

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



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# We Need Your Help to Maintain Reliability



**Tim McIntyre**  
General Manager

March already? Thank goodness! Although we were fortunate this winter, experiencing unseasonably warm temperatures for a portion of the winter and having our ice storm arrive a little later than normal, we still got hit with some bitterly cold temps in January. I sat in my home during a few of those cold days, watching the outdoor thermostat plunge to cruel temps below zero. I was grateful that I had electricity and heat to keep my home at a consistent temp in the low to mid-sixties. Sometimes, I'd prefer it to be a little warmer, but we try to stay extra vigilant over our thermostat settings, so I just put on a sweater and think warm!

Here in South Dakota, especially in Lake Region territory, we are quite accustomed to the cold, but a good portion of the country isn't. Along with the higher demand for electricity to power all the gadgets our families, homes, and businesses now require, there have been some colder temps in the south that are requiring a lot more power to heat homes and businesses.

Our purpose at Lake Region Electric is to provide our members with reliable, affordable electricity. We are expanding our power generation profile to include more renewable energy resources, but we must also maintain our old reliable energy sources. In our area, coal is the most reliable source of energy. Some other areas of the country are dependent on natural gas. Over the past few years, the demand for electricity has been increasing and so far, we have done a good job of keeping up, but it's getting more difficult. The current administration has been proposing and imposing unrealistic rules and guidelines on reliable sources of energy. Extreme weather and increasing demand for electricity, coupled with the decrease in resources for reliable power generation is threatening the reliability we have been working so hard to provide.

The way I see it, the electric cooperatives have done such a wonderful job of providing electricity that we don't even have to think about it. That is, until we don't have it. If the current trends keep up, we will all have to think about it a lot. I don't mean to sound like a broken record, because I know that I've said this before, but your electric cooperatives need your help! Please do more than think about electricity and the importance of reliability: talk about it! Talk to your congressmen, legislators, environmental groups, local and national law makers, and political leaders. It is important to attend town halls, forums, campaign engagements and talk about the importance of reliable sources of energy. We really need our members' support and good old-fashioned grass roots outreach. Let's work together to come up with practical, affordable solutions and timelines to avoid what could be an energy crisis right here in the greatest country in the world.

Here at Lake Region, the employees and directors are working hard to provide you with reliable power at an affordable rate. Please help us continue with that goal by reaching out to our lawmakers.

Thank you & God Bless,  
Timothy McIntyre

## 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.

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

## 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 of your community in Lake Region Electric Association territory, your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond to make our world a better place!

Selected nominees will be featured on Keloland and could win up to \$3,000!

### Nominations Opening SOON!

Watch for updates on our website or Facebook!



OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

# GOOD FRIDAY

March 29

Call to Report Outages: 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869

### Welcome to our new members:

Dawn Robinson & Janet Pleinis

Ashley Konradi & Jesus Lopez

Dillon Lien & Kodie Green-Lugert

Jonathan Moen

Marx Family Farm LLC

Aaron & Jen Hunt

John Zimmerman

# ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 06,  
2024

Langford



## Make Fall Safety a Top Priority

It may come as a surprise that the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death is falls. In 2021, 44,686 people died in falls at home and at work, according to Injury Facts®. For working adults, depending on the industry, falls can be the leading cause of death.

### Falls are 100% Preventable

March is Ladder Safety Month. Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be one foot away from the surface it rests on for every four feet of height and extend at least three feet over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

### Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a weekend warrior or do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls.

Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall.

At home or at work, many of the same rules apply. When taking on a project:

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips mentioned above
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment

We tend to think we're always safe on flat ground, but the thousands of injuries each year tell us otherwise.

- Falls are the #1 cause of death for older adults; fall-proof your home
- Keep floors and surfaces clear of clutter
- Keep file cabinets and desk drawers closed
- Keep electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Install handrails on stairways
- Wear sensible footwear
- Never stand on chairs, tables or any surface with wheels
- Properly arrange furniture to create open pathways
- Maintain good lighting indoors and out

More than 6.9 million people were treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries in 2021. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure stay safe at home and at work.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Trim Your Trees

#### Brace Tapio, Age 8

Brace Tapio cautions readers to trim their trees to prevent power line damage. Brace's parents are Nate and Elsa Tapio from Armour, S.D., members of Douglas 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.

# SEAFOOD SPECIALS

## CAJUN SHRIMP

### Ingredients:

1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined  
2-3 tps. cajun seasoning  
2 tbsps. butter

### Method

Coat shrimp with seasoning. Melt butter in large skillet on medium heat. Add shrimp; cook and stir three minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Serve over cooked rice, if desired.

**McCormick.com**

## CRAB SALAD SPREAD

### Ingredients:

8-12 oz. imitation crab meat, flake style, tear into small pieces  
1 tbsp. lemon juice  
1 cup (approx.) shredded Cheddar cheese  
1 small can black olives, sliced  
Mayo (must be Mayo), to get correct texture, less is better than too much  
1/4 to 1/2 pepper, cracked

### Method

Mix by hand. Serve with Club or Ritz crackers.

Linda Hubbard  
Rapid City, S.D.

## CREAMY SHRIMP LINGUINE

### Ingredients:

8 oz. linguine  
1 tbsp. butter  
1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 package garlic butter shrimp scampi  
2 tbsps. white wine

### Method

Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain well.

Melt butter in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add shrimp; cook and stir 2 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Add cooked pasta, Seasoning Mix, cream and wine. Reduce heat to medium; cook 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

**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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Budget Billing Is a Good Option for Many

It's no secret that the temperatures in Lake Region territory fluctuate and get downright cold during the winter. That's when we see our most energy usage and many of our members see their highest bills.

Lake Region Electric offers budget billing as an option to help members manage their monthly payments. Budget billing does not regulate the amount of electricity you use, or the cost; it just spreads the payments out more equally over the span of a year. Individual budget bills are compiled using the last twelve month's bills averaged with an additional cushion to accommodate possible rate increases and potential additional usage.

According to Lake Region's Consumer Accounts Representative, Autumn Spiering, "We do monitor our accounts on budget bill and may periodically send a note with the monthly billing to let you know if you need to make an adjustment to your budget bill amount due to higher than average usage."

- Applicants must have received service from LREA and have a minimum of one-year history with a satisfactory credit rating.
- LREA will determine monthly payments based on prior use.
- Monthly payments will be calculated annually and commence with the June payment, due July 15th. The consumer must pay any balance due by the June 15th due date. Any credit remaining on the account will be re-calculated into the next year's budget balance.
- If the kilowatt hour usage changes substantially during the year, the Cooperative may change the monthly payments. The consumer is responsible for notifying the Cooperative of any significant electrical load additions during the year that could impact the Budget Billing amount.
- Budget Billing will have a sign-up period from the April billing cycle to the August billing cycle each year.
- Account must be paid in full prior to qualifying.
- Members who fail to meet their agreed upon payment amount for a period of two (2) months, will be taken off the budget plan. Any remaining balance may be subject to the disconnection of the service.

The enrollment period for budget billing is from April until the end of August. Anyone interested in budget billing should contact the Lake Region Electric office by calling: 605-345-3379 or by e-mailing: [lakeregion@lakeregion.coop](mailto:lakeregion@lakeregion.coop).



  
**Budget Billing**  
**KEEPING YOUR ELECTRICITY AFFORDABLE**  
**YEAR ROUND**

# Cost of Service Study Helps Lake Region Determine Rates

**Laura London**

Lake Region Electric

Lake Region Electric has been undergoing a cost of service study to evaluate the service requirements of our cooperative and the associated costs. This study helps the managers and board of directors determine which members, or revenue classes, are responsible for portions of Lake Region's cost of power and overall cost of doing business.

Many of our costs are incurred by Lake Region for the benefit of all our members, therefore they are considered "joint costs." All costs cannot be split exactly equally because some members require equipment that costs more to install and maintain,



such as three-phase power required by some farms and businesses.

Determining which members are responsible for a certain portion of all costs incurred can be difficult; many factors are taken into consideration when determining the proportionate share of costs to our members. The first step in the study determines the revenue requirements of the cooperative, which is total revenue required to pay all expenses and provide adequate margins. Once the revenue requirements are determined, the cost of service identifies the responsibility of each rate class to satisfy the revenue requirements.

Lake Region uses an outside party to conduct the cost of service study, then the staff and board of directors

carefully examine the results of the study to form a plan that will help Lake Region continue to provide the best service to our members.

We understand that nobody wants to see a rate increase in their base charge or usage rates; with the rising costs we are experiencing on every level, it seems inevitable. Lake Region Electric anticipates increases in the cost of power from our power suppliers East River Electric and Basin Electric Power Cooperative in the coming year as well. Performing a cost of service study will help determine the best way to divide those costs amongst the membership in a manner that makes the most sense.


**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.



Rural Artist Michelle Weber has illustrated 11 children books in addition to showcasing her art nationwide and internationally.

## Michelle Weber Captures Rural Life in Art

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

During her upbringing in Windom, Minn., Michelle Weber discovered her passion for art at a young age. She was the kid who was always doodling, often paying more attention to her drawings than to the class. Holding on to her passion, Weber took her first art class in high school with her art

teacher, Mark Nass. Although the class had a rocky start, Nass recognized her potential and helped fuel a passion that would ultimately lead Weber to becoming a prominent rural artist.

"I was a junior in high school when I enrolled in my first real art class, and to be honest, I kind of hated it," said Weber. "That first week, I was mortified that I wasn't any good."

Initially contemplating dropping the class, Weber sought a signature from her art teacher to change her art class to a study hall instead. Despite her request, Nass refused to let her drop the class and encouraged her to try give the class another chance.

"After a few weeks, everything just clicked," said Weber. "I fell in love with painting and began living in the school's art room."

In less than a year, Weber made substantial progress in her artistic abilities. Enough so, that her teacher encouraged her to apply for the Congressional Art Competition. She applied,

and her painting not only won in her district but also earned a spot in the U.S. Capitol building in Washington D.C., where it was showcased for an entire year.

Weber's success in the Congressional Art Competition foreshadowed what was to come. Drawing inspiration from her upbringing on a farm and involvement in 4-H, Weber began primarily painting livestock. In 2011, Weber's friend from Mitchell, S.D., Amanda Radke, approached her with a request to illustrate a children's book featuring livestock and rural agriculture, a perfect fit for Weber's artwork. This opportunity led to the creation of "A World With Cows," marking Weber's first foray into a full-time career as an artist.

"The book was a huge stepping stone for both of us," said Weber.

The children's book marked not only the beginning of a career but also established Weber's niche – capturing the focal point of rural life on canvas: livestock, horses, buffalo, and more. Weber has since illustrated 10 additional children's books and successfully sold her artwork both nationwide and internationally.

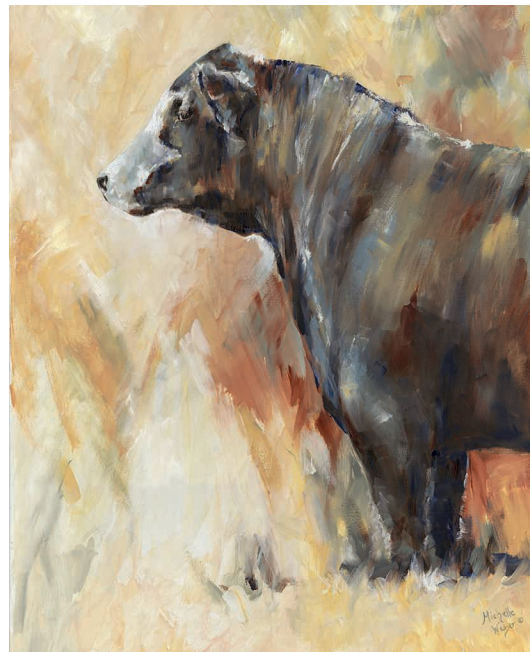
Traditionally, her oil paintings have been rooted in a realism, capturing every detail of the depicted animals. More recently, Weber has expanded her art to include a more whimsical and abstract representation of the rural lifestyle.

"My niche market is the producer, so it's important that my art reflects an authentic rural lifestyle," said Weber. "I want these paintings to have a touch of who I am, but also have the integrity of this lifestyle retained on canvas too."

Today, Weber resides just outside Lake Benton, Minn., a town just outside the South Dakota border. From her small town, Michelle Weber also maintains a website, [michelleweberstudio.com](http://michelleweberstudio.com), where she showcases a wide range of products

featuring her artwork, including prints, notecards, children's books, and even cake pans. In addition to her website, Weber recently opened a studio named, "The Studio by Michelle Weber" in the center Lake Benton.

"The Studio is a space located right in the heart of Lake Benton," said Weber. "Some people look at Lake Benton with a population of less than 700 or less and ask, 'Why would you open your studio there?' But I stand behind supporting these small. They are the heartbeat of this country, so it only seemed fitting to bring it home."



A Weber painting, titled "Side Eye."



Weber is widely known for her oil paintings that capture the essence of an authentic rural lifestyle on canvas.

# 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*



# Help Us Provide the Best Service

We want your feedback! Lake Region Electric exists to provide you with reliable electricity, but we are more than just an electric company; we are a cooperative. We are owned and governed by the members who we serve, and we want happy members! To ensure that we are meeting the needs of our members and to successfully plan for the future, Lake Region Electric Association is conducting a member satisfaction survey.

In the past, we have teamed up with our transmission provider, East River Electric, to gauge member satisfaction throughout East River territory and we will continue

to participate in their bi-annual survey. For the first time, Lake Region has decided to do a survey of our own members.

Through our partnership with Touchstone Energy, we are using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) to conduct the survey and benchmark our results. The ACSI is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States.

This is a voluntary survey initiated by our members; we will not be sending out emails or phone calls. This survey consists of only a few questions and takes less than a minute to complete.

Members who wish to participate can scan the QR code found in this issue of *Cooperative Connections* or go to our website: [www.lakeregion.coop](http://www.lakeregion.coop) and click on the survey.

There is also a link to the survey on our Facebook page. Call Laura at Lake Region if you have any questions: 605-345-3379.



## Take our Member Satisfaction Survey

Scan the QR code with your mobile device.  
Or go to our website: [www.Lakeregion.coop](http://www.Lakeregion.coop)





Sacred Hoops Coach Tuffy Morrison is just one of many volunteer coaches who make Sacred Hoops Basketball a reality for rural athletes.

# SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

## Sacred Hoops Basketball Scores Big with Rural Youth

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdrea.coop)

Sacred Hoops Basketball, a nonprofit organization unique to South Dakota, has been changing the game for youth basketball across the state for more than six years. Using basketball as a tool for youth development, the program organizes teams, trains coaches, and hosts tournaments and workshops for young individuals in all communities – both big and small.

Since the program's conception, the emphasis has centered on rural engagement. Allan Bertram, the owner and operator of Sacred Hoops, co-founded the program alongside Jordan Long and a few other movers and shakers as a way to bring quality basketball instruction to students who would otherwise need to travel hundreds of miles to participate. Their goal was to make basketball accessible to all athletes across the state, not only improving their basketball skills but

also their life skills.

"We wanted to bridge the gap for kids in rural areas, particularly our athletes in low socio-economic areas who may not have been able to play basketball otherwise," said Bertram. "We want to ensure that every kid who wants to play can."

Beyond hosting tournaments and teams, Bertram and the organization's other volunteers have found other ways to make changes on and off the basketball court. In addition to hosting more than 120 high school instruction programs across the state, Sacred Hoops Basketball annually distributes more than \$70,000 in scholarships that aid athletes from low-income families to play ball. The organization was also the driving force behind a recent initiative that placed 2,000 new pairs of shoes in the hands of children from select, rural



Sacred Hoops Director and Coach Ted Standing Soldier draws up a play for the the Sacred Hoops West River Youth Team.

elementary schools in South Dakota.

"We've seen so many kids grow and fulfill their passion," said Bertram. "In today's world, our youth sometimes don't understand what their purpose or passion is, and that's why so many of our youth are struggling. It doesn't matter what a kid is passionate about – it could be music, sports, gaming, or whatever – but it's our job to help feed that passion because that is what gives those kids a purpose."

Today, the program has expanded to encompass more than 50 dedicated volunteers and 600 athletes across 60 teams in their summer season, with athletes spanning from third grade to high school. These numbers, said Bertram, have added up to a real impact for athletes across the state. Within Sacred Hoops Basketball, more than 75 athletes have gone on to play college-level basketball.

"It gives us a great sense of pride because those kids are not only getting a post-secondary degree but also get to continue their passion by playing at the next level," said Bertram. "Many of these kids come from rural areas or

locations."

Sacred Hoops Basketball Director and Coach Ted Standing Soldier also emphasized the impact that the nonprofit has had on West River athletes. Standing Soldier regularly works with athletes from several rural

West River communities, including Pine Ridge, Belle Fourche, Kadoka, and more.

"We have athletes from all over come to play on one team, and it's changing the game for these kids. We have seen several of our athletes start making junior varsity and varsity teams as middle schoolers," said Standing Soldier. "These are kids we want to help reach their full potential, both on and off the court."

Reflecting on his upbringing, Standing Soldier said that basketball played a significant role in his early life, ultimately leading to college scholarships that allowed him to play basketball for Platte Community College in Nebraska and later the University of Mary in North Dakota. Those opportunities, he said, are ones that he wants to share with other youth in South Dakota.

"Basketball has been a part of my entire life," he said. "I developed a love for the game. God has used it to impact my entire life, and now I'm using it to impact others."



The Sacred Hoops Basketball AAU West Coast National Championship Team.



Ali Van Sambeek's one-year-old smiles while feeding the chickens.

# Keeping Chickens

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

During summertime mornings, Ali Van Sambeek will send her five-year-old out into the backyard to retrieve what's needed to cook that morning's breakfast.

"He's learned how to fry an egg on the stove, so in the summer he'll go out to the coop, bring back an egg and cook himself breakfast. Or I'll tell kids we need some tomatoes and eggs for breakfast, and they'll go out to get them in the backyard," Van Sambeek said.

Nestled in the Black Hills between Hermosa and Keystone, Ali and her husband raise four children, all under the age of seven, and a couple dozen chickens.

The chickens were added to the Van Sambeek family about a year ago.

"We wanted our kids to have more chores. We both grew up ranching and farming. We don't personally do that

anymore and we wanted our kids to have a taste of that life," Van Sambeek said.

"We haven't had to buy a store-bought egg since we started," she gleamed.

To begin, Van Sambeek started asking friends who raised their own chickens in their backyards a lot of questions.

Around that time and by chance, Van Sambeek learned of a friend that was looking to get rid of a couple hens and a coop for free.

So Van Sambeek took advantage of the opportunity and gave the hens a home in her backyard.

"We started with four, and were up to 20 at one point. And now we're down a little bit after an unfortunate situation with a hawk. That was our kids' first experience with losing animals. But this spring we'll get chicks again," Van Sambeek said.

The Van Sambeeks started off with Dominique brown layer chickens, but expanded the number of breeds in their

coop to get a more colorful plethora of eggs.

"I really wanted the green, dark brown and blue eggs. We pretty much have all the colors now. They've stopped laying throughout the winter, in the summer we'll get about eight or nine eggs a day," Van Sambeek said.

With her children being at the ages of 7, 5, 3 and 1, raising chickens has been



Ali Van Sambeek's son refills the water jug for the family's chickens.

a great way to teach them that their food doesn't just come from the store.

"Somebody has to put work into it – it's kind of cool when it's your own work. That's been one of the biggest things. We also have a pretty big garden. We feed the scraps from the garden back to the chickens. It's so much fun for the kids to see that process," Van Sambeek said.

Over in the eastern part of the state near Brandon, Stephanie Peterson has taken her love of raising backyard chickens and her expertise in doing so to new levels.

Peterson grew up in Lemmon and Rapid City before moving to Washington, D.C., to work on Capitol Hill for U.S. Sen. Tom Daschle.

During her time in Washington, D.C., Peterson raised four backyard chickens. Nine years ago, Peterson and her family moved back to South Dakota and bought a small acreage just outside of Brandon.

She purchased 15 hens and one rooster in the process and immensely enjoyed caring for the chickens and was entertained by their antics.

That developed into a full-fledged business for Peterson, named Fruit of the Coop.

"I heard that the backyard chicken keeping classes instructor for Sioux Falls Community Education was no longer available to teach, and I stepped right into the opening. I've been teaching classes since 2015. I also help small communities draft and pass backyard chicken ordinances for their towns, in addition to offering private consultations for folks who want personalized help getting started with backyard chickens," Peterson said.

She even offers advanced classes on veterinary care for flocks and is a distributor of non-GMO, organic chicken feed grown and milled by a local family farm.

"I started my egg business in 2016, working directly with chefs and restaurant owners to provide pasture-raised eggs to Sioux Falls restaurants. I also offer farm tours and field trips, and operate a farm stay Airbnb here at Fruit of the Coop," Peterson said.

What drives Peterson's passion for chicken and eggs is how interesting of an animal she's found chickens to be, with what she described as "unique biological makeups and also fun personalities."

Over the years, Peterson has seen the number of people raising their own chickens increase.

According to the American Pet Product Association's survey, ownership of backyard chickens increased from 8% in 2018 to 13% in 2020.

"And since COVID-19, the numbers have skyrocketed. The pandemic allowed for folks to have the time to pursue their backyard chicken hobby. But more importantly, many people began to focus on where their food was coming from and how to eat more locally," Peterson said.

"Raising your own chickens for eggs is an easy way to take control of a small part of the food system we all participate in. It

is now estimated that 12 million people in the U.S. own backyard chickens."

## Things you need to know when considering backyard chickens:

- Hatching a Plan (local laws, cost, choosing a breed, where to buy)
- Chicken Little (setting up a brooder, food and water, heat, socializing)
- Feather Your Nest (coops and runs, predator proofing, cleaning, nest boxes, ventilation, space needed, seasonal care)
- Chicken Scratch (feeders and waterers, nutrient-dense feed, oyster shell, grit, treats)
- Ruling the Roost (free range, dust baths, molting, pecking order, injuries and diseases)
- Eggs/The Fruit of Your Coop (laying age, the "bloom," winter laying)



The Van Sambeek kids inspect the chicks that will be added to their coop.



**MARCH 1-3, 2024**  
**National Pheasant**  
**Fest & Quail Classic**  
 1201 N West Ave.  
 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 2**  
**Live on Stage**  
 High Country Guest Ranch  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 7**  
**Elevate Rapid City Economic Summit**  
 8 a.m.  
 The Monument  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**French Toast/Pancake Feed & Health Fair**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 Tea Community Building  
 Tea, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**SunCatcher Therapeutic Riding Academy & 3rd Annual Shamrock Gala**  
 5 p.m.  
 Alex Johnson Ballroom  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 11-15**  
**Black Hills Institute's 50th Anniversary Celebration**  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 14-16**  
**Spring Rummage Fundraiser**  
 Spearfish Senior Center  
 Spearfish, SD

**MARCH 15**  
**East Dakota Chapter NWFT 31st Annual Banquet**  
 Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 15-16**  
**Badlands Quilter Weekend Getaway**  
 5:30 p.m. Friday, all day Saturday  
 Wall Community Center  
 Wall, SD

**MARCH 16**  
**Live On Stage**  
 High Country Guest Ranch  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 16**  
**South Dakota Poetry Society Poetry on the Road & Open Mic**  
 1 p.m.  
 Tri-State Museum  
 Belle Fourche, SD

**MARCH 16-17**  
**Hill City Antiques, Railroad & Collectibles Show & Sale**  
 Hill City Center  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 17**  
**St. Patrick's Day Green Pancakes and Sausage**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

**MARCH 20-23**  
**Hill City Restaurant Week**  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Tyndall VFW Vegas Night**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Tyndall Community Center  
 Tyndall, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Hill City Children's Easter Egg Hunt**  
 Visitor Info Center  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 24**  
**Ham Dinner & Silent Auction**  
 11:45 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

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

**APRIL 5-7**  
**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 14**  
**Hill City Senior Sunday Breakfast**  
 8 a.m.  
 Hill City Center  
 Hill City, SD

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