives of past Cooperative Connection articles and found a column that I wrote back in 2014. That was the last time that Lake Region Electric asked their membership for additional revenue through a rate increase. My column this month will be similar.

During an era of rising costs, sometimes it is necessary to review our rates. The cooperative conducts a Cost of Service Study to aid in determining the approximate cost for each rate class and to determine if the current rate structure distributes the cost fairly. Along with the cost of service study, Lake Region considers a combination of ratios that help us evaluate the financial health of our cooperative currently and long-term. Lake Region remains in a strong financial position, and we are dedicated to continuing along that path far into the future. A potential rate increase is not something that management and your board of directors take lightly. With rising costs of materials, labor, and the overall cost of doing business, it has been determined that Lake Region is not currently bringing in the revenue needed to meet our

obligations. Whenever possible, we try to minimize the impact these issues could have on your electric bill.

Lake Region will continue to be prudent with our member's money. Each year any revenue we bring in over our expenses will be given back to the membership in Capital Credit retirement. I want to personally thank you, our membership, for your investments in your local cooperative.

With all of this said, I would like to thank the employees, staff, and directors at Lake Region for their commitment to serving our members. We will continue to work hard to deliver reliable, affordable electricity.

Please watch for announcements in Cooperative Connections, Facebook and on your billing statement over the next few months as we determine the amount of increase necessary. As always, feel free to contact me, or the office if you have any questions.

Thank you & God Bless,  
Timothy McIntyre

## What Is A Base Charge?

We often have members call inquiring about terms and charges that show up on their bill. The Base Charge is something that is frequently asked about.

### **Did you know that your electric cooperative has expenses to pay even if we don't sell any power?**

The base charge is your portion of a total electric rate that covers the cost of doing business unrelated to power use expenses. Some of these expenses include trucks, our building, employee wages, poles, wire, loans, insurance, taxes, postage, and many other expenses you don't often think about. This cost is determined by considering different ratios and is then turned into a fixed cost distributed among our members so that each rate class covers a portion of the cooperative's expenses in a fair manner.

**Lake Region must continue to operate the business year-round and make sure our equipment is working properly so that the lights turn on when you want them to.** This is why every member of Lake Region has a base charge for their meters, even if they are not in use.





# HOW TO READ YOUR BILL

YNNN

**LAKE REGION ELECTRIC**  
PO Box 341 • Webster, SD 57274-0341  
Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For Billing Questions and Outages  
Call (605) 345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869  
24 hour payment access 1-844-834-4459

Contact us or Pay Online at  
[www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop)

2 1 AV 0.455

JOSEPH MEMBERSMITH  
JANET MEMBERSMITH  
42123 44 4TH ST  
BRISTOL SD 57219

5 2  
C-1

Account Number 123000  
Statement Date 02/28/2023 Due Date 03/15/2023

**Billing Summary**

Previous Balance	287.71
Payment by Bank Draft 02/12/23	287.71 CR
Balance Forward	0.00
Current Charges	447.78
<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>447.78</b>

Page 1 of 2

**Messages**

\*\*\*\*\*REMINDER\*\*\*\*\* Please use extreme caution when moving and piling snow! Transformers are easily buried and go unnoticed until accidentally hit. Linemen need at least a 15 foot radius to work on equipment safely.

**Service Details**

Loc:	Desc:	Rate:	Meter:
A2B025	Farm	001 - Residential Single	22211
<b>Meter Reading Details Meter 24545</b>			
Current KWH Reading	02/28/23	15757	
Previous KWH Reading	1/31/23	10046	
Master KWH Usage		5711	
Less Sub Meter KWH		4760	
Total KWH Usage(Multiplier: 1)		951	
Days Served 32			
<b>Detail of Charges</b>			
Base Charge			45.00
KWH Charge	951 @ .1069		101.66
90 Watt Led Light (Qty: 1)			16.00
South Dakota Tax			19.46
Water Heater Control			-4.00
<b>Total This Service</b>			<b>178.12</b>
A2B025A	House	007 - Dual Heat	22255
<b>Meter Reading Details Meter 24210</b>			
Current KWH Reading	02/28/23	6934	
Previous KWH Reading	01/31/23	6696	
Total KWH Usage(Multiplier: 20)		4760	
Days Served 32			
<b>Detail of Charges</b>			
Base Charge			5.00
KWH Charge	4760 @ .0556		264.66
<b>Total This Service</b>			<b>269.66</b>

Usage x rate/kwh

Rental Yard Light

Water Heater Credit

**Meter reading - Heat meter = Current usage for main meter**

**Total for main meter kwh usage + monthly other charges.**

Heat meter kwh usage x appropriate multiplier = heat usage

**Total charges for Heat Meter, at discounted rate, to be added to main charges.**

**Amount you owe when paid on time**

**Amount you owe if paid LATE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Please Return This Stub With Your Payment Tear Stub Along This Dotted Line

**LAKE REGION ELECTRIC**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

JOSEPH MEMBERSMITH  
JANET MEMBERSMITH  
42123 44TH STREET  
BRISTOL SD 57219

For Billing Questions: Call (605) 345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869

See Back for Payment Options.

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 123000  
Amount Due By 03/15/2023 447.78  
Amount Due after 01/15/2023 470.17  
AMOUNT PAID

Lake Region Electric Association  
P.O. Box 341  
Webster SD 57274-0341

440000000990000004478000047017010520

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#login>

Call us with questions (605) 345-3379





SDHP Trooper Megan Koch stands by her patrol vehicle. Koch works within the state's Motor Carrier Division. *Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel*

# COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

When commercial motor vehicles come into the state of South Dakota, it's the job of the South Dakota Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Division to ensure the drivers of those vehicles have the necessary paperwork, permits and documents.

The task is one of public safety.

Making sure the carriers are adhering to safe driving practices is just another way to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be while driving on the state's roadways.

South Dakota Highway Patrol

Trooper Megan Koch is one of the officers who works within the motor carrier division.

"Our main focus is making sure the motor carriers or trucks are safe on the roadways and keeping everybody else safe. It helps them perform their job of carrying their property or passengers across the state lines and within the state. We help make sure that they can do that job," Koch explained.

Mainly, Koch works specifically with commercial motor vehicles that carry over a certain weight or property of monetary value within the state or interstate.

"When we do an inspection on a driver, we're checking a bunch of different things. Weight sometimes is one of them, but not always. It just depends on the situation," Koch said.

"They have to have certain paperwork with them and they are required to follow certain rules. It depends on what they're doing."

The dependent variables include whether a carrier is traveling with goods within the state or going out of the state and how far away they are from the hub, or where they leave every day or go home to every day.

Koch also checks their paperwork to ensure the drivers are within compliance of state law.

"They have to follow certain hours that they can work so that they don't get tired while driving. It's a big thing that we follow for safety," Koch said.

"We also check things like



equipment violations, headlights, taillights, tires, you know, stuff that makes them safe on the roadway and keeps them safe. We'll also check for things such as bad driving behavior, if they're not staying within their own lane, using blinkers, not properly stopping at stop sign – stuff like that. So, if we see something like that, we can initiate an inspection."

Koch, a Plankinton native whose father was a truck driver, said the division is typically checking brake lines and lights.

In South Dakota, there are four main ports of entry. The ports are located along Interstate 29 in Jefferson and Sisseton, and along Interstate 90 in Sioux Falls and Tilford.

Each carrier is issued a "safety score," which is assessed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"That's based on whether or not they have the proper paperwork, if they're driving within their hours, if they have the proper equipment and whether or not they've received any driving or alcohol violations," Koch said.

If a driver has a high enough safety score, they aren't required by law to stop at a port for inspection.

Overall, it all comes down to keeping the roadways safe for everyone, regardless of what type of vehicle they are driving.

"These rules and laws are in place for a reason. They have to be extra alert and awake while they're driving and that all of their equipment works properly. If you're driving a very heavy, large vehicle, you need excellent brakes. You have to be able to stop in time. That is the main reason we're checking all these things. It helps everybody on the road."

The division also works

with rural electric cooperatives when oversized loads travel along the state's highway system, according to Lieutenant Austin Schmitz, District Four Assistant Commander with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Sometimes oversized loads require that overhead power lines be moved out of the way to let the carrier pass through.

"As a district we do work with a lot of the cooperatives such as East River Electric. We all get together when planning for oversized loads coming through our area," Schmitz said.

"They usually run the route first and let us know what lines they need to move."

That was the case when a massive generator was moved across the state. The generator was so heavy and huge that the truck carrying it could only travel 30 miles per hour. That truck was also equipped with over a hundred tires, Schmitz said.

"That generator came through Watertown a couple of years ago and we've got some more coming in two or

three years," Schmitz said, referring to the multi-million pound machines.

"The planning for those started last year. That equipment will be coming in through the Great Lakes on a ship. They'll pick them up there and then they'll move through our state then Wyoming, Montana, however they can go," Schmitz said.

The truck carrying the heavy equipment is too big to go across most bridges and overpasses, so finding a route that allows the machinery to snake across the country is tricky.

While moving huge pieces of machinery can be one of the more interesting parts of the job, it's the flexibility of the job that Koch enjoys most.

"I get to pick and choose where I want to go for the day. I get to do something a little bit different every day. Because, I mean, nothing is ever the same," Koch said.

"It's kind of nice to be able to do that and make the day what you want of it."



A SDHP officer has the latest technology at his or her fingertips to ensure trucks on South Dakota roads are operating safely. Photo Credit: South Dakota Highway Patrol

## LINEMEN APPRECIATION



April 8th

# NATIONAL LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

113th CONGRESS

1st Session

S. RES. 95

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

April 10, 2013

Mr. Isakson (for himself and Mr. Bennet) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

### RESOLUTION

Recognizing linemen, the profession of linemen, the contributions of these brave men and women who protect public safety, and expressing support for the designation of April 18, 2013, as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

Whereas the profession of linemen is steeped in personal, family, and professional tradition;

Whereas linemen are often first responders during storms and

other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety heroes;

Whereas linemen work with thousands of volts of electricity high atop power lines

24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to keep electricity flowing;

Whereas linemen must often work under dangerous conditions

far from their families to construct and maintain the energy infrastructure of the United States;

Whereas linemen put their lives on the line every day with little recognition from

the community regarding the danger of their work; and

Whereas April 18, 2013, would be an appropriate date to designate as

National Lineman Appreciation Day: Now, therefore, be it

That the Senate—

- (1) recognizes the efforts of linemen in keeping the power on and protecting public safety; and

- (2) supports the designation of April 18, 2013, as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

**Lake Region Electric Association celebrates Linemen Appreciation Day the second Monday of April.**



# Take a Tour With LREA

June 17-18, 2024



See firsthand where our power comes from and how it gets to your home!

Basin Electric

DSG

Wilton Wind Farm

Freedom Coal Mine

Antelope Valley Power Plant

✓ Bus Trip

✓ Hotel Room

✓ Meals & Snacks

\$25 charge per LREA member, you can bring a guest for no additional charge.

For further information, contact Brett 605-345-3379 or visit our website [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop)

Return application below by mail: PO Box 341, Webster, SD 57274 OR E-mail: [lakeregion@lakeregion.coop](mailto:lakeregion@lakeregion.coop)

LREA Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

LREA Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Pick up Location: Webster Bristol Groton  
Circle one





**APRIL 5-7, 2024**  
**PBR: Unleash the Beast**  
 Denny Sanford  
 PREMIER Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

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 30**  
**BHEC Community Easter Egg Hunt**  
 10 a.m.  
 Hermosa Baseball Fields  
 Hermosa, SD

**MARCH 31**  
**Easter Sunday Sunrise Celebration**  
 7 a.m.  
 Mount Rushmore National Monument  
 Keystone, SD

**APRIL 2**  
**Clay-Union Electric Ribbon Cutting & Open House**  
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.  
 31321 SD Hwy. 19  
 Vermillion, SD

**APRIL 5**  
**A Night at the Races fundraiser for Safe Place of Eastern SD**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD

**APRIL 5-7**  
**71st Annual Hayes Play: Under a Cowboy Moon**  
 7 p.m.  
 Hayes Community Hall  
 Hayes, SD

**APRIL 12-14**  
**The Farmer's Daughter 19th Anniversary Celebration**  
 Hill City, SD

**APRIL 13**  
**Front Porch 605 Shop Hop**  
 9 a.m.  
 Groton, SD

**APRIL 14**  
**Hill City Senior Sunday Breakfast**  
 8 a.m.  
 Hill City Center  
 Hill City, SD

**APRIL 20**  
**Healthy Kids Day**  
 10 a.m.  
 Liberty Center YMCA  
 Box Elder, SD

**APRIL 20**  
**Groton Firemen's Spring Social**  
 7 p.m.  
 Groton Fire Station  
 Groton, SD

**APRIL 21**  
**Fiddle & Popular Song**  
 2 p.m.  
 Gayville Hall  
 Gayville, SD

**APRIL 26**  
**Mitchell Technical College Alumni Cornhole Tournament**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 World's Only Corn Palace  
 Mitchell, SD

**APRIL 27**  
**66th Annual Lions Pancake Jamboree**  
 7 a.m.  
 Masonic Hall  
 Mitchell, SD

**APRIL 27**  
**Spaghetti Feed & Silent Auction for Black Hills Raptor Center**  
 4:30 p.m.  
 Canyon Lake United Methodist Church  
 Rapid City, SD

**MAY 5**  
**Opening Day**  
 Historic Prairie Village  
 Madison, SD

**MAY 11**  
**Opening Day**  
 1880 Train  
 Hill City, SD

**MAY 18**  
**Booth Day**  
 10 a.m.  
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery  
 Spearfish, SD

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