

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Antler Shed Hunting

**Shed Hunter Kelly
O'Bryan**

Pages 8-9

Artificial Intelligence

Pages 12-13

*Photo submitted by
Kelly O'Bryan*

Fall Highlights



Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/GM

Hello Lake Region Members!
Summer really flew by here at Lake Region Electric Association! Our crew took advantage of favorable conditions to plow their way through several projects, and we hope to continue that momentum through the fall, that is right around the corner.

By the time you read this, the kids will be back in school, and a new football and volleyball season began! I wish all our local athletes good luck, and I look forward to those Friday night lights and some hard hitting serves and spikes from the volleyball court!

Not only is high school football starting, but college football and the NFL are back! My prediction is that this will be the year the Vikings finally win the super bowl. I know we are divided in this country between Packers and Viking fans, and while I don't understand it, I won't hold it against anyone if they would rather have a block of cheese on their head versus a horned Viking helmet! I know it is a long shot, but I

faithfully make the prediction every year that this is the year for the Vikings, only to have my heart broken time and time again. But maybe, just maybe, this will be the year! I am an optimist, and I believe you must keep hope alive.

As fall begins, I am excited to get out and do some bowhunting. There is nothing better than a crisp cool fall morning sitting in a tree stand hoping for a nice buck to come by! Not only will I be chasing some deer around on the weekends, I also plan on chasing a few pheasants with my black lab, Zetty!

Fall is also harvest time and our local farmers will be heading out to the fields to harvest their crops. I want to wish all our farmers a successful and safe harvest!

And remember no matter what color combine you drive, we are all in this together and until next time we will keep the lights on for you!

Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/General Manager



**Happy
LABOR DAY**

**OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2025**

Call to report outages: 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Ashley Meslow
Hayden & Maria Anderson
Wendy Duis
Jason Hill
Josh Jorgenson
David B Hanson
Chad & Susan Simon

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

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HARVEST SAFETY TIP

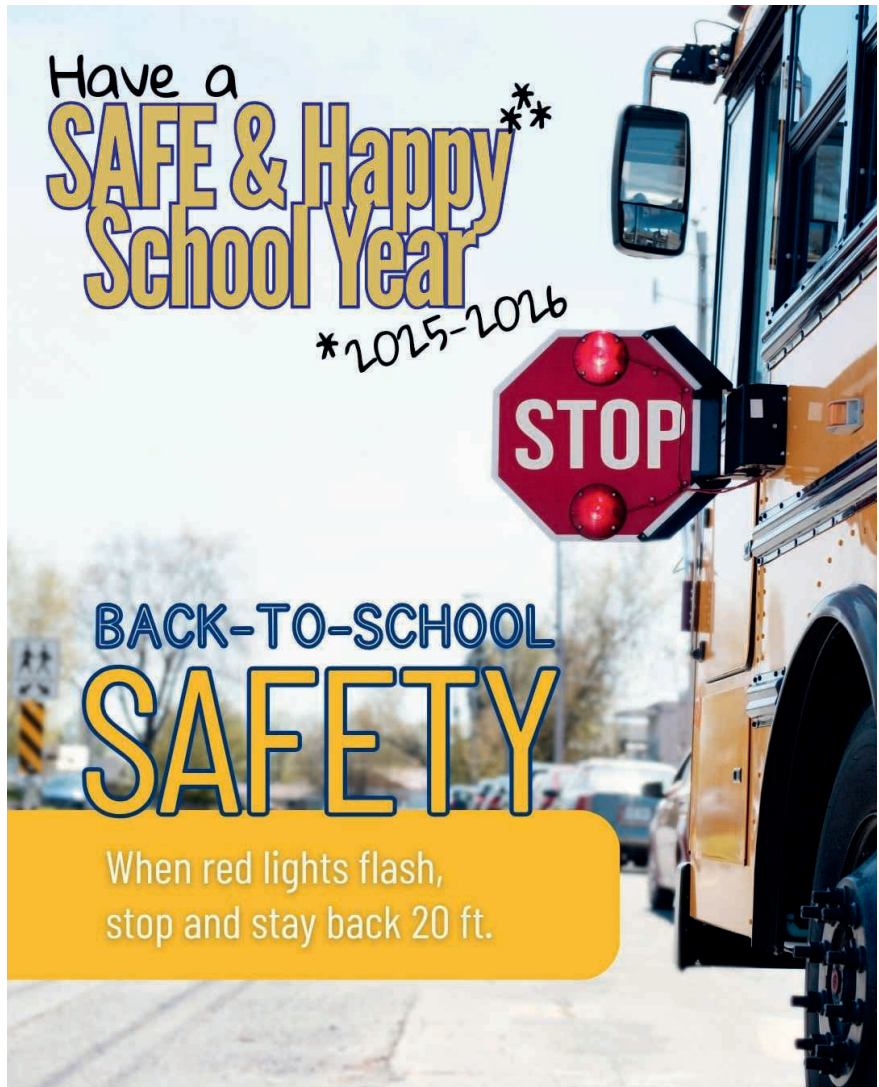
Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.



Have a
SAFE & Happy
School Year
*2025-2026

BACK-TO-SCHOOL
SAFETY

When red lights flash,
stop and stay back 20 ft.



Emergency Preparedness: Are You Ready for a Disaster?

Source: National Safety Council

National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and held annually in September, is a good reminder that natural and man-made disasters can strike at any time. It's important to have a planned response when you're at work, on vacation or on the road.

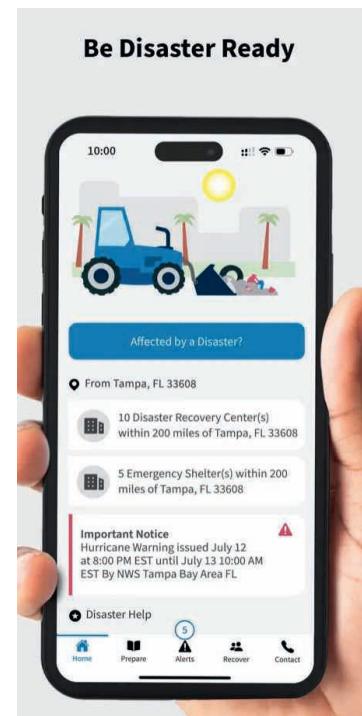
In 2022, 69,473 weather-related events resulted in 813 deaths and 1,718 injuries. Winter weather, heat, floods and hurricanes resulted in the most deaths that year, according to Injury Facts.

The National Safety Council offers safety tips specific on preparing for earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes, and how to minimize fire risks.

Federal agencies, like Ready.gov and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also are valuable resources for emergency preparedness. When you face a natural or man-made emergency, try to stay informed through radio, TV or the Internet. In some cases, however, cable, electric and cell phone service will be disabled, making communication nearly impossible. The National Safety Council recommends the following general precautions that apply to many disaster situations:

- Make sure at least one family member knows first aid and CPR.
- Download the FEMA app for resources, weather alerts and safety tips.
- Have a family communication plan in place; all members of the family should review and practice the plan.
- Have all family members' and other important phone numbers written down or memorized.
- Have an emergency kit in your car and at least three days of food and water at home.
- Be sure to store all important documents – birth certificates, insurance policies, etc. – in a fire-proof safe or safety deposit box.
- Know how to shut off utilities.

The official FEMA mobile app offers critical resources and real-time alerts to help you prepare for emergencies, stay safe during disasters, and navigate recovery afterward. With features like customizable emergency checklists, shelter locations, disaster recovery centers, and direct access to emergency alerts, the app is a comprehensive tool for personal and family safety planning.



"Don't drive tractors into power lines."

Darcy Welsh, Age 9

Darcy cautions readers while driving tractors near power lines. Great picture, Darcy! Darcy's parents are Ryan and Rachel Welsh from Oral, 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.

Fruit SPECIALS

FROZEN FRUIT FIESTA

Ingredients:

1 6-oz. frozen orange juice concentrate
2 10-oz. frozen strawberries
2 cans pineapple with juice (1 tidbits, 1 crushed)
3-4 bananas, sliced
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 cup cold water

Method

Mix all together in a large bowl. Freeze in individual cups. Set out at room temperature for 1-2 hours before serving.

Optional: pour sour or 7-Up on top before serving.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

PEACH RHUBARB CRISP

Filling:

3/4 cup sugar
3 tbsps. flour
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/8 tsp. salt
3 cups rhubarb (sliced, fresh or frozen)
2 1/2 cups chopped fresh or frozen unsweetened peaches

Topping:

1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup brown sugar
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt
5 tbsps. butter (cold)

Method

Combine the filling ingredients and fruit. Transfer to a greased 11"x7" baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the topping ingredients; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over fruit. Bake at 375°F for 30 to 35 minutes until bubbly and browned.

*Recipe can be cut in half and bake in 8" x 8" pan.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

CHERRY ICE CREAM DESSERT

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cup Rice Krispies, crushed
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
1 cup grated coconut
1/4 cup chopped nuts
1-quart vanilla ice cream
1 cup cherry pie mix

Method

1. Melt butter in frying pan. Add coconut and toast, stirring constantly as it burns easily. Cool
2. Add nuts, brown sugar and crushed rice Krispies. Mix together.
3. Press 2/3 of crumb mixture into a buttered 9x9 inch pan.
4. Soften ice cream and spread over crumb mixture then top remaining crumbs.
5. Freeze well. Cut in squares and top with cherry pie mix.
6. Can be served with any other toppings. Serves 6-8.

Rowena A. Wipf
Northern 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.

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

Help Us Get Our Member's Money to Them

Inactive members were mailed a Capital Credit refund check in June.* A number of checks were returned to Lake Region as undeliverable by the post office. We are asking for your help getting unclaimed payments to previous account holders.

Here's where you can help your fellow cooperative members:

If you know the current address or phone number of anyone listed here, please notify them to contact Lake Region Electric Association by calling 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869, or by sending an email to lakeregion@lakeregion.coop. Thank you for your help!

**Active members saw their refund as a credit on their May bill.*

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.

First Name	Last Name	& / Or
Bonnie	Anderson	
James	Batterton	
Eric	Becking	
Nathan	Boe	
Michael	Brzica	
Justin	Cimburek	
Christopher	Felicia Jr.	
Alan	Franka	
David	Hegge	
Kangi	Hisgun	
Jeremy	Johnson	or Marcia Johnson
Nathan	Johnson	
Robin	Keeble	
Virginia	Koenig	
Jane	Larson	
Susan	Lufkins	
Leon	Marks	
Sharon	McMurtry	
Keith	Mendenhall	or Nicky Watson
Derek	Moe	
Constance	Moen	
Nancy	Olsen	or Joe Olsen
Lois	Ercink	or Lois Olson
Gene	Paulson	or Gloria Paulson
Willis	Quinn	
Lane	Rademacher	
Earlynne	Redday	
Jeff	Ringenberg	
Basil	Robertson	
John	Rondell	
Bill	Rosenau	
Hutch	Schilling	or Carol Schilling
Patricia	Schmidt	
Leo	Schmit	or Carol Schmit
Victor	Simon	
Roger	St Sauver	
David	Wade	or Sharon Helgeson
Jason	Wagner	or Mara Wagner
Vern	Wampler	or Virgie Wallace
Allan	Weismantel	
Business/Organization	Contact	
Andrews Welding	Roger Andrews	
Robert Wehrkamp Est	Dorothy Wehrkamp	
Maurice E Webb Trust		
Great Western Bank	Commercial Real Estate	



Kelly O'Bryan of Winner shows off his impressive collection of deer and elk sheds alongside his shed-hunting Labrador, Skye. Photos submitted by Kelly O'Bryan

SHED HUNTING

Prairie Miles and Antler Piles

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Rosebud Electric member Kelly O'Bryan of Winner regularly hikes mile after mile of open prairie in search of the perfect shed. But he isn't looking for a place to store his garden tools or lawnmower – instead, he's after antlers. Each spring, deer and elk naturally shed their antlers, leaving behind prized treasures for shed hunters like O'Bryan to find.

O'Bryan jumped into the shed hunting hobby in 2020, during the social distancing months of the pandemic, after a friend invited him on a shed hunt in Montana. When O'Bryan found his first deer shed, he uncovered more than just a pair of antlers – he discovered a new passion.

"It was during the time when you couldn't go out and do anything, so you just had to make your own fun and find stuff to do," he laughed. "I just fell in love with covering as many miles as I possibly could each season, trying to pinpoint sheds. It's just like an Easter egg hunt."



O'Bryan lifts an elk shed found in Montana. Submitted Photo

Shortly after, O'Bryan fully committed to the hobby and added the ultimate scavenger to his team: a white lab named Skye. According to O'Bryan, it didn't take long for the dog to become an invaluable shed-hunting partner.

"I got Skye as a puppy, and I knew as soon as I got her, I

would train her to be a shed dog,” he said. “I taught her to sit and stay while I hid sheds all around the house. When she found one, I would give her lots of positive reinforcement. She figured it out just like that.”

Since then, O’Bryan and Skye have become seasoned shed hunters. In 2024 alone, the pair found 152 whitetail sheds, 25 mule deer sheds, nine elk sheds and 16 complete skulls – called “dead heads” – which resemble an English-style mount. Many of their best finds come from long days spent in remote country, often covering 10 to 15 miles in a single outing.

O’Bryan’s collection of sheds has grown into an impressive heap of bone and tines that continues to grow each season. Like many in the shed hunting community, he has found creative ways to showcase his finds with his most festive being an antler-adorned Christmas tree.

Others in the shed hunting community use their collection for art projects, crafting everything from knife handles to chandeliers. Some even trade or sell antlers to crafters, collectors, or pet product makers, giving shed hunting both recreational and economic appeal. Although O’Bryan does not sell his finds, he does cut up broken and damaged antlers for dog chews, gifting them to friends, family and his own favorite shed-hunting friend.

O’Bryan also has a few tips for beginners, drawn from miles of experience.

He says spring is the best time to search – antlers are freshly shed, and the grass is still short enough to give hunters a clear view. A good pair of binoculars is another must-have, helping spot antlers from a distance when the terrain allows for a higher vantage point.

And once you’ve found one shed, don’t assume the hunt is over. Whitetail deer are often in groups and antlers are often dropped in pairs so it’s worth taking the time to thoroughly scan the surroundings.

“You aren’t going to be finding many sheds unless you are willing to put on the miles,” he said. “The more you hike, the more you are likely to find sheds.”

More photos of O’Bryan’s collection and other hunting trophies can be found on his Instagram page: @db_huntin.



(Above) O’Bryan praises Skye for a lifetime of discovering antlers.
(Below) O’Bryan and Skye show their white tail antler finds from a winter shed hunt. *Submitted Photo*



Lake Region Leadership Visits Webster Scale

Laura London

Lake Region Electric recognizes the importance of understanding our members and their electrical needs. One of the ways the board and management team are working on strengthening relationships and improving understanding is by reaching out to some accounts and even taking a tour when the opportunity arises.

Joel Shoemaker, VP of Webster Scale, Inc. hosted a tour for the Lake Region Board of Directors and Management team following their board meeting in July. The tour began at one of Scale's shops along Highway 12 in Webster where there is a portable scale, a little longer than your average semi-truck, set up. As Joel welcomed the group, he introduced employee Wyatt Ewing, joking that Wyatt is a fourth-generation "married into" the company. Joel started by giving a little background of Webster Scale explaining that his Grandparents started the company over 50 years ago as a scale repair business then brought Joel's dad Roger in as the industry entered the digital era, eventually Roger's sons John, Jason and Joel joined the team, with the fourth generation now

on the work crews. Joel went on to explain that they built their first scale in 1982, then in the 1990's they went on to build their first portable scale.

Joel and Wyatt then began a demonstration of the scale's jacking system, a "one of a kind in the world" created right here in Webster by Joel's dad, Roger. Moments after Wyatt started the process, the massive scale was raised to a height that allowed a person to stand at full height beneath it. Joel invited the group to walk under the scale to get a closer look at the structure and weighing mechanism. To answer a question about accuracy, Joel told a story of when a scale was being federally tested under NTEP guidelines and supervision, it was accurate at 180,000 pounds all the way down to 2 pounds but once the last weight was removed, the last 2 pounds still registered on the scale. This was a problem; Joel said they called Roger who immediately knew what to do, he told them to "take a torch and cut a couple of lines in the scale deck, it's too stiff." Joel said they were hesitant but followed the instructions of his dad. When the scale

was re-tested the next day, it was perfect.

"This is so cool, I had no idea we had something like this built completely in Webster!" said LREA Director Rodney Tobin. LREA General Manager Jeremy Lindemann is in awe of the innovation and vision that the Shoemakers had from the start. "Whenever they saw a problem, they came up with a way to solve it themselves. Whether that meant building their own products or starting up a new branch of their company, they did it right." stated Lindemann. This experience was eye opening for this group, most of whom have lived in the area since they were born. Some say they now understand that Webster Scale doesn't just haul dirt and rocks; this is a solid business, and it is remarkable to have something of this magnitude in Webster.

Following the demonstration and informative tour of Webster Scale, the group had the opportunity to go out to the new housing development west of Webster. They were impressed by the layout of the development and the foresight that went into the design from the spacious lots to the larger homes with shops being set on the outside forming a break between the family homes and the industrial area to the north. "It really is a beautiful addition to Webster," said Lindemann.

Webster Scale

Member Spotlight

If you live in Lake Region Electric territory, there is one business that tips the scales in the right direction when it comes to community support and involvement. Webster Scale makes it part of their mission to support the community. This isn't a bank or some big-box company; this is a local, family-owned business that has operated out of Webster SD for roughly 60 years. Joel Shoemaker, company Vice President, is part of the third generation to lead this company. "Grandpa Russell taught us from an early age, if you want to have an opinion, you better be willing to get involved. We have carried on his legacy by donating not only our time and talents, but also by financially sponsoring different activities within our community that we believe will help make our region a great place for our dedicated workforce to raise their families and enjoy all the benefits of living in this wonderful area."

Webster Scale was founded in the 1960's by Joel's grandparents, Russell and Doris Shoemaker as a company that repaired and serviced all small and medium capacity mechanical scales. Since that time, the company has gone through some changes but one thing that has remained constant is that it is family owned and operated. Roger Shoemaker joined his parents in the family business in the mid 1970's when they expanded into selling and servicing digital equipment. About a decade later, the father and son duo transformed their business once more when they started their own concrete crew to construct the scale foundations. They then began manufacturing their own truck and livestock scales; the first scale was completely built right in their hometown of Webster in 1982. Having control over the quality of products that they manufactured, sold, and installed strengthened their business and helped bolster Webster Scale's sales and solidified their reputation in the industry. Roger's three sons John, Jason and Joel joined the family business in the 90's.

Webster Scale Inc. built their first portable scale in the 90s. Their jacking system, designed in the 2000s, is the only type like it in the entire world. It incorporates a portable wheel kit, a hydraulic lift kit, and a hydraulic winch located under the scale. This system makes it easy to quickly set up and tear down without having extra equipment on site. Joel is proud to say that Webster Scale is the only company in the United States

to manufacture a portable legal-for-trade scale of this magnitude, as the certifications get really complicated with each state having different regulations. These portable scales, manufactured wholly in Webster, are also certified as legal-for-trade in Canada, which has very stringent regulations.

This family run business is a perfect example of resiliency and adaptability; as time marched forward, and the industry changed, so did Webster Scale. The scale boom of the 90s slowed significantly at the turn of the century when small elevator facilities started shutting down. Faced with the realization that they may have to downsize and lay employees off, they started exploring options. That is when the Webster Scale started their highway and commercial construction division. To put it simply, their dedication to the company and the people who worked for them paid off. Since the start of the construction division, Webster Scale has worked on a variety of highway and development projects throughout the Midwest from North Dakota all the way down to Texas.

Webster Scale is one of the largest employers in the area, with roughly 80 employees ranging from full-time to part-time temporary positions. The culture and philosophy of the company are dedicated to not only outstanding customer service, but also to providing mutual service to their employee team. They invest in their workforce in a number of ways including offering scholarships and internships, multi-level training opportunities, promotion from within, and a top-notch safety program.

Joel, who began working for his grandpa and dad, alongside his brothers, more than 30 years ago now runs the company. He also farms west of Webster with his wife Alyssa and their 4 sons, and is active in many organizations. He is proud to carry on the legacy that his family built and work with the fourth generation coming into the business. He has faith that Webster Scale will continue the people and community of Webster for a long time to come.



Scale in use. Photo courtesy of Webster Scale, Inc.



HARNESSING AI

Electric Cooperatives Explore What's Next for AI

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. It has the potential to bring many opportunities, and a few challenges, to electric cooperatives. But machine learning takes time, and cooperatives are still in the process of determining how AI can be effectively used.

Like any new technology, AI brings with it a mix of potential and uncertainty. It's a hot topic — sometimes exciting, sometimes a little intimidating. But for electric cooperatives, the focus isn't on the buzz. It's on the basics: What problems can it solve? What efficiencies can it create? And how do cooperatives make sure they are using it safely?

That measured, practical approach is what's guiding East River Electric Power

Cooperative, a wholesale power supply cooperative which serves 25-member distribution systems in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, as it explores how AI might support the operations of its member cooperatives now and into the future.

Right now, most electric cooperatives in South Dakota have not yet integrated artificial intelligence into their operations or systems. But that doesn't mean the technology is being ignored. Across the state, many co-ops are watching AI developments closely, asking questions, and exploring how these tools might be used in the future. The focus remains on learning first — before implementing anything that could affect system reliability or member service.

At East River Electric Power Cooperative, that learning process is already well underway. According to Jeff May, chief information officer with East River Elec-

tric, the co-op has spent the past several years researching what AI has to offer. Their approach has been to identify practical, secure applications that could help improve efficiency, support employees in their day-to-day work, and ultimately benefit members.

“With the explosion of AI applications and models for both personal and professional uses, we've been exploring ways that East River Electric and our members can harness the power of AI while making sure that our data is secure from a cybersecurity perspective,” said May.

Because AI technology has the potential to interact with both internal systems and external networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As South Dakota rural electric cooperatives look to adopt tools powered by AI and other tech, they will ensure their systems are safe from potential cyber threats. Strong digital defenses are essential for the safe use of any new technology.

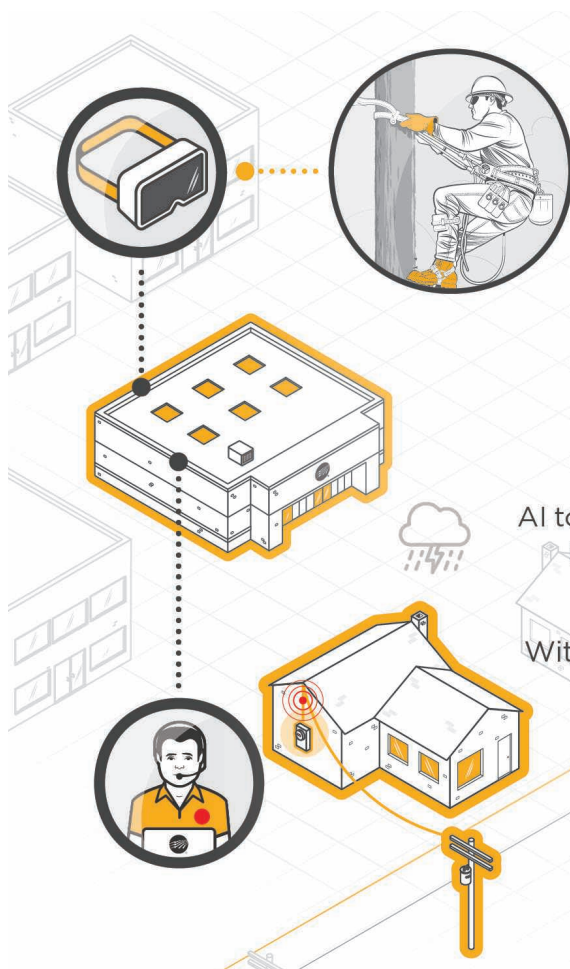
With safety in mind, May said East River Electric is actively partnering with Dakota State University graduate students to see how AI can be safely utilized by electric cooperatives. Together, East River Electric is working with the school to build an AI model that can predict electricity usage based on weather conditions and other factors to support the cooperative's load forecasting and rate forecasting capabilities. Although the technology is still in its infancy, May said he expects that someday AI will play a significant role in an electric cooperative's daily operations, including load forecasting, outage response and maintenance planning.

"It's difficult to predict how AI can be used for different types of jobs, but it will certainly become common throughout the organization as we learn all of the things AI can do," he said. "If it can be used to make our employees more productive and have a positive impact on the organization and our members, we will consider it. In some areas it could become commonplace within the next year, but throughout the cooperative it could take 3 to 5 years or more to be fully integrated in a safe and secure way."

Beyond grid operations, East River Electric is also trying out Microsoft CoPilot, an AI-powered assistant built into programs like Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams. A few employees are currently testing it to see how it might improve productivity and workflow, especially in communications and marketing departments.

Ultimately, if AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for electric cooperative members, May said it's worth considering. AI can be another tool in the cooperative tool belt that can make energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.

"Over the next 5 to 10 years, AI's role in electric cooperatives is poised to grow significantly, driven by the need for efficiency, grid reliability and sustainability amid rising energy demands and technological advancements," said May. "Just the advancements that have been made in the last three years have been astounding to watch, and as more and more data centers and large language models are built in the coming years, it will become something that cooperatives likely use on a daily basis."



AI PUT INTO ACTION

Electric cooperatives are already using artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) for key tasks and activities. Looking ahead, co-ops see great potential for AI and AR as helpful tools for improving grid reliability and the services they provide to consumer-members.

SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

AI tools like chatbots can enhance member interactions and provide a tailored experience based on energy use data.

WEATHER FORECASTING

With the help of AI, weather forecasts will become more accurate, pinpointing areas to station utility crews.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through augmented reality, or AR, lineworkers can experience interactive, lifelike trainings, rather than watching a video or webinar.



Photo by Jessie Tucker

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Is an EV Right for Your Needs?

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

As electric vehicle infrastructure improves in South Dakota, you may be wondering: is it finally time to jump on board the EV bandwagon?

EVs offer many lucrative benefits to their owners. They mark an end to the tedious oil changes, and you're likely to take on fewer expenses to maintain the vehicle — and that's all while you're getting the combustion engine-equivalent of 100 miles to the gallon.

It's a deal lucrative enough that EV registration has surged in the U.S. to more than four million vehicles on the road in 2024, with that number expected to grow exponentially over the next decade. Florida, Texas and Washington each already have more than 100,000 EVs registered, and California reports more than one million.

Meanwhile in South Dakota, it's still fairly irregular that you'll see an electric vehicle (with in-state plates) driving around your community. In fact, the South Dakota Department of Transportation records only about 1,400 fully-electric vehicles on the road, even as charging infrastructure increases.

"You do have range anxiety — that is something that happens," said Matt Hotzler, manager of H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, who regularly takes the co-op's Tesla Model 3 on business trips across the state.

South Dakota's weather makes planning a trip in an electric vehicle a little more hands-on. Temperature, wind speeds, climate control and headlights all affect how frequently you have to stop to add some joules.

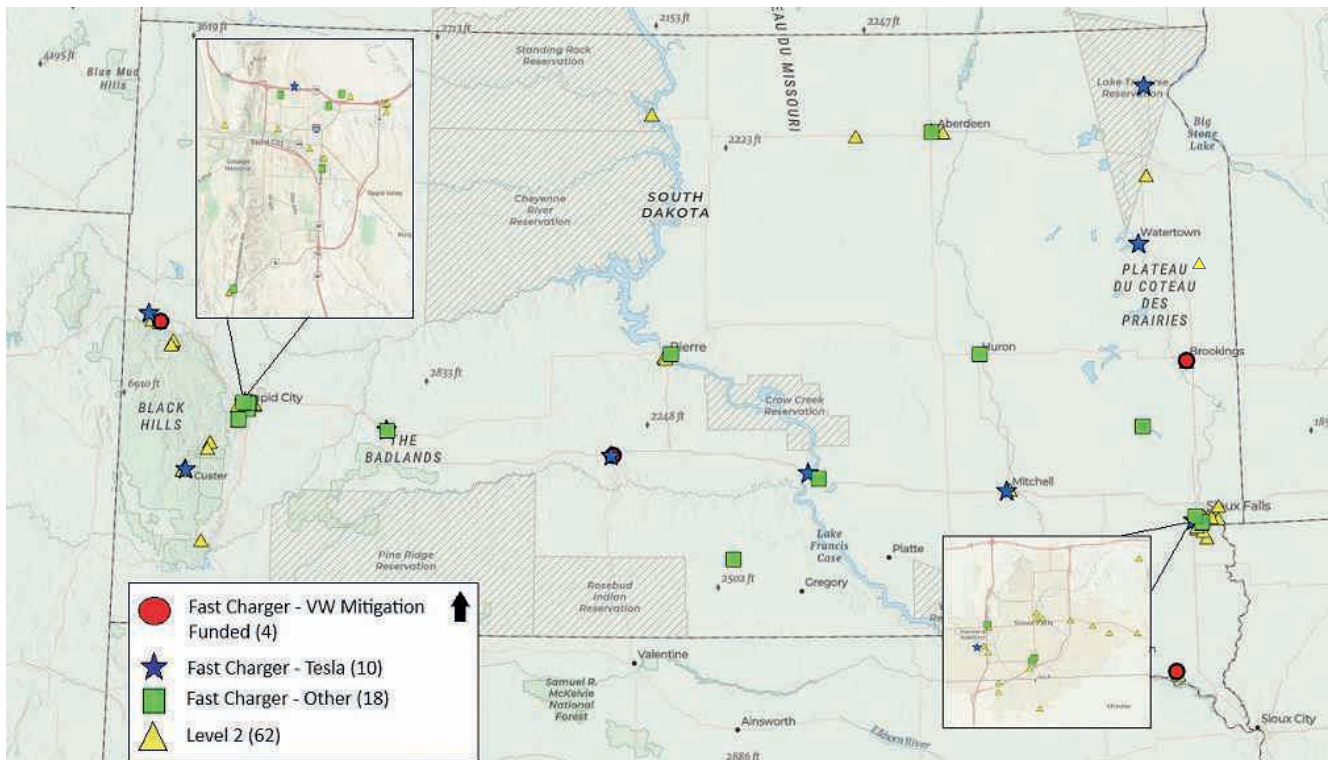
Luckily, the stops aren't usually long, Hotzler said, with his Tesla planning several

stops along a route to do partial charges — about ten minutes at a time — before hitting the road again.

While the public charging stations are convenient for out-of-town travels, it's where one giant plus to owning an EV — low operating costs — begins to erode.

Jessie Tucker, manager of member services at West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, recalls his surprise on a trip last winter to Rapid City when he stopped to charge the co-op's Ford F-150 Lightning and discovered his charging rate was nearly 68¢ per kWh — more than five times what it would cost to charge at home. Driving 80 mph in the winter weather and averaging about 1.3 miles per kWh, Tucker calculated the combustion engine-equivalent would be about \$9.41 per gallon.

"It would be tough for me to own one (personally) at this point," Tucker said. "If you're a daily commuter and you're getting home every night, then owning an EV does make sense. If you can charge overnight at your own house, it is still approximately half the cost of \$2.85 fuel."



Electric Vehicle charging stations in South Dakota.
Graphic courtesy of South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

In western South Dakota, West River Electric Association offers members an EV charging incentive — with some stipulations.

“It’s like the old cell phone plans where they would have unlimited nights and weekends,” joked Adam Daigle, manager of communications and public relations at West River Electric in Wall.

“Members with an electric vehicle can pay \$33 per month for unlimited charging on nights (9 p.m.- 7 a.m.) and on weekends. So in a sense, you can drive all month for \$33.”

The incentive is designed to encourage charging during off-peak times when there is less strain on the electric grid while also helping members interested in electric vehicles make the switch.

“I think EVs are great cars for commuting,” Daigle said. “If you stay within range of that battery, where you don’t have to hit a level three charger, they’re fantastic.”

Another factor to consider if you’re thinking about an electric vehicle: you’ll need somewhere indoors to charge it.

The lithium-ion batteries found in EVs will not charge as quickly in cold weather.

Though many EVs have systems to warm the battery before charging, a heated garage is still the most convenient and efficient way to charge, and can prevent cold-weather charging degradation on your battery.

“When I drive my Tesla to work and it sits out in the really cold weather for a big part of the day – 8 to 10 hours – I do see some battery used during that time to keep things warm,” H-D Electric’s Hotzler added. “You have to be careful of the batteries getting so cold.”

Another necessity: a 240-volt plug for level 2 charging. While you can charge an electric vehicle with a standard 120-volt outlet, it could take more than a day to reach a full charge.

After five years of driving the Tesla Model 3, Hotzler is a fan of the technology, and recommends it as a daily driver.

“I’d recommend an EV for a household using it for a back and forth commute – just not any extremely long trips,” Hotzler said. “For an everyday driver, it works really well. They drive fast, they’re zippy, there’s hardly any maintenance. I’ve just had a really positive experience.”

EV Charging Explained

Level 1 charging uses a standard 120-volt outlet. Level 1 charging is the slowest charging speed, adding about 3-5 miles of range per hour. This is not recommended, and is typically used in residential settings.

Level 2 charging uses a 240-volt outlet – the same as your stove or dryer. This is the more practical solution, adding about 12-30 miles of range per hour and is enough to charge many EVs overnight. This is recommended for residential settings. Many public charging stations also feature level 2 chargers.

Level 3 charging, or DC fast chargers, are the quickest way to charge, taking just a half hour to charge the battery to 80%. Using these chargers can cost as much or more than a tank of gas. Speeds range from 50 KW to 350 KW. These stations are placed along major highways, including I-29 and I-90.

Source: driveelectricsd.com, How-To Geek

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SEPT. 4-6
DKG Used Book Sale
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD

SEPT. 5-7
James Valley Threshing Show & Tractor Club
Threshermen's Park
Andover, SD
www.jamesvalleythreshers.com

SEPT. 5-7
EurekaFest
Eureka, SD
209-728-5744

WEEKENDS SEPT. 6-OCT. 26
The Back Forty Corn Maze
42242 134 St.
Pierpoint, SD
www.backfortybeef.com/commaze

SEPT. 6
Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 7
Farmer Tractor Parade
1 p.m.
Tractors, Cars & Food
Farmer, SD

SEPT. 8
Sip & Shop
5-8 p.m.
Redfield, SD
605-472-0965

SEPT. 13-14
Prairie Pickers Harvest Fest
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tulure, SD
605-450-0263

SEPT. 13-14
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
www.twinriversoldiron.org

SEPT. 13-14
South Dakota Senior Softball Tournament
Huron, SD
605-295-2039
www.southdakotaseniorgames.org

SEPT. 19
Veterans Stand Down
SD Military Alliance
8:30-11:30 a.m.
Sioux Falls, SD

SEPT. 19
Homecoming Parade
2 p.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 19-20
SiouxperCon Annual Convention
Benefits Make-A-Wish, REACH Literacy, JY6 Foundation
Sioux Falls Convention Center
Sioux Falls, SD

SEPT. 26-28
Coal Springs Threshing Bee Featuring Horse-Drawn Equipment
Meadow, SD
605-788-2229

SEPT. 27
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m.
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
yourraceaberdeensd@gmail.com

SEPT. 27
Wheelin' To Wall
Wall, SD
www.wheelintowall.com

SEPT. 27
Harvest Pumpkin Fest
3-7 p.m.
Eureka City Park
Eureka, SD
605-230-1777

OCT. 4
Harvest Fest
11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Redfield, SD
605-472-0965

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.