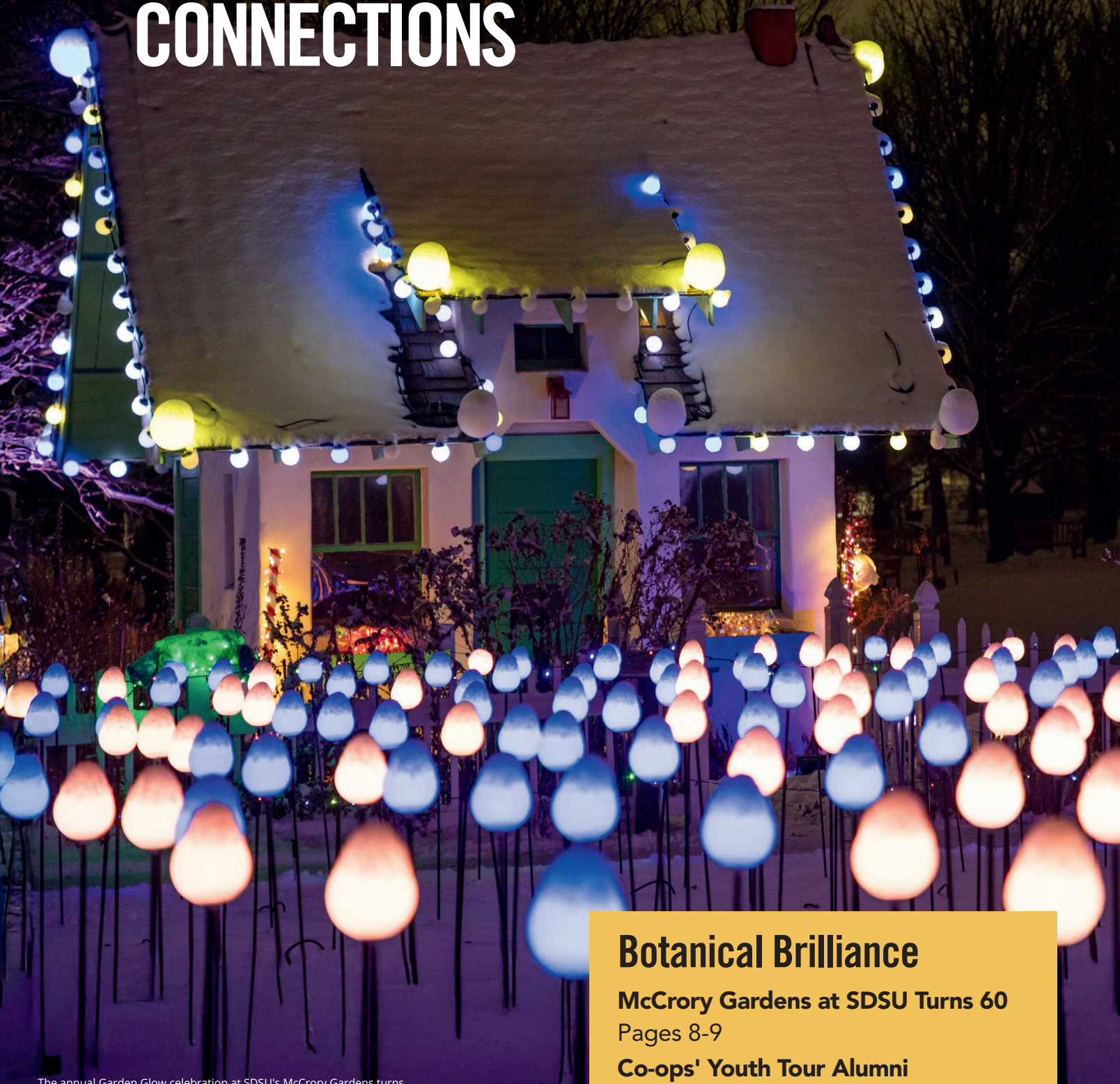


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Botanical Brilliance

McCrary Gardens at SDSU Turns 60

Pages 8-9

Co-ops' Youth Tour Alumni

Pages 12-13

The annual Garden Glow celebration at SDSU's McCrary Gardens turns the space into a winter wonderland with festive lights and decorations.

Photo by McCrary Gardens

Merry Christmas!



Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/GM

I cannot believe how fast the past 11 months have gone by and it's almost time for me to get out and do all of my holiday shopping. I'm not one to wait until last minute so I will be out there browsing the stores on December 23rd. Really though, it is true what my grandpa would always say, "time goes even faster as you get older!"

It is the holiday season, and I love seeing all the Christmas lights. The best way for me to get in the holiday spirit is to put up a bunch of decorations! I encourage everyone to channel their inner Clark W. Griswold and go crazy decorating your house with Christmas lights that not only can you and your family enjoy, but so can your neighbors! Now, please be safe and make sure you have someone to hold your ladder, and make sure you are not overloading your extension cords, and you are plugging those lights into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet! And remember to watch out for icicles, or as said in another classic Christmas movie, *The Christmas Story*, "You will put you eye out, kid."

Now some of you might be thinking, "Sure. You just want me to put up Christmas lights, so I use more kilowatts." The truth is that while I do like to sell kilowatts, I also like helping our members save money wherever they can and I have an excellent energy-efficient recommendation for you: use LED Christmas lights. Switching to LED Christmas lights will lower your holiday electric bill while still allowing you to lift the holiday spirit in your home and neighborhood!

If you want to get into the technicalities of Christmas lighting: LED Christmas lights use only 5-10 watts for a 100-bulb strand, a significant reduction compared to incandescent bulbs which use around 40 watts on average. Running a strand of LED lights for six hours a day can cost less than \$0.25 per month. But this is an average, to calculate the cost of your lights, find the total wattage of the lights you're using, which is usually listed on the package. Next, multiply the total watts by the hours you plan to use them each day, then divide by 1,000 to get your daily kilowatt-hours (KWh) then multiply the daily KWh by your KWh rate (found on your bill) to get your total cost!

So, as you see, some holiday lighting is now more affordable than ever! So go ahead, get out there and spread some Christmas cheer lighting up the neighborhood!

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all the members of this great cooperative for your support over the past year. On behalf of the board of directors, the employees of LREA, and myself, we wish you a Merry Christmas filled with family and friends and holiday cheer!

Until next time, we will keep the Christmas lights on for you!

Merry Christmas to all!

Jeremy Lindemann



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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Calculate The Cost of Your Christmas Lights

1. Figure out wattage of each bulb or strand of lights.
2. Multiply the the wattage or strand by the number you are using.
3. Multiply the wattage x 0.001 to get your kWh.
4. Multiply your kWh x your company's power rate.
5. Multiply your kWh by the number of hours per day you will have lights on.
6. Multiply your daily total by the number of days you will have your lights on.

1 strand of 100 mini LED lights = 10w

$10w \times .001 = .010 \text{ kWh}$
 $.01 \text{ kWh} \times .1129 = \$0.001129 \text{ per hour}$
 $\$0.001129 \times 6 \text{ hours} = \0.0068 per day
 $\$0.0068 \times 30 \text{ days} = \0.20

100 mini incandescent lights = 45watts

$45w \times .001 = .045 \text{ kWh}$
 $.045 \text{ kWh} \times .1129 = \0.005 per hour
 $\$0.005 \times 6 \text{ hours} = \0.030 per day
 $\$0.03 \times 30 \text{ days} = \0.90

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So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

If you come across downed power lines...

Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines – not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

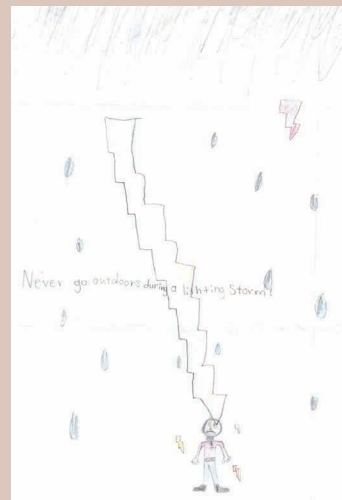
If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



Always assume a downed power line is energized. A downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

"Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



Josiah Krcil, Age 9

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, S.D.

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.

Specialty SOUPS

CHEESEBURGER VEGETABLE SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef
2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese
(2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk
(3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup
1 can French style green beans
1 can mixed vegetables
1 can diced potatoes

Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

Wendy Thorson
Northern Electric

DUMPLING SOUP

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 tsps. sesame oil
1 cup carrots, shredded
5 green onions, thinly sliced (whites and greens separated)
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 cup white miso paste
6 cups chicken vegetable broth, divided
1 lb. frozen mini dumplings
3 cups baby spinach
3 tsps. soy sauce (plus more to serve)
Hot sauce or chili oil to serve

Method

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

Susan Forma
Union County Electric

PHEASANT CHOWDER

Ingredients:

2 pheasants (thighs and breasts: or only breasts if preferred)
4 celery stalks, sliced
1/2 lb. bacon strips, sliced
1 large yellow onion, diced
4 cups chicken broth
4 medium size Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 cloves garlic, diced
5 tsps. flour
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup parmesan cheese
Salt and Pepper

Method

Put cubed potatoes in a separate pot, cover with the chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they are soft.

Slice the pheasant meat, across grain into 1/4 to 1/2 inch strips.

Cut bacon slices into small pieces and put in a Dutch oven on medium heat. Add diced celery and onion and cook until the bacon and celery are cooked through and onions are transparent. Add the garlic and pheasant. The meat should cook quickly because of the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

Nick Kvernevig
Lake Region Electric

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS







During the annual Garden Glow event, McCrory Gardens in Brookings is transformed into a winter wonderland.
Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

NATURE GROWS & GLOWS AT MCCRORY GARDENS

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, community-focused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a spring-time syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summer-time TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see — just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summer-time home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

"We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace."



Lisa Marotz – McCrory Gardens Director since 2016 – with intern Kathryn Bowar, who is beginning her third fall working at the garden.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



The 1991 Sioux Quartzite rock garden and 2013 waterfall are a favorite fixture in the garden — and the site of numerous summertime marriage proposals.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



During the Garden Glow event, the East Terrace Lawn and Gazebo becomes The Enchanted Forest. Marotz notes this was the site of the first Garden Glow in 2015 — miniscule compared to today's expansive decorating.

This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.

Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

60TH ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY STORY

*Photos submitted by
McCrory Gardens*

1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.



1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



2025

McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!



Residents of Sun Dial Manor at the Blue Moon 50's Room

Member Spotlight

Blue Moon 50's Room

Laura London

A feeling of nostalgia edges into your soul as you pull into Ron Kuecker's place. Parked beneath the Texaco sign, a teal 1950s Hiawatha tandem is the star of the vintage bicycles racked in front of the old Fire Chief and Texaco gas pumps. The kind of pumps used at stations of years ago when the guy came out to fill your tank, check your oil and tires, and wash your windshield; back when full service was a priority. There is no gas being pumped here, but if you're interested in the history around Day County, you can get your fill! Ron is an unofficial historian of the area who became impassioned with all things Day County and Webster from a very young age. His interest in history and storytelling began with the tale of his great grandfather, Frank Kuecker homesteading here in 1885.

That nostalgic feeling covers you like a warm blanket as you enter the two-story building, framed by a couple of vintage trucks, you are taken back in time by The Blue Moon 50's Room. This place is literally a work of art, conceived by Ron and the love of his life, his late wife Lona, and their mutual love for history, especially all things 50s and 60s. Hundreds of pieces of memorabilia adorn the walls and

shelves, leaving no space untouched. Every piece has a story and Ron knows them all.

As you stand in the middle of the black and white checkerboard floor and face the garage door, you get the intended image of a drive-in movie where Lona's 1956 Peacock Blue Ford Thunderbird had been parked. There is a gas station in the corner with a vintage glass counter stocked with whatever a guy or gal might have needed when filling the tank in the 50s: a tire patch, pack of gum, can of snus, or a razor, it's in there somewhere.

In the Café section, Ron says that most people don't realize that they are sitting in booths from the forgotten Evans Café. The vintage A&W phone ordering systems hang on the wall right next to folks as they read the offerings of \$1 meals on the menu from Rogers Café that was attached to Nash 66, open 24 hours a day, even holidays.

Ron's malt shop at the back of the room features an old-fashioned freezer and toppings center from one of Lona's favorite places to visit as a child. As you take your seat on one of the restored barstools from Kight's Café in Bristol, your knees may bump against the gorgeous bar that was built from doors salvaged from the historic Brokaw Hotel in Bristol. There is a meat scale from Erickson's Red Owl, and you can have a spin on the roulette wheel from

Bob's Bar for a "free beer." When you turn your barstool to face that drive-in theater, take a look up and to the left so you can see the faded wooden siding from the old Poka Dot Bar in Webster with the neon sign still shining through a window.

The T-Bird Room, named after Lona's car, with its booths and stools covered in the famous Peacock Blue, is a loft situated above the malt shop boasting a car hop, poodle skirted mannequins and a phone booth fit for Clark Kent needing to change into his Superman outfit. The real treasure up here is a nod to Lona's love of The King, complete with a set of porcelain Precious Moments Elvis figurines. Ron, with a gleam and maybe even a tear in his eye tells about how Lona's famous T-Bird came to





be hers, “I saw it at one of the Back to The 50’s car shows; it was Peacock Blue just like she dreamed of... Lona had a long military career with the SD National Guard and was serving in Desert Storm at the time. It took a few months to convince the guy he wanted to sell it to me.”

Each piece in Kuecher’s Blue Moon 50’s Room has a story. There are bottles from the old Webster Bottling Company. Ron has created a tribute wall where a rifle hangs, dedicated by a passed-on friend as well as photos of loved ones and local heroes who went to Vietnam and never returned adorn the walls alongside hula hoops and hub caps, Lona’s poodle

skirt, even glass globes from the original streetlights of Webster. All collectively tell a story of love for family and history in a display of true affection for Northeast South Dakota.

Several residents from Sun Dial Manor recently made a trip back in time when they were invited to Kuecher’s Blue Moon 50’s Room. Konnie Anderson, Activities Director, said, “It was so neat, the residents loved it! It was like a walk back in time for them, and me too.” They enjoyed seeing the memorabilia, sharing stories and dancing to the juke box that still plays 45’s. Ron has visited the nursing home in Bristol with the Cruisin’ Classics Car Club

many times over the years and during one visit, he approached Konnie with the idea of hosting a visit. She thought this was a great idea, so they made it happen. She said, “Ron made it extra fun. He even gave me a parking ticket for not putting coins in the meter when we parked the bus!” Ron said this is what it’s all about, “...sharing it with everyone. Sometimes I host different organizations, occasionally some of my classmates and friends come out, and we have family gatherings here too.”

Ron has dedicated himself to continuing to share his collections, works of art, stories and history by creating a personal place to gather, share stories of days past, and make new memories with family, friends and some organizations from the community where he grew up and cares for so deeply. He doesn’t offer 6¢ donuts, or 20¢ hamburgers like the old Wist Locker menu on display, but for those lucky enough to be invited, he does offer a warm smile, cold soda from the Coke machine, and maybe even a dish of strawberry ripple ice cream. The Blue Moon 50’s Room is a true treasure hidden in Lake Region territory!

Note: Ron is keen on sharing his collections and knowledge of history, however, this is not a museum or tourist attraction, this is his family home, and he values his privacy; his property is protected with security cameras.



Lona with daughters, Becca and Kelli, in her '56 T-bird.
Photo courtesy of Ron Kuecher.



The 2006 Youth Tour group takes a photo on the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

YOUTH TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdeca.coop

Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent

its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Fouberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025

he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

“These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids,” Larsen said. “I’m from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota – a lot of people don’t even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody’s home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm.”

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. “You build connections you don’t expect,” he said. “One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife’s, and years later he attended our wedding.”

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. “She was so passionate about the places we visited,” he said. “We weren’t just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant.”

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. “That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen,” he said. “When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I’d get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too.”

Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. “I’m pretty sure my best



Kevin Larsen
2006 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo



Andi Fouberg
1994 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool,” she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an unusual reason.

“The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles,” she said with a laugh. “We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together.”

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune’s communications director.

“Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point,” Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

“I’d see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I’d think, that was me,” she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

“The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment,” she said. “It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people.”

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

“Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don’t know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour,” she said. “Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour.”



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan



LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RECOGNIZES LOCAL STUDENT AS SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Lake Region Electric Association and Webster Area High School are pleased to announce Willa Stern as a Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week winner for the week of November 2, 2025 - November 8, 2025. The scholar of the week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now Television, Lake Region Electric Association and other local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honor

accomplished high school students.

Nominations for the weekly awards are submitted by school faculty, based on excellence in the classroom and service in the community. Willa is the Student Body President, a member of National Honor Society, Key Club and FCCLA. She is strong academically and is a wonderful role model to younger students. "Willa is very independent, and she asks a lot of questions. She has

a genuine interest, and that curiosity is really fun to teach," said Webster Social Studies teacher Adam Mines. Willa has been active in a variety of sports. She has also used her artistic talents to paint murals around the school. You may find her working at Brewhouse and Roots in her spare time. Willa believes that setting a good example is important, she says, "no matter what grades you have, people are going to remember how you made them feel. So being a good person is just as important as being a good scholar." When asked what inspires Willa, she gives a lot of credit to her mother, Juliana Stern, "She really pushes me to be the best version of myself. I'm also driven by my future self and the person that I want to be."

As a Scholar of the Week, Willa was featured in a weekly segment on Dakota News Now and received a \$250 scholarship from Lake Region Electric Association. Willa is also now eligible to receive a \$1,000 scholarship or one of two \$500 scholarships that will be given away this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.

"Lake Region Electric Association salutes Willa and all students who set an example of hard work and high academic standards," said Brett Kwasniewski with Lake Region Electric Association.

For more information about Lake Region Electric Association or Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, please contact Laura London at 605-345-3379.



2026 Power Cost Increase

- Will go into effect January 1, 2026.
- New rate chart will be available late December.
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2026

June 14-20

YOUTH TOUR

Join students from across South Dakota for a free to you, once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Lake Region Electric.

For more information and applications:
 Website: www.lakeregion.coop
 email: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Non-discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



NOV. 25-DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m. (holidays included)
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178
christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov

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.

NOV. 27
Community Thanksgiving
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Groton Community Center
Groton, SD

NOV. 28
Snacks With Santa
2-4 p.m.
Hill City Center
Hill City, SD

NOV. 29
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Gregory, SD
605-830-9778

DEC. 5-6
Christmas in the Hills
Mueller Center
Hot Springs, SD
605-890-2974

DEC. 6
Hometown Christmas
All Day
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656

DEC. 6
KJAM Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Madison, SD
605-256-4514

DEC. 6
Parade of Lights
6 p.m.
Redfield, SD
605-472-0965

DEC. 6
Holly Jolly HoeDown on Ice
Fort Pierre Expo Center
Pierre, SD
605-289-1334

DEC. 6
Fun, Old-Fashioned Christmas in Britton
Activities All Day, Lighted Parade
Britton, SD
brittonareachamber.my.canva.site

DEC. 13
Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Aberdeen, SD

DEC. 14
A Poker Alice Christmas
2 p.m.
Gayville Music Hall
Gayville, SD
605-760-5799

DEC. 14
Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience Holiday Show
4 p.m.
Johnson Fine Arts Center
Aberdeen, SD

DEC. 15
Holiday Jam with the Hegg Brothers
7-9 p.m.
H.S. Performing Arts Center
Mitchell, SD

JAN. 22
Gentleman's Quartet: Instrumental Quartet with Erin Shields
7 p.m.
Johnson Fine Arts Center
Aberdeen, SD

FEB. 21
Bellator Titans Casino Night Fundraiser
6-11 p.m.
Blackjack, Scorpion (horse) Races, Find the Titan, Live Auction & More
City Lights Bar & Event Center
Aberdeen, SD

FEB. 22
C Street Brass
4 p.m.
Johnson Fine Arts Center
Aberdeen, SD

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.