

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The Days of '76 Rodeo

A Century of Grit and
Glory

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85 Years of Service



Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/GM

Hello again, Lake Region members! I can't believe how fast this year is scooting along. We're already to the Fourth of July, and June just flat flew by!

I hope you get the chance to enjoy a parade or two, fire up the grill, and spend some good time with family and friends. As for me, I'm planning to wet a line as many days as the weather will let me – and I'm looking forward to all the holiday fun. And speaking of celebrations...

I want to give a big thank-you to everyone who took the time to come to our Cooperative Annual Meeting. It was sure good to see folks, visit about your cooperative, and celebrate 85 years of serving the members of Lake Region Electric Association (LREA). I really appreciated the conversations I had with members. I also want to tip my hat to our employees – they did a terrific job getting everything ready and making the evening run smoothly. And thank you to the City of Britton for hosting us, along with everyone else who helped make the 85th Annual Meeting a success!

As I've been thinking about it, an 85th anniversary is quite a milestone. It's made me look back with gratitude and appreciate what it took to get us here. This cooperative was built by generations of members, board directors, and employees who invested in the system and kept it strong through all kinds of challenges.

And while Lake Region is celebrating 85 years, our country is marking a big one, too – 250 years! I hope everybody celebrates a little extra this year. Two hundred and fifty years is quite a milestone, and I sure hope we've got another 250 ahead of us. We live in a great country – one where folks can work together and build something as meaningful as an electric cooperative. I'm guessing that 250 years ago, it would've been hard to imagine electricity reaching every farm and home across rural America. But look at what it's meant for everyday life: we can heat and cool our homes, cook our meals inside, and we don't have to head down to the creek to haul water or do laundry. I'll tell you what – I sure appreciate being able to walk down the hallway to my laundry room, toss the clothes in the washer, and (thanks to those efficient machines) they spin around at Mach 7, and they come out darn near dry! That sure beats hauling everything to the creek and beating it against the rocks!

I could go on and on about the conveniences electricity has brought us, but it's worth pausing now and then to remember how fortunate we are to live in a place where folks can chase a dream – and, with a little grit and help from their neighbors, make it happen!

From all of us at Lake Region, happy Fourth of July – and thank you for letting us serve you. I hope you have a safe, enjoyable holiday weekend. Until next time, we'll keep the lights on for you!

Jeremy Lindemann,
CEO/General Manager

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Nate Baumgarn, right, presents Lorne Aadland with \$500 at Lake Region Electric's annual meeting.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Carter Reints
Daren Schmidt
Ben Milliken
Melanie MacConnell
Tyler Tordsen
John and Robin Fritch
Lynne Brown
Adam & Misty Heiden
Calvin Soward
Allison Rolstad
McKenzie & Zachariah Grant

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Elise Kretchman
Jordan & Kadie Tekrony

BEFORE THE SMOKE: PROTECT YOUR HOME BEFORE WILDFIRE SEASON

Wildfires can move quickly, especially when dry grass, high winds and hot weather come together. In rural South Dakota, where homes, farms, shelterbelts, outbuildings and open grassland share the same landscape, preparation matters.

But there is one important point to make first: fighting a wildfire is not a job for homeowners.

If a wildfire is nearby, leave firefighting to trained professionals. Follow evacuation orders, call 911 to report a fire and stay away from downed power lines, smoke-filled areas and active fire zones. Cooperative members can do their most important work in advance, taking steps that make a property harder for fire to reach and easier for responders to protect.

One of the most effective steps is creating defensible space around the home. That does not mean clearing every tree or turning a yard into bare ground. It means reducing combustible material near houses, garages, sheds and other structures, while thinking about how fire could move from brush to trees to buildings.

Start closest to the house. Embers can collect against siding, under decks, in gutters or near steps. Remove dry leaves, dead plants, stacked lumber, cardboard and other combustible materials from next to the home. Gravel, rock, concrete, pavers and other hardscaping can be better choices near walls, decks and porches.

Gutters and roofs deserve attention, too. Leaves and needles can become dry fuel. Cleaning them before fire season can reduce the chance that embers find an easy place to ignite.

From there, look at the rest of the yard. Clear dead brush, tall grass and dried weeds, especially near structures. Keep grass mowed around homes, outbuildings, propane tanks and driveways. Trim and space shrubs and trees so fire cannot easily climb from grass to brush to tree canopies. Low branches can act like ladder fuels.

Do not overlook decks, porches and crawlspaces. Dry leaves, grass clippings and other materials can collect underneath. Cleaning those areas and using screening can help keep debris from building up.

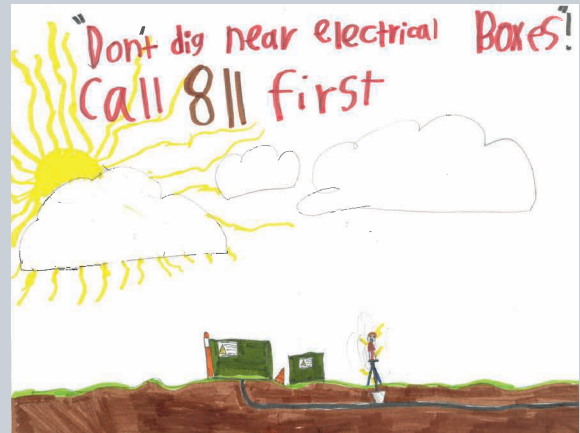
Access is part of preparation, too. Firefighters need to reach

a property quickly and safely. Keep driveways clear, make sure gates can open and trim branches that could block emergency vehicles. Clearly visible address signs can help responders find a home when visibility is poor.

Before making major landscaping changes, building fences, planting trees or adding new water lines, call 811. Underground electric, gas, water and communication lines may be closer than expected. A free locate request helps protect homeowners, utility crews and infrastructure.

Cooperative members can also make a plan. Know two ways out of the property or neighborhood. Keep important documents, medications and emergency supplies ready to go. Take photos or videos of buildings, equipment and belongings for insurance records.

Wildfire preparation is a seasonal habit, much like cleaning gutters, changing filters or preparing equipment for winter. The goal is not to fight the fire. That job belongs to firefighters and emergency responders. The goal is to give the home, property and responders a better chance before the fire ever starts.



**"Don't dig near electrical boxes!
Call 811 first."**

Caleb Blake, age 9

Caleb urges members to not dig near a pad-mounted transformer. Thank you for sharing your picture, Caleb! Caleb's parents are Peter and Stephanie Blake – members of West River Electric.

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.

Sweet on RHUBARB

RHUBARB CAKE

Ingredients:

White cake mix
4 cups rhubarb, diced
1 cup white sugar
2 cups heavy whipping cream

Method

Mix white cake as directed on the box. Pour in a greased 9x12 pan. Place 4 cups of diced rhubarb over the top. Pour 1 cup of white sugar over the rhubarb. Pour 2 cups of heavy whipping cream over the top. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

Jeanette Kleinsasser
Dakota Energy

RHUBARB SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups rhubarb, chopped
4 tbsps. water
1/2 cup sugar
3 oz. red jello
3/4 cup cold water
1 apple, diced
1 banana, sliced

Method

Combine rhubarb, water and sugar. Stir and cook until mushy. Add jello and stir until dissolved. Add 3/4 cup cold water. Cool until it begins to set. Stir in diced apple and sliced banana. Chill and serve.

Leanne Eich
Central Electric

RHUBARB CHEESE CAKE

Ingredients:

Rhubarb Filling

9" pie shell, unbaked
2 1/2 cups rhubarb, chopped
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. flour

Cheese Cake Filling

8 oz. cream cheese
2 eggs, added one at a time
1/2 cup sugar

Topping

3/4 cup sour cream
2 tbsps. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Method

Stir rhubarb with flour and sugar. Put in the unbaked pie shell and bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and lower temperature to 350° degrees.

Beat cream cheese, add 2 eggs one at a time, then add the sugar. Mix well and pour over hot rhubarb layer. Bake 30 minutes at 350° degrees.

Mix the topping of sour cream, sugar and vanilla well and spread over hot pie. Cool 3 hours or more before serving. The flavors blend better the longer it cools. Refrigerate leftovers.

Charles Lebeda
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.

Picture by Sokor Space and Shutterstock.

Charles Johnson Education and Training Trust Awards Three Scholarships

Laura London

Charles Johnson is known for being instrumental in bringing Mereen Johnson Manufacturing to Webster when he started the Western Division of MJ in 1973. Charles Johnson cared about manufacturing and about the people who worked for him. He was all about improving business, people and the community. Furthering the legacy and community support shown to Webster by Charles Johnson, a trust was established in 2017. Honoring the memory of Charles Johnson, Russell D. McBroom, past president of Mereen Johnson Machine Company, made funds available to form The Charles Johnson Education and Training Trust. The purpose of this trust is to promote education, training, hiring and placement of people to work and potentially begin their lifelong careers in the manufacturing and fabrication industry or trades within the Day County area.

The Charles Johnson Education/Training Trust board of trustees currently consists of Chairman Dr. Jim Block, Kermit Pearson, and Jeremy Lindemann. This year, the board awarded education scholarships to 3 students. Jeron McCreary, Kingston Ryan and Chesney Deibert will each receive \$2,500 to assist them with their educational needs.

Jeron McCreary is known as a positive and friendly young man with the type of work ethic that is getting harder to come by these days. “I understand that success is not given, but earned through hard work, perseverance and strong values,” said Jeron. He participated in several sports and clubs throughout high school while also



working a couple of jobs around the area, namely Sheyenne Transport. He volunteers his time with many organizations and can be seen assisting with many community events. Jeron’s biggest passion is working on vehicles; whether it’s repairing someone else’s car, or wrenching on one of his demolition derby vehicles, he’s always busy. Jeron’s basketball coach, Matt Lenards, remarked that he cannot recall a time when Jeron didn’t show up to practice covered in some form of oil or automotive fluid. “Aside from his passion, Jeron expresses qualities that I wish I could copy and paste onto other students or athletes... he is one of the hardest-working individuals that I have ever been around.” said Lenards. Jeron is the son of Michael and Cheryl McCreary of Webster. He plans to attend Lake Area Tech to study Automotive Technology then return to the Webster area to work.

Kingston Ryan is goal-oriented and hardworking, he has been praised for his dedication and determination at school, on the football field and at work. He played football at Webster Area High School where he learned the importance of leadership and teamwork. Kingston set a goal of becoming a journeyman lineman and is doing all he can to achieve this goal. He completed a student internship at Lake Region electric last fall and immediately inquired about a summer job, which he was offered.



Laura London of Lake Region Electric said “Kingston has put in the work to rise above diversity. He has learned that there is a better way to life through hard work, determination, and a positive attitude. His desire to learn and succeed will help him in the future.” Kingston was accepted to the Mitchell Technical Institute for Powerline Construction and Maintenance program and will be attending school this fall. “I hope to settle in a community where I can contribute both professionally and personally, mentoring future apprentices as I have been mentored. I want to succeed and make a positive impact in my community,” said Kingston.

Chesney Deibert is known around the Webster community as a bright, responsible and outgoing young lady. She is always ready to step-up wherever help is needed. Teacher Brandy

Scholarships Continued

Gangle said, “Chesney is responsible and dependable, always ready with a quick smile and upbeat attitude. She is extremely hardworking, whether it is putting in the extra time on her schoolwork, working at her job, or volunteering when possible.” Chesney plans to attend Lake Area Technical College to further her education. “My long-term goal is to work in Human Resources for a manufacturing or industrial company in northeastern South Dakota. I hope to remain in this area and help connect individuals with meaningful careers in manufacturing and skilled trades,” stated Chesney. She is the daughter of Leonard Deibert of Webster and Rebecca Bartelt.



Congratulations to Jeron, Kingston and Chesney! The board of trustees for the Charles Johnson Education and Training Trust has confidence in each of these recipients and looks forward to seeing their leadership skills and dedication innovate the community where we live.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During these warm summer months, a smart thermostat can help keep your home comfortable while reducing cooling costs. Smart thermostats learn your routine and automatically raise the temperature when you're away and cool things down before you return, avoiding unnecessary energy use. You can also adjust settings remotely from your phone, so you're never cooling an empty house. Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher while you're away or asleep can lead to significant savings. Many smart thermostats provide reports and tips, helping you fine-tune your energy use and stay cool while keeping your electric bill in check.



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Scammers are increasingly using “smishing” — fake text messages designed to look like they’re from legitimate businesses, including your electric utility. These texts may claim your bill is overdue, your service will be disconnected or you’re owed a refund. They often include a link that directs you to a fake payment site or asks for personal information. Never click suspicious links or respond to unexpected texts, even if the message appears urgent. Instead, log in to your utility account through the official website or mobile app to verify any claims. We will never ask for sensitive information like passwords or banking details through text





A CENTURY OF GRIT AND GLORY

The Days of '76 Rodeo

Photos by KSchurr Photography

Jocelyn Johnson

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In the historic gulch of Deadwood, S.D., the past isn't tucked away in books – it rides out of old wooden chutes every July at the Days of '76 Rodeo.

What began more than a century ago as a short weekend celebration has grown into a week-long rodeo and parade tradition that draws contestants and visitors from across the country. Yet, amid the growth and national recognition, the Days of '76 remains rooted in family, heritage and a deep sense of place.

Pat Roberts, longtime board member of the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "It started in 1924, and it actually wasn't a rodeo then. It was a celebration of Deadwood and its establishment in 1876 – hence where the name came from. It was started by the community just to promote the founding."

Those early celebrations featured parades, horses, fireworks and the kind of small-town pageantry that fits a frontier

community proud of its past. The full-fledged rodeo format came a few years later in the late 1920s, but the heart of the event hasn't changed: honoring Deadwood's origins and the Western way of life that built it.

Today, the Days of '76 Rodeo is marking its 104th year alongside other milestones – the 150th anniversary of Deadwood and the nation's 250th anniversary.

The rodeo boasts a total payout of roughly \$350,000 and typically draws 700 to 800 contestants, including top names like Rocker Steiner, Lisa Lockhart and rising stars such as Emily Beisel. During a week of performances, 25,000 to 30,000 spectators pack the grandstands, turning the arena into a sea of cowboy hats and hometown pride.

The events remain classic: bareback riding, steer wrestling, calf roping, team roping, barrel racing, saddle bronc riding, bull riding and breakaway roping. No frills, no gimmicks – just the timeless contests of skill and grit that define rodeo.

"We just keep it traditional," Pat said. "Just welcome everybody to Deadwood to enjoy the best cowboys and the best bucking stock that we can get."

For a town of about 1,200 people, the Days of '76 Rodeo has earned outsized recognition.

In 2011, the Days of '76 was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, a distinction the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) had not extended to a rodeo in many years.

Chris Roberts, son of Pat Roberts and fellow board member on the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "We won the PRCA Rodeo of the Year every single year that we were in the medium category until we surpassed into large. We've been nominated many times in the large category and won it once. To our knowledge, we're the only rodeo that's won Rodeo of the Year in each and every category."

In Deadwood, legacy still rides out of wooden chutes, year after year, drawing generational athletes. Rodeo here is a family affair. The Roberts family has been involved continuously since the event began.

"There's been a Roberts at every Days of '76 celebration since it started," said Pat.

Pat attended his first Days of '76 Rodeo when he was four days old and serves on the board with his son, Chris.

"I'm fourth generation," Chris said. "My great-granddad was there from year one, and we never missed a single year. Then his son – my granddad – followed in his footsteps, my dad and now me."

A fifth generation is already helping behind the scenes, continuing a family legacy that mirrors the rodeo's own endurance through the decades.

That kind of continuity isn't unique to the Roberts alone. Many contestants

arrive with stories of parents and grandparents who once competed in Deadwood.

"From a contestant perspective, I'd be willing to bet that no matter where you grew up, if you are a rodeo family, Deadwood was one that was always on the map," Chris said. "I hear it every single year – contestants talking about how grandpa or great-grandpa, grandma or great-grandma competed in Deadwood, and they've always wanted to be here. In the rodeo world, everybody knows Deadwood."

Mackenzi Gatzke, secretary of the board of directors, says her family story is similar. She currently serves on the Days of '76 board alongside both of her parents and noted two other families who have long served on the board promoting the event.

"Our board is all made up of people who were or still are locals to Deadwood, and we're all volunteers," she said. "We really do it because we love Deadwood, and we love the Days of '76 and the tradition behind it. We actually have four different families with multiple generations on our board, and we all just work together like one big family that just loves the community."

That focus on authenticity extends beyond the arena. The Days of '76 Museum houses the largest working



collection of horse-drawn wagons in the country, along with memorabilia from across the Black Hills dating back to 1876. During rodeo week, many of those wagons leave their resting place to roll through downtown Deadwood in historic parades – matching the sight of a 19th-century streetscape.

For Pat Roberts, rodeo's relevance in modern life is still significant and comes down to identity.

"It's tradition – it's the cowboy way," he said. "These cowboys and cowgirls are athletes...and the horses are too. They're bred to buck. We're not hurting anything by doing it – that's what they want to do. Just think of Deadwood and the West. Rodeo fits right in."





A LEGACY OF SERVICE

85th Annual Meeting

Laura London

The Lake Region Electric Association 85th Annual Membership Meeting was held at the Britton Event Center in Britton on June 4th. There were 162 active members registered, along with 65 guests. We hosted a total of 227 people plus a few special guests. Upon registration, guests received a meal voucher and a special gift. This year the gift was a 3.5 gallon bucket from Northern Edge Marketing as well

as a gift bag including jam from Sunset Colony, tallow balm from Back Forty Beef, and a honey bear from Hallelujah Honey Company. A variety of snacks were served, including popcorn from the Strand Theatre and meat sticks from Sunset Meats.

Board President, Kermit Pearson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Britton, Marshall American Legion and VFW Color Guard presented the flags. The National Anthem was performed

by Livia Knecht, a Freshman student at Britton-Hecla High School; she is the daughter of LREA members Troy and Katrina Knecht. Pastor Lexi Carlson of Britton's First Lutheran Church gave the invocation. Mayor Clyde Fredrickson welcomed the crowd to the city of Britton.

Following opening ceremonies, LREA Board Secretary Tom Steiner declared enough voting members were in attendance to constitute a quorum, verifying that the meeting could legally proceed. Steiner also provided proof of mailing of the official notice of the meeting. Steiner asked for approval of the 2024 meeting minutes from the voting members; a motion was made and accepted.

President's Report

Pearson gave the President's Report. He first covered system statistics, showing that Lake Region has 3,467 meters that serve power to 2,606 members throughout the territory, which equals approximately 1.5 members served per mile of line. He presented a financial report, declaring a positive audit report from Eide Bailly that showed no significant deficiencies. Pearson highlighted the progress made in the construction plan over the past 5 years, explaining that the conversion of 185 miles of overhead lines to



underground is a part of Lake Region's continuing efforts to improve reliability for our members. He then reported on our generation and transmission partners East River Electric and Basin. He showed slides from East River, demonstrating the improvements and investments being made throughout Lake Region territory. Pearson explained the impact that the cooperatives in Basin Electric's territory have on feeding and fueling the world through the percentage of agricultural and oil production in the United States, as well as Basin's commitment to South Dakota. He briefly explained how the Paulsen Member Engagement Project, in which a brief multiple choice questionnaire was sent to members, showed that consumer priorities are: affordability, load growth and reliability.

Data centers and other large loads have been an area of concern. Pearson explained that data centers are used by practically everyone, whether you realize it or not, every time you make a phone call or send a text, do your banking, or have a medical visit, data is being used and needs to be processed and sorted. He continued, explaining that the Large Load Commercial Program at Basin was developed to safeguard existing members from financial risk as Basin Electric serves growing large load demands. The program helps minimize rate impacts to existing members, reduce the risk of stranded assets, protect Basin Electric's credit rating, support members through flexibility in serving new large loads and establishes a clear and consistent process for all members.

Pearson then highlighted some legal and legislative issues that are affecting cooperatives. In South Dakota the legislature passed laws concerning data centers and wildfire mitigation. On the national level, cooperatives are keeping an eye on progress with the Chevron Doctrine that was overturned in 2024, as well as the Coal Executive Order that was signed by President Trump Strengthening United States National Defense with America's

Beautiful Clean Coal Power Generation Fleet. Pearson also explained the Green House Gas Endangerment Finding Repeal, which does not directly impact power plants but does set the stage for repeal of other GHG rules.

Election & Bylaw Vote

Attorney Smeins explained the petition process for the director election. There were two Director seats up for election. He called for nominations from the floor, none were made; motions were made and approved to re-elect incumbent directors Mark Wismer for District 2 and Tom Steiner for District 4. Smeins then explained the proposed bylaw change. A motion was made by Roger Kulesa to approve, seconded by Clark Moeckley, and passed by the voting members present.

Manager's Report

CEO/General manager Jeremy Lindemann took the podium to talk about the mission of Lake Region, how it began, the current status, and future plans. He began by thanking Livia for doing a wonderful job singing the National Anthem acapella, and the Britton, Marshall Color Guard for presenting the flags and by asking for a round of applause and respect for all veterans in attendance.

Lindemann spoke about the 85th anniversary of this cooperative and how far we have come since early days when investor-owned utilities refused to bring electricity to most farms in this area because it was too costly and there was not enough profit for their stockholders. He read a few passages from the book, *Bringing The Light to The Lake Region* that highlighted some of the struggles it took for the pioneers of rural electrification to get power to their homes and farms. A few members in attendance at this meeting recalled the days when "the REA" came and the power was turned on at their farms. Lindemann talked about the mission and focus of Lake Region Electric association as we progress into the future. He explained key highlights of the work plan which include converting more lines

to underground, adding line, building new services, upgrading load controllers and meters, and changing out poles.

Lindemann thanked the employees for their hard work and dedication, giving special recognition to Donna Sattler for 30 years of service to Lake Region Electric. He thanked his family for their support. He concluded by thanking the Board of Directors for their continued governance of Lake Region Electric.

Old & New Business, Questions, Door Prizes & Adjournment

Pearson called for Old Business, New Business and questions from the audience. There were a few questions from members in attendance concerning data centers and the possibility of using geo-thermal as a renewable energy source.

IT Manager Tim Gaikowski spun the wheel for a variety of door prizes and bill credits. Lorne Aadland won the grand prize of \$500 cash. Karen Mikkelson had the winning ticket for the food pantry donation raffle; she won a \$50 Visa Gift Card.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:17 PM.



Annual Meeting Gift purchased from these local vendors:

- Bucket - Northern Edge Marketing**
- Jam/Jelly - Sunset Country Market**
- Tallow Balm - Back Forty Beef**
- Honey Bear - Hallelujah Honey Company**

FORT MEADE & THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

How South Dakota Set the Stage for a National Anthem

Jacob Boyko

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This month – July of 2026 – the United States of America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when the Founding Fathers declared the end of Great Britain’s role as their colonial overseer.

No patriotic song captures the sacrifice and resilience of the American experiment quite like the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” However, the anthem is not from the American Revolution, nor was it immediately adopted as the nation’s official song. Its story unfolded over more than a century, from a British bombardment in Baltimore to a flag-lowering ceremony on the plains of western South Dakota.

The War of 1812

The year is 1814. The United States of America is in the midst of its second war with Great Britain – The War of 1812 – and the nation is reeling from a recent attack on Washington, D.C., where British troops torched the Capitol and White House.

A Maryland lawyer, Francis Scott Key, had just boarded a British naval vessel. He was sent there on behalf of the U.S. government to negotiate the release of an American prisoner, and while his negotiation was successful, Key was not allowed to return ashore until the British forces completed their bombardment on nearby Fort McHenry for fear that Key had overheard military plans while on board.

Detained aboard the enemy ship, Key looked ashore to Baltimore as the American forces fended off the invasion. As dusk settled over the harbor, it became harder for Key to track the battle, his only illumination being the occasional glow of British rockets and exploding shells. Key watched through the night, not sure who was winning the drawn-out fight. At dawn, there was just enough illumination for Key to make out the American flag still flying over the fort. The Americans had held



Visitors to Fort Meade (1 mile west of Sturgis, S.D.) will see the very same flag pole used by Col. Caleb Carlton during the flag retirements. These once-a-day evening ceremonies were the first instance of the Star Spangled Banner serving as the United States’ unofficial national anthem.

Photo submitted by Randy Bender

the fort and fended off the British from Baltimore.

Key’s experience that night inspired him to write a poem he titled “The Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Later, it was put to song and became known as “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Fort Meade

Fast forward to 1892, thousands of miles west on the American frontier.

Col. Caleb Carlton is the new commander of the Eighth U.S. Cavalry at Fort Meade, a U.S. Army post in the young state of South Dakota. About a mile west, the bustling town of Sturgis is growing along with the fort, serving as an important stop along numerous trails heading toward gold country in the streams of the Black Hills.

“Fort Meade was put in place in about 1878 to help maintain the peace in the Black Hills region between the native tribes and the settlers coming in,” explained Randy Bender, a lifelong resident of Sturgis and second-generation Fort Meade Museum board member.

Carlton was eager to make his mark – not through a battle, but patriotism. He and his wife discussed how they could better instill respect for the American flag among their troops stationed at the fort. The Carltons’ idea was to have the band play an official song during the evening retreat, when the flag is retired for the night.

“Carlton issued orders that all within hearing distance were to stand at attention, and all men not under arms were to remove their hats as a sign of respect to the flag,” Bender said.

That song, chosen at the urging of Mrs. Carlton, was the Star Spangled Banner.

“We selected the Star Spangled Banner as it was written under very unusual circumstances,” Carlton later wrote in a 1914 letter.

Carlton’s daughter, Mabel, recalled the first ceremony in her journal.

“As the final notes of the song faded away, the flag landed gently in the arms of the waiting troops,” she wrote. “If it had been practiced, it could not have been done more perfectly.”

From Fort Meade, the practice began to spread as other officers and government officials visited and observed the ceremony.

“The New York Times referred to the fact that (I) was trying to establish a national anthem,” Carlton wrote. “This attracted the attention of Col. Cook in command of the recruiting depot at David’s Island, who wrote me that he was having recruits taught to sing our national air. I suggested he concentrate his instruction on the Star Spangled Banner.”

Carlton also wrote that later, during a meeting in Harrisburg with Pennsylvania Gov. Daniel H. Hastings, that the governor promised he would initiate the playing of the Star Spangled Banner among the state’s militia.

The most decisive support came during a meeting between Carlton and Secretary of War Daniel Lamont, with the two speaking about the custom. Before long,



Above: Officers of the 8th Cavalry in Fort Meade, S.D. in 1892. Photo courtesy of the South Dakota State Historical Society



Right: A photograph of Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Lamont ordered that the Star Spangled Banner be played during evening retreats across the nation.

Nearly 40 years after Fort Meade’s first Star Spangled Banner rendition, Congress in 1931 declared it the national anthem.

Today, visitors to Fort Meade can stand near the place where that custom began. A historical marker near the parade ground bears the words “It Started Here,” connecting the South Dakota fort to the story of the national anthem.

“That flagpole that they lowered the flag down from for that event is still standing at Fort Meade, and still used,” Bender said.

For Bender, who grew up at Fort Meade while his father worked at the

VA hospital and mother served on the museum board, the historic post still carries the feel of another era.

“When you visit Fort Meade, it’s like stepping back in time,” Bender said.

Many visitors are surprised to learn about Fort Meade’s place in the anthem’s history.

“It’s one of those things we just take for granted that we have a national anthem,” Bender said, “We never stopped to think about how these things came to be. But every one of those stories had to start at some point, and the national anthem story got its start in Fort Meade, South Dakota.”

The Fort Meade museum is open from mid-May through the end of September 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

ELECTION RESULTS

Incumbent Directors Re-elected for Districts 2&4

Two Director seats were up for election at the LREA Annual Meeting. Both incumbent directors ran

unopposed. Mark Wismer submitted his petition and was re-elected to represent District 2. Tom Steiner

submitted his petition and was re-elected to represent District 4.

Effective governance and oversight of your cooperative is what keeps Lake Region Electric viable, providing reliable electricity and keeping rates affordable for the 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 of Lake Region Electric are encouraged to get involved in their cooperative. If you have questions about serving on the board, contact the Lake Region Electric office: 605-345-3379 or email: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop, or speak to any of your current directors.

The map displays the Lake Region Electric Association's 2026 director districts. District 2 (blue) includes towns like Dayton, Newark, White, Victor, Stena, Miller, Pleasant Valley, Nordland, and Wismer. District 4 (purple) includes towns like Edin, Buffalo, Drywood Lake, Greenville, Racine, Waubay, Alto, and Ortley. Other districts are color-coded: District 1 (green), District 3 (orange), District 5 (yellow), District 6 (teal), and District 7 (red). A legend shows the color key for districts 1 through 7. The map is titled 'Lake Region Electric Association Director Map 2026' and includes a note 'Map Not Drawn to Scale'.

2026 INCUMBENTS Re-Elected

- District 2:** Mark Wismer
- District 4:** Thomas Steiner

Bylaw Amendment

In accordance with current Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. Bylaws, Article 12, Amendments, the following proposed amendment to Article 4, Section 4, Nominations, was proposed and voted on at the 85th Annual Meeting of Members in Britton, SD June 4th, 2026. A motion was made by Roger Kulesa, seconded by Clark Moeckley to amend the bylaws. Motion carried. The bylaw now reads:

Article 4, 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 ensure 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. If only one (1) nominating petition is filed for

each director position within the deadline here-in they shall be considered elected and no election will be held at the annual meeting.

The secretary shall mail, with the notice of meeting or separately but at least fourteen (14) 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. If no more than one (1) nominee per district, the chairman or his designee shall announce the names of those elected directors.

EMPLOYEE MILESTONE SPOTLIGHT

DONNA SATTLER

Laura London

Donna Sattler, Lake Region Electric's Director of Finance/ Office Services Manager, recently celebrated thirty years of service to the members of Lake Region Electric Association. During that time, a lot has changed, but one thing has stayed the same, she loves her job and the members she works for. I recently asked her to reflect on the past thirty years at work and at home and how the two sometimes intertwine as storms came through the area and Lake Region declared "All Hands on Deck," interrupting personal plans, family time and holidays.



Donna Sattler on Thirty Years:

Thirty years?!

A gallon of gas was \$1.09, Tickle Me Elmo was a cultural phenomenon and Beanie Babies collections were all the rage.

Strolling down memory lane, there have been a lot of events since 1996 when I began working at Lake Region Electric.

Meters were self-read. Members recorded their monthly meter readings on their payment stub to be used for the next billing. Since then, we have moved to automated meter readings, which has been beneficial to all involved.

Way too much time was spent preparing for a catastrophic event that never happened - Y2K.

There was a massive windstorm in 2008. I walked to work to avoid the debris on every street in Webster. I walked down Lake Region's driveway wondering what that pile of lumber was laying on the lawn - turns out it was the roof off of Lake Region! Employees spent many hours and days serving our members to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

I can tell you exactly where I was standing the day the towers came down on 9/11. I wish that was a memory that never happened.

Christmas Day 2016, not a normal day to use the phrase "raining cats and dogs" but rain it did, followed by freezing rain, slush, wind and blizzard conditions.

It wasn't exactly the holiday my family had planned, but off to work I went. Not only were a lot of our members out of power, but so was the town of Webster and surrounding communities.

On a personal level, we spent countless hours at sporting events and many weekends camping at the lake. Our kids have a lot of core memories from the time we spent together as a family. Today, our family continues to grow to include daughters-in law and grandchildren.

In my free time, I love to flower garden, spend time with my family, travel, read, and plan a lot of projects at home that likely won't happen.

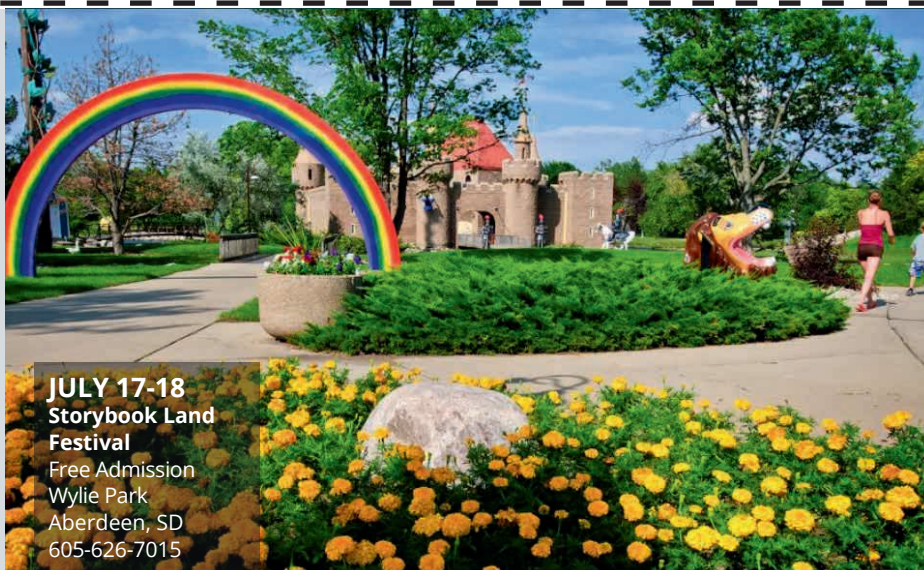
I would like to say thank you to the employees, directors and membership for allowing me to serve you for 30 years!

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 17-18
Storybook Land Festival
Free Admission
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-626-7015

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.

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration at Mount Rushmore
Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 4
Fishing Derby & Fireworks
Lake Farley Park
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656

JULY 8
Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour
2-7:30 p.m.
Lakes Area - Shetek, Sarah, Gavin
Rain Date: July 9
Tracy, MN
507-629-3252
tracy.area.garden.quilts@gmail.com

JULY 10-12
Rooted: A Prairie Arts Weekend
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

JULY 11
40th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K
Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD
End: City Park, Spearfish, SD
Register: www.nhcasa.org

JULY 18
A Celebration of Johnny Cash
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

JULY 18
Forever Simon & Garfunkel
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 18-19
10th Annual Charles Mix Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

JULY 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JULY 24-26
Winner Elks 57th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScope
7 p.m.
Tripp County Fairgrounds
Winner, SD

JULY 25
Planes, Trains & Automobiles
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 30
Spurs Grand Classic Equestrian Competition
9 a.m.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

AUG. 1-2
51st Annual Pioneer Power Threshing Show
MN Machinery Museum
Hanley Falls, MN
507-828-5437

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Gilfillan Estate
28269 MN Hwy. 67
Morgan, MN
ideagroup.com/farmfest

AUG. 7-9
Fur Trader Days
NEW Art in the Park
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

AUG. 9
Czech Heritage Festival
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Brechyn, MN
320-522-1218

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.