

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



This year's sunflower crop is expected to be bountiful as market forces have driven up demand and prices

## Sensational Sunflowers

**Sunflower market blooms**

Pages 8-9

**Everyone's welcome in the Chislic Circle**

Pages 12-13

# Co-op values mean benefits for the community

Lake Region Electric Association's core job is keeping the lights on, but our passion is serving our members. Because we're a co-op, our purpose is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our community. This service focus is at the heart of who we are.

We were built and are led by the members we serve. Whether tested by severe weather events or a pandemic, our co-op puts people first not just during tough times but all the time. Over the years, our charitable efforts, volunteer service hours and other locally focused projects have supported local schools and young people, supported local food banks, assisted families in need to keep the lights on and much, much more. You can see Lake Region Electric employees in all different aspects of volunteer work to help support the communities we serve, volunteering their time when they aren't working. We have firefighters, youth coaches, church, and museum volunteers and more; honestly too many volunteer activities to even list.

Lake Region partners with GROW South Dakota and other organizations to work on economic development projects that meet our region's evolving needs and help it to thrive. We do a good portion of this through our CoBank Sharing Success program where CoBank matches our funds to give \$20,000 to programs that directly benefit our communities. We also partner with

the REED program to promote and support local businesses. In addition to these programs, Lake Region supports local community fund raisers, schools and youth activities through water and monetary donations as well as giving scholarships to area students equaling thousands of dollars given back.

The money we've spent stays right here and benefits our local economy. We've invested in the infrastructure of our co-op and community in order to ensure the long-term viability of both. When the co-op thrives, our community thrives.

The energy industry is rapidly changing. In our region, the increased availability of renewables at the point of generation allows us to take advantage of more options for our energy mix. Building a sustainable future is a priority. More importantly, while use of renewables is increasing, we will need to incorporate other forms of energy in the mix to ensure service reliability. After all, solar and wind are referred to as "intermittent" power because the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow.

As a local business, Lake Region is proud of our role in helping bring good things to our community. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains constant. Working together with you, the members we serve, we'll continue to be a catalyst for good.



**Laura London**  
Administrative  
Assistant





## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

#### Board of Directors

Kermit Pearson, President  
Rodney Tobin, Vice President  
Thomas Steiner, Secretary  
Andrea Kilker, Treasurer  
Amy Kuecker  
Cody Paszek  
Mark Wismer  
Danny Smeins, LREA Attorney

#### General Manager

Tim McIntyre

#### Staff

Donna Sattler, Director of  
Finance/Office Services Manager  
Jim Grimes,  
Manager of Operations  
Brett Kwasniewski,  
Manager of Member Services  
Tim Gaiowski,  
Manager of Technology Services



Lake Region Electric Association, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Like us on Facebook:  
Lake Region Electric Association Inc.

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 E-mail: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

24 hour Dispatching/Outage Line  
1-800-657-5869

## Historical Tidbit: Big changes in the Summer and Fall of 1953

### LAKE REGION ELECTRIC BEGINS SWITCHING TO EAST RIVER LINES

Power began flowing through East River Electric lines on June 11, 1953, when Board President Alfred Pew pressed a button at the Bureau of Reclamation substation located at Armour. Following this event, the Lake Region Ripples September 1953 published a story touting the arrival of East River power to most of LREA territory.

The power from East River lines began to flow through the Pickerel Lake, Webster and Britton substations. Pending completion of the Fort Randall Dam, the power was purchased from Northern States Power plant in Sioux Falls and was coming in over East River lines through Bureau of Reclamation substations at Summit and Groton. Prior to this, Lake Region was purchasing all of its power from Northwestern Public Service and Ottetail Power companies.



The introduction of power from East River infrastructure helped LREA meet the rising demand for electricity.

This was the beginning of our relationship with East River Electric. This milestone helped pave the way for power to come to Lake Region from the Missouri River over Bureau and East River lines, ensuring adequate power to meet the increasing electrical demands of our rural homes and farms. This was the realization of the dreams of the pioneers of rural electrification.

## Come visit us at the State Fair!

Be sure to stop by and visit the Touchstone Energy Exhibit at the 2022 South Dakota State Fair in Huron.

Electric cooperative representatives from across the state will be on hand to share information about the electric utility industry and ways that you can save money on your electric bill. Find us at the Expo Building on Recreation Avenue.



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Michael & Lynn Ewing  
KBJ Enterprises  
Carter Shoemaker  
Harlan Berstein

James Sletten  
Don Ogren  
Jerry & Amy Reiner

# Take safety precautions during harvest season

Harvest season brings long, grueling hours in the field, which can make workers weary and prone to neglect safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks.

Farm operators, their family members and farm employees are urged to beware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allows operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from these lines. Maintain a minimum 10-foot radius around electric lines.

Portable augers are the No. 1 cause of electrocution on the farm. Augers being maneuvered by hand around bin sites have caused the deaths of many farmworkers who became the path to ground for electricity when the top of the auger touched overhead power lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Other equipment commonly involved in power line accidents includes oversized wagons, large combines and other tall equipment.

Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That's exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. He was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.

Follow these safety measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

## STUDENTS LEARN HOW POWER IS PRODUCED

A group of high school students recently gathered together to take a trip and learn how electricity is produced and how it is used to power their homes, farms, appliances and local businesses.

The students traveled to Bismarck, N.D., to tour the power generation facilities of Basin Electric, which supplies electricity across nine states and is one of the largest power producers in the country.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Don't Mess With a Transformer Box



## Beware of the green box

### Cambrie Koistinen

Cambrie, age 11, advises electric cooperative members to use caution around pad-mounted transformers, also known as green boxes, because they contain high-voltage power equipment. Cambrie is the child of Lance and Holly Koistinen of Hayti.

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.



# FRESH FROM THE GARDEN

## ZUCCHINI SPINACH CASSEROLE

**Ingredients:**  
 2 lbs. zucchini  
 1 lbs. frozen spinach  
 1 chopped onion  
 4 cloves of garlic  
 5 beaten eggs  
 1/2 cup salad oil  
 1-1/2 cup cracker crumbs (save 1/2 cup for top)  
 1-1/2 cup cheddar cheese (save 1/2 for top)

### METHOD

Cook and drain first four ingredients. Add eggs, salad oil, cracker crumbs and cheddar cheese. Add salt, pepper and parsley to taste. Spread the remaining crumbs and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.  
**Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls**

## CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1 1/2 long English cucumbers cut in half moons  
 1 1/2 lb tomatoes on the vine sliced in segments  
 1/4 cup red onion thinly sliced (optional)  
 3 tbsp dill finely chopped  
 2 small garlic cloves grated  
 1/2 cup sour cream  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, dill, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir gently from the bottom in the center of the bowl until well combined. Serve salad within next six hours or so.  
**ifoodreal.com**

## CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

**Ingredients:**  
 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
 1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix (dry)  
 1 mini loaf of cocktail rye bread  
 1 cucumber, sliced  
 fresh dill weed, chopped

### METHOD

The night before serving the cucumber sandwiches, mix together the cream cheese and the Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix. Refrigerate overnight. Shortly before serving, spread some of the cream cheese mixture on a slice of the cocktail rye bread. Top with a slice of cucumber and sprinkle with dill weed.

**Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg**

## CHERI'S SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1-1 lb. pkg. veggie spiral noodles  
 2 1/2 c. diced ham  
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
 1 c. chopped celery  
 1 bag frozen peas, thawed

**Dressing:**  
 1/2 c. mayonnaise  
 1/2 c. sour cream  
 1 tbsp. mustard  
 1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice  
 3/4 tsp. onion powder  
 1/3 c. sugar

### METHOD

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse. Mix ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Mix until blended and pour over salad. Stir until well blended.

**Jan Antonen, Arlington**

**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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.**

## Unclaimed capital credits



One thing that sets Lake Region Electric Association apart from other electric companies is that we are a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative. LREA allocates any excess margins to our consumers after paying all the bills, reinvesting in infrastructure, and meeting our financial obligations. Lake Region tracks the allocations and refunds the money to our member-owners, as cash positions allow. The Lake Region Board of Directors approved more than \$710,000 this year. Active Members saw their refund as a credit on their bill that was sent out at the beginning of May. Inactive members were mailed a check in June.

Here's where you can help your fellow cooperative members: a number of checks were returned to Lake Region as undeliverable by the post office. We are asking for your help getting these payments to previous account holders. If you know the current address or phone number of anyone listed here, please notify them to contact us, or contact Lake Region Electric Association by calling 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869 or by sending an email to lakeregion@lakeregion.coop. Thank you for your help!

## Unclaimed capital credits

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	CITY/STATE
Paul	Ackerman	Phillipsburg, MT
Terry or Wanda	Block	Bristol, SD
Orville	Brandlee	Bristol, SD
Karen	Davis	Redfield, SD
Calvin	Diehl	Oakes, ND
Dawn	Feather	Houston, TX
Joseph or Donna	Hanson	Sioux Falls, SD
Harley	Hoisington	Eden, SD
Amanda	Holy Bull	Fargo, ND
Joan	Jones	Spring Valley, MN
Lee P.	Johnson	Britton, SD
Mary C.	Joyner	Sisseton, SD
Pat	Kulesa	Laramie, WY
Alfred	Lamee	Britton, SD
Lance	Larsen	Bath, SD
Lisa	Likness Halbert	Sisseton, SD
Amanda	Lufkins	Veblen, SD
Dean	Marske	Aberdeen, SD
Roger	McKittrick	Coon Rapids, MN
John	Owen	Watertown, SD
Everett or Caron	Peck	Sioux Falls, SD
Rick	Peckham	Clark, SD
Joseph or Debbie	Peterson	Sisseton, SD
Carl	Privatt	Advance, MO
Craig	Rickert	Sioux Falls, SD
Paul or Mary	Rickert	Sioux Falls, SD
Robert	Rohl	Aberdeen, SD
Robert or Eugene	Rumpza	Grenville, SD
Elmer	St John	Veblen, SD
Blake	Seas	Fort Collins, CO
Adelaide	Swanson	Brookings, SD
Gregg	Tobin	Winner, SD
Geraldine	Walker	Waubay, SD
BUSINESS/ORG.	CONTACT NAME	CITY/STATE
Lew Marian Est.	Tammy Paul	Anchorage, AK
MM Sigaty Est.	Nancy Sigaty	Peoria, AZ
Wayne Bowers Est.	Kay Marie Bowers	Montrose, CA
Sy Herrick Est.	Linda Herrick	Webster, SD



We want  
to share  
your story

Did you serve in the armed forces, or have a family member who did?

We are looking for the veterans amongst our Lake Region members to spotlight in our November issue. Entries should be in by September 15th.

Contact Laura  
at Lake Region Electric  
Phone: 605-345-379  
Email: llondon@lakeregion.coop  
Mail: P.O. Box 341  
Webster, SD 57274



# Wordes works to master complexity of the pipe organ

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The many pastimes of Rachel Wordes include popular activities such as dance, soccer and volunteer work through her church.

And then there's the pipe organ. Wordes, a native of Clara City and recent graduate of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, has been on a quest to perfect her musical skills on this arcane instrument since she joined the music program at Dordt.

She received scholarship support in dance and education, but also received a special private scholarship to study the pipe organ because of her proficiency on piano, her passion for music and eagerness to learn. She sat down at the imposing Casavant organ at Dordt and it was love at first listen.

Wordes read a history of the vaunted Casavant organ written by Dr. Joan Ringerwole, who described it as having voice and breath and taking on the qualities of a living being. The massive organ has 2,865 pipes, 57 ranks, 37 stops and 32 pedals.

"The appeal to me is that the pipe organ is like a palette you can use to paint a musical picture," Wordes said. "Every one is different and has its own unique tone and timbre."

Throughout her college career, Wordes taught piano and pipe organ lessons, led summer music camps, participated in recitals and distinguished herself in her ability to play and teach.



Rachel Wordes plays an organ at St. Bavorkerk in Haarlem, Netherlands. The instrument was built in the early 1700s and was played by Handel and Mozart.

During two weeks last spring, she was selected to take part in a pipe organ tour across the Netherlands. She has also traveled with her fellow Dordt College students and faculty to Europe for the opportunity to play 24 famous and historic pipe organs.

"The Netherlands trip was remarkable," she said. "We got to play two or three pipe organs a day. We had some pieces picked out and played in the style represented during the time the organ was made, going all the way back to the 1300s. It was kind of like driving a car that's not yours. They're all different with

different tones, temperaments, character and personality. I learned a lot."

Knowledge is something Wordes is more than eager to share. In 2019, she spent the summer teaching music in La Entrada, Honduras. During the first five months of 2022, Wordes worked with students in Managua, Nicaragua, and recently returned there with a year-long commitment to teach English and music at a local private school.

Her career goal is to teach English as a Second Language (ESL).

"I love to teach and watch students expand their skills," she said.



# Sunflower commodity prices are making farmers smile

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

It's hard to keep from smiling when you're driving past a field of golden sunflowers in full bloom during the late summer months.

Wall Drug billboards, old red barns and shiny grain bins are no match for the attention of motorists along I-90 when the sunflowers are bursting forth in all their spectacular yellow splendor stretching far into the horizon.

The subject of many aerial and terrestrial photographers across the region, sunflowers have a special appeal as they grow tall in the field and seem to greet the day leaning forward with a positive energy that exudes joy and optimism.

The current sunflower commodity market certainly has given farmers a reason to smile. South Dakota farmers raised nearly 600,000 acres and more than 1 billion pounds of sunflowers

last year, ranking second only to North Dakota for sunflower production. In fact, for the past decade the Dakotas and Minnesota have alternated the top three spots in their friendly competition depending largely on the vagaries of weather patterns. At least 75 percent of the U.S. commercial sunflower production has taken place in those three states.

About 1,000 of those South Dakota acres were grown by Brad Schecher, a fourth generation farmer who also rotates wheat, corn, flax and soybean crops on his 3,500-acre spread located near Bison in the northwestern part of the state, one of the hot-bed regions for sunflowers.

Schecher took over the family farm from his father nearly 10 years ago and said the military conflict in Ukraine and other economic factors have converged to form a "perfect storm" that has constricted international supplies and created a favorable environment for the

current global sunflower oil market. Commodity prices have broken all-time records by soaring 60 percent compared to a year ago.

"It's as good as any of the 10 years I've been involved in it," Schecher said. "Ukraine was the largest producer of sunflowers and the largest exporter of sunflower oil on the world market with about 50 percent of the overall market, but a lot of their crop has been destroyed or confiscated by the Russian military. That's one of the things that have driven prices up, and it's been good for the farmers."

High prices and high returns are keeping Schecher interested in raising sunflowers, but sometimes he has his doubts. Especially when he gets tired of fighting the fires, a battle that all sunflower farmers are bound to face at some point.

Schecher said that for all the eye appeal sunflowers hold, it's not always easy to bring in the crop. He explained that reaping the high-yield, high-oleic variety that he grows for the sunoil market can cause fires to break out during the combining process in the





Brad Schecher farms roughly 1,000 acres of sunflowers near Bison. *Photo by Brooke Schecher*

fall. The elevated oil content of the plant - ranging anywhere from 38 to 44 percent - along with the dust that's created during combining can result in a combustible mixture that is sometimes ignited by the presence of static electricity.

To make sure he's prepared, Schecher keeps a battery-operated leaf blower aboard the combine at all times.

"I have to keep blowing the combine off when I get to the end of the field to keep a fire from breaking out," he said. "You can see the accumulated piles of dust start glowing red-hot, and you can usually smell it and get it put out before it gets out of control. It's a hazard that you just have to contend with. Sometimes it can happen two or three times a day, especially when it's dry conditions."

Other farmers, such as Lance Hourigan of Lemmon, S.D., have addressed this common problem by investing in after-market solutions. Hourigan reached northward across the state border and recruited Stelter Repair out of New Leipzig, N.D., to manufacture an air tower to help

Estimated number  
of sunflower acres

**600,000**

planted in South  
Dakota in 2021

reduce the risk of fire during harvest time. Resembling a chimney, the device draws in air from above the combine where there is much less dust and debris billowing from the threshing process, and blows the air over the engine to help it stay cool and clean.

While Schecher focuses on the high-oleic variety that represents about 80 percent of the market, there are other varieties grown for silage, birdfeed and other uses. Confection sunflowers, grown mostly in the eastern part of the state, are those found bagged up on convenience store shelves, the kind loaded with an assortment of flavors and

seasonings and meant for chewing.

While sunflowers are native to the continent, their history in North America can be traced to American Indian tribes in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Archaeologists have found that these tribes domesticated the crop as early as 3000 B.C. The seed was ground or pounded into flour for cakes, mush or bread. Some tribes mixed the meal with vegetables such as beans and squash. The seed was cracked and eaten for snacking, while the oil was squeezed from the seed and used in making bread.

Non-food uses included purple dye for textiles, body painting and other decorations. Parts of the plant were used to treat snakebites. The oil was used on the skin and hair, and the dried stalk was used as a building material.

Today, agricultural scientists are exploring new uses for the plant while also figuring out how to provide protection from wireworms and other threats. Meanwhile, bullish farmers are keeping their eye on the global markets while exuding the same sense of sunny optimism associated with the sunflowers they work so hard to raise.



# BLOOM FAMILY FARM



The move from town to farm has gone well for the Bloom Family. *Photo by Carly Ruth Photography*

## Member spotlight: Bloom Family Farm

By **Laura London**

A rabbit, a goat and a yak walk into a barn...

Sounds like the beginning of a good joke, and while the laughs and smiles abound, this is the reality of Lake Region Electric member-owners Jared and Candice Bloom and their children Abel and Anna.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the farm to check out the animals and hold a bunny or two. This is such a welcoming place, full of a variety of animals and an abundance of love and wonder that it's difficult to choose the best parts to share. Jared and Candice are both Webster natives. When asked how the decision was made to move their little family to a farm, they both replied, "There really wasn't a decision to be made; we both knew this was something we wanted."

Jared's family moved into town from their farm when he was in the third grade. "I cried the entire way to town, just ask my parents."

He still spent a lot of time growing up at the farm with his family, but it wasn't the same. When the opportunity came to purchase this place, there was no hesitation. Jared and Candice bought this little piece of heaven, creating the Bloom

Family Farm in 2018.

The Blooms started raising rabbits for children to show at 4-H. The children are too young to show hooved animals, so bunnies were a great starter animal. The Blooms have had a variety of rabbits since they started raising them, but Candice's favorite is the Chocolate Magpie Holland Mini-lop. This type of rabbit is energetic and curious and loves to play and chew on toys. They are typically calm and tolerate being handled by children well.

Jared and Candice raise rabbits to sell, especially to families looking for a pet for 4-H activities. They caution anyone considering getting one of the rabbits that while they are cute and great pets to have, they do require care and work.

Bunnies may be a main area of focus, Bloom Family Farm has quite a variety of livestock and pets. There is a barn and a pen with some Baby Doll sheep; the youngest of whom, a sweet little lamb named Bobo, was slightly unexpected and bottle-fed as a newborn by a family friend. There are Nigerian goats, potbellied pigs (my personal favorite goes by the name Albert Einswine,) peacocks, a variety of horses and ponies, miniature cows, a couple of hedgehogs, call ducks, and more traditional farm animals like chickens, dogs and cats. That being said,

there are a couple of slightly "exotic" cats who live in the bunny barn.

Candice had grown up in town and as a "city girl" the only animal she was allowed to have was a dog. She loved her dog growing up, she always wanted more. She enjoyed going out to visit her grandparents on their farm, but her mom wouldn't let her have other animals.

"I think I'm making up for it now," Candice says, taking a seat on the ground to cuddle a hungry six-day old yak by the name of Ferdinand. It is obvious that Ferdinand thinks Candice is his mom, even though the two only met the previous day. This little yak cuddles in and starts licking and begging for attention - much like one of the dogs or kitties also vying for their dose of loving - from his new momma while Jared disappears to prepare a bottle.

Ferdinand is one of the newest additions, having been purchased by the



Abel Bloom feeds a goat.





## BLOOM FAMILY FARM

At left, Anna cuddles a kitten. Above, a hungry farm cat wants to get in on the act while Candice feeds a yak. Below, Jared holds a bunny. *Photos by Laura London*

Blooms after his mother passed away. Domestic yaks like Ferdinand can grow up to 2,200 pounds. I'm not certain what sort of milk is in this freshly prepared bottle Jared returned with but one kitty in particular thinks the yak can share.

Jared is a veteran, having served in the National Guard 147th Field Artillery unit out of Webster from 2002-2014. During his time in service, Jared served two tours overseas, deployed in Iraq (2003-2005) and Kuwait (2009-2010). He definitely has an adventurous spirit and caring personality. One thing that he works hard to ensure is that there are no "mean" animals on the farm.

He feels comfortable with his children being around the animals and it is obvious by the interactions that he wants them to not only enjoy the animals as part of their life, but he also wants the children to learn and respect the animals' different needs and personalities.

Jared leads a very large Belgian by the name of Tiny Tim out of the pen and easily lifts his daughter Anna onto the horse's back. Tiny Tim's head alone is larger than Anna's torso, and his hooves are easily the size of a pie plate. The ride doesn't last long, as Anna spies a kitten

that she needs to go love-up; Tiny Tim is all right with this because there is some freshly rained-on grass right outside the pen that he wants to munch on. This horse eats up to 40 pounds a day! Next to Tiny Tim is a smaller pony named Jojo who Jared rescued after its mother died.

The Blooms are often asked to take in unwanted house pets, but that isn't often possible. They are particular about the animals' personalities and care; animals that were previously kept as inside pets often cannot be transitioned into farm life with other animals. This is a difficult concept for some people.

The Blooms are a busy family. Jared is sales manager at Hahler Automotive in Webster. Candice has decided to venture into something new this year, leaving her career with the National Guard Child and Youth Program, she has taken a position as art teacher at Webster School. Their children Abel and Anna participate in the beginning 4-H programs. Abel started wrestling, with his dad joining the program as a coach. They all love hunting, fishing, spending time with their family. The Blooms are still in the process of renovating the house they moved into a few years ago and situating



things on the farm to suit their needs.

"I need to figure out where exactly I'm going to put Ferdinand," says Jared as he scans the farm and outbuildings. I jokingly remark that he could just stay in the house, to which Candice and Jared simultaneously respond, "That's where he slept last night."

With full time jobs, activities and just daily happenings, it's a lot of work to keep everyone cared for properly. Sometimes chores aren't finished until wee hours of the morning. Despite all of that, the Bloom Family wouldn't have it any other way. As Abel aptly responded when I asked him his favorite part of the farm "All of it!"





Roger and Lori Pietz claimed the New Age Nosh Award at last year's Chislic Festival in Freeman. Photos by SD Chislic Festival

## Step inside the Chislic Circle for unique food and lots of family fun

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

In a world already rife with scads of dander-raising hot-button issues, add chislic to the list. It seems that anytime more than a few cocksure chislic chefs gather around a grill, controversy can't be too far away.

The bickering typically begins with picking the proper protein. Opt for the traditional scrumptious cubes of mutton or lamb, or take a risk and go hog-wild with pork or maybe buffalo? How about swinging farther to the edge with venison, goat, beef or chicken? Dare we add emu to the list?

At least one restaurant is sending the chislic cosmos into spasms by serving up plates of (gasp) "fish-lic."

The plethora of opinions surrounding the preparation of chislic starts with the choice of meat and springboards from there into seasonings, cooking methods and even serving techniques. Grilled,

deep fried or air fried? Fork, toothpick or skewer? Don't get a chislic enthusiast started on the sauce selection.

Many people and various cultures have a strong attachment to their particular favorite types of food, but South Dakota's desire for chislic is unusually intense – especially for those who dwell within the Chislic Circle.

If the name Chislic Circle evokes images of a secret society that conducts mysterious midnight rituals around a raging bonfire deep in the forest, well, it's not quite that. It's more of a clever marketing concept, and an effective one for community leaders who take pride in their chislic lore. In fact, everyone is invited to come inside this circle.

At the center of the Chislic Circle lies Freeman, S.D., with the chislic realm falling inside a 100-mile radius and including communities such as Kaylor, Menno, Hurley, Marion, Bridgewater, Emery and others. The Circle was spun into creation in 2018 when a small

but passionate contingent of chislic connoisseurs decided to celebrate and demonstrate their pride in their unique culinary heritage.

Andrea Baer was part of that early chislic cadre. She said the catalyst came when chislic was officially declared the "state nosh" by the Legislature four years ago.

"Before then, when you mentioned chislic outside of the area, there was hardly anyone who knew what you were talking about," said Baer, who is a native of Turkey Ridge still living on the farm her forebears from Denmark settled several generations ago. "It's something that's very unique to the area and we





like to celebrate it.”

That celebration has taken the form of an annual event that’s been recognized by tourism officials as one of the state’s fastest-growing festivals with an estimated 10,000 attendees last year after a pandemic pause in 2020. Organizers were expecting up to a couple thousand for the inaugural event in 2018, but four times that many showed up. The following year, the party was moved from the Freeman softball field to the more spacious 40-acre Prairie Arboretum.

This year’s festival was held on July 30 with the usual food vendors touting their unique savory recipes, libations, live music, a family-friendly kid zone, bingo, dancing, a cornhole competition, 5K run/walk, helicopter rides and other forms of family-oriented fun.

Festival board member and chislic expert Ian Tuttle also presented, “From Russia with Love: The History of Chislic” at the nearby Heritage Hall Museum and Archives.

Tuttle enjoys telling the story of how chislic arrived in the late 1800s with a particular group of immigrants described as “Germans from Russia.” A group of German Mennonites and Hutterites originally fled religious persecution in the 16th century and migrated eastward through the Russian Empire where they raised crops and sheep.

They chopped the meat into small pieces, cooked it over a fire and called it “shashlik,” a word for “skewer” rooted in the Turkic languages of Central Asia. The word is a close cousin to the more widely known “shish kebab.”

Eventually, those migrants found their way to present-day southeastern South Dakota and made sure to bring their shashlik with them. Those residing



inside the Chislic Circle generally recognize Johann Hoellwarth as the individual who introduced chislic to the Dakota Territory. Born in 1849 to a German Lutheran family in the Crimea, Hoellwarth settled just outside of where Freeman is today and was laid to eternal rest in the town.

Each year a panel of seven fearless judges takes on the task of naming the festival’s “best chislic.” For the past two years the top Traditional Division Award has gone to Kyle Sturzenbecker and his squad of Sheep Flockers.

Sturzenbecker said he and his fellow chef Josh Goehring don’t characterize themselves as competitive, but he also isn’t about to give away any trade secrets.

“You don’t have to do a whole lot. I just let the flavor of the meat speak for itself,” he said. “Honestly, I never

thought I’d win. I just like to cook good food that people enjoy eating.”

In 2021, the non-traditional New Age Nosh Award was claimed by Roger Pietz, owner of the Pietz Kuchen Kitchen. The establishment is mostly known for its rich custard dessert, but for the festival Pietz decided to go in a different direction and put together a tangy chislic pizza.

Ultimately, the Chislic Festival is about celebrating family, honoring the past and preserving the rural lifestyle.

“The tradition of chislic comes not from cities, the wealthy, or the privileged,” Baer said, “but from the rural, hardworking farm tradition of the people who settled this area. We thrive on the rural, while building the region through vibrant community.”





---

## Anglers get hooked on fly fishing for fun and sport

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

---

Tall tales, small tales, long tales, short tales...Buddy Seiner is interested in hearing any fishing tale you'd like to tell.

While he's partial to fly fishing, Seiner is passionate about fishing in all of its forms. And he offers an open invitation to anglers of every ilk to share their stories of fishing adventures enjoyed with friends, family members or in the presence of one's own company.

Seiner started [www.fishstories.org](http://www.fishstories.org) after his grandfather passed away and he realized there were no audio or video recordings of the many outings they took together casting flies and chatting about whatever popped into their minds in the moment.

Several years ago, Seiner stood on the main stage during a TED X speech in Rapid City and explained his purpose in creating the website. Soon after, he began hauling in a mess of fish stories submitted by avid anglers from far and wide. Today, the archive holds more than 400 sagas of lunkers that were landed, the big ones that got away and precious time spent with loved ones in the great outdoors.

"I believe all fish stories need to be told," said Seiner, who works as a communications consultant based in Pierre. "I used to fish a lot with my grandpa and I realized I'd never hear his voice again after he passed away. He was full of wisdom and had a great sense of humor. I had some regrets about not recording him, so I started this project as a way for people to preserve those cherished voices and to preserve the memories."

Seiner observes that many people are in some way connected with fishing, whether they pursue it themselves or know someone who likes the feel of a rod and reel. He has found that the stories submitted to the site feature not only intriguing narratives of reaching the day's limits under clear cerulean skies but they also reveal relationships that run deeper than the deepest river channel. Some describe disastrous events.

One of those is the story of an outdoors escape that quickly turned tragic. A young woman tells how she lost her husband to an accident while the two were ice fishing on a frozen lake in Minnesota.

While there are stories of heartache and loss, Seiner said most tales tend to trend toward the positive. He has his own fond memories of how his uncle introduced him to fly fishing

---





Part art and part skill, fly fishing is an increasingly popular pastime across the region. *Photo by Travel South Dakota*

26 years ago and how he started tying his own flies as a college student.

“My Uncle Dwaine gave me a rod and I went in the back yard and started practicing. He always told me I’d enjoy it and he was right,” Seiner said.

It was at Bear Butte Creek near Sturgis that Seiner landed his first trout. He was casting for a brown trout beneath a willow tree. The fish went for the dry fly – a blue wing olive – and both the fish and Seiner were hooked. The fish was landed and released but Seiner’s love of the sport has never waned.

Fly fishing is growing in popularity across the region as more anglers discover the adventure and what many describe as the therapeutic benefits of casting flies out across the water. Though fly fishing is often associated with the clear, cold, fast-running streams found in the Black Hills area, Seiner said there is a wide range of options available depending on an angler’s tastes and preferences.

“We have a lot of water that’s prime for fly fishing,” he said. “It’s a sport Buddy Seiner started fishstories.org to preserve fishing tales and memories like those he has of his late fishing pal, Lucy.

that’s new to a lot of people and it’s gaining momentum. You can catch anything on a fly rod. You can go for trout and fish the stock dams out west, you can sight-fish for walleye or channel catfish in the clear waters of the Missouri River, you can fish the glacial lakes in the northeast or fish for carp out near Yankton.”

Whether they go for carp or brown trout, many fly fishers take an interest in maintaining and preserving the habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Seiner serves on the board of a group called Black Hills Fishers and works

with folks like Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler and Outfitter in Rapid City to promote the sport of fly fishing, support conservation and educate the public on how to preserve the environment.

“Fly fishing is so much fun,” he said, “but if we don’t do what we can to protect our woods and waters, it will be a tragedy. We need to stay committed to preservation and conservation, and I’ve found that most people who enjoy the outdoors are very conscientious. We want people to have fishing stories to share for generations to come.”





## REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
*Photo Credit: SD State Fair*

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.

**EVERY TUESDAY,  
AUGUST-OCTOBER**  
**Webster Area Farmers Market**

486 Main St., Webster, SD,  
[facebook.com/farmersmarketwebstersodak](https://facebook.com/farmersmarketwebstersodak)

**AUGUST 24-28**  
**Kool Deadwood Nites**

Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**AUGUST 25-28**  
**Steam Threshing Jamboree**

Prairie Village, Madison, SD,  
605-256-3644

**AUGUST 26-27**  
**Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ**

Elm St., Hill City, SD, [hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com](https://hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com)

**AUGUST 27**  
**Tabor Quilts & Craft Sale**

Tabor Church, Webster, SD,  
605-880-3377

**AUGUST 27**  
**Veblen Summer Bash**

5K, car show, rodeo & dance  
Veblen, SD, 701-403-4688

**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**

890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD,  
[sdstatefair.com](https://sdstatefair.com)

**SEPTEMBER 4**  
**Dakota Five-O**

City Park, Spearfish, SD,  
[dakotafiveo.com](https://dakotafiveo.com)

**SEPTEMBER 8-11**  
**S.D. State Senior Games**

Watertown, SD, 605-491-0635  
or 605-753-3668

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Antique Tractor Pull**

Andover, SD, 605-448-8611

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Germanfest**

Fawick Park, Sioux Falls, SD,  
[siouxfallssistercities.com/event](https://siouxfallssistercities.com/event)

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Insect Festival**

McCrary Gardens, Brookings,  
SD, 605-688-6707

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Sidewalk Arts Festival**

Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD,  
605-367-6000

**SEPTEMBER 16-18**  
**South Dakota Film Festival**

Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen, SD,  
[southdakotafilmfest.org](https://southdakotafilmfest.org)

**SEPTEMBER 17-18**  
**Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games**

37925 Youth Camp Rd.,  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-622-0144

**SEPTEMBER 23-24**  
**Hops and Hogs Festival**

Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**SEPTEMBER 23-25**  
**HNIRC Championship of Champions**

Stanley County Fairgrounds,  
Fort Pierre, SD, [horsenationsindianrelay.com](https://horsenationsindianrelay.com)

**SEPTEMBER 24**  
**Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival**

Main Street Square, Rapid City,  
SD, 605-716-7979

**SEPTEMBER 24-25**  
**Menno Pioneer Power Show**

Pioneer Acres, Menno, SD,  
[mennopowershow@yahoo.com](mailto:mennopowershow@yahoo.com)

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival**

Custer, SD, [gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-roundup](https://gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-roundup)

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 1**  
**Oktoberfest**

Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 2**  
**SiouxperCon**

1201 N West Ave., Sioux Falls,  
SD, [siouxpercon.com](https://siouxpercon.com)

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