

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Anglers from across the region compete in the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year to try their luck and test their skills

Hook, line and auger

Inside the Mobridge ice fishing tourney
Pages 8-9

Shake the blues with winter outdoor fun
Pages 12-13

Powering the bright lights that shine at Christmastime

Here at Lake Region, we are proud of the fact that we supply the electricity to our members that is used to light the skies during Christmas time. We celebrate the star that shone in the sky looking over the birthplace of our savior Jesus Christ, bright and beautiful. Now each year we light up our homes in celebration of the birth of Christ, and Lake Region is happy to be a part of that. When the meter is turning at Christmas, some of those kilowatt hours are used to light up our homes and the sky, reminding us of that bright and beautiful night, so long ago.

From all of us at Lake Region Electric Association, we wish you, our member-owners, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
God Bless,
Timothy McIntyre



Tim McIntyre
General Manager



A graphic with a brown background featuring bokeh light effects. At the top, the text "Happy New Year" is written in large, white, outlined letters. Below it, "Lake Region Electric will be" is written in green, followed by "CLOSED" in large, purple, outlined letters, and "Monday, January 2, 2023" in green. At the bottom left, there is a large, detailed image of a pocket watch and a white utility truck with a bucket lift. At the bottom right, the text "Call to report outages 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869" is written in white.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

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LAKE REGION RIPPLES COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Lake Region Electric Association, Inc., PO Box 341, 1212 N Main St., Webster, SD 57274. Lake Region Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: As part of their membership, Lake Region Electric members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. (USPS 018-904) Periodicals Postage Paid at Webster, SD 57274 and at additional mailing offices.

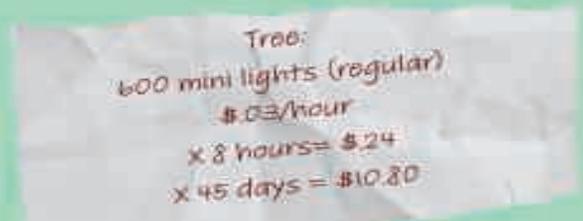
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Lake Region Ripples Cooperative Connections, PO Box 341, Webster, SD 57274. Telephone 605-345-3379; Toll Free 1-800-657-5869; Fax 605-345-4442
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HOW MUCH DID YOUR CHRISTMAS LIGHTING COST?

THERE ARE ONLINE CALCULATORS THAT WILL TALLY HOW MUCH YOU'LL PAY TO LIGHT YOUR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. OR YOU CAN CALCULATE THE COST YOURSELF. YOU WILL NEED TO CHECK THE PACKAGE OF THE STRING LIGHTS FOR THE WATTAGE. LAKE REGION MEMBER'S COST PER KWH IS \$0.1069

Find how many watts each strand of lights will use.
 Multiply times 0.001 to find kilo-watt hour.
 Multiply by 10.69 cents to find cost per hour.
 Multiply by 6 hours a day to find kwh/day.
 Multiply by 45 days to find kwh/season.



RECIPES NEEDED FOR THE **Country Cookin'** cookbook

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes as well as recipes for the cookbook's "Wild Game" section.

Submit recipes via email to ajohannsen@eastriver.coop.

Contact Lake Region Electric for more information:
 Phone: 605-345-3379 Email: Lakeregion@lakeregion.coop



Tips to use your electric blanket wisely

Heating pads and electric blankets cause around 500 fires throughout the U.S. each year. Almost all of these fires involve electric blankets more than 10 years old.

Learn how to stay safe and injury-free.

- Heating appliances should never be left unattended or used while sleeping.
- Do not plug electric blankets into an extension cord or power strip, as they could overheat and cause a fire.
- Look for dark, charred, or frayed spots or electrical cords that are cracked or frayed. Replace any worn or old heating pads or electric blankets.
- Never fold electric blankets when in use. Folded or tucked-in electric blankets could overheat and cause a fire.
- When purchasing electronics, including electric blankets, be sure to only purchase from reputable retailers. Purchase devices that have been approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Do not allow anything to rest on top of a heating pad or electric blanket when it is in use. It may cause the device to overheat.
- There are two types of personal heating appliances: electric blankets and heating pads that are placed directly on the mattress. They are not meant to be used interchangeably or at the same time.

Gums wins Connections annual recipe contest

Lily Gums of Clear Lake has been selected winner of the annual *Cooperative Connections* member recipe contest.

Gums submitted a beverage recipe she calls "Swamp Water" that was published in the April 2022 issue of the magazine. She received a \$25 gift card for her submission. Congratulations, Lily!

She is a member of H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake.

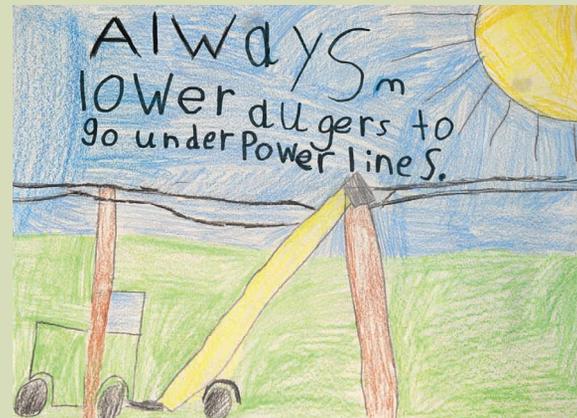


CO-OP LEADERS SERVE THEIR MEMBERS AND CONSTITUENTS



Ryan Maher is both a state senator and a board member at Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake. He is one of three cooperative leaders who play unique roles in serving their co-op consumers while also serving their constituents as state lawmakers during the legislative session in Pierre.

To view the comments and insights of these lawmakers and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Be safe around power lines

Weston Kling

Weston Kling, age 7, urges equipment operators to always lower augers to accommodate for overhead power lines. Weston is the son of Tyler and Alexis Kling of Rapid City. They are members of West River Electric based in Wall.

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.

SUPER SOUPS



VEGGIE CHEESE SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1/3 c. shredded carrots
- 1/3 c. chopped celery
- 3/4 c. broccoli flowerettes (fresh or frozen)
- 2 tbsp. diced onion
- 1/4 c. butter or margarine
- 6 tbsp. flour
- 2 c. chicken broth
- 2 c. milk
- 2 c. Velveeta cheese, cubed

METHOD

Cook carrots, celery and broccoli in 1 cup water until tender crisp. Saute onions in butter. Add flour to blend. Add milk and stir to make white sauce then add cheese and stir until melted. Add chicken broth and vegetables in remaining water. Blend until smooth.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre

CHEESEBURGER SOUP

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. ground beef or ground chuck
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1/2 med. onion chopped
- 1/2 stalk celery, chopped
- 5 med. peeled potatoes, chopped
- 4 c. turkey or chicken broth
- 3 c. half and half
- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 lb. Velveeta cheese, chunked
- 2 tbsp. butter
- salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Brown ground meat in large pot. Drain and return to pot. Add butter, onion, carrots, celery and potatoes. Cook for 5 minutes. Add broth, poultry seasoning, garlic powder and continue cooking until vegetables are tender. Add half and half and Velveeta cheese and continue heating until cheese has melted. Salt and pepper to taste.

Kathleen Meier, Firesteel

CHICKEN FAJITA SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 med. green bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 med. red bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 sm. onion, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 pkg. McCormick® Organics Fajita Seasoning Mix
- 3 c. chicken stock
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) petite diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 c. frozen corn
- 1 c. tortilla strips

METHOD

Heat oil in large saucepan or Dutch oven on medium-high heat. Add peppers and onion; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook and stir 2 minutes. Stir in chicken, Seasoning Mix, stock, tomatoes and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 20 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Ladle soup into bowls. Sprinkle with tortilla strips. Serve with desired toppings.

mccormick.com

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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Lake Region Electric co-hosts legislative forum

Lake Region Electric joined with fellow cooperatives Northern Electric, FEM Electric and Cam Wal Electric to host a dinner and casual conversation with area legislators in Aberdeen on Dec. 2.

The meet-and-greet forum was attended by Lake Region Electric General Manager Tim McIntyre and Board Members Kermit Pearson, Cody Paszek and Rodney Tobin. Legislators participating in the event were Sen. Al Novstrup, Dist. 3; Rep. Scott Moore, Dist. 23; Rep. Brandei Schaeffbauer, Dist. 3; and Rep. Carl Perry, Dist. 3.

Though participation was lower than expected due to inclement weather, the lawmakers thanked the cooperative leaders for holding the forum and engaging in a dialogue regarding those matters that could potentially arise in the upcoming session, including electric vehicle growth and power supply issues.

Mike Jaspers, business development director at East River Electric, presented a program explaining the value of electric cooperatives in setting the standard for delivering superior service reliability, offering affordable rates, and promoting economic growth and prosperity.



Mike Jaspers of East River Electric, left, speaks during the legislative forum held in Aberdeen on Dec. 2.

Jaspers assured the legislators that electric cooperatives are staying active in the development of an EV charging network across the state and region, and that grid operators are working hard to ensure that the power continues to flow throughout the regional transmission network during weather events.

“Our regional transmission grid operators have been very attentive to finding new ways to harden the system and improve service reliability since Winter Storm Uri struck in 2021. We’ve

learned a lot and we’re implementing those strategies,” he emphasized.

McIntyre said the session was very productive.

“It’s important that we maintain an open dialogue with our elected officials,” he said. “We always find they’re receptive to our concerns and the concerns of our members, but it’s our responsibility to make sure we keep the discussion going, especially as the session begins and they start getting very busy conducting the legislative affairs of our state.”

Wisner earns Board Leadership Certificate

By Laura London

LREA recognizes board member Mark Wisner, shown at right with Manager Tim McIntyre, for completing the requirements to receive his Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The BLC recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). Mark received his CCD in 2019. In order to attain the BLC, directors must complete 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

Education, Training, and Information is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles LREA is guided by. The willingness of our directors to continue to educate themselves so that they can best govern our cooperative is one way LREA shows this commitment. Thank you for your dedication to LREA.



LREA linemen work to repair early ice storm damage

Lake Region Electric recently responded to an early ice storm that left hundreds of members temporarily without power and caused considerable damage to the cooperative's power delivery system.

We thank our members for their patience as we dispatched crews out into the elements to make the necessary repairs. And, as always, thanks to our linemen for a job well done.



Ice Storm November 2022

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OUT BY LOCATION

Grenville ... 22
 Andover 26
 Webster 37
 Langford ... 124
 Britton ... 391

Most Members were only out a few hours but some overnight and a few two days!

\$\$\$
\$75,000

Estimated cost to Lake Region for Restoration and Repairs

250

Approximate Labor Hours spent on Restoring Power and repairing damages



Historic Tidbit - This photo from 1960 demonstrates that ice storms are an ongoing menace for LREA members and co-op linemen.





The annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament attracts more than 1,000 avid cold-weather anglers. *Photo by Mobridge Outdoors*

Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament offers fun and friendly competition

Billy Gibson

editor@sdrea.coop

Last fall, the world of competitive walleye fishing was shaken with a startling saga of deception and skulduggery worthy of a Tom Clancy novel.

Social media lit up showing the dramatic moment a tournament director in Ohio shouted at the top of his lungs with horror and disgust: “We got weights in fish! We got weights in fish!”

Suspicion had long surrounded a pair of locals who ultimately got nabbed stuffing lead weights down the gullets of their walleye. After the two sparked skepticism with a catch of nearly 36 lbs. - one-third heavier than the runners-up - the director gutted the fish right in front of the entire field of wary competitors and held aloft several shiny orbs the size of steel ping-pong balls.

The viral video received more than 10 million views as cameras captured the chaotic scene with one of the accused hanging his head in shame (his partner had slithered away to his truck) while fellow competitors cursed and threatened to inflict bodily harm upon the sly anglers who were later indicted on four felony counts.

Vinson Dargatz is pretty sure nothing close to that degree of high drama will be replicated at the 22nd Annual Mobridge Walleye Ice Fishing Tournament set for Jan. 14. Based on his experience participating in the event over the past 12 years, this competition is more fisherman-friendly and the atmosphere is much more focused on fun.

Dargatz, an apprentice electrician at Lake Region Electric based in Webster, has continued to make the four-hour trip from his home to Mobridge mostly

because of the fellowship and the relaxed, laid-back vibe of the festivities.

He typically gets together with his two brothers and three cousins for the tournament that he describes as a “yearly ritual.”



Vinson Dargatz is shown with one of his prize catches.

“We always have a lot of fun” he said. “We used to just bring a portable shack out on the ice and sit on some buckets while we fished. But now that we’ve gotten older, softer and a little smarter, we have an Ice Castle and we fish and hang out and grill some burgers.”

Number of two-person fishing teams competing

551

in last year's Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament

Dargatz confesses that the purchase of the 8 x 16-foot Ice Castle was actually his wife's idea. When it's time for an outdoor fishing excursion, the entire family with two boys and a girl always likes to come along. And mom insists on having adequate accommodations.

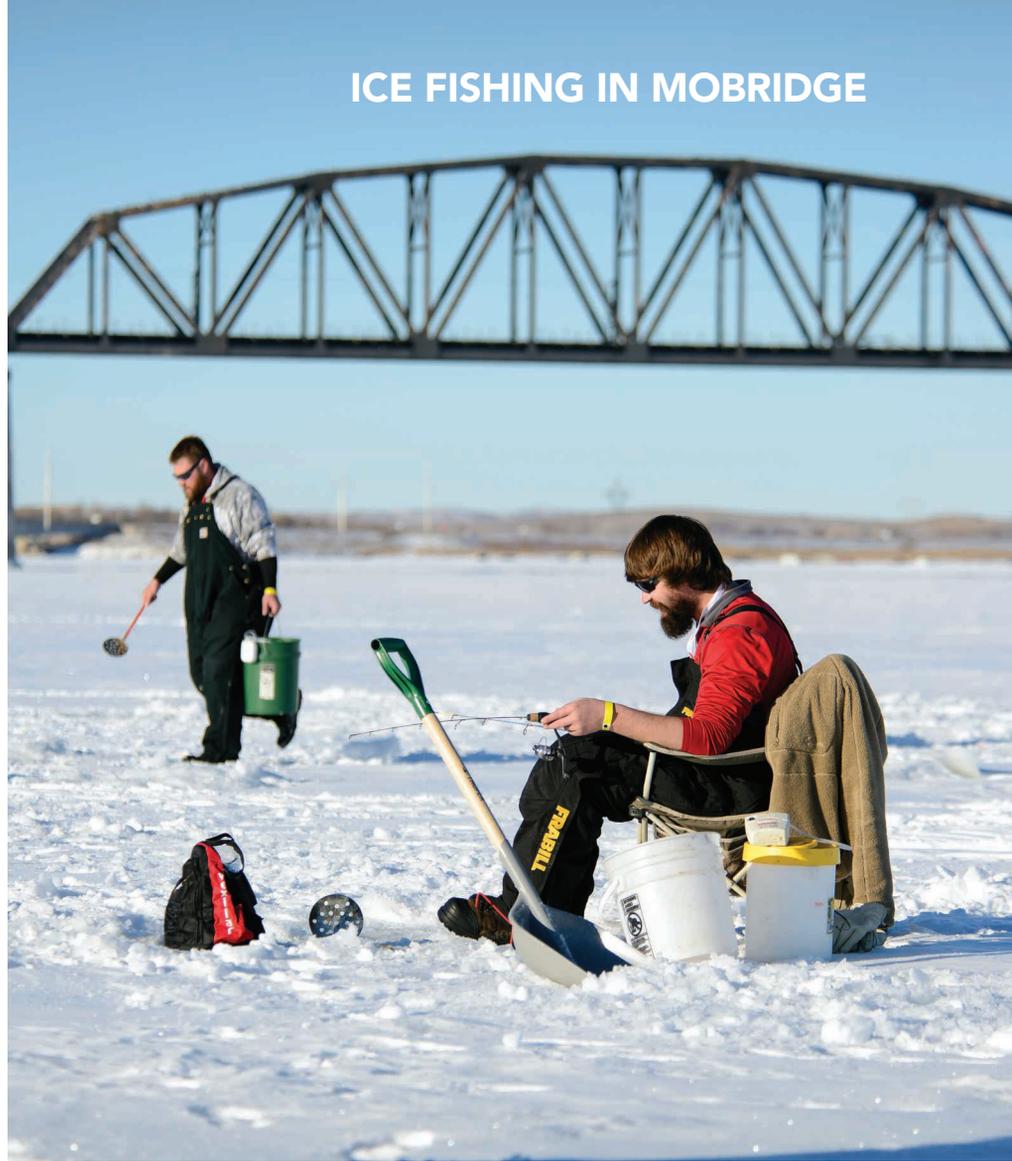
But Dargatz said when it comes to the annual winter escapes to Mobridge with the fellas, the family has to find something else to do. Besides, the town already doubles in size during tournament weekend and if every angler brought hangers-on in tow, Mobridge might expand to the size of Sioux Falls.

FILLED TO CAPACITY

Lately, the walleye population is standing less of a chance for survival against the increasing number of competitors testing their luck and skill in the annual tournament. The field has ballooned to the point of being capped at 551 two-person teams with fishermen swarming in from 16 different states.

Only so many humans can be stuffed into the town's expo center where the group events are held.

All of these developments have bewildered Jeff Jackson, one of the tournament's founders and owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge. He recalls more than two decades ago sitting around the table with a group of town leaders who were trying to figure out a way to attract visitors to the area and capitalize on all the outdoor adventure the Missouri



The Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament draws eager competitors from 16 different states.
Photo by Travel South Dakota

River and Lake Oahe have to offer.

In the first year, 50 eager contenders were lured to the event by the opportunity to claim the super grand prize of a Mr. Heater. These days, the prize list represents more than \$225,000 in assorted items such as Ice Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, clam shacks, \$8,000 worth of outdoor gear from Scheel's and Runnings, and more.

Anglers can keep their spot in the field if they register early in mid-July, otherwise their spot will be thrown into a lottery. Three guaranteed positions are drawn each year for those who participate in the town's summer fishing tournament, the Annual Denny Palmer Memorial Walleye Classic. Three spots are auctioned off on Ebay, which typically fetch up to \$4,000 apiece, while a

final spot is raffled off.

Last year's winners were Travis Bergstrom and Tate Merchant, who registered four fish weighing a total of 15.8 lbs. including one lunker that tipped the scales at 9.33 lbs. Jason Converse and Josh Spilde finished second with five fish weighing in at 13.4 lbs.

Dargatz already has the July 2023 registration date on his calendar and reminder notifications set to make sure he doesn't miss out. He's anticipating another adventurous outing in this year's tourney.

"I think it's great for the town to have so many people visiting and spending money. It's pretty wild that a small town can pull something like that together. They run it like a well-oiled machine and make sure everyone has a good time."

Langford's Avery West chosen Scholar of The Week

Langford High School student Avery West strives to be a role model for younger students. Judging by the way the other students look up to Avery and come to her for help, she has been successful. As one of the top students in her class, she is described as being responsible and accurate.

Her teachers say that she is always willing to help her classmates with anything, especially explaining material in a way they can understand. Avery feels that being a positive role model is important: "I remember being little and thinking the seniors were doing amazing things. They look up to us. I always make sure I'm doing the right thing, so I can help them do the right thing also."

This year, Avery is doing a student internship in Susan Larson's fourth-grade classroom.

"My fourth graders just adore her. They'd much rather seek Avery's help than mine sometimes. That's just so nice to see. She's just a gentle kind soul," says Larson.

This experience should help her in the future as Avery plans to attend Northern State University to pursue a degree in elementary education and a minor in

special education.

Avery is active at school outside of the classroom in volleyball, chorus, band, student council and the school play just to name a few. Susan Larson, who is also Avery's volleyball coach, says it is a privilege to coach Avery.

"She always gives 100 percent. She has great determination. She's an awesome role model. She's a great leader, on and off the court. She is also very active within the community, helping teach Sunday School at our local church," Larson says.

Avery is humbled by the award and appreciates being nominated and chosen. She is very proud of her community and school: "The teachers have pushed us to do great, and I've always enjoyed going to Langford. I think it is a great school and a nice community. That's the most important part. This place has a nice spot in my heart."

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors the region's accomplished high school students. Each winner receives a cash award from their local Touchstone Energy Cooperative and is featured on



LREA's Brett Kwasniewski congratulates Avery West on being selected Scholar of the Week.

Dakota News Now. All winners are also eligible to receive one of the three scholarships given away at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.

Avery is the daughter of Mathew and Amanda West. She was chosen Scholar of The Week for the Week of Nov. 27. Avery, who was nominated by Langford School Principal Mary Hosford, received a check for \$250 from LREA.

Academic scholarships available for area students

LREA has two scholarships available for area students: The Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship and the Basin Electric Scholarship. LREA also helps facilitate the Charles Johnson Trust Scholarship.

The Duane Snaza Memorial Scholarship was created by LREA's Board of Directors to honor former employee Duane Snaza, who worked at LREA for three summers. Duane's mother, Jackie Snaza, is a LREA member.

This \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to one student who is the dependent child, including adopted or stepchild, of member-owners of LREA. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen and must be a student who is enrolled, or is planning to enroll, in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

This scholarship is awarded based on the following criteria: participation in school and community activities, grade-point average, work experience, SAT/ACT scores, statement by student explaining his/her educational and career goals, a written recommendation by a third party and presentation of the application.

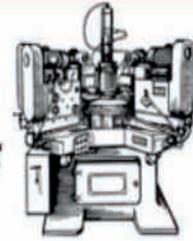
The Basin Electric/Lake Region Scholarship is funded by LREA's energy partner, Basin Electric. This \$1,000 is awarded to the dependent children, including adopted or stepchildren, of member-owners of LREA. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen and must be a student who is enrolled, or is planning to enroll, in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

Recipients are selected based on academic record, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

To apply, students must complete the required criteria and application, which can be obtained from your high school counselor, by visiting www.lakeregion.coop, or from the LREA office. Applicants must provide all required information and complete the application. Submissions MUST BE POSTMARKED OR RETURNED BY FEB. 15, 2023, to LREA, PO Box 341, Webster, SD 57274, to be eligible for either scholarship. Contact Laura London at llondon@lakeregion.coop or by telephone: 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869.



*The Charles Johnson
Education and Training Trust*



ATTENTION TRADE STUDENTS

The scholarship through the Charles Johnson Trust is awarded to persons who intend to further their education in order to return to the area with the knowledge and skills necessary to flourish in the trades industries. The scholarship is focused on the Day County community but may be expanded to enhance economic development and community growth in Northeast South Dakota. This scholarship may be awarded to qualifying high school students as well as nontraditional students, someone who has been finished with high school for more than one year who wishes to further their education.

The Charles Johnson Trust was established to promote education, training, hiring and placement of persons to work and establish life-long careers in the manufacturing and fabrication, or trades industry in the Day County area. This scholarship is named in honor of Charles Johnson who was instrumental in the development of industry in Webster. Lake Region Electric Association shares in Charles Johnson's vision and promotion of local manufacturing and industry that support our community.

The students to be recognized with this award are to be of good character and must be planning to pursue careers in manufacturing and technology including, but not limited to: Precision Machining, Welding, Electronics, Robotics, Energy Technology, Engineering, Construction Management, etc.

Previous scholarship recipients have been awarded between \$1,000 - \$4,000 towards their educational needs. Applicants for this scholarship do not need to be members of LREA. Applications for this scholarship should be submitted before April 15.

The Charles Johnson Education/Training Trust board of trustees include Jim Block, Tim McIntyre, and Kermit Pearson. To apply for this scholarship, contact Laura at Lake Region Electric Association or Webster Area High School Counselor Chelsea Larson. Applications are also available on the Lake Region Electric website: www.lakeregion.coop

Criteria for the Award:

- *Minimum 2.0 GPA*
- *Qualifying course of study related to manufacturing or technology*
- *Essay of goals and future plans*
- *Character qualities possessed by applicant*
 - *Academic orientation*
- *Intent to return to Day County, or surrounding community in northeast South Dakota*



WINTER OUTDOOR FUN

The chill of winter doesn't keep outdoors enthusiasts from finding adventure at Farm Island Recreation Area. *Photos by Travel South Dakota*

Winter adventure-seekers find wonder in the chilly outdoors

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Mental health counselors have discovered that seasonal affective disorder can be much more than just a harmless case of the blahs - it's a real condition that afflicts millions of people when the daylight diminishes and the temps turn colder.

They also agree that one way to defend against the winter doldrums is to get out of the house, embrace the crisp invigorating air and enjoy all the season has to offer.

It doesn't take much time or effort to create a list of fun things to do to get the blood pumping and the spirit soaring. Stepping away from a stuffy den and going outside to build a snowman, hike a nature trail, roast marshmallows over a bonfire and engage in other activities with family and friends can help bring back some

mental and emotional balance.

Nick Harrington of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks said his department is eager to accommodate anyone looking to extract some fun from the chill of winter.

Harrington notes that many of the state's 50-plus public camping and recreation areas are open for attendance during the long winter months, although some facilities are closed in an effort to protect delicate nesting habitats

for eagles and other species of wildlife.

Some comfort stations may close down during winter but the state has modern lodges available with amenities such as heaters and running water, including cabins, suites and group lodges for cold-weather outdoor vacationing.

Harrington said that while many vacationers from far and wide flock to South Dakota in the summertime, the state boasts more than 1,500 miles of nature trails for cold-weather adventurers to discover and is one



Fat-tire biking in Spearfish Canyon

8 WINTER WONDERLANDS FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

- * Wind Cave National Park, Hot Springs
- * Snake Creek Recreation Area, Platte
- * Palisades State Park, Garretson
- * Custer State Park Spur, Custer
- * Randall Creek SRA, Pickstown
- * Pelican Lake, Pelican Township
- * Farm Island SRA, Pierre
- * Oakwood Lakes State Park, Bruce



Time spent outdoors during the winter can be beneficial to mental and physical well-being.

of the nation’s top attractions for snowmobiling, snowshoeing, hiking, fat-tire biking and many other off-season outdoor adventures.

“Some people just enjoy getting out in the cold weather. They like the changing of the seasons we get in our region and they’re always looking for new opportunities to explore what we have to offer without a lot of crowds,” Harrington said. “It’s already a beautiful state, but winter really changes the look of the landscape and is a big draw for many people looking for outdoor fun.”

World-renowned summertime attractions such as the iconic Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse destinations take on an entirely different appeal during the snowy season. The Badlands geological formations, Ponderosa pine forests, open prairies, secluded lakes and

scenic waterways become even more alluring for landscape photographers, bird-watchers, hikers and wildlife enthusiasts when set against a charming and aesthetically pleasing wintry backdrop.

One of the most highly-attended state park destinations during both the summer and winter is Custer State Park with its 71,000 acres of trails, spectacular vistas and pristine lakes. The site is open year-round and during winter offers a wide array of things to see and do.

But there is still lots to explore across the state, including the more centrally situated Farm Island Recreation Area located four miles east of Pierre. Considered one of the park system’s best-kept secrets, Farm Island sits nestled along the banks of Lake Sharpe

and the Missouri River and welcomes many winter guests who enjoy majestic glowing sunsets, ice fishing, eight miles of hiking trails, cross-country skiing and exploring the perfect natural habitat for birdwatching. There’s also RV, primitive and cabin camping opportunities available.

For more ideas on how to plan trip and shake off the winter blues, check out this handy guide: www.travelsouthdakota.com/winter.

And after deciding on your winter vacation plans, don’t forget to pack the following along with the rest of your cold-weather gear:

- Wool base layer
- Fleece mid-layer
- Windproof outer layer
- Waterproof boots
- Warm hat, scarf, gloves and socks.

SHORT GO SHIRTS



At left, Seth Gaikowski was recognized for his achievement in Team Roping. Above, honorees Tate and Tyan Johnson are also shown competing in the Team Roping event.

TSE Short Go Shirts Awarded by Lake Region Electric

In recognition of their achievements at the South Dakota High School Rodeo Association Finals, four area students were presented with “short-go” shirts by Manager of Member Services Brett Kwasniewski.

The short go consists of the 15 athletes who accumulated the most points in the first two rounds of the state finals, plus qualifying points from the regional rodeos.

Lake Region Electric and South Dakota’s Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives are proud supporters of the South Dakota High School Rodeo program and we are proud to be able to present these students with these awards.

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives nationwide are committed to the core values of innovation, integrity, accountability, and commitment to community. Our cooperative values go hand-in-hand with the Six Pillars of Character of the South Dakota State High School Rodeo Association: respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness,

fairness, and citizenship.

When they say character counts, it is definitely reflected in these young athletes when we talk with them and see them interact.

SETH GAIKOWSKI

Seth Gaikowski, son of LREA members Justin and Amy Gaikowski received a Short Go shirt for his performance in Team Roping. Seth graduated from Waubay High School in the spring of 2022 and is attending college at South Dakota State University in Brookings.

JOHNSON SIBLINGS

Three recipients of Short Go Shirts in Lake Region territory have more than rodeo in common, they are siblings. Tate, Tyan and Sidney Johnson all made the short go this year.

Tate and Tyan Johnson received shirts for their performance last summer, qualifying for the short go in the team roping event. Tate and Tyan excelled at the state level, winning state in June. This win led the team to Nationals in Gillette WY in July. At nationals, they



Tate, Sidney and Tyan Johnson are shown with Brett Kwasniewski of LREA.

placed 10th in the world!

Joining her brothers, Sidney Johnson was awarded a short go shirt this year in the Breakaway event. Sidney participates in a few other rodeo events as well: team roping, barrels, and goat tying. Sidney enjoys the competition, but they are all really good friends and cheer each other on.

Tate, Tyan and Sidney are children of Lake Region Electric members Travis and Sara Johnson.

“We appreciate the support the Electric Cooperatives have shown. They are supporting a great group of high school rodeo kids,” they said.

Student intern has his sights set on working for Lake Region Electric

By Laura London

Webster Area High School student Ethan Opitz interned at Lake Region Electric in November and December as a part of his Senior Experience.

According to Morgan Heuer, the Senior Experience coordinator and instructor, the program includes a quarter-long class designed as a capstone experience to help students graduate and become successful beyond school.

During the first few weeks, students learn more about themselves through career assessments and personality tests. They then transition into what Heuer calls the “job process,” where they learn about and discuss applying for jobs, resumes, cover letters and do a mock interview. Students then conduct a career research project. With some guidance from Heuer, students are responsible for contacting their employers in an occupation they are hoping to pursue after high school. They are required to “be in the field,” for roughly 20 hours.

Ethan came into the Lake Region office in October and talked with Brett Kwasniewski about the possibility of doing an internship. Lake Region is committed to education and the youth in our community; internships, job shadowing and summer jobs are things we offer.

“Programs like this not only benefit our youth, but they also benefit the cooperative by opening doors to future generations in our workforce,” Kwasniewski says.

There are many aspects to working in the electric industry and Lake Region Electric being a cooperative puts another spin on things. Kwasniewski feels it is



Ethan Opitz, background, has distinguished himself with his strong work ethic and positive attitude as an LREA intern.

important for students to spend time with all departments, so they get a good overview of everything that goes on.

“It’s a misconception that the only job here is a lineman; there are a lot of different career possibilities,” he says.

For an hour and a half each day, Ethan showed up at the office with a smile on his face and eager to learn. One of his first days interning was spent with General Manager Tim McIntyre.

“It’s just really neat that we can be a part of young kids’ growth. It’s exciting to see them take an interest in the utility industry and the different jobs we have here,” McIntyre says.

He spent time in the office department learning about policies, benefits and compensation, accounting, and billing. He witnessed a variety of jobs and tasks conducted by the Service Department. One of the things that Ethan found most interesting was the work that Utility Specialist Nathan Baumgarn performs.

“The mapping and staking is really cool,” he says.

Ethan was not deterred from his goal of becoming a lineman, even after going out with a crew as the linemen retired and de-framed a pole in the bitter cold wind with an ambient temperature of -11 degrees. For the last two years, he has had his sights on lineman school; intrigued by the variety of work, the hands-on aspect and potential for advancement. He is not naïve about safety concerns or drawbacks such as the weather; he feels it’s a good trade-off for the positives.

Ethan is the son of Megan and Mike Ninke of Webster. His grandparents Gary and Beth Aadland are members of LREA and his Uncle Tyler has been a lineman at Lake Region for 14 years. Ethan applied and has been accepted to Mitchell Technical Institute.

Students wishing to intern with LREA are encouraged to visit their high school or college advisors.

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Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
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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.

JAN. 1
American Legion Post 15
Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance Building
1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

JAN. 13-14
ON YOUR FEET! THE MUSICAL
Show Dates:
Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14, 2 p.m.
Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

JAN. 14
Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament
Registration Starts at 1 p.m.
\$80 for a four-person team
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

JAN. 14
Chinook Days
Winter Carnival
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Big Hill
Spearfish, SD

JAN. 20
Rapid Valley UMC
Soup Supper
4:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Rapid City, SD

JAN. 21
Lakota Games on Ice
1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village
Mitchell, SD

JAN. 27-28
Annual Deadwood Pro
Snocross Races
Jan. 27, 12:50 p.m.
Jan. 28, 8:25 a.m.
Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds
Deadwood, SD

JAN. 27 - FEB. 4
Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairgrounds and The Monument
Tickets may be purchased online and at the gate
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

JAN. 28
K9 Keg Pull
On-site registration
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Deadwood Street by
Outlaw Square
Deadwood, SD

FEB. 3-4
TOOTSIE
Show Dates:
Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4, 2 p.m.
Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

FEB. 10-11
Mardi Gras Weekend
Mardi Gras Events & Parade sponsored by Deadwood Chamber of Commerce
Main Street
Deadwood, SD

FEB. 11
Songs of Romance
7:30 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

MAR. 4
Annual Ag Day
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

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