

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Crazy about Curling

**Win or lose, there's
no bad curling**
Pages 8-9

**Saddle making
for the pros**
Pages 12-13

Many curling enthusiasts
contend the world would
be a more peaceful place if
everyone "threw the stone."

Staying focused on service in a rapidly changing world



Tim McIntyre
General Manager

The world we live in is rapidly changing. Things are progressing at an unprecedented pace. As technology progresses and society, as a whole, becomes more demanding, people tend to become more focused on themselves and their personal needs, rather than the good of the whole or even their neighbors. Here at Lake Region Electric we strive to stay ahead of that. We care about our member-owners. We appreciate our member-owners. We respect our past and all of the work that went into creating this cooperative in order to provide affordable, reliable electricity to, not only our homes and farms, but to our neighbors as well.

Lake Region Electric is a member-owned, member-governed cooperative and every decision made by the Board of Directors affects them as personally as it does their neighbors.

The pioneers of Lake Region Electric put a lot of hard work and planning into bringing power lines and equipment to the area before they could even start transmitting electricity. This took much time and effort. More than time and effort, it took cooperation by everyone in the community to get power to this territory. When a representative of Lake Region Electric showed up at a farm or rural

home and asked for permission for power poles to be placed on their land, most everyone eagerly agreed. They cared for their neighbors, and they wanted everyone to get electricity. Though times have changed drastically and getting easements may be a little more challenging, one thing is clear, the majority of people in this area still care about their neighbors and their communities.

I am proud to be a part of Lake Region Electric. I appreciate the member-owners who make us who we are. I appreciate that our members want change and progress for our cooperative so that we can keep up with the rest of the world and continue to make necessary changes in order to continue to improve our infrastructure and serve all of you. I look forward to the future of providing even more efficient, safe, affordable electricity to our member-owners. I welcome your advice and counsel as we continually look for innovative ways to help you use energy efficiently and in a more cost-effective manner.

Thank you for caring about your cooperative. Thank you for caring about your neighbors and your community. Thank you for being a part of the progress at Lake Region Electric.

God Bless,
Timothy McIntyre

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Colton Koslowski

Hedrin Rock

Robin Keeble

Taylor Eberline

Bob Dallenbach

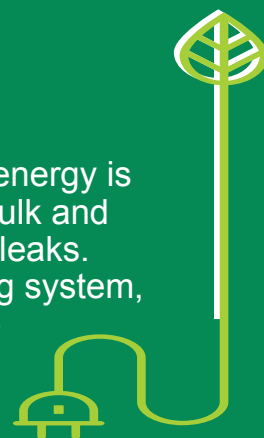
Brooklynn Johnson

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

Source: Dept. of Energy



**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**LAKE REGION ELECTRIC
RIPPLES**

(USPS 018-904)

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Employee Spotlight: Kurt Hoines, Custodian

Kurt Hoines is, for the most part, one of the behind-the-scenes employees at Lake Region Electric.

Kurt has worked at Lake Region Electric for the past six and a half years as the Custodian. A majority of work that Kurt does is typical custodial and



maintenance type work such as sweeping floors, and groundskeeping to minor repairs around the building and shop.

Kurt always has a positive, can-do attitude at work. He has a smile on his face and is willing to help whenever asked.

Kurt's list of "and other duties as assigned" can be quite extensive. One day he may be asked to go out into the field to assist the electrician or line crews with tasks, the next day he may be asked to build something for the office. Kurt often uses his creative mind to help bring ideas to life for decorations and floats.

Kurt is familiar with all of the parts and equipment at Lake Region and may be called upon to help members who come in looking for wire, thermostats, and other parts.

Manager of Member Services, Brett Kwasniewski says, "Kurt is the go-to guy for a lot of things. From maintenance on equipment and our facility to wood working, Kurt can get it done. He's made our department some wood frames for in-wall heaters that were smaller than the opening in the wall, for example. His many years at Marvin

Windows and at his cabinet business really show through in the quality of work that Kurt conducts. If something needs to be done, Kurt is willing to do it."

When asked what he likes most about his job, Kurt's quick and easy reply is "The variety of work that I do, and it evolves. Oh, and the people I work with!"

Kurt always has a positive, can-do attitude at work. He has a smile on his face and is willing to help whenever asked.

Kurt and his wife Mary have two daughters and five grandchildren. Kurt grew up farming and still spends quite a bit of time helping out on the farm. Farming isn't necessarily a job to Kurt, he enjoys it and considers it a bit of a hobby.

Maybe due to his farming background, the thing that surprised Kurt the most about working at Lake Region is, "The number of poles that get hit by farm machinery each year!"

When Kurt is not working at Lake Region or farming, he has quite a honey-do list at his house as well as assisting his neighbors. He somehow still finds time to relax by going hunting and fishing.

Kurt's dedication, work ethic and winning attitude are invaluable to the Lake Region Electric team.

Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

Though they may make for a pretty seasonal backdrop, snow and ice can complicate even modest travel plans. It's unsafe to drive when visibility is vastly reduced or when you can't fully control your car. According to AAA, wintry weather and its byproduct - hazardous road conditions - are a factor in nearly a half-million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths each year. With those figures in mind, here are some tips to minimize the risk to yourself and other motorists during winter weather.

Don't drive unless you must. It really isn't worth the risk to your safety and that of others to venture out onto potentially unsafe roads for any circumstance that isn't urgent. Pay attention to weather reports so you can run any time-sensitive errands and stock up on supplies before adverse conditions arrive. If you must drive to work, that's one thing. But don't tempt fate if you can help it.

If you have to drive, eliminate distractions. Keep your phone out of reach or set it to airplane mode - a good practice year-round but especially important when roads are dicey.

Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, including water, nonperishable food, warm clothing, a flashlight, glass scraper, blankets and medications.

Before you set out, alert others to your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

Make sure your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent a frozen fuel line, which could leave you stranded.

Don't use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface.

Drive slowly. Lower your speed to counteract the reduced traction that accompanies snow and ice. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly can help avoid skids. Since it takes longer to slow down on icy roads, take your time to slow down for a stop sign or light.

A final note for winter driving: Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area such as a garage. Exercise caution and good judgment to stay safe as you negotiate whatever conditions winter brings this year.

POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE?

Power lines are insulated for contact.

False. While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

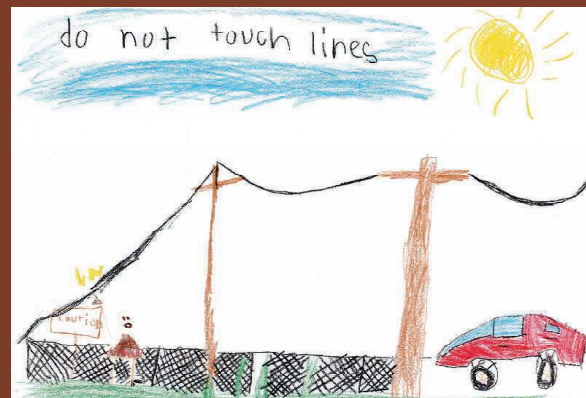


I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

True. You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is space. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

True. Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space - and lots of it - is the best insulator.



Don't touch power lines

Luke Walden

Luke Walden reminds co-op members that it's important to never touch power lines under any conditions. Luke is from Brandon, where he and his parents Blake and Jennifer are all members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

BRUNCH TIME!

COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quick oats
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cup milk

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and let sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold. May add walnuts and apples or other fresh berries when serving, if desired.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

BRUNCH EGG BAKE

Ingredients:

- 12 slices, bread, crusts removed
- 2 cups diced ham or bacon, crisp and chopped
- 1 - 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 5 eggs
- 2-1/2 cups milk
- salt and pepper
- paprika

METHOD

Butter six slices of bread and put face down in 9 x 13 inch pan, lightly sprayed with cooking spray. Cover the bread with the ham, mushrooms, green pepper, onion and cheese. Dice the remaining bread and spread over the top. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper and pour over the top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon McCormick® Oregano Leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Coarse Ground Black Pepper
- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 package (20 oz) refrigerated shredded hash browns
- 3 tbsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

METHOD

Cook and stir sausage in large skillet on medium heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add onion and bell pepper; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Set aside. Beat eggs in large bowl with wire whisk. Add milk, oregano, salt and pepper; mix well. Add sausage mixture, cheeses and tomatoes; mix well. Set aside. Pour oil into same skillet, swirling to coat the pan. Spread hash browns in bottom and up sides of pan. Pour egg mixture over potatoes. Cover. Cook on medium heat 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite seafood 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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Wintertime thrills on REA Hill

Laura London

Lake Region Electric

There aren't too many places to go sledding in the area, but there are a few. The hill behind Lake Region Electric's headquarters in Webster, often referred to as "The REA Hill," is the premier spot for one of the most popular winter activities for young and old alike.

The hill is about 150 feet from top to bottom and spans approximately 300 feet. As it curves around, the grade is much steeper in some areas than others, averaging about 20 percent.

The sledders often provide a little entertainment for Lake Region employees. The shouts and cries of youngsters and their parents as they mount their sleds and prepare to race down the hill often catch the attention of those working inside.

Manager of Office Services, Donna Sattler, has worked at Lake Region for 26 years; she has enjoyed "Hearing the squeals of joy and excitement being heard throughout the office as kids are sliding down the hill."

It isn't just the little ones who have fun on the hill. I asked the employees for stories about their experiences out there on the hill. I got all smiles in return, some big grins with twinkling eyes and stories that started with "Oh, in high school we..." followed by memories best left unprinted.

Journeyman Lineman Bryce Jorgenson has always been an adventurous, outgoing spirit. He recalls fond memories as a kid building ramps and "catching air" as he and friends spent weekends and snow days on the REA Hill, just being kids and having fun. Apprentice Electrician Vinson Dargatz recalls one time going down the hill, quite by accident, in a skid steer shortly after he started working for Lake Region, "I was moving snow and the tires on the old skid steer weren't that great. I ended up going a little too far and went over the crest. I had to drive

through Mike's parking lot and come back up the other way."

The exhilarating ride to the bottom is typically fast, sometimes a little too fast, depending on the quality of the snow coverage. The voyage back up to take another run at it gets just a little more challenging each time, especially as we get older. The exhaustion of the upward trek is more likely to end the day's excitement more quickly than anything else.



Lake Region Electrician Nick Kvernevig spent some time on the hill in his younger years. These days, however, when his children get out there his participation is limited, "About two trips back up that hill and I'm done." That is pretty much the general consensus amongst those of us who have taken youngsters out in recent years. I know that after taking a little one down the hill a few times, it gets a little more challenging every snowy step back up the hill. If there is a wipe-out situation, forget about it, I'm done and taking two days to recover.

Kurt Hoines, LREA Custodian, claims that he has never been sledding on the REA Hill, but he maintains it

year-round and has mowed too many times to count. During the winter, Kurt finds all sorts of lost and discarded items. Broken sleds are pretty popular, as are random gloves and hats. One year, the wind had tangled the Christmas lights so badly in the trees at the bottom of the hill that they hung there for quite some time. Apparently, someone was feeling like helping out and had climbed into the trees and untangled all of the lights and left them for a very pleased



The area outside Lake Region Electric headquarters known as REA Hill, is a popular spot for winter fun.

Kurt to find the next morning. Not a soul has come forward to admit to this deed, and though Junior High or High School kids are suspected, it could have been just about anyone.

All are welcome on the hill, we just ask that you be kind to each other, be respectful of the property and environment and be courteous. This may not seem as outwardly generous as giving out scholarships or donating money to local organizations, but it is pretty clear that the "REA Hill" has a big impact on the community. We are proud to be able to provide a place where children, and adults, can just come have some good old-fashioned fun.

Swatek finds joy in helping others through art

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Art has always held a special spot in Johnny Swatek's soul. But when he discovered how much his work meant to others, he began developing an even deeper understanding of his passion for connecting with people through canvas.

Swatek recalls the time he received an urgent request for a portrait. The client was friends with a married couple and she wanted to commission a painting of the two...but it had to be soon because the husband was stricken with brain cancer and didn't have long to live.

"She came to my studio with a photo on Thursday, I stayed up all night and the next day doing the portrait, she gave it to them on Saturday, and he passed away Monday," Swatek recalled.



Since then, Swatek has made a conscious effort to put more of himself into every piece. For instance, many random requests come from those who have an emotional attachment to their farms and ranches that can reach back many generations. They'll ask for paintings of old barns and tractors or broken down cars or other images they associate with their homestead.

"It's very rewarding to help people capture their memories," he said. "Frankly, I didn't pay enough attention to the details before and I might take shortcuts, but now I realize every blade

of grass is important. I spend much more time getting those details right."

Swatek considers himself on a lifelong quest to improve his craft. Largely self-taught, the 58-year-old identifies a certain skill to hone every year. For example, in 2021 he focused on texture, in 2020 he concentrated on contrast, in 2019 he emphasized composition.

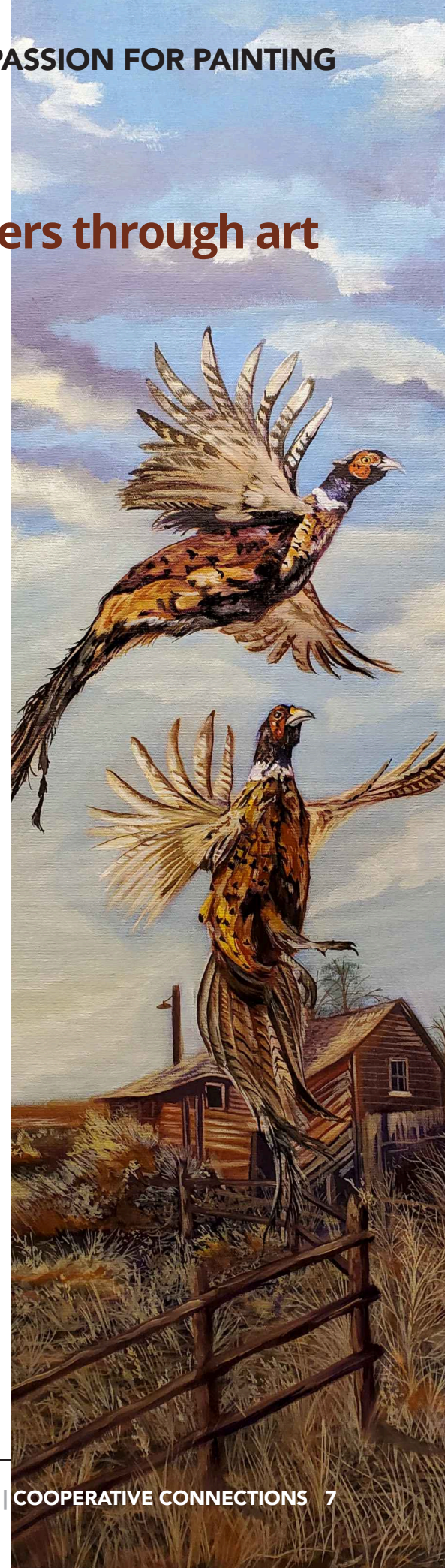
Born in Wyoming into a military family, Swatek grew up in Garden Grove, Calif., where he started learning to airbrush t-shirts on the carnival circuit. He showed up at Citizen Band jamborees where the radio buffs would line up to have their CB handles air-brushed onto their vests. It was all an education for Swatek as he perfected his artistic skills but also learned the art of working with people.

In 1992, he made his way back to his father's native town of Wagner and later settled in Avon where he lives with his wife and business partner, Jennifer. The two travel to art shows and festivals around the region, including Winterfest in Aberdeen and the "granddaddy" Augustana Art Show in Sioux Falls.

Taking much of his inspiration and influence from the 15th century Baroque stylist Caravaggio, Swatek's studio work is done in an old two-story bank building. Along with portraits, he does wildlife paintings, landscapes and other subjects that reflect his interpretation of the rural Upper Midwestern lifestyle. Scenes range from boats in a harbor in Nova Scotia to horses running wild across the plains.

While Swatek enjoys his quiet time in the studio, he looks forward to the next art show where he can rub elbows with his fellow artists.

"The shows are so much fun. There's so much camaraderie," he said. "You get to see people you may not get to see often, and when you sell a piece everybody's happy. There's no arrogance or conceit, and everybody encourages each other to succeed."





STICKS AND STONES

Members of the Aberdeen Curling Club hold a public instructional session to teach both the young and old the finer points of their sport.

Curling clubs seek to educate the public and spread the word about the joy of throwing stones

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Looking for a sure-fire way to achieve permanent world peace and lasting harmony?

Make curling mandatory.

At least Bryan Rau thinks that's just the ticket to putting an end to international animosity. Rau serves on the board of the Aberdeen Curling Club and describes being hooked the moment he threw his first stone in competition eight years ago.

"When I touched that first stone it was like 10,000 volts going through me. I kicked out the hack and threw that stone down the ice and it was just incredible," he said. "I think if everybody curled, the whole world would be different. Everybody would get along. There's no bad curling. No matter where you play, whether you win or lose, it's all good curling. It's a game that's played with honor and pride. You don't have to be a jock or a talented athlete. It's a sport that's

made for everyone. I've seen people play from 8 to 85."

Bryan and his fellow board member, Steve Gascoigne, spent a recent afternoon in Gascoigne's garage taking in a documentary called "Sticks and Stones: Battle for the Soul of Curling." When they're not playing the game, they enjoy talking about it.

As for his role as the club's ice master, Gascoigne can wax eloquently about how to prepare the perfect sheet of competition ice. He describes the tedious and exacting process that involves various measures of zammung, scraping, mopping, pebbling (twice), watering and nipping.

And if you can't control your stone after Gascoigne and his crew have spent 45 minutes working their magic, more practice may be in order.

The job of a stone hitting its target largely falls on the shoulders of the skip. A typical four-member team includes the lead, second, vice skip and skip. Each player throws two 44-pound stones and the vice skip



Aberdeen Curling Club members Danny Wolfgram, John Hilton, Alex Wolfgram and John Peterson recently completed an "eight ender," which is often compared to a perfect game in baseball.

Curling club contacts

Sioux Falls Curling Club

605-271-7539

www.scheelsiceplex.com

Aberdeen Curling Club

605-228-1717

www.curlaberdeen.com

Rushmore Curling Club

605-484-4477

www.rushmorecurling.org

Yankton Curling Club

(605) 665-0229

www.yanktonice.org

MN Curling Association

www.mncurling.org



Many curling clubs have two common goals: dedicated ice and a desire to teach others the rules and techniques of their sport.

stands in when it's the skip's turn to throw. The direction of the stone's path can be altered by sweepers who brush the surface in a way that can make the stone lose speed, gain speed or curl left or right.

The last stone is called the hammer and can be used to earn points with a favorable position near "the button" or knock the opponent's stone out of the target area.

But beyond the technical aspects of the sport or tallying wins or losses, each of the four most active clubs across the state share the same goal of educating the public about the sport and getting younger folks hooked on curling.

Rau, for instance, is a long-time Scout master and is working with his local troop to get the kids involved. He and Gascoigne and other members of the club visit the Boys and Girls club, school groups and others to

teach youngsters how to play the sport, share their positive experiences and answer their questions.

The same spirit of advocacy is also found at the Yankton Curling Club, which was started last winter by Mike and Julianna Ford along with a small group of other enthusiasts.

Julianna serves as president of the group and fell in love with the sport when she was a high school student in her native Alberta. She describes failing to make the roster of the volleyball and basketball teams but eventually finding a home with the curling squad.

"Our gym class went to the local ice rink and I loved it," she recalled. "It was a lot more strategic than physical and it was something I could compete in."

She later moved to Sioux Falls, married Mike, and the two helped create the existing club in that city.

Several years later they moved to Yankton for Mike's work and soon started another club. The Yankton group lists about 45 members and is also heavily involved in growing the sport in their community.

"We're reaching out to schools, clubs and nursing homes," Julianna said. "There are handicapped leagues and elderly people can play by using a stick to throw the stone. It's a sport that's literally for everyone."

The Fords don't often find themselves on different sides of the ice, but when they do they try to keep the competitive fires closer to an ember than a raging flame.

So, bottom line...who's better?

"No comment," Julianna said, before commenting with a chuckle, "but I'm the one who went to Arena Nationals."

Upgrading our infrastructure to meet higher demands and increase reliability

Laura London

Lake Region Electric

Members of Lake Region Electric are noticing changes to the landscape in our territory. Some big changes are taking place for several reasons. The biggest reason is that our infrastructure is getting old, a good portion nearing 80 years.

Another reason is to increase the amount of amperage that can be transmitted as demand increases. When Lake Region Electric Association was formed, there was no way of predicting that people would be using the amount of electricity that we do. While small upgrades have taken place over the years, the time has come for some big changes.

One of these changes is the conversion from overhead to underground lines. As you travel across our territory, you will see fewer poles and wires as crews work to bury lines where possible. As much planning as we do, the earth sometimes puts us in our place and puts obstacles in the way, as crews burying lines in the Veblen area found out when they ran into “rocks” the size of buildings. In these cases, it was decided the overhead lines would just have to remain.

Our power transmission provider, East River Electric, has been making even bigger changes with more in the works. Matt Mohr, Engineering Manager at East River Electric, along with East River’s Chief Operations Officer Mark Hoffman shared some insight as to what has been happening in order to improve reliability and power transmission in our area.

A new WAPA source substation in Roberts County was constructed and put in service in 2019 with new East River transmission line extending from there to Lake Region’s service territory. Nearly 45 miles of line were built to



the Veblen and Hillhead substations, moving transmission service from Otter Tail Power Company’s system to East River’s. This new area source substation and transmission line improved reliability and allows the cooperative to prioritize the electric service to the members. The Hillhead substation was also rebuilt at this time, removing vintage equipment and infrastructure from the system, and replacing it with a new facility that will vastly extend the life of the electric service.

We have taken quite a few calls asking about the “big” poles and equipment in the Grenville area. In early December, we had a planned outage that affected all of our members served by the Grenville substation. This outage lasted roughly six hours and affected 942 Lake Region members. Multiple calls went out to members days ahead of time, as well as notifications on our Facebook page, notifying members of the planned outage so that they could prepare.

Early December may not be the most convenient time to have an outage, as most people were unhappy with the cold weather, however this was the time that East River could coordinate supplies, contractors and all of the services needed in order to make such a drastic changeover. We plan outages as best

we can in order to do maintenance and make upgrades to our system so that we can avoid unexpected and long-term outages as much as possible.

East River is currently building an alternate transmission line to serve the Grenville substation which will improve reliability. The 17-mile line is being built from a new breaker position out of the WAPA Summit substation, which also greatly improves East River’s ability to reliably serve the members and allows for another source to the Grenville substation in the case of inclement weather. Construction of the line is scheduled to be complete by late spring 2022. Along with the tie line to Grenville, East River also added Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and other modifications within the substation during the recent outage. SCADA allows East River to remotely control some processes at the substation and collect data to help improve reliability.

East River has also made major changes in the Britton and Langford areas. On Dec. 2, members served from the Britton Substation had a planned outage for about three hours. The Britton substation was rebuilt around seven years ago but work is still being done to improve service. The new

Upgrading infrastructure, continued

line from Roberts County was extended over to the Britton substation, providing a tie line for backup service to Britton and Langford. East River is also adding a capacitor bank to the Britton substation to improve the area system voltage; this will be in service early spring 2022. The transmission line serving the Britton and Langford substations is being rebuilt in 2022 to improve reliability and increase the load serving capability of the cooperative. The 25-mile line is scheduled to begin construction March of 2022 with completion by the end of the year. The cost for the 25-mile line from Britton to Langford is estimated at \$7.5 million.

As Lake Region and East River work to replace and upgrade aging and inadequate infrastructure, we continue to rely on our members' support and cooperation. Members have expressed concern as to why we would plan a 6-hour outage on a cold day in December. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle, especially when working with big distribution lines. Coordinating equipment, contractors, supplies and people has never been easy but this past year or two, things have become increasingly difficult. Basically, we get things done as soon, and as quickly, as we can while trying to cause the least amount of inconvenience to our members. We have been successful at implementing Call Capture to notify members in advance of planned outages so they can check generators and warm their homes in advance, as well as preparing water for livestock. We also put outage information on Facebook as soon as we can. Members can view current outage information by going to our Live Outage Map on our website: www.lakeregion.coop.

Utility Specialist Nathan Baumgarn spends a lot of effort into researching and writing easements. A power easement is a right for Lake Region to install and maintain electrical power lines, above or below ground, on private property. "This summer we will be installing new underground powerlines to accommodate new transmission line construction. This is a great opportunity for LREA to strengthen our infrastructure by replace aging overhead lines, with more reliable and cleaner looking underground powerlines. Deciding on new routes while being efficient with our input costs is part of the process. Working on routes and easements with landowners can be a rewarding challenge, finding a route that works for LREA and the landowner can take some time, but is a process I enjoy."

LREA prefers easements to access private property for many reasons. Easements allow us to avoid congestion of other utilities in the Right-Of-Way, fewer ROW permits to obtain, and puts LREA powerlines in a better spot for any future road projects. This can save the members of LREA money in the long run by not having to re-do powerlines before their life expectancy is reached.

Lake Region Electric and East River will continue to make improvements to our infrastructure as time goes on, in order to continue to provide quality service at affordable rates.



SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH LAKE REGION ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

**Lake Region/Basin
Electric
Scholarship** **\$1,000**

**Duane Snaza Memorial
Scholarship** **\$1,000**

**Charles Johnson Education &
Training Trust Scholarship**

Applications can be obtained from your high school counselor, the Lake Region Electric office, or by visiting the Lake Region Electric website: www.lakeregion.coop

**Submissions must be
postmarked or returned by Feb.
14, 2022**

For questions about scholarships, contact Laura London at Lake Region Electric
Phone: 605-345-3379
email: llondon@lakeregion.coop



STILL IN THE SADDLE

At age 77, Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre is nearing the completion of his 2,000th saddle and has no plans to slow down anytime soon. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Saddle-maker Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre delights in helping bronc riders bring home championship buckles and purses

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Dave Dahl will probably never win a hand model contest. Dahl's digits are gnarled, bent and puffy after nearly a half-century of hard labor producing bronc saddles for dozens of rodeo champions.

Dahl is quick to point out, however, that looks can be very deceiving: his mitts are as strong and dependable and productive as they've ever been, seasoned with decades of experience. At the age of 77, Dahl is still going strong creating saddles out of his shop in downtown Fort Pierre. Incredibly, he's still keeping his customary pace of hand-crafting nearly 60 high-

performance saddles a year.

"Somebody once said if your hands aren't moving, you ain't making money," Dahl chuckled.

During the last week of December, Dahl was busy dashing out his 56th saddle of 2021. That saddle, commissioned by a Canadian bronc riding champion, was No. 1,924 of Dahl's career. Yes, Dahl does keep count, stamping every saddle that leaves the shop. He's already anticipating reaching the 2,000 mark.

He's considering loaning that milestone saddle to Fort Pierre's Casey Tibbs Museum so that visitors can see the brand that's catapulted dozens of rodeo competitors to the top.

"There's actually two that are marked 1,000," Dahl said. Turns out that Glen

O'Neill ended up with the first one, but then Dahl's daughter Darcy Harper also received a commemorative version for roping events. Incidentally, No. 1,800 is displayed in the North Dakota Rodeo Hall of Fame where Dahl was inducted in 2017 for both his riding and his other contributions to the sport.

The list of riders who have won titles from the swells of a Dahl saddle is endless and includes champions from Alberta to Aberdeen to Australia: CoBurn Bradshaw, Cody DeMoss, Clay Elliott, Chuck Schmidt, Jake Watson, Tom Reeves, Jeff Willert, Taos Muncy, Zeke Thurston, Cort Scheer, Wade Sundell, Kyle Whitaker and so many more that Dahl can hardly keep up. Eight Dahl saddles were at the 2021 PRCA Nationals in Las Vegas.

Pro riders enjoy collecting purses and Dahl delights in helping them reach their goals. He knows how hard it is not only to stay on a spirited bucking bronc

for a few seconds but also how difficult it is to make a dollar at it.

Dahl recalls his own limited days as a card-carrying professional when he won several buckles on the PRCA circuit before taking his saddle-making business full-time in the summer of 1974.

Bronc riding set a fire in Dahl's soul at an early age, growing up on the family farm in Keene, N.D., as one of 11 children. He competed for New Town High School and later went on to claim a national collegiate title as team captain for Black Hills State in 1967. A year after graduating with a bachelor's degree, Dahl also won the South Dakota Rodeo Association's saddle bronc title.

While he taught school for three years, Dahl eventually decided to make saddle-crafting his life's work. Dahl's friend and fellow rider Dick Jones got him interested in the craft and the two set up shop in an old abandoned drug store building next to the bank in Fort Pierre. In 1986, the bank decided to open a drive-through lane so the business moved across the street to its present location where Dahl runs Diamond D Saddle Shop and also manages a western clothing store adjacent to the shop.

Dahl plans on keeping his hands hard at work with no end in sight. He stays



DAHL SADDLES

Dahl's phone number is on the speed-dial list of collegiate rodeo coaches in several states across the country. At left, Dahl applies his trademark stamp to one of his saddles.

as busy as ever while participation in rodeo continues on an upward growth trajectory. College rodeo coaches in Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other states have Dahl on their speed-dial lists. He said he recently received a call from someone wanting him to fit a saddle for her 11-year-old child.

"It's just really a booming sport," he

said. "The training is better, there are better horses, there's better TV coverage of the sport and there's more money out there to be made. There are still a lot of ranch kids who grew up on horses and know how to ride. And they like to compete to see who's the best. There's so much work and I still enjoy it, so I don't plan on jumping out of the saddle anytime soon."

Co-ops In the Classroom Produces Shocking Results

Laura London

Lake Region Electric

Just before Christmas break, Jennifer Gross from East River Electric teamed up with representatives of Lake Region to bring a fun and educational experience called “Co-ops in the Classroom” to some area students.

Apprentice Electrician Vinson Dargatz joined Gross to present the program to fourth graders in Webster. This was Dargatz' first time presenting to the students, “I thought it was just as interesting as the kids did!”

As someone who works with electricity daily, Dargatz was able to provide insight and show off a little of the equipment used by electricians and linemen. Gross also presented to students at the Langford and Britton-Hecla Schools with the assistance of LREA Manager of Member Services Brett Kwasniewski. Kwasniewski feels the presentation is valuable to the cooperative, “Not only are we helping keep our kids safe, the program helps to educate future members.”

Co-ops in the Classroom is designed to help children learn the importance of respecting electricity through hands-on lessons. The program teaches students ways to conserve electricity, how to be safe around electricity, helps them recognize where electricity comes from and also introduces them to the cooperative business model and cooperative principles.

By learning these concepts from an early age, the kids will be better prepared to make wise energy decisions now and be conscientious consumers of energy in the future.

Most children in fourth grade are not thinking about being “conscientious consumers” or what a cooperative is. They just know there are a couple of different people coming into their classroom, those people are bringing some interesting looking equipment, and they get to do something different



Vinson Dargatz and Jennifer Gross lead the Co-ops in the Classroom Program.

for an hour. Dargatz observed, “It’s fun to see them learning and watch them take an interest. At first, it’s hard to get kids to volunteer, until they see what we are doing, then they ALL want to participate.”

There is time allotted for questions and conversations about electricity, and their experiences and the students are always eager to share.

Those interesting pieces of equipment that Gross brings include a bicycle connected to a stationary mount and a Pedal Power generator that demonstrates power generation and turns the concept of electricity from something abstract into something tangible.

Gross says, “By providing the energy needed to make a light bulb turn on, the students are able to quantify just how much more energy an incandescent light bulb requires than a CFL or LED.”

Another crowd-pleaser is a device called a Van de Graaff generator to demonstrate the movement of electrons with some shocking results.

“Not only does it provide a visible and audible example of how electricity moves, but students also get a kick out of seeing their hair stand up and shocking their friends. This part of the presentation teaches about insulators and conductors and helps the children understand that even though we are having fun with the little bit of electricity being produced by electric current, that electricity is very dangerous, and can cause serious harm.”

Lake Region Electric appreciates the opportunity to go into the schools and educate children about different aspects of electricity. The teachers are receptive to the program; Webster Elementary teacher, Nancy Block sends along notes from the students thanking Lake Region and she says, “We love this program!”

2022 Rural Electric Youth Tour

June 18-24, 2022
Washington, D.C.

HAVE YOU EVER:

- Dreamed of getting a selfie on the Capitol's steps for your Insta story?
- Thought it would be cool to make friends from all across the country?
- Wanted to get face-to-face with our nation's leaders?

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE!

You, along with 40+ fellow S.D. teens, have the chance to fly out to our nation's capitol for an **ALL-EXPENSES-PAID** trip courtesy of your local electric cooperative!

This is your chance to see the incredible sights of Washington, D.C., and make once-in-a-lifetime memories!

So — what are you waiting for?

Applications are available on our website: www.lakeregion.coop or by contacting the LREA office.

For more info, contact:

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llondon@lakeregion.coop
Lake Region Electric Association
1212 Main Street, P.O. Box 341, Webster, SD 57274
605-345-3379 • www.lakeregion.coop



**TELL
US WHO
POWERS
YOU!**

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a member or employee of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond.

They could win up to \$3,000!

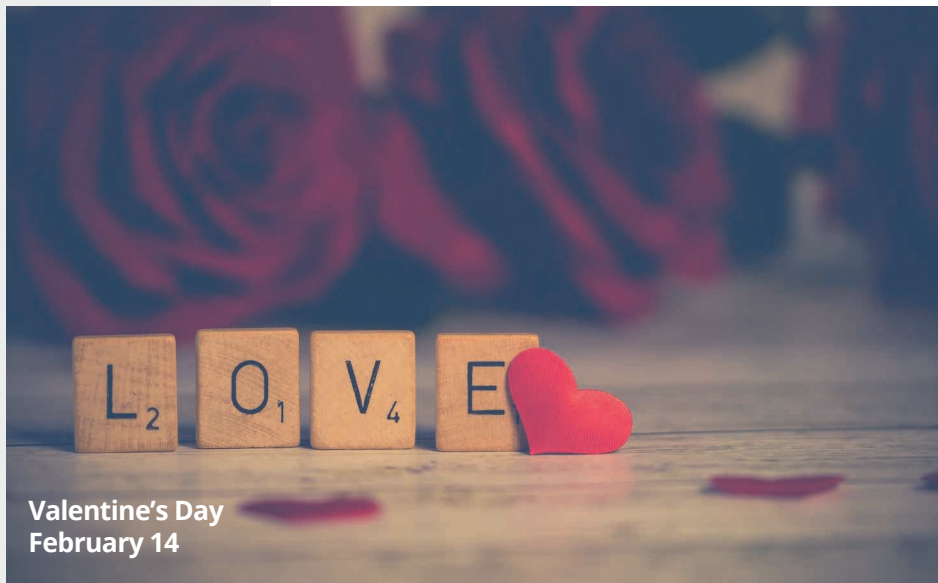


Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Nominate your local hero at

WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM



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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

JANUARY 22
Reba McEntire
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

JANUARY 28-29
Deadwood Pro Snocross Races
 Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
 Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JANUARY 28-29
27th Annual Dinner Theater
 Reliance Legion Hall, Reliance,
 SD, call 605-730-0553 for
 more info and tickets

JANUARY 28-31
Lead Winterfest
 Various Locations, Lead, SD,
 call 605-584-1100

**JANUARY 28-
FEBRUARY 6**
**Black Hills Stock Show &
Rodeo**
 Central States Fairgrounds &
 Rushmore Plaza Civic Center,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

JANUARY 29-30
DTGCA Gun Show
 National Field Archery Building,
 Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

FEBRUARY 4-6
Fiddler on the Roof
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

FEBRUARY 5
**Lake Hendricks
Improvement Association
Ice Fishing Derby**
 Hendricks, MN, contact Tim at
 507-828-2113 for registration
 and more information

FEBRUARY 9-12
**Watertown Winter Farm
Show**
 Codington County Extension
 Complex, Watertown, SD,
 605-886-5814

FEBRUARY 11
Calamity's Shindig
 Homestake Adams Research
 & Cultural Center, Deadwood,
 SD, 605-722-4800

FEBRUARY 11-12
Bulls & Broncs
 Expo Center at the W.H. Lyon
 Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD,
 605-367-7178

FEBRUARY 11-13
**Black Hills Sports Show &
Outdoor Expo**
 Monument Arena, Rapid City,
 SD, visit bhsportsshow.com
 for more information

FEBRUARY 12
Lakota Games on Ice
 3200 Indian Village Road,
 Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

FEBRUARY 12-13
**DTGCA Sioux Falls Trophy
Show (The Big One)**
 Sioux Falls Convention Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-280-2438

FEBRUARY 18-28
Black Hills Film Festival
 Various Locations in Rapid
 City, Hot Springs, Hill City and
 Spearfish, SD, visit www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org for more
 information

FEBRUARY 19
Sioux Empire on Tap
 Denny Sanford Premier
 Center, Sioux Falls, SD, visit
siouxempireontap.com for
 more info and tickets

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

**FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5**
Making God Laugh
 Grand Opera House, Pierre,
 SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
The Music of John Williams
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 3-5
The 39 Steps
 Orpheum Theater Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 10-13
**Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show**
 Sioux Falls Arena &
 Convention Center, Sioux
 Falls, SD, visit www.siouxfallssportsshow.com for more
 info and tickets

MARCH 12
**28 Below Fatbike Race,
Ride and Tour**
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
 SD, visit www.28below.com
 for more info and to register

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