

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Separating Fact From Fiction

Energy Myths
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Energy Scams
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Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations with Sioux Valley Energy, brings more than 35 years of experience in the electric industry and helps set the record straight on common energy myths.
Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy.

SPRING PLANNING



Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/GM

Hello Lake Region Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well! About now, I imagine we are all making preparations for spring. As I write this column for our April issue, it is the middle of February, and we are experiencing what I call “fake spring.” Fake spring is where it warms up enough to get everyone’s hopes up that we will have an early spring and the worst of winter is almost over. I see in the forecast they are predicting colder temperatures and some snow to end the month, and if that happens, it pretty much proves my “fake spring” theory. This may be a good thing if March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. And, if we are following other old farmer tales, we had some fog earlier in the year which could equate to some heavy snow or rain.

You all know by now that I don’t mind the cold because I love ice fishing, but I am hoping the temperatures are warm enough to get some “April showers to bring the May flowers,” as the saying goes! Not to worry, we already put in our order to have the ground around Lake Region territory dry up just enough for spring planting!

Just like the farmers are preparing to get out in the fields to do some planting, we are gearing up for the construction season to start. Plans have been made and studied, materials have been ordered, and the equipment has been serviced; we are ready and looking forward to a safe and productive construction season!

So, what do we have planned? Our main work plan this year is focused on the Hillhead area where we are converting overhead lines to underground to help with reliability. Along with our main workplans, we have many new service requests coming in that will keep us busy with construction.

From a maintenance perspective, we will be changing out poles that failed last year’s inspection and will continue testing more poles to make sure they are strong enough to withstand the elements. We will also be doing some vegetation management, trimming tree branches out of the power lines. This is important, not only for safety, but reliability. A lot of those blinks we see during thunderstorms are from trees in the lines, so we want to make sure we clear our right of ways to keep outages to a minimum.

Safe, reliable, affordable electricity with high quality service is the meat and potatoes of our mission here at Lake Region Electric and believe me, it can be a challenge to bring all these components together, but we are working hard to meet that goal.

You can gather from this article we have an extremely busy construction season ahead. Make sure when you see the guys out there you give them a friendly wave and remember to thank a lineman; they are here to serve you the member.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you a safe planting season! Remember to watch for power poles! Stay safe and until next time we will keep the lights on for you!

Jeremy T Lindemann
CEO/General manager

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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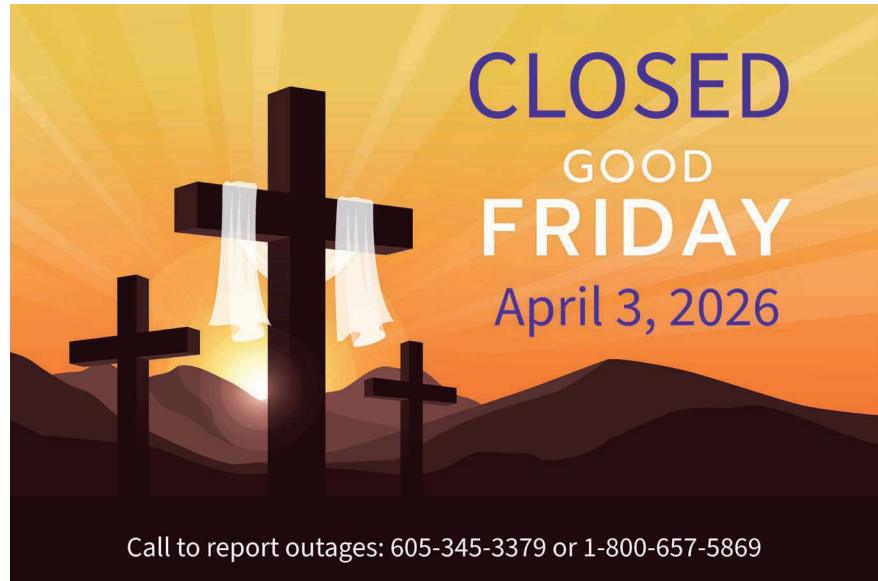
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Let's celebrate people making a difference in our co-op community!

Nominate someone you think deserves recognition for the difference they are making while giving them a chance to win up to \$3,000 for their cause.

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Morris & Rebecca Spiess

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Amber and Jake Schulz

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STAYING FOCUSED BEHIND THE WHEEL: A SIMPLE GUIDE TO SAFER ROADS

Distractions behind the wheel aren't just inconvenient – they're deadly. Each moment you allocate to anything other than driving increases the risk for you and everyone sharing the road. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in the United States in 2021, underscoring how costly a split-second lapse can be. The good news is that small, deliberate habits behind the wheel can make a big difference. Here are three practical ways to stay focused.

First, minimize phone use. Store your device out of sight before starting the engine. Texting or scrolling through apps draws your eyes from the road, your hands from the wheel and your mind from the task at hand. If you must communicate, pull over safely or use hands-free features only if absolutely necessary and legal in your area. Remember, many places have laws prohibiting texting while driving, with penalties that reflect the risk. Consider enabling “do not disturb” modes that silence notifications while you drive, and set your status to indicate you're driving. This simple barrier can prevent impulsive checks and help you maintain steady attention.

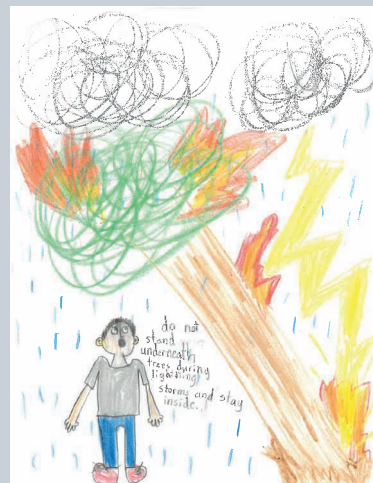
Second, plan your route before you depart. Entering a destination while driving is a dangerous distraction. Take a few minutes to review the route, check traffic conditions, and set your navigation system in advance. With your route loaded, you can keep your attention on driving rather than on-screen instructions during the journey. If possible, choose routes with fewer turns or fewer heavy-traffic segments, and be ready to adjust if conditions change. Having a mental map of the journey can also reduce the need to peek at the screen for updates.

Third, ensure you are well rested. Fatigue can dull reaction times, reduce concentration, and cause your eyes or your vehicle to drift. Prioritize a good night's sleep before long trips, and consider stopping for short breaks on extended drives to refresh your focus. Even brief pauses for stretching and deep breathing can reset your alertness and help you respond more quickly to changing road situations.

Beyond these tips, practice general safe-driving habits: obey speed limits, maintain a safe following distance and stay alert for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists. If you feel distracted or fatigued, it's wiser to pause and reassess rather than press on. Safe driving is about consistent, proactive choices that protect everyone on the road.



"Do not stand underneath trees during lightning storms and stay inside."



**Ramsey Faini,
Age 8**

Ramsey warns readers about the dangers of lightning storms. Thank you for sharing your picture, Ramsey! Ramsey's mom is Katie Faini from Rapid City, 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.

MAIN DISHES

HOMEMADE MAC & CHEESE

Ingredients:

16 oz. box elbow macaroni noodles
Oil
1 pkg. bacon
3 cups whole milk
1/2 cup butter (melted)
5 oz. can (about 2/3 cup) evaporated milk
16 oz. block Velveeta cheese (cut into cubes)
1 tsp. salt
Guda cheese
Parsley (to taste)
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Method

Cook noodles as directed. Drain noodles and pour a small amount of oil on them while in the strainer. Cook bacon and cut into small pieces. Add all of the ingredients into a Crock-Pot and mix. Cover and cook on low for 1.5 hours, stirring once or twice while cooking. Serve and enjoy.

Cindi Foster
Codington-Clark Electric

CHEDDAR POTATO SOUP

Ingredients:

1 medium onion, chopped
3/4 cup celery, chopped
1/4 cup butter
5 cups peeled potatoes, cubed
3 cups water
3 cups milk, divided
4 tps. chicken bouillon granules
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup flour
4 cups (16 oz.) cheddar cheese, shredded

Method

In large Dutch oven or kettle, saute onion and celery in butter for 5 minutes. Add potatoes and water, bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in 2 cups milk, bouillon, salt and pepper. Combine flour and remaining milk until smooth, gradually stir into soup. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat, add cheese and stir until cheese is melted.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
1/4 cup horseradish sauce (optional)
12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you will have 24 squares of cheese)
Sauce
1/2 cup butter
1/4 tsp. onion powder
2 tbsps. brown sugar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tps. poppy seeds
1 1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese. Replace tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

Sauce

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald & Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

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Email: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

Visit our website:

www.lakeregion.coop



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LREA Member Name: _____

Phone: _____

LREA Account # _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Guest Name: _____



Shaina Kleeman Recognized as Scholar of The Week

Shaina Kleeman was chosen as Scholar of The Week for March 29 – April 4, 2026. This 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.

Shaina is an honors student at Langford High School and was nominated by school counselor Megan Lynde. Mrs. Lynde describes Shaina as a student who goes above and beyond, “Shaina is a hardworking, kind, intelligent, and highly involved senior who consistently demonstrates integrity, compassion, and leadership. She is accepting of everyone and is never afraid to be herself, making her a positive role model within our school community.” Shaina is involved in play, chorus, student council, National Honor Society,

and Hope Squad at school. Shaina says that if she could offer only one piece of advice to underclassmen, she would tell them to, “Be someone the younger you would admire. Be the person that helps others out when no one else does; be the person that involves people who are left out; and in general, be that person that overall brings joy and sunshine into people’s lives daily. However that looks to you, strive to be that positive influence in life.”

Shaina thrives on being involved and helping others. “Outside of school and during the summer, I don’t slack off when it comes to programs offered. I’m involved with a pre-college program called TRIO Upward Bound, where during the summer high school kids who are either first generation or low income (or both, like me!) participate and live on the Northern State University

campus to emulate the college kid experience. This upcoming summer will be my fourth time attending and throughout my previous times I’ve taken the opportunity to guide people as much as I can. Another program I’m involved in is HOBY, or Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership. There, I volunteer to help guide sophomores called Ambassadors, who are there to learn how to be leaders and that it’s never too early to start. We aid in community services and raise money for charities like Alex’s Lemonade Stand, Feeding South Dakota, etc.” Shaina recently participated in the Page Program at the state capitol, which gives select students the opportunity to help legislators and their staff during session. This experience will help Shaina as she prepares for her future studying Political Science and Law with aspirations to become an attorney and run for political office.

Shaina received \$250 from Lake Region and is eligible to win a more scholarship that will be given away this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet. She says, “Being chosen for this award feels surreal; I am majorly grateful for it.”



From left, in the Sioux Valley Energy shop: Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations; Chad Williams, manager of operations; journey lineworker Jager Rus; and journey lineworker Paul Schamber. Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy

BUSTING ENERGY MYTHS

with Ted Smith of Sioux Valley Energy

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Electricity powers nearly every part of daily life, yet most people only think about it when the lights flicker or a bill arrives. Because the system works quietly in the background, assumptions about how it operates tend to fill the gaps.

To sort through several common misconceptions, Cooperative Connections spoke with Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations at Sioux Valley Energy, the cooperative serving South Dakota counties of Brookings, Lake, Moody, Kingsbury, and Minnehaha and Minnesota counties of Rock and Pipestone. Smith has worked in the electric industry for 35 years, including 20 years at Sioux Valley, where he

oversees engineering, line crews and dispatch.

Here are several claims he regularly hears from members and how he responds.

Myth: If the lights go out, it must be a local problem.
Smith: That's definitely a myth.

An outage can begin anywhere from inside your home all the way back to a generating station two states away. The electric grid is highly interconnected. A disruption in one area can ripple outward across transmission lines that serve multiple utilities.

There have been large historical outages, especially in the eastern United States, where a single event such as a tree contacting a transmission line triggered a cascading failure across multiple states. Entire cities lost power

because one initiating fault spread across the network.

Closer to home, severe weather in one region can affect transmission lines feeding a much broader footprint. If a major transmission line trips offline, and another line is already out for maintenance, service interruptions can extend far beyond the original storm area.

“Just because your lights go out doesn't mean the problem started down the road, close to home” Smith said. “It could be much farther upstream.”

Myth: The grid can be powered entirely by renewable energy.
Smith: At times, yes. Around the clock, no.

Smith pointed to hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River as renewable generation that run continuously, but other renewable resources, such as wind and solar, simply aren't reliable sources of energy and only contribute

significantly when conditions allow.

“Although sometimes it seems like it, the wind doesn’t always blow in South Dakota,” Smith said. “And solar only produces during daylight hours.”

Although battery storage has improved in recent years, Smith says storing enough energy to power the grid around the clock is prohibitively expensive at this point in time.

For now, maintaining reliability requires a mix of generation resources so supply remains available regardless of weather or time of day.

Myth: If my neighbor has power and I do not after a storm, the cooperative skipped me.

Smith: That’s not how it works.

In some cases, the cooperative may not yet know a member is without service. Reporting outages remains important.

Another possibility is that the issue is on the member side of the meter. Crews may restore cooperative equipment and determine that the damage is within the member’s own service.

“When crews see it’s a problem on the member side of the meter, they will call dispatch and have them contact the member,” Smith said.

He also emphasized the importance of keeping current phone numbers on file. Fewer households rely on landlines today, which makes updated cell phone numbers critical during storm response.

Myth: Burying all power lines would eliminate outages.

Smith: No.

Underground lines are not exposed to wind and ice, but they are not immune to failure. Over time, underground conductors deteriorate. Rodents such as gophers can damage them. Excavation damage is also common when individuals dig without confirming where utilities are buried.

Before digging, members should always contact 811, the national call-before-you-dig number. That service

notifies utility providers so buried lines can be located and marked before excavation begins. Failing to call 811 can be dangerous and increase the risk of damaging underground infrastructure, causing outages.

And even when damage occurs naturally, locating the fault underground can take time.

“With overhead lines, crews can usually see the damage,” Smith said. “Underground, it takes troubleshooting to figure out exactly where the fault is, sometimes leading to longer outage durations.”

He recalled one outage that proved especially difficult to diagnose.

“One time we had an outage that we just could not narrow down,” he said. “When we finally found the damage, we saw that a gopher had chewed the bottom of the wire. You could not see it from the top. We had to dig up about 20 feet of cable and turn it over before we could see the damage.”

Underground systems can reduce certain types of outages, but they do not eliminate them, and repairs often require more time and labor.

Myth: Wind and solar power are free once installed.

Smith: The fuel is free, but that’s the only thing that’s free.

Wind turbines require ongoing maintenance, including mechanical components that need to be regularly serviced. Solar power relies on inverters and other equipment that must be maintained and eventually replaced.

There are construction costs, financing costs and transmission costs involved in delivering electricity from generation sites to homes and businesses. Those transmission and maintenance assets are accounted for over time and included in the overall cost of electricity.

Free fuel lowers one portion of cost. It does not remove the need to build, maintain and replace infrastructure.

Myth: Electric cooperatives raise rates to increase profits.

Smith: No. Cooperatives are not-for-profit.

Electric cooperatives are member owned, not investor owned. That means there are no outside shareholders expecting earnings. Instead, cooperatives operate on margins, collecting enough revenue to pay expenses, maintain infrastructure and meet financial obligations.

“The only place we get money is from the people at the end of the line,” Smith said. “We don’t have a printing press in the basement.”

In fact, if revenue exceeds expenses in a given year, a portion of those margins are allocated back to members as capital credits when the board determines it’s financially appropriate. Capital credits represent a member’s share of the cooperative’s financial performance during the years they received service.

However, in recent years, equipment costs have risen significantly. Smith cited bucket trucks that once cost around \$220,000 have since more than doubled in price, and major system components have seen similar increases. Usually, the cost of wholesale power from the cooperative’s power suppliers makes up the largest share of the budget and those costs have been increasing as well.

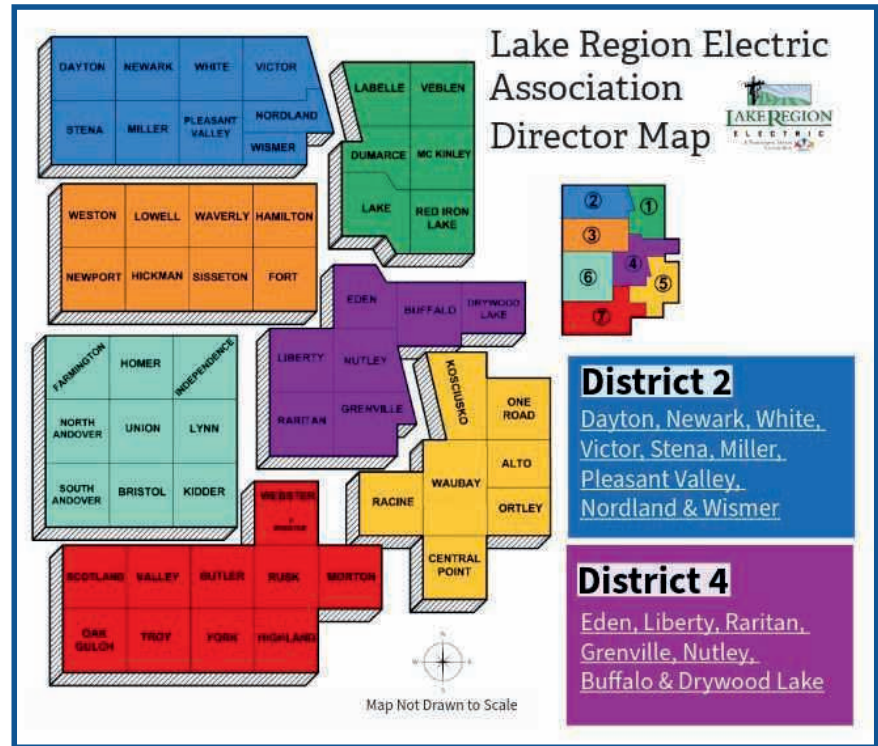
Rate adjustments reflect those rising operational costs and the need to maintain reliable service, not profit distribution.

Electricity may seem simple at the flip of a switch, but as Smith makes clear, the system behind it involves infrastructure, coordination and constant evaluation. Understanding how it works helps members separate assumption from reality and better appreciate the network that serves them every day.

Election to be Held for Two Director Seats

Two Director seats will be up for election at the Lake Region Electric Association annual meeting of members to be held in Britton, SD on June 4, 2026. This year District 2 and District 4 are up for election. District 2 townships include: Dayton, Newark, White, Victor, Stena, Miller, Pleasant Valley, Nordland & Wismer. District 4 townships include: Eden, Liberty, Raritan, Grenville, Nutley, Buffalo & Drywood Lake. District 2 is currently represented by Director Mark Wismer. District 4 is currently represented by Director Thomas Steiner. Both incumbents are eligible for re-election.

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



Serving on the Board of Directors is a commitment that requires representatives to attend local meetings on a monthly basis as well as state and national meetings. Board members attend trainings and pursue educational opportunities so that they are well informed on regulations and industry trends in order to best serve the members of Lake Region Electric Association.

Members living in these districts

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

Anyone wishing to make a nomination from the floor must call the office in advance of the annual meeting to pre-check the candidate for eligibility.

LREA Qualification and Nomination Bylaws

Bylaws

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

Section 3. Qualifications

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who is a close relative father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchildren, first cousins or stepchild of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative, or is not a member in good standing of the Cooperative and receiving service at his/her primary residential abode or primary business, which must be located in the directorate district that the director is to represent; PROVIDED, that the designated representative of any non human member, such as a corporation or its designee, shall notwithstanding that he/she does not receive

services from the Cooperative at his/her primary residential abode, be eligible to become a director if (1) he/she is in substantial permanent occupancy, direction or use of the premises served by the Cooperative, and (2) is a permanent and year round resident within the Cooperative's service area or residing not more than fifty (50) miles from the principal location of the non human member that is being served by the Cooperative; BUT PROVIDED FURTHER, that no more than one such person as the designated representative may serve on the Board at the same time and in the event that he/she should resign or is unwilling to so act, that directorship shall become vacant. No person may become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in the Cooperative who does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract, or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, or a business providing electric services to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electric appliances, fixtures or supplies to, among others, the members of the Cooperative. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who is not at least eighteen (18) years of age. No ex employee, either retired or terminated, will be eligible to become a director of the Cooperative for at least 5 years after their employment ends. If a nominee for director lacks eligibility under this paragraph or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, the chairperson presiding at the meeting at which such nominee would otherwise be voted upon shall disqualify such nominee.

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

Section 4. Nominations

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


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

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

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

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85 Years



LAKE REGION
ELECTRIC
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ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 4, 2026

Britton, SD

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ENERGY SCAMS

Photo by Frank Turner

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

It's no April Fools' joke. Consumers with an electricity connection have long been targets for scams. In today's digital world, those schemes have evolved. As more daily business is conducted online, scammers have shifted their tactics to match. They now use phone calls, texts and emails to create urgency, confusion and fear, hoping consumers will act before taking time to verify the claim.

For victims, these scams can lead to financial loss and identity theft, but understanding how the most common schemes work and what they typically look like is one of the best defenses to staying safe.

The "Past Due" Disconnection Threat

One of the most common tactics that scammers use is the disconnection threat. They use a fake message claiming a bill is past due and that service will be disconnected immediately unless payment is made on the spot.

The call may sound official. The message may include account numbers

or appear to come from your local cooperative's phone number due to caller ID spoofing. The scammer's goal is simple: create panic so you pay first and question later.

In reality, cooperatives follow clear procedures and provide advance notice before any disconnection. A demand for instant payment, especially with threats attached, is a major red flag.

The "You Overpaid" Refund Scam

Who would not want a refund? Scammers take advantage of that instinct.

In this scheme, a text, call or email claims a member overpaid an electric bill and is owed money. The message often includes instructions to click a link or provide banking information so the refund can be "processed."

The message can sound especially convincing to cooperative members because electric cooperatives do return margins to members in the form of capital credits. Capital credits represent a member's share of the cooperative's annual margins and are returned over time.

However, capital credits are distributed through established,

official processes. They are not issued through unsolicited texts, surprise phone calls or links requesting personal banking information. When your local cooperative retires capital credits, members are notified through official channels such as billing statements, newsletters, verified mailings or even through Cooperative Connections.

An unexpected refund message that asks for sensitive information is a red flag. When in doubt, pause and contact your local cooperative directly using trusted contact information.

Gift Card and Cryptocurrency Demands

Scammers often insist on unusual payment methods such as gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency. They may provide detailed instructions on how to purchase gift cards and read the numbers over the phone.

This is a clear warning sign. Legitimate cooperatives do not request payment in gift cards or cryptocurrency. These forms of payment are nearly impossible to trace or recover, which makes them attractive to criminals.

Spotting a Scam

Regardless of the method, every scam has similar warning signs that members can watch for:

- High-pressure tactics that demand immediate payment
- Requests for payment through gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency
- Emails or text messages with poor grammar, spelling errors or unfamiliar web addresses

Scammers rely on urgency. Taking a few extra minutes to verify a message can prevent lasting financial consequences.

What Your Local Cooperative Will and Will Not Do

Your local cooperative will not demand immediate payment without prior notice. Cooperatives follow

established procedures and provide advance communication before any service interruption.

Your local cooperative will not ask for Social Security numbers, banking details or other sensitive information through unsolicited phone calls, emails or text messages.

Members have secure payment options available through official cooperative channels, including the cooperative's verified website and approved payment systems. When in doubt, independently locate the cooperative's official contact information rather than using links or phone numbers included in a message.

Text alerts are only sent to members who have enrolled in official notification programs, such as outage updates.

Avoiding Energy Scams

If you receive a suspicious call, text or email claiming to be from your local cooperative, do not use the contact information provided in that message. Instead, use the phone number printed on your billing statement or listed on the cooperative's verified website.

Also, reporting suspected scams helps protect fellow members. By alerting your local cooperative to fraudulent activity, members help strengthen the community's defense against energy scams and ensure the cooperative network remains secure for everyone.

Have a question about whether something is real or not? Reach out to your local cooperative. Electric cooperatives are owned by the members they serve and powered by the communities around them.

SIGNS OF AN

ENERGY SCAM

High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



LINEWORKER APPRECIATION

THANK YOU LINEWORKERS!



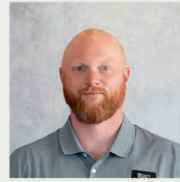
Tyler



Shawn



Bryce



Mat



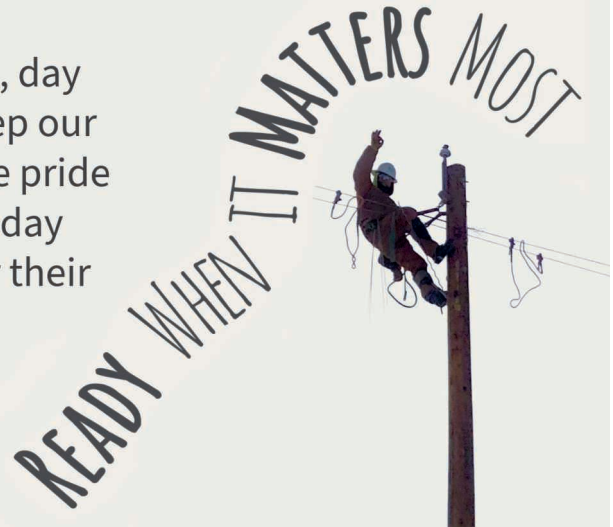
Jesse



Tevin

When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

**Lineworker Appreciation Day
April 13, 2026**



AADLAND PROMOTED TO LINE FOREMAN

Jeremy Lindemann

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Tyler Aadland as our new Line Foreman. Tyler has been a great part of our crew for 18 years and has served the members well with a commitment to safety, a strong work ethic and leadership. As Line Foreman, Tyler will help lead daily crew operations, support safe work practices, coordinate job assignments, and continue helping our team provide reliable service to our members.

Please take a moment to congratulate Tyler when you see him. We're proud to have him stepping into this role and know he'll do a great job serving the members of Lake Region Electric.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

TYLER AADLAND

Laura London

Being a lineman was not a dream for Tyler Aadland as he grew up on the family farm in the Roslyn area where his family raised some cattle and grew crops and hay. It wasn't even on his radar until 2005 when a major storm tore through the area, leaving his family farm without power for 19 days. That storm may have planted a seed, but Tyler still didn't make the decision to go to line school right away. After graduating from Roslyn High School, Tyler went to SDSU to major in Construction Management where a couple of classes helped him come to the realization that sitting in classrooms all day studying things like European History was not his forte. Tyler says that he loved the construction aspect of school but, being a farm kid who was used to hard work and outdoors, he switched paths and decided to attend school at Mitchell Tech to study Gas Technology and eventually Powerline Construction and Maintenance. While working a 1,000-hour job at Whetstone Valley Electric, Tyler received a call from Lake Region's Operations Manager, Tom Lundborg. Tyler had previously worked a summer job at LREA, so Lundborg was familiar with

his strong work ethic and knowledge of the area. "Tom called me up on a random Wednesday in 2008 and offered me a lineman job because someone had put in their notice; I accepted it, and here we are." says Tyler.

Tyler has always been an avid outdoorsman. Even as a kid, hanging out with friends usually meant a few kids getting together to go hunting. Rumor has it that Tyler's mom, Beth, finally shared her goose jerky recipe with some other moms because the kids kept hauling piles of birds in for her to make jerky. Tyler still enjoys hunting and fishing but admits he doesn't get out as much as he would like. He says, "Hunting is kind of on the back burner these days, we are too busy chasing after kids!" Tyler's wife Briana is a Community Health Nurse for the State. They have three very active children, 13 year old Kalli plays on a traveling volleyball team in addition to other activities and 11 year old Tucker plays a variety of sports, but his travelling baseball team pulls them in all directions throughout the spring and summer. Tyler and Briana's youngest daughter Huntley is starting to get involved in her own activities too. Tyler is dedicated to his family and his community.

He works hard to provide a comfortable environment where the kids feel safe, which is reflected in the pile of bicycles and other kid accoutrements parked in the driveway or abandoned on the sidewalk in front of his garage any given day.

Working for Lake Region Electric is personal for Tyler. He not only grew up in Lake Region Electric territory, he is also a member-owner of this cooperative, as are his parents and so were his grandparents. It hasn't been an easy job and Tyler says no matter what anyone might say, storm jobs are the worst. "It's cold and exhausting and by the time you get done, everything is wet and broken." He recalls a storm back in 2010 when he responded to an outage north of Pickerel Lake. "We got to the location and saw three poles broken off on our three-phase line. We got out of the truck thinking this wasn't so bad, then there was a loud crack, and we stood there and watched as all the poles down the line, as far as we could see, started breaking off. It was demoralizing... About the only thing that makes up for times like that are when you get that thumbs up from someone standing in their driveway as you pass by." As far as bad days at work go, you can't get any tougher than having to perform CPR on your co-worker and friend after a high voltage contact like happened in June of 2018. Despite the bad weather and the dangers of the job, Tyler loves his work and continues to dedicate himself to the members of Lake Region Electric.

After working as a Journeyman Lineman at Lake Region Electric Association for the past 18 years, Tyler is looking forward to the changes and challenges of his new role as Line Foreman. In addition to learning more about what goes on behind the scenes of a work plan and other things here at Lake Region, Tyler has been learning more about the big picture of what it takes to keep an electric cooperative going. "There's more to it than sticking a pole in the ground or connecting some wires. There is a lot going on with power generation, finances and politics that we don't see." His main focus is keeping the power on for the members of Lake Region in the safest and most efficient way possible.





APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Festival of
 Tasting
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

Travel South Dakota Photo

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 27-29
Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament
 DWU Avera Sports Complex
 Mitchell, SD

MARCH 27-APRIL 4
The Passion and the Cross
 Orpheum Theatre
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000
 www.ThePassionMusical.com

MARCH 28
Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser
 6-11:30 p.m.
 Legion Post #39
 Groton, SD

MARCH 28
Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt
 10 a.m.
 City Park
 Groton, SD

MARCH 28
Coteau Prairie Masters Gardeners Ready, Set, Grow
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Codington Cty. Extension Cplx.
 Watertown, SD

APRIL 3
Bachelors of Broadway: Gentlemen of the Theatre
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 5
Easter Sunrise Service
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 10-11
Forks Corks & Kegs Food & Wine Festival
 Deadwood, SD

APRIL 11
Women VetsConnect Retreat
 A Wellness Retreat for Women Veterans and Military Spouses
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Our Savior's Lutheran Church
 Sioux Falls, SD

APRIL 18
Brookings Quilt Show XII
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Admission: \$10
 Dakota Bank Center
 Brookings, SD
 605-690-3246

APRIL 18
Tri-Valley Chorus 75th Annual Show
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD

APRIL 18
Groton Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station
 7 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
 Groton, SD

APRIL 20
The Bronx Wanderers
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

MAY 2
Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale
 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Groton, SD

MAY 2
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 2-8 p.m.
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656

MAY 2-10
Rustic Designs & More Spring Show, Flea Market
 41450 264th St.
 Ethan, SD
 605-770-2411

MAY 6
Day of Play - Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation
 Groton, SD

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

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.