

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pristine Prairie

**Tellus & Lori Waddell Grow,
Harvest Native Plants**

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Drive Out to a Drive-In!

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Fourth Fair Fall



Jeremy Lindemann
CEO/GM

My Grandpa had a phrase that he loved to say about this time of year. He would say “well ya know it’s Fourth, Fair, Fall!” And boy was he right! The county and state fair have all but wrapped up, and fall is at our doorstep! School buses are back on the roads, Friday night lights are shining again, and the combines are starting to roll across our service territory! It is a busy and important time of year for families, farms, schools, and local businesses – and it is also a good time to slow down just enough to keep safety at the front of our minds.

As students head back to class, please take a little extra care on the roads. Watch for children waiting at driveways, buses making frequent stops, and young drivers getting back into their school-year routines. A few extra minutes and a little patience can make a big difference for our neighbors and our communities.

Harvest season brings its own kind of traffic and its own set of hazards. Combines, grain carts, augers, trucks, and other large equipment will be moving from field to field, often early in the morning and late into the evening. We ask everyone to be patient when meeting farm equipment on the road, and we remind those working in the field to keep an eye out for overhead power lines, underground equipment, guy wires,

and electric poles along field edges and farmyards.

Every fall, it is worth repeating: look up, look around, and know where the power poles and lines are before moving equipment. Take time to lower augers and extensions, use a spotter when working close to lines or poles, and never try to move or raise a power line on your own. If equipment does make contact with a line, stay inside the cab, if it is safe to do so, and call 911 right away. If there is a fire and you must get out, jump clear with both feet together and shuffle or hop away, keeping your feet together. Do not touch the downed power line as it may still be energized!

Our cooperative crews have also been busy wrapping up summer electrical projects across the system. From line work and maintenance to service upgrades and reliability improvements, the work done during the warmer months helps prepare our system for the changing seasons ahead. We appreciate the patience of our members whenever crews are working in your area, and we thank you for giving them room to work safely.

On behalf of all of us at LREA, I want to wish our students, teachers, farm families, and local businesses a safe September and a productive harvest season. And as always, we will keep the lights on for you!



Yellow lights? Slow down — the bus is stopping.

Red lights + stop arm? Stop — kids are loading or unloading.

Stay back at least 10 feet and watch for kids crossing unexpectedly.

As school buses hit the road, remember: the most dangerous time for kids is when they’re getting on or off the bus.

STAYING PREPARED IN RURAL S.D.

As most South Dakotans know, weather on the Great Plains can be frightfully unpredictable. In fact, South Dakota holds the record for the fastest temperature rise ever recorded. On Jan. 22, 1943, the temperature in Spearfish climbed from 4 degrees below zero to 45 degrees above zero in only two minutes.

Winter storms also offer reminders of how quickly severe weather can reshape daily life. The Blizzard of 1966 brought wind gusts of 70 mph and snowdrifts reaching more than 30 feet. Roads remained blocked for days, and massive livestock losses made it one of the most severe blizzards in state history.

Winter Storm Atlas, another devastating blizzard in October 2013, dropped several feet of snow over the Black Hills. Heavy snow and strong winds toppled trees and power lines, and devastated livestock operations, leaving some residents without electricity for a week or longer.

Although not every storm will make the record books, severe weather can still disrupt a household. A little preparation on an ordinary day can make a difficult day much easier.

Make A Plan

Emergency preparedness begins with a plan. FEMA recommends that households develop a plan for alerts, appropriate shelter, evacuation and communication if family members become separated.

Start by identifying the types of emergencies most likely to affect your area. For rural South Dakotans, that may include anything from blizzards and tornadoes to severe thunderstorms and wildfires. A good safety plan starts by choosing a safe place inside the home for high winds and tornadoes, generally a basement or small interior room, away from windows.

Next, consider who in your household may need extra help during an emergency, including infants, older adults and pets. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do, then walk through the plan together.

Build A Practical Supply Kit

Once the plan is in place, start collecting and organizing supplies your household could rely on if the power goes out or travel becomes difficult. FEMA recommends keeping enough food and water for at least several days, with one gallon of water per person for each day. For example, a

family of four preparing for three days would need at least 12 gallons of water.

Choose nonperishable foods your household already eats and that can be prepared without electricity. Then add the basics needed to get through an outage, including flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and a way to recharge cellphones. A NOAA Weather Radio can also provide important updates even when cellphone service is unavailable.

Next, tailor the kit to your household. Set aside medications and other essentials.

There is no need to build the entire supply kit at once. Start with what is already in the house, then add supplies during regular shopping trips. Check the kit a few times each year to replace expired food, medications or batteries.

Preparedness cannot stop a storm, reopen a highway or restore electricity, but it can provide time and options when conditions begin to change.

For more information, visit Ready.gov for additional tips on making an emergency plan, building a supply kit and staying prepared.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Owen Williams, age 7

Owen reminds members to not plant trees near power lines. That is great advice, Owen! Thank you!

Owen's parents are Bruce and Jing Williams from Wakonda S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

FALL DESSERTS

GOLDEN GRAHAM/ SMORES BARS

Ingredients:

7 cups Golden Graham cereal
16 oz. mini marshmallows
1/2 cup butter
6 full size Hershey bars

Method

Unwrap Hershey bars and break apart on lines and then each piece again in half. Set aside. Melt the butter and 6 cups of the marshmallows. Stir in the Golden Grahams cereal. Cool for one minute. Stir in remaining marshmallows and Hershey pieces. Press lightly into a greased 9x13 pan with slightly wet hands. Cool and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsp. flour

Topping

(makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

VERY GOOD PEACH DESSERT

Ingredients:

First layer:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup nuts
1 stick margarine
Mix together and press in 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 F for 10 minutes.

Second layer:

1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1 cup powdered sugar
Cream together and add 1 cup Cool Whip. Spread on top of cooled crust.

Third layer:

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. white corn syrup
3 tbsp. cornstarch
1 cup water
Combine ingredients, cook until thickened, then remove from heat. Add 3 tbsp. of peach-flavored gelatin and 1/4 tsp. almond flavoring. Cool. Peel and slice fresh peaches, then combine with the cooled mixture. Spread on top of cheese filling. Top with a layer of whipped topping and chill.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

HELP US GET OUR MEMBERS' MONEY TO THEM

If you know any of the people on this list, please have them contact our office: Phone 605-345-3379 or Email lakeregion@lakeregion.coop.

First Name	Last Name	and/or	City/State
Ulysses	Abraham	Cathi Abraham	Browns Valley, MN
Barth	Adolph	Geraldine Adolph	Summit, SD
Bonnie	Anderson		Webster, SD
Roger	Andrews	Andrews Welding	Britton, SD
James	Batterton		Colorado Springs, CO
Eric	Becking		Aberdeen, SD
Justin	Bopp		Oakes, ND
Jesse	Brakke		Havana, ND
Ronald	Button		Tea, SD
Perry	Cottingham		Columbia, CA
Mike L	Davies		Sisseton, SD
Mark	Deutsch	Monica Deutsch	Eden, SD
Jennifer	Dumarce		Sisseton, SD
Jennifer	Eastman	Tristan Eastman	Sisseton, SD
Alan	Franka		Britton, SD
Richard	Gorud		Milbank, SD
Roland	Heminger		Sisseton, SD
Kangi	Hisgun		Veblen, SD
Robert	Horsman		Roslyn, SD

First Name	Last Name	and/or	City/State
Nathan	Johnson		Webster, SD
Lewis	Lacroix		Veblen, SD
Roydin	Lamb	Doris Lamb	Baltic, SD
Susan	Lufkins		Sisseton, SD
John	McCardle		Rockwood, TN
Derek	Moe		Watertown, SD
Willis	Quinn		Sisseton, SD
Earlynn	Redday		Veblen, SD
Briana	Rodriguez		Eden, SD
Patricia J	Schmidt		Webster, SD
Craig	Schotzko	Rochelle Schotzko	Sioux Falls, SD
Victor	Simon		Waubay, SD
Barbara	St John-Heminger		Sisseton, SD
Allen	Svare		Lakeville, Mn

Business/Organization	Contact Name	City/State
Great Western Bank		
Bender Real Estate	Att: Matt Biggs	Lincoln, NE

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Are you Power Line Ready?

Always be aware of your surroundings when moving farm equipment and know what to do in case your equipment contacts a power line. Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative has tips and resources available to keep you safe this season.





Aunicka and Jagger Dargatz and
Micki Lesnar from Lake Region
Electric pose with sparklers

AMERICA'S 250TH

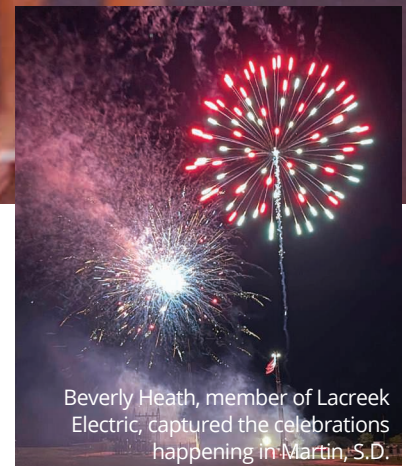
Electric Cooperatives Celebrating Independence



Oahe Electric General
Manager Jordan Lamb takes
a moment to pose with
wildlife in the Black Hills.



Central Electric employee
Heather Gales and
her family celebrated
America's 250th in
Chamberlain, S.D.



Beverly Heath, member of Lacreek
Electric, captured the celebrations
happening in Martin, S.D.



Bailey Meyer, member of
Lake Region Electric, shares
a photo of her children
celebrating the holiday.



Lake Region Electric
employee Autumn Spiering
and her boys went touring
around Custer.



Central Electric employee
Lindsey Wilson's family
celebrated America's 250th
and July 4th at Lake Mitchell.



WONDROUS WILDFLOWERS & PRAIRIE PRESERVATION

Tellus and Lori Waddell.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Waddell Native Seeds Turns Rural Acreage into Prairie Paradise

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Journeying east on U.S. Hwy. 12 toward Milbank, as you make a steep descent into Whetstone Valley, you'll pass the usual South Dakota crops – corn, soybeans, some wheat here and there.

But for Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative members Tellus and Lori Waddell of Marvin, the most fascinating – and lucrative – harvest is one most of us would overlook, growing tall in roadside ditches and uncut fields.

For more than 30 years, the Waddells have allowed their Grant County acreage to run wild as they grow, harvest and sell the seeds of dozens of native wildflowers and grasses.

"We started noticing wildflowers up in the pasture, and at that time [the internet was] coming out so we could do some research on what they were," Lori recalled. "Tellus started calling nurseries asking them if they wanted this or that ... and that's how we built into this – and there are not a lot of people that do this."

When Lori says "this," she's referring to more than just collecting seeds. She means getting up early before the weather

is too hot, rolling up her sleeves and driving around the property in a side-by-side scanning the ground for patches of whichever wildflower type is ready to be harvested – by hand – for seeds.

"It's very, very labor-intensive," Tellus added. "It's not like picking flowers – because we don't pick a flower. You have to let [the seeds] develop. Right now, we're picking things that blossomed about six weeks ago."

With dozens of plants and just as many harvest schedules, the Waddells have a steady amount of work to do from mid-spring all the way into fall.

Traversing the lightly traveled trails over their expansive, glacially carved property, (this reporter was joined by two labs in the back seat of the side-by-side) Tellus and Lori are quick to point out distant patches of coneflowers, blazing star, wild turnips, vervain and their personal favorite flora they cultivate, milkweed.

"It's for the butterflies," Tellus explained as he pulled the vehicle up to the family's newest experiment: milkweed planted as a row crop.

"It's the first time we've ever done that," Tellus said, proudly explaining his youngest son, Levi Waddell, is heading up the initiative.

Tellus added, "As every generation takes over, you'll get different things."

Most outbuildings on the Waddells' land double as drying rooms for at least one harvest during the season.

That includes their three-stall garage – a more accurate description may be the seed processing facility – where the Waddells dry the seeds, separate them from the chaff and package them for shipment to area greenhouses and other customers.

Demand has grown to the point where the Waddells have hired about a dozen part-time summer workers to help harvest seeds.

Their harvesting efforts don't stop at the

The Waddells are row cropping milkweed for the first time. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed, making it an important resource for conservation efforts.

Photo by Jacob Boyko





Lori Waddell enjoys photographing native flowers on the acreage.
 Top row: prairie lily, pasque flower (S.D. state flower), wild turnip.
 Bottom row: blazing star, scarlet gaura, coneflower.
Photos by Lori Waddell

fence line – Tellus is known to park his car, knock on the doors and ask to collect seeds if a patch of prairie catches his eye.

"We have picking rights [agreements with property owners] from here to Pierre down to Grand Island, Nebraska," Tellus said, recounting an especially vibrant purple field of vervain near Forestburg.

This led Tellus to a more solemn conversation. Piece by piece, he and Lori have bought surrounding acreage in an effort to isolate their native plants from the effects of drifting pesticides. Tellus said that when mixed into a slight breeze, the chemicals are potent enough to wipe out their native broadleaf plants for years at a time – even if the spraying takes place miles away.

Tellus and Lori's observation is that biodiversity is shrinking throughout the region for this same reason – diverse fields of native flowers and grasses are becoming more difficult to find, and the wildlife that relies on native plants for food are becoming increasingly scarce.

"You talk to people in their 80s, and they'll talk about walking through a field of lilies," Tellus said. "And then they just sit there for a bit and try to think of the last time they've seen that. Sometimes 40 or 50 years ago."

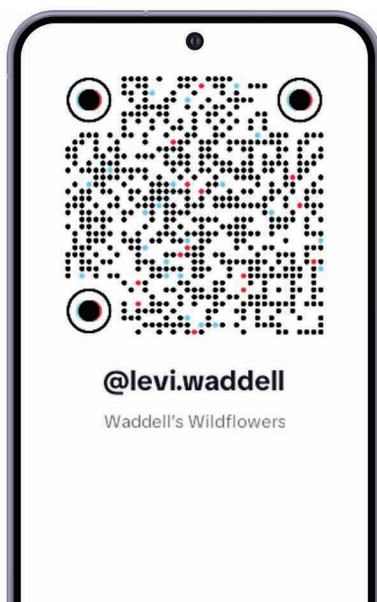
He continued, "that's when people realize the prairie is pretty much gone."

Levi Waddell uses social media to spread awareness about native plants, conservation and his family's operation.

His TikTok page, Waddell's Wildflowers, has more than 1,000 followers and 19,000 likes and chronologizes the day-by-day life of a native plant harvester.

The Waddells hope to share their story to educate others on the importance of conservation and inspire them to preserve the native prairie for generations to come.

"God gave us this beautiful earth and we're ruining it," Lori said. "If we can at least preserve and protect our little corner, I feel like we've done our job."



PROCESSING NATIVE SEEDS



The harvested seeds are spread indoors to dry for several weeks.



The dried seed heads are broken apart to loosen the seeds from the surrounding plant material.



The seeds are fed into a hammer mill to break apart remaining plant material from the seeds.



The cleaned seeds are sifted one final time to remove any extra material. The separated chaff is spread where the seeds were harvested so any unseparated seeds can germinate.

ROOTED IN LAKE REGION TERRITORY:

Building A Business Around Family, Community and Creativity

Laura London

For Northern Edge Marketing founder, Bailey Meyer, the journey to owning and running a successful marketing business from her home in rural northeast South Dakota wasn't part of a carefully mapped career plan. Originally from Minnesota, she and her husband, Calvin, have built a life in South Dakota that has become exactly what they hoped for— a close-knit community, room to raise a family, and the opportunity to pursue meaningful work.

The couple's path to Webster followed Calvin's career with South Dakota Game,

Fish and Parks. After moving to Garretson in 2014, then Watertown, they settled near Webster in 2019 when Calvin became a conservation officer. Today, he serves as a private lands habitat biologist. Although work brought them here, the community convinced them to stay.

Living on a small acreage just outside of town, the Meyer family enjoys gardening, raising free-range chickens and spending as much time outdoors as possible. "This is the kind of life we once prayed for," Bailey says, describing Webster as the place where they were able to put down roots to grow their family and now, her business.

Her professional path wasn't always



clear. After high school, she initially considered cosmetology before earning an associate degrees in Fashion Management and Sales and Marketing Management. Later, while Calvin was deployed to Iraq, she completed her bachelor's degree in marketing through the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Bailey's first marketing position introduced her to the promotional products industry, where she discovered a passion for combining creativity with client relationships. Although she briefly stepped away after the birth of her son and during the COVID-19 pandemic to operate a home baking business, Bailey soon realized she missed helping businesses bring their brands to life through promotional marketing. Returning to the industry confirmed she had found her calling.

When Northern Edge Marketing launched, years of industry experience and strong professional relationships helped fuel its early success. Rather than relying on aggressive advertising, the business has grown primarily through referrals, word-of-mouth and a reputation built on trust, responsiveness and honest communication. Bailey believes clients want more than products – they want a marketing partner who understands their business and helps solve problems.

Like many small business owners, Bailey faces challenges every day. Competing with large online companies, balancing countless responsibilities and maintaining personalized service while growing requires constant attention. As an independent distributorship, Northern Edge



Marketing enjoys the freedom to choose the best solutions for clients, but that independence also means building every aspect of the business without the support systems larger organizations often have.

Family remains the driving force behind every major decision at Northern Edge Marketing. More than building a successful business, Bailey hopes to create something rooted in integrity, service and purpose - something her children can one day be proud of or even become part of themselves. Calvin has been a huge support and helps Northern Edge marketing on multiple levels. He is there for Bailey to bounce ideas off and offer encouragement

as she works towards her goals. Calvin also pitches in with manual labor; sometimes pressing apparel, assembling orders and assisting with production after the kids are asleep. Bailey values the flexibility entrepreneurship provides, allowing her to remain present for important family moments while demonstrating to her children the value of hard work, perseverance and meaningful relationships.

Looking ahead, growth is certainly part of the plan - but only the right kind of growth. She has no desire to become the largest company in the industry. Instead, the goal is to thoughtfully expand production capabilities, improve internal

systems and continue serving businesses throughout the region without sacrificing the personal relationships that define the company. As Northern Edge Marketing continues to outgrow its home office, the family is exploring the possibility of a dedicated office and production facility in Webster. Rather than operating a traditional storefront, the vision is to create a space designed for production, consultations and customized projects while continuing to meet clients where they are. Whatever comes next, Bailey plans for the business to remain firmly rooted in the Webster community that has become home.

LREA MEMBERS TAKE VIP TOUR TO BASIN

Early one Monday morning in July, fourteen Lake Region Electric members boarded a charter bus to learn about Basin Electric and how power generated in North Dakota reaches our homes, farms, and businesses. On the way to Bismarck, the bus stopped to pick up members from fellow cooperatives Northern Electric in Bath and FEM Electric, headquartered in Ipswich.

While on the tour, members get to visit Basin Electric headquarters. Basin is a not-for-profit generation and transmission cooperative incorporated in 1961 to provide supplemental power to a consortium of rural electric cooperatives. To this day, Basin remains consumer owned by member cooperative systems. Power generated by Basin serves 3 million electric consumers, including the 2,600 members of Lake Region. In fact, Britton native, Art Jones was one of the founders of Basin Electric. Another stop on the tour is Basin-owned Dakota Gasification Company, a synfuels plant that is the only commercial-scale coal gasification plant in the United States that manufactures natural gas. It is capable of gasifying more than 6 million tons of coal annually. An-

telope Valley Station, a power generation facility owned by Basin Electric is part of an energy complex that includes the Great Plains Synfuels Plant and the Freedom Mine. The Synfuels Plant and Antelope Valley Station share certain facilities and coal and water supplies: Antelope Valley Station supplies the Synfuels Plant with electricity, and the Synfuels Plant supplies several of Basin Electric's gas peaking facilities with synthetic natural gas. They also visited Wilton Wind Farm that provides more than 200 megawatts of power to the Basin system. Eleven tour guests spent an evening cruising the majestic Missouri river aboard the Lewis & Clark Riverboat where they were able to relax and enjoy a tasty barbecue supper.

Feedback from members who attend the VIP Member Tour is always positive, and this year was no exception. "It was very eye-opening. Several of us were chatting during the tour and consensus was, none of us realized everything that Basin did for us as members to keep the price of electricity affordable. I think we all thought they created electricity and sold it to Lake Region and other cooperatives. Headquarters was impressive and there's a lot going on there. Several presenters commented on how impressed they were with Kermit's dedication to the cooperatives. Site visits to the plants and mine were also very interesting. Hard to put into words what we all saw, people need to see it for themselves," said Lake Region member Lorne Aadland.

Tour dates are typically announced at the beginning of the calendar year, so keep an eye out for information on how to sign up next year!





DRIVE OUT TO A DRIVE-IN

Outdoor Movie Theaters Offer Old-Time Fun

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

It's one of the defining cultural behemoths of the 20th century. Load the family into the station wagon – or someone you fancy in a borrowed hot rod – and head over to the drive-in theater. You pick up popcorn and soda pop, tune your car stereo to the transmitter, and settle in for an unforgettable experience.

It all started in 1933, when Richard Hollingshead of Camden, New Jersey, began developing an accessible and comfortable way to bypass the confining indoor theater seats and allow moviegoers a way to enjoy a show from the comfort of their own vehicle.

The Smithsonian Magazine reports a peak of more than 4,000 American drive-in theaters in 1958. But with cities continuously expanding and the price of property increasing, most of them have closed in the time since. Today, it's estimated that fewer than 300 drive-in theaters remain.

But don't fret! If you're reading this magazine, there are still some nearby drive-in movie theater options for you and your family (or your date) to enjoy!

Midway Drive In – Miller, S.D.

In Miller, mid-May through Labor Day weekend is drive-in movie season. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights are illuminated by the distant glow of the local drive-in movie theater.

Sarah Resel is one of the owners of the Midway Drive-In. Growing up in Miller, the drive-in was her weekend hangout and the site of so many cherished memories. Years later, that's still the case – just under slightly different circumstances.

A show is about to start at the Midway Drive In near Miller.
Photo submitted by Midway Drive In

"We pretty much don't have weekends during the summer," Resel said. "We're committed to being here with the theater. We all have full-time jobs; we always call this our community service."

Despite the hefty commitment, Resel says seeing people turnout from all over the country for an authentic drive-in experience makes it worthwhile.

"I think with us in our Miller community, we take it for granted that it's just here," Resel said. "It's crazy the support we get from other towns coming to our community."

Pheasant Drive-In – Mobridge, S.D.

Cam Wal Electric Cooperative members Jon and Jill Olson of Mobridge have experience with both indoor and outdoor theaters.

"The day-to-day prep is a little bit different," Jill said, explaining



The Pheasant Drive-In sits on the Missouri River hills near Mobridge.
Photo submitted by Pheasant Drive-In

the maintenance needed for the property and screen, along with weather surprises.

"I think weather is probably the number one issue," she continued. "We had a windstorm that came through Sunday [July 19] and caused some damage for us."

Even with the unexpected challenges, Jill said owning the drive-in theater is a positive experience, and on summer nights as people from near and far gather for a showing, she's reminded why she does it.

"It's a completely different vibe than sitting inside a dark theater," Jill said. "Parents do such a good job making it a fun experience, like bringing a pickup, backing it in and letting the kids sit in the back end. The other weekend, we had a family bring a bunch of blow-up air mattresses. The kids can talk and run back and forth – it just isn't your typical thing."

Hilltop Drive Inn Theater – Gregory, S.D.

"It's awesome," Rosebud Electric Cooperative member Dawn Boyer said when asked about running a drive-in movie theater.

"It's like owning a piece of the past while being in the present – and hopefully the future."

When Dawn was a kid, her mom worked at the ticket counter, sometimes taking Dawn along too. When she learned in 2018 the theater was looking for a new owner, it just seemed right.

"Two weeks later, I was running a theater I knew nothing about," Dawn laughed.

The drive-in is an 80-year-old landmark in Gregory County, and the oldest operating drive-in theater in the state. The age is catching up with it, Boyer said, explaining the heavy maintenance schedules necessary to keep the theater running.

Though the theater is becoming harder to operate, Boyer says the smiles on visitors' faces make it all worth it.

"The people who come through that have never seen a drive-in before – that's who we do it for," Boyer continued. "The expression on somebody's face when that big screen lights up at night is awesome."

Pheasant City Drive-In Theatre – Redfield, S.D.

Redfield's drive-in theater has been open continuously since 1953, and thanks to Dave and Stacey Marlow, it will continue for many years.

"We bought it at the time the industry was changing over to digital projectors," Stacey said, recalling the 2014 sale. "And [the previous owner] wasn't going to do it, so we went to him and asked if he'd like to sell it."

Since taking over, they've upgraded the display system again, installing a brighter, higher-contrast laser projector that allows shows to begin earlier and helps future-proof the theater.

While modern, the theater retains its original elements: the speaker poles are functional (Dave spends hours wiring each spring) and the propane popcorn maker satisfies hungry moviegoers.

"People tell us all the time, 'We are so glad you took this and have kept it going,'" Stacey said. "This is a part of our town we didn't want to lose, so we decided we were the ones to step up and save it."

Winner Drive In Theater – Winner, S.D.

In 2022, Rosebud Electric Cooperative members Austin and Jill Moser were looking for more space for their family. They finally found the perfect house on a nice chunk of land – with a catch.

"The movie theater was included," Jill said. "We thought, 'Why not?'"

The Mosers say running the drive-in theater with their three kids has been a good experience for the family and has given the kids an opportunity to work concessions.

During the Mosers' second season in operation, a windstorm damaged the screen, necessitating a lengthy rebuild. Luckily, the theater was able to reopen for the 2025 season.

"It's really great to see how many people still support drive-in movie theaters," Jill said. "There's not that many left in the country. We meet people from all over – we've had people from France come to the theater."

Verne Drive In – Luverne, Minn.

Half an hour east of Sioux Falls, the Verne Drive In welcomes hundreds of I-90 travelers Wednesday through Sunday each summer.

Owner and operator Doug Rozeboom said his goal is to provide an experience that is affordable, fun and unique for both locals and travelers.

"I don't want to say drive-in theaters are a thing of the past, but they're becoming it," Rozeboom said. "It's a unique experience because you can't just go anywhere to watch a movie outdoors on a big screen."

He continued, "Kids are able to run around and throw a football, so they can blow off some steam."

Rozeboom described the enthusiasm of moviegoers, recounting creative truck-bed setups, typically with lawn chairs, sofas or mattresses.

"For the Toy Story 5 premiere, someone had a tree-trimming truck, so they had the boom arm out," he laughed. "I was like, 'Huh, that's interesting.'"

Making the perfect setup is part of the drive-in movie theater experience!
Photo submitted by Verne Drive In



Winner's drive-in features a curved screen.
Photo by Kim Boyko





RUNNING TOWARD BETTER CARE

Avera Race Against Cancer Makes Every Step Count

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

As Vice President of Community Giving for Avera Foundation, Kellie Yackley helped lead the fundraising effort that brought the Avera Cancer Institute to Pierre and helped build the Helmsley Center, a cancer treatment center at Avera St. Mary's Hospital. From the beginning of the campaign, she conveyed to the region the importance of bringing cancer care closer to home.

However, a year after the cancer center opened its doors, that mission became personal. Yackley was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer and soon found herself receiving treatment at the same oncology center she had helped bring to Pierre. Instead of traveling regularly to Sioux Falls, she was able to complete most of her care close to home, surrounded by her family, community and local care team.

"The center was open for a year, and then I received the diagnosis. That irony was lost on nobody, but everything that needed to be managed with my care was managed in Pierre," Yackley said. "I understood the importance through the campaign, but it really landed when I became the patient instead of the fundraiser."

Yackley's fundraising efforts had come full circle. For years, Yackley has lead the team who organizes the annual Avera Race Against Cancer, the foundation's largest fundraiser, raising money for cancer treatment, technology, research and patient services across the region.

Participants line up for the Avera Race Against Cancer in Pierre, outside of the Helmsley Center.
Photo submitted by Avera Foundation.

Held on the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend, the event includes a 1.5-mile walk, a 5K run and a 10K run. For Yackley, the race is proof that a community gathering can have an impact far beyond the finish line.

"It takes all of us, from the \$2 donation to the folks providing five- and six-figure gifts," Yackley said. "Every dollar counts."

The race began 38 years ago when a group of women organized an event to support a friend undergoing breast cancer treatment in Sioux Falls. The event continued to grow and eventually became connected with Avera. For many years, it was known as the Avera Race Against Breast Cancer before expanding to recognize people



Judy Davis, left, inspired the original Avera Race Against Cancer. She is pictured with Jackie Haggard-Tuschen, a longtime volunteer who helps kick off the event in Sioux Falls.
Photo submitted by Avera Foundation.

affected by all forms of cancer.

Today, the race is held in six Avera communities: Sioux Falls, Pierre, Aberdeen, Mitchell and Yankton in South Dakota, and Marshall, Minn.

“We want people to get care locally,” Yackley said. “Rather than saying everybody needs to come to Sioux Falls to participate, we wanted to make sure people could participate locally, where they receive their care and where their care team is.”

Virtual participation has also extended the race well beyond the six host communities. Over its history, the event has drawn participants from 42 states and several countries, helping the race reach more people than ever before.

In 2026, the event drew 8,683 participants and raised more than \$1 million through sponsorships, registration fees and fundraising by individuals and teams. Those funds support cancer screening and early detection, genetic testing, 3D mammography and other advanced technologies intended to identify cancer sooner and improve treatment.

“Every person who participates matters,” she added. “Every person that we touch matters, and every dollar that we raise matters.”

Proceeds from the race also help support Avera’s cancer navigation services, which connect patients and families with assistance at any time of day. Patients can call with questions about treatment reactions, appointments or other concerns. The service also helps coordinate care and provides bereavement support for families after a loved one dies.

Another resource supported by the race is the New Look, Same You program. The program provides wigs to patients experiencing hair loss from chemotherapy and can connect patients with cosmetologists who offer advice about skin care and other appearance-related concerns during treatment, a service Yackley herself used.

The race also highlights the stories of cancer survivors, caregivers and families at each location, recognizing the people behind every diagnosis.

Yackley recalled the story of a Pierre-area woman who expected to travel to Sioux Falls, a three-hour drive across the state, for radiation treatment. Because treatment required appointments over several days, the care would have meant an extended stay away from home. The woman later learned that the treatment she needed was

available in her hometown of Pierre.

“She was able to receive all of that care here because the technology had been expanded to Pierre,” Yackley said. “That is a perfect example of why this matters for rural people.”

At a previous race, organizers recognized the late Dr. Mikel Holland, former president and CEO of Avera St. Mary’s Hospital. Holland supported the effort to build the Helmsley Center and later received treatment there during his own cancer journey. His wife, Debbie, shared the story of his treatment, leadership and connection to the center.

“He was heavily involved in fundraising for the cancer center, and later he was able to receive his care at the Helmsley Center,” Yackley said. “Ultimately, his team cared for him here.”

Years after helping advocate for expanded cancer services in Pierre, Yackley remains committed to ensuring future patients can receive high-quality care close to home.

“For me, the race is a culmination of all the things that are really important,” she said. “We will absolutely continue to carry that banner and support patients in every region throughout Avera.”



Kellie Yackley of Pierre poses for a photo at the 2026 Avera Race Against Cancer. Photo submitted by Avera Foundation.

The next Avera Race Against Cancer is May 8, 2027.
Register at AveraFoundation.org.



Runners begin the Avera Race Against Cancer. Photo submitted by Avera Foundation.

REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!



SEPT. 3 (ONE DAY EVENT)
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
Horticulture Park, State Fairgrounds
Huron, SD

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.

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 6
Studebaker Car Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
South 6th St.
Custer, SD

SEPT. 10-12
DKG Used Book Sale
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-6713

SEPT. 11-13
James Valley Threshing & Tractor Club Show
Andover, SD
jamesvalleythreshers.com

SEPT. 12
Salute to Ellsworth
3-8:30 p.m.
Box Elder, SD
605-390-9341

SEPT. 12
Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 12
Harvest Bash
Webster, SD

SEPT. 12-13
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
605-505-0535

SEPT. 19
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m.
American Flag at Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-380-6762

SEPT. 19
SPURS Annual Barn Dance
Doors Open: 4 p.m.
Dinner: 5 p.m.
\$25 per person
Live & Silent Auction
Lizzy Hofer Band
605-226-1099
SPURSAberdeen.org

SEPT. 26
Harvest Pumpkin Fest
3-7 p.m.
Eureka City Park North Shelter
Eureka, SD
605-230-1777

OCT. 1
The Dreamboats
7 p.m.
50s & 60s Rock n' Roll Band
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

OCT. 2-3
Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

OCT. 4
St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Swiss Steak 12-1:30 p.m.
Legion Hall
Hoven, SD

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.