

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

In pursuit of Walleye

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LREA is moving in the right direction with an eye on our energy future



Tim McIntyre
General Manager

As we move into the future, we see more and more importance on moving towards renewable sources of electricity. The demand for renewable energy grows, and we, at Lake Region Electric, are growing with it. We want to take an “all of the above” approach to providing you with affordable and reliable electricity. This means using technology advances in the solar and wind energy resources and mixing them with gas-fired generations. We are doing this while still standing on our well-established base load generated from coal with future considerations for increased nuclear energy.

The main part of our mission here is to provide all of our members the highest quality electrical service possible while keeping our rates low. That is why we want to make sure we take our time and get this right. We expect to have electricity 24/7, 365 and there can be some imbalances with renewable energy. We must consider all of the variables that arise with renewable energy sources and how those variables affect our demands. I assure you that

Lake Region Electric and our energy providers are moving in the right direction for our members and the communities we serve while respecting the environment.

Some members of Lake Region are working on their own projects involving on-site renewable energy sources. Technological advances in the solar and wind power generation areas are making it more affordable for people to use these resources on a smaller scale. We want to help! If you are looking into implementing such technology to use in your homes, businesses, or farms, reach out to us. For members who are interested in investing further in renewable energy but don't have intentions of implementing their own, personal systems, Lake Region Electric has Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) available for purchase to offset your current usage with 100 percent renewable energy options.

Staying future focused also brings electric vehicles into the mix. There is a big shift in how many products are being manufactured and the automotive industry is no exception. If you have an electric vehicle or are considering buying one, we want to hear from you.

During this energy generation transformation, we want to strive to provide you reliable power in an environmentally responsible manner.

Thank you & God bless,
Timothy McIntyre

WELCOME TO OUR NEW LAKE REGION ELECTRIC MEMBERS!

Webster Scale Inc
Trevor Bakke
Vevang Properties LLC
Tami Charles
Loris Johnson
Robert Scheire
Jason Devine
Riley Storley
Carol Jacobsen
Brandon Davis
Meredith and Andrew Feia

DO YOU DRIVE AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!
WE ARE CONDUCTING AN INFORMAL SURVEY TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT ELECTRIC VEHICLE USE IN OUR AREA. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE!

Electric vehicle growth is expected to continue to rise across the U.S. There are also plans to install thousands of additional charging stations across the country. With the infrastructure in place, people will soon be able to drive electric from coast to coast with plenty of options to plug in along the way. Let's ride.

Contact Lake Region Electric Association Phone: 605-345-3379 or 1-800-657-5869 Email: lakeregion@lakeregion.coop

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC RIPPLES

(USPS 018-904)

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

RENEWABLE ENERGY CREDIT (REC) PROGRAM



SHOWCASE YOUR SUPPORT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Sign up for Lake Region Electric's REC program and showcase your business's support for renewable energy.

Contact us to learn more!
605.345.3379
bkwasniewski@lakeregion.coop

POWER YOUR BUSINESS ON 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

We're excited to help you reach your business's renewable energy goals! After signing up for our REC program, you'll receive a REC certificate and other promotional materials that you can showcase to your business's customers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Renewable Energy Credit (REC)? 1 megawatt hour produced by a renewable energy source equals 1 REC. RECs are also called Green Tags and they represent the valuable renewable attributes of wind energy.

Do I need to purchase any special equipment? No special equipment is needed. Lake Region Electric will fulfill all your electric needs while you enjoy the benefits of powering your business with renewable energy.

Where do RECs come from? Our RECs come from several wind farms in our region that supply renewable energy to our cooperative.

How much does it cost to power my home or business on 100% renewable energy? \$1 per MWh. Example: If you use 1,200 kWh per month, participating in the REC program would add \$1.20 + tax to your monthly bill.



WEBSTER AREA SOUTH DAKOTA

FARMERS MARKET

Fruit • Veggies • Meat • Canned • Baked • Handmade • More!

Tuesdays from 4-6 PM June - October

486 Main St. Webster, SD

Like "Webster Area Farmers Market" on Facebook
 + Find us on SDSpecialtyProducers.org local foods map!

South Dakota SPECIALTY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Prepare to protect your devices from power surges

A power surge, or transient voltage, is a sudden and unwanted increase in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy sensitive electronic equipment in your home or business.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association estimates that 60–80 percent of power surges are created within a building, such as when large appliances, like air conditioners, turn on and off. Far less common are surges that originate from an electric utility during power grid switching. The most powerful surges can be caused by lightning.

A spike in voltage can be harmful to electrical devices in your home if the increase is above a device's intended operating voltage. This excess voltage can cause an arc of electrical current resulting in heat that damages electrical components. Repeated small-scale surges may slowly damage your electronic equipment and shorten its life span.

Surge Protection Options - Consider protecting your devices and appliances with surge protection. Several levels of protection are available to consumers.

Point-of-use surge protectors protect only the items that are directly plugged into the device. They do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert the

surge to ground. Use point-of-use surge protectors that have an indicator light or audible alarm that alerts you when the surge protector needs replacement.

Service entrance surge protection devices are mounted in or on your main electrical panel or at the base of the electric meter and provide protection for your entire electrical system. These devices cover components that cannot be connected to a point-of-use device, such as outlets and light switches.

Power strips do NOT provide surge protection. Be sure you are relying on the appropriate device for protection.

And remember, power strips and surge suppressors don't provide more power to a location, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. Be careful not to overload the circuit.

Unfortunately, no surge protection device on the market can handle a direct lightning strike. The best way to gird against surges caused by storms is to unplug devices.

SUMMER MEMORIES

Send us your favorite summer photos!



As we approach the end of summer, *Cooperative Connections* would love to see your favorite memories of the season captured in pixels.

We're holding a photo contest called "Summer Memories." Send us your top shot and you could be eligible to win a \$50 gift card!

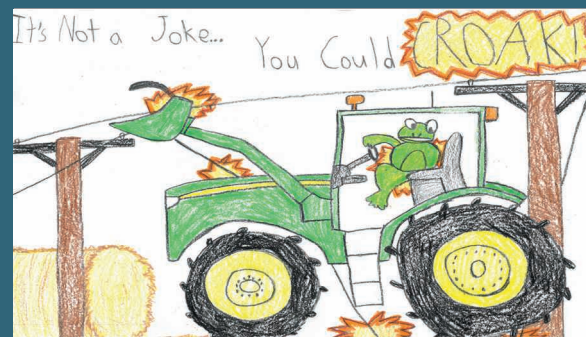
Here are the rules:

- One photo per entrant;
 - The deadline for entry is Aug. 27;
 - Finalist photos will appear in the October issue of *Cooperative Connections*;
 - Send your entry to editor@sdrea.coop.
- Good luck!

Hope Haven fundraising event Sept. 11

Hope Haven will hold a fundraising event on Sept. 11 at Talsma's Trail Park in Avon. The organization offers services and support for children, adults and families, including physical, mental, intellectual, residential, vocational and spiritual needs. For more information, visit www.hopehaven.org.

Hope Haven was misidentified in the July issue of *Cooperative Connections*.



It's not a joke...you could croak!

Creighton Werning, 4th Grade

Creighton is a fourth grade student at Parkston. He and his family live in Emery and are members of Southeastern Electric.

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

PERFECT PASTA

PAPPARDELLE

Ingredients:

- Salted water
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp shallots, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp chili flakes
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 cups pappardelle noodles
- 3/4 cup vegetable stock
- 3 tbsp capers (optional)
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced in wedges
- 1 handful baby kale
- 1 fresh lemon, juice only
- 2 tbsp butter (optional)
- sea salt, to taste
- fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 handful fresh basil, torn

METHOD

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. In fry pan on medium-high heat, add olive oil and onions; saute 2 minutes. Lower heat slightly and add garlic and chili flakes. Saute on medium heat 2-3 minutes. Add white wine and deglaze pan. Cook 3 minutes. Remove from heat, keep warm until ready to add freshly cooked pasta. In pot of boiling water, add pappardelle. Cook according to instructions then drain. Place fry pan back on medium heat. Add drained pasta; vegetable stock; capers, if desired; tomatoes; baby kale; and lemon juice. Add butter, if desired, toss well. Cook 2-3 minutes, tossing occasionally, and season with salt and pepper, to taste, and basil. Toss again, remove from heat and serve.

Rouxbe.com

SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

- 1 # thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 zucchini, peeled & diced
- 2 cucumbers, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 (16 oz.) can sliced black olives, drained

Dressing:

- 1 (16 oz.) bottle Italian dressing
- 1/4 c parmesan cheese
- 1 T sesame seeds
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- 1/2 tsp garlic salt

METHOD

Cook pasta and drain. Drizzle with small amount of olive oil to prevent sticking and stir to combine. Combine pasta with veggies and black olives. Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss until coated. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours or overnight.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

PIZZA NOODLE HOT DISH

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 1 jar pizza sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 c. noodles, cooked and drained
- 1 jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 pkg. pepperoni slices
- Mozzarella cheese for top

METHOD

Mix ingredients together and put in a greased 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350* for 20 minutes. Sprinkle 8 oz. of mozzarella cheese on top and place back in oven to melt.

JOAN ANTONEN, ARLINGTON

SPAGHETTI PIZZA

Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb spaghetti
- 4 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- Salt & pepper
- 7 oz. pepperoni
- 1/2 lb hamburger
- 1/2 lb pork sausage
- 1 onion
- 1 lg jar spaghetti sauce
- 2 c. mozzarella cheese

METHOD

Cook spaghetti, drain, and put in the bottom of a 9x13 casserole dish. Mix eggs, milk, salt, and pepper to taste and pour over noodles. Spread pepperoni over the above. Brown hamburger, sausage, and onion and put over pepperoni. Pour spaghetti sauce over all. Sprinkle mozzarella on top. Bake at 350° for 45 min.

Ruth Morman, Volin

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Unclaimed capital credits: Help us get our member's money to them



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, back to our member-owners, as cash positions allow.

Active Members saw their refund as a credit on their May billing that was sent out at the beginning of June. Inactive members were mailed a check in June. 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 these 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!

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	CITY/STATE
Azure	Venique	Veblen, SD
Baum	Robert	Chester, SD
Baus	Jim/Eileen	Webster, SD
Bennet	Stacy/Lance	Britton, SD
Bergsbaken	Jeffrey/Cynthia	Watertown, SD
Breske	Tim	Madison, SD
Brixey	Tim/Debbie	Defuniak Springs, FL
Buettner	Larry	Bristol, SD
Buss	Aaron/Shasta	Fargo, ND
Cameron	Ilse	Groton, SD
Carson	Raymond	Langford, SD
Cavalier	Teresa	Claremont, SD
Chase	Shawn	Redfield, SD
Davis	Karen	Redfield, SD
Demarais	Fred/Paula	Bristol, SD
Ellingson	Alicia	Veblen, SD
Farness	Al	Garden City, SD
Gangone	Frank	Sisseton, SD
Garness	Leonard	Groton, SD
Gonsoir	Randy	Webster, SD

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	CITY/STATE
Grajczyk	Sheila	Sisseton, SD
Haber	Denton	Sioux Falls, SD
Hanson	Joseph/Donna	Sioux Falls, SD
Harder	Brian/Michele	Grand Forks, ND
Haug	Ashley	Sisseton, SD
Hoisington	Harley K	Eden, SD
Holy Bull	Amanda	Sisseton, SD
Jandahl	Gary/Martha	Yoncalla, OR
Johnson	Hazel B/Terry	Webster, SD
Johnson	Theodore C	Agency Village, SD
Johnson	Tom	Shakopee, MN
Kaul	Jean	Rapid City, SD
Kwasniewski	Janis	Webster, SD
Kurkowski	David	Waubay, SD
Larsen	Lance	Bath, SD
Lesnar	Richard	Alexandria, Mn
Mehlhoff	Mary A	Britton, SD
Mikkelson	Ramona	Waubay, SD
Neugebauer	Ronald/Lynn	Grenville, SD
Nordling	Donald/Corrine	Aberdeen, SD
Ogren	Ehlert/Joyce	Langford, SD
Okroi	Roman/Irene	Grenville, SD
Parker	James/Susan	Sioux Falls, SD
Parrow	Mike/Leona/Dennis	Britton, SD
Peterson	Joseph/Debbie	Sisseton, SD
Quinn Langdeaux	Donna	Waubay, SD
Rohl	Robert/Roberta	Aberdeen, SD
Satterlee	Lisa	Miller, SD
Scotting	Gaylon/Patsy	Baltic, SD
Shepherd	Raymond	Agency Village, SD
Sichmeller	Mrs. J S	Webster, SD
Sippel	Chris	Andover, SD
Sterzinger	Joe	Aberdeen, SD
St John	Elmer	Veblen, SD
Svare	Allen/Harriet	Lakeville, MN
Swanson	Adeline	Brookings, SD
Thompson	Stan	West Fargo, ND
Turner	Dawn	Sisseton, SD
Voss	Richard	Andover, SD
Waddle	Emma	Webster, SD
Walker	Geraldine	Waubay, SD
Wattier	David/Lavina	Webster, SD
Wilson	Michael/Pauline	Webster, SD
Wyckoff	Mark	Forman, ND

BUSINESS/ORG.	CONTACT NAME	CITY/STATE
Wayne Bowers Est.	Kay Marie Bowers	Montrose, CO
Lew Marian Estate	Tammy Paul	Anchorage, AK
MM Sigaty Est	Nancy Sigaty	Peoria, AZ



Electric cooperatives teaming up with Agtegra Cooperative to host farm safety event for kids at the Brown County Fair

Large equipment, big grain bins, and high-voltage electricity can be found on the typical family farm in South Dakota. All those things play a key role in increasing efficiency and productivity, but farm machinery also needs to be treated with respect and operated in a safe manner. It is the reason Agtegra Cooperative and three local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are teaming up to host a Farm Safety Party for kids and families at the 2021 Brown County Fair Aug. 19.

Lake Region Electric Association, Northern Electric Cooperative and FEM Electric Association are

partnering with Agtegra to bring an electrical safety component to the four-hour farm safety event.

“Electricity powers many aspects of farm life but it is also a major hazard on the farm,” Northern Electric Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor said. “We hope to teach kids about the importance of staying safe around power lines through several fun and interactive demonstrations.”

The Farm Safety Party will feature a ‘power town’ display. The display depicts a rural farm scene and uses small figurines and toy tractors to demonstrate the dangers of

contacting power lines.

“The ‘power town’ display is a good way to show kids and families the importance of keeping a safe distance from overhead lines,” Dunsmoor said.

The free Farm Safety Party includes several other activities to teach families about safety and the various hazards they can encounter on the farm. The Farm Safety Party will feature an ATV safety simulator, a safety gear dress-up booth, and a grain sensory station.

“Throughout our territory, children are surrounded by farms, equipment and livestock. By throwing a Farm Safety Party, we created a fun environment to educate hundreds of children on the basics of farm safety,” Brittney Bulson with Agtegra Cooperative said.

The Farm Safety Party will be held in the ‘Kid’s Zone’ at the Brown County Fair which is on the



southwest side of the Holum Expo Building. There will also be face painting and several safety-themed giveaways available for kids and adults. The party gets started at 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 19, and it will continue until 2 p.m. in the afternoon. The event is free and is open to anyone who is attending the Brown County Fair.

In hot pursuit of Walleye



Aydan Johnson landed this Walleye on his 12th birthday at Cow Creek north of Pierre. Photos by Billy Gibson

SD anglers pursue walleye for fun and charity

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Walleye fishing isn't always all about fishing for walleye.

That was the case at the annual SDREC Employee and Vendor Walleye Fishing Tournament held earlier this summer at the Cow Creek Recreation Area north of Pierre. For most of the more than 100 walleye whisperers who participated, the event was mostly about hanging out together, swapping fish tales - some of them true - and catching up with one another.

The tournament also raised \$500 for the state's rural electric cooperative Line Patrol charity.

For Evan Buckmiller, general manager at Kingsbury Electric Cooperative in DeSmet, the tournament presented a prime opportunity to spend time with family and interact with his cooperative colleagues. While his team failed to place, he enjoyed being out on the water with his wife and dad.

"It was a little hot, but we had beautiful weather and caught a lot of fish...just not as many as we wanted," said Buckmiller. "I'd never been a part of this event, so it was fun seeing all the boats taking off at the same time. It was also good to see people you don't normally get to see, or you haven't seen since you worked a storm together years ago. You get to connect with your friends and linemen you went to school with. That's the fun part about events like this."

Roger Crom, former manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, served as a volunteer to help coordinate the event. Crom said while he likes to fish, he takes satisfaction with staying on dry land and meeting the competitors as they come in to weigh their catch and tell of their exploits on the lake.



The dawning of a new summer day brings the promise of fun and a full string of walleye by the afternoon.

“I just enjoy being a part of it every year,” Crom said. “It’s a lot of fun getting together with old friends and meeting new friends and getting to know the young linemen that are now part of the program. It’s not just one or two co-ops, it’s like a big family that comes out year after year. There’s a lot of camaraderie. Everybody works together and we also have a lot of fun together.”

For the record, the winning team of Roger Squires, Ryan Squires and Ron Koosman took top honors, despite temperatures soaring into the 90s and water levels that were unusually low. The crew representing H-D Electric and Dueco prevailed over a field of more than 30 teams with a total weight of 18.03 lbs. Their largest walleye weighed in at 3.05 lbs.

The East River Electric team of Tim Dockendorf, Doug Engbrecht



Crew members of the Captain Crawdaddy prepare to launch at Cow Creek.

and Robert Hanson landed the largest walleye at 4.04 lbs. (Search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus to see a video of the event.)

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America and is one of the top walleye habitats on the continent.

While there are many other walleye fishing tournaments held throughout the state in the spring and fall, one that stands out is the Tom and Matt Hill Memorial Tournament.

The fifth annual event, set for July 31 at the West Whitlock Recreation Area near Gettysburg, is held each year in honor of the Hill brothers who died in a boating accident on Brush Lake in December of 2016.

Born and reared in Volga, the siblings were avid hunters and fishermen. They were finishing up a day of duck hunting and were heading back to the landing to meet their father when their boat suddenly capsized.

The tournament is held to raise funds to support local youth outdoor programs in honor of the brothers. Proceeds have gone toward purchasing safety hunting vests for youngsters, hunting gear and safety training.

Sheila Gross, Energy Services Specialist at Sioux Valley Energy in

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America.

Colman, lost her brother and great-nephew in a fishing accident in January. As word spread, friends and family of the Hill Memorial Tournament and Fishing 4 Miracles jumped into action with an outpouring of support to the Berwald family. To express their gratitude, several of Gross’ family members plan to participate in the tournament to help contribute to the safe enjoyment of fishing and hunting.

“The Hill Brothers Committee is an amazing group of people and they do so much to support the community and those who have been impacted by tragedy. They have blessed my family in our time of loss and have brought great comfort,” she said.

A rules meeting will take place on Friday, July 30, at the Whitlock Bay Supper Club. An open house will be held from 1-5 p.m. with a meal from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Scott Smith locates and marks underground lines for a member.

Avoid underground dangers by calling 811 before you dig

Laura London
Administrative Assistant

The construction season is well under way at Lake Region Electric. One of the largest projects that we have going on is the conversion of overhead lines to underground. Burying electrical wires has advantages but there are disadvantages and dangers as well. The biggest disadvantage being, you cannot see where the lines are just by looking. Lake Region Electric takes calls on a daily basis from members wanting to

know where the lines are buried; we always recommend that anyone who plans on digging call 811. Personal projects are often planned in advance but are typically started when it is convenient for the member or there is a dire need. You must call 811 at least two business days prior to digging, as scheduling can be a challenge. Lake Region Electric receives around 2,000 calls for locates per year through the 811 system, not including the members who call us directly asking questions about their lines.

Scott Smith has worked as a Utility Specialist at Lake Region Electric for nearly 6 years. One of Scott's main responsibilities is doing locates for members who call 811. Scott says there are a couple of things that members need to keep in mind when they have a locate done. First, "Lake Region only marks our power lines up to the meter, that is our demarcation point. On the other side of the meter are customer owned lines, or secondary lines. Other utilities and water companies will come out to mark their own facilities. When you call 811 to request a locate, you want to make sure that all your utility companies have had the opportunity to come out and do their job before you start to dig; we all need 48 hours, or 2 working business days. Secondary lines

owned by the member must be located doing a secondary locate by contacting someone who does that. Each utility has their own color of paint and flags for marking their lines; electric companies use red. It is always helpful if contractors or individuals can mark their work area with white paint and/or white flags which is the color for proposed excavation.”

Scott locates in one of two ways; by detecting the 60 hertz that electric lines naturally emit or more often, using our locating equipment to induce a signal onto the lines. There are regulations governing how deep the lines must be buried but the depth of the lines can change due to environmental factors and excavations. The equipment can give an estimated depth but is not exact.

The best way to avoid hitting underground wires is by digging cautiously and using your eyes to get a



visual to ensure the area is safe and clear. Even though we get a great number of calls for locates, we still have several occurrences of dig-ins annually due to individuals or contractors failing to call 811. These accidents can be dangerous and can cost thousands to repair. Safe Electricity.Org offers this bit of advice: “Remember, always call 811 before you start any digging project! You’ll avoid injury, expense, embarrassment – and a very inconvenient day in the dark.”

UTILITY FLAG COLOR CODE

	Red = Electrical Utilities, like power lines		Orange = Communication Lines
	White = Excavation		Blue = Water Lines
	Pink = Temporary Survey markings		Purple = Undrinkable Water Lines
	Yellow = Gas Lines		Green = Sewer Lines

LAKE REGION ELECTRIC

SUNSET FARMERS MARKET and bake sale

August 20 - 21, 2021
 Friday: 8-5pm / Saturday: 8-12pm
 6 miles west and 1 mile north of Britton
 605-290-9035

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT
SCOTT SMITH:
UTILITY SPECIALIST



Scott Smith is involved in youth sports and church activities in the community.

Scott is a Utility Specialist at Lake Region Electric where he has worked for the past 6 years. He started out in the utility industry about 30 years ago. Scott earned his Electronics Technology Degree from Southwestern Technical College in Granite Falls, Minnesota. Other than electrical lines, Scott has experience with copper and fiber telephone lines.

A native of Willow Lake South Dakota, Scott has lived in Langford for over 10 years. He has five children: Kelsey, Gabe, Cooper, Connor, and Ryder. Kelsey lives in Devils Lake, ND with her family and four years ago made Scott a grandpa. Twin sons Connor and Cooper graduated from Langford High School this past spring and will both attend SDSU this fall. Gabe is currently a “grad student” at Langford and attends Aspire in Aberdeen a few days a week. Ryder will be a freshman in High School this fall.

Scott is very active in his community. He has enjoyed coaching and mentoring area youth, along with his own children, over the past decade. He also is very involved with his church.

RV TRIPPING

RV campers make new friends and enjoy new experiences on the open road. *Photo by South Dakota Travel*

Vic and Barb Simmons adopt the RV lifestyle when visiting new places and creating lasting memories on the road

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Decisions, decisions...

When Vic Simmons starts to sense the allure of the open road, he has some decisions to make. He can crank up his Jeep Cherokee and join all the brand loyalists out there who rally around the phrase, "It's a Jeep thing: You wouldn't understand."

Or he could go grab his gloves and his riding gear, fire up his orange 2017 Harley-Davidson Street Glide and experience the wind rush and beauty of the natural landscape on two wheels. Or he can climb into the command-and-control center of his massive 40-foot Meridian "diesel pusher" motor coach.

But who wants to be burdened by making tough decisions when the highway is calling? Most of the time he makes it a little easier by attaching the bike or the Jeep and

heading out into the great wide open.

Simmons, who just turned 65, serves as general manager of Rushmore Electric in Rapid City. But he has plans of retiring early next year and that means lots of travel time in the future with his wife Barb and whoever else wants to join the adventure.

The passenger list usually includes a host of grandchildren as it has from the beginning of Simmons' foray into the world of recreational vehicles and RV life.

He and Barb invested in their first RV about 12 years ago by purchasing a pre-owned 32-foot Class C model Jamboree, the kind that's built on a truck chassis and resembles a van with a large camper shell and a sleeping chamber over the roof.

"When our three girls were little, Barb's parents used to take them

camping, and to this day they always talk about how much they enjoyed those trips," Simmons said. "So, when it came time for us to have grandkids, we wanted to have a way to create those same kinds of memories for our own grandchildren."

Inevitably, as the family grew the smaller that 32-foot camper became. Besides, the vehicle was a bit top-heavy and caused some white-knuckle driving in high winds, and according to Vic, "Barb's idea of roughing it is staying at a hotel without a swimming pool." So, after three summers an upgrade with more space and more amenities was in order, and Simmons graduated to a 37-foot motor coach.

After a few years, he sold that RV to Lacreek General Manager Josh Fanning, who used it for family vacations and to take his daughter to weightlifting and track competitions in far-flung places.

Soon afterwards, Vic and Barb acquired their "forever RV," a 40-foot Meridian they purchased



Vic Simmons of Rushmore Electric enjoys climbing behind the wheel and piloting his 40-foot recreational vehicle.

a few years ago when Vic began planning out his retirement.

Simmons, who prides himself on always buying pre-owned vehicles, purchased the RV sight-unseen... well almost.

"I found it at a dealership in Lincoln," he recalled. "It had 17,000 miles on it and looked like it was in good shape. My son-in-law was in Lincoln, so he went to the dealership and Facetimed me and walked through it and it looked nice. It was set up to pull the Jeep or the trailer for the motorcycle, so we got it. I don't usually do business like that, but..."

With Vic soon retiring and Barb already retired from her



Vic and Barb Simmons use their RV to visit new places and create lasting memories.

job as the pharmacy technician program director at Western Dakota Technical Institute, the two have lots of traveling plans in their future.

One hitch, however, is finding places to park. RV sales shot through the roof nationally last year as people sought to escape the confines of their homes under lock down conditions and explore the outdoors.

"You can hardly find any good camping spots," Simmons said. "Camping just became something that people felt safe doing, and it got them out of their homes. A neighbor of mine had a travel trailer for sale and it sold in just a few minutes after he posted it."

Simmons said his travel adventures have taken him from North Carolina on the eastern seaboard to Washington state on the Pacific, and also all the way down to El Paso.

His plan is to "go to places I haven't been," although when asked if there's one place he would like to re-visit he's quick with an answer.

"Door County in eastern Wisconsin. I just fell in love with the place," he said. "It's on the peninsula above Green Bay and is just gorgeous

'GREAT 8' UNIQUE RV CAMPGROUNDS IN SD

Here are the state's top eight unique campgrounds, according to the state Department of Tourism:

Wessington Springs City Park Campground

Wessington Springs

Castlewood City Park Municipal Campground

Castlewood

Lake Carthage Campground

Carthage

Custer's Gulch RV Park

Custer

Cedar Pass Campground

Badlands National Park

Rafter J Bar Ranch

Hill City

Fish 'N Fry Campground & RV Park

Deadwood

Rocky Point Recreation Area

Belle Fourche

with a beautiful campground and a friendly community and shops and restaurants on Sturgeon Bay. The sunrises and sunsets are awesome."

His plans for himself and Barb are the same he had for his grandchildren when he invested in his first RV: meet new people, explore new places and make lasting memories.

Oddly enough, many of those new people are encountered not at state parks, camp sites or in restaurants, but at the fuel pump.

"When you're driving a car and stop for gas, nobody will come up and talk to you," he said. "But if you're on a motorcycle or in an RV, it's amazing how many people want to come up and talk to you all the time about where you're going and where you've been. They also like to talk a lot about gas mileage."



South Dakota trucking industry keeps rolling along despite challenges

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

While the two major political parties bicker back and forth about addressing the nation's crumbling infrastructure, substandard roads and other federal issues can be a real problem for people like Mick O'Connor.

Owner of Mick O'Connor and Son Trucking operating out of Mitchell, he oversees a fleet of 11 haulers and dump trucks along with his wife, Carla, and his son, Mike.

Mick launched the business in 1972 and has faced all manner of obstacles and challenges dating back to the Middle East oil embargo back in the 1970s that brought fuel shortages and high prices.

Over the years, there have been strict permitting regulations, soaring insurance premiums and economic downturns. Having cleared all of those hurdles in the past, he was braced to contend with any problems brought by last year's global pandemic. Fortunately for O'Connor and others in the trucking industry in South Dakota, there were a few figurative bumps in the road but business soon kept rolling right along.

"We kept people socially distanced like everybody else," O'Connor said. "Our business wasn't impacted as negatively as some industries, so we were lucky in that regard."

The industry hasn't been completely unscathed, however. Like other business owners navigating

through the post-pandemic environment, O'Connor is having to face challenges such as finding qualified employees and dealing with supply shortages and kinks in the supply chain.

Specifically, O'Connor is keeping his attention focused on the tire market. With big rigs that have up to 18 axles and can weigh up to 195,000 lbs., O'Connor and other trucking company owners purchase plenty of tires.

For Barry Selland, owner of the family-owned Selland Trucking company out of Woonsocket, the immediate need is for vehicle parts. Looking to expand his fleet of 30 flatbed and step-deck rigs, Selland is awaiting delivery on three new Kenworth trucks.

"We're waiting on certain parts to arrive before we can get them here," said Selland, whose company specializes in hauling structural steel



More than 8 million workers are employed in the U.S. trucking industry.

and manufactured goods all across the country and into Canada. “A representative at Kenworth told me there are some headlight parts that have been on order since the first of the year. We had a water pump go out and there was only one pump in the six-state area.”

Selland admitted being surprised that the pandemic wasn’t more disruptive to his industry. At first, he said, he felt the situation was going to impact trucking as heavily as the economic recession did in 2008.

“Things quickly started to slow down and it felt like another recession was coming,” he said. “But

then, just as quickly as it slowed down, it picked back up again and just took off. And it’s been going great ever since. We’re getting good loads and doing a lot of business.”

Both O’Connor and Selland said a national dearth of qualified drivers and general labor shortages are problems not particular to the post-pandemic business world. One concern they share, however, is that the average age of available drivers is rising. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median age of a private fleet driver is 57 years old while drivers in training are at a median age of 35.

More than 3.5 million U.S. workers are employed as professional drivers with nearly 8 million employees in the industry, accounting for almost 6 percent of the workforce. Truckers log a combined 300 billion miles every year.

“There are always things to deal with,” Selland said. “But we’re optimistic about the future. People in this industry in South Dakota all work well together. We work with our state officials, law enforcement and others involved to make sure we continue to get products delivered where they need to be as safely and as efficiently as we can.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT SOLAR ENERGY? THE PUC HAS ANSWERS

Seeking answers about state laws and regulatory policies regarding solar energy and electric vehicles?

The South Dakota Public Service Commission (PUC) has put together a list of frequently asked questions on these topics and more.

PUC officials have indicated that ratepayer inquiries on these topics have increased over the past several months, so they drafted a document entitled “South Dakota Electric Service Laws” to edify utility customers and cooperative members.

Under the heading “Solar Energy” some of the subjects include:

- Solar leasing
- Solar power for your home

- What are the benefits of solar energy?

- What challenges does solar energy face?

- What do I need to know when considering or installing a solar energy system?

- What will I get paid for my solar generation?

The document also provides information on electric vehicle charging, such as where existing EV charging stations are located throughout the state and a summary of rules governing the establishment of charging stations by independent business owners.

According to Trevor Jones, general manager of the South Dakota Rural

Electric Association in Pierre, the PUC’s document will help deliver useful information to electric cooperative members.

“The legislature and the PUC are working very hard to establish rules and regulations in an industry that’s continuing to evolve at a very rapid pace,” he said. “They’re focused on making sure the guidelines are fair and consistent and take into consideration the challenges faced by utility providers to deliver affordable, accessible power balanced against the needs and expectations of consumers.”

The document can be found at <https://puc.sd.gov/Publications/electricsolarfaq.aspx>.

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Your E-mail Address: _____

August 26-29
58th Annual Steam
Threshing Jamboree
Photo by Travel South Dakota



To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

JULY 23-25
Arlington Days
Various Locations, Arlington, SD, 605-983-5251

JULY 27-31
Days of '76 Rodeo & Parades
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 29-AUGUST 1
Bruce Honey Days
City-wide, Bruce, SD, 605-627-5671

JULY 29, AUGUST 5, 19
The 1880 Train Old West Shootout
222 Railroad Avenue, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

JULY 31
Chislic Festival
Freeman's Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, 605-496-9946

AUGUST 5-7
90th Anniversary Union County Fair
The Fairgrounds, Alcester, SD, 605-356-2321

AUGUST 5-14
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7178

AUGUST 6-7
Huron Senior Games
Various Locations, Huron, SD, 605-491-0635 or 605-353-8533

AUGUST 6-7
Potato Days
Citywide, Clark, SD, 605-360-7672

AUGUST 6-8
Annual Sioux River Folk Festival
Newton Hills State Park, Canton, SD, 605-261-7414

AUGUST 6-15
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally
Citywide, Sturgis, SD, 605-720-0800

AUGUST 11
Willie Nelson & Family
824 32nd Avenue, Brookings, SD, 605-692-7539

AUGUST 12-15
Annual Custer County Fair
Custer County Fairgrounds, Hermosa, SD, 605-255-4145 or 605-393-7055

AUGUST 13-15
Fort Pierre Trader Days & Backyard BBQ Competition
Various Locations, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-7603

AUGUST 17-19
Dakotafest
2300 E Spruce Street, Mitchell, SD, 877-611-8161

AUGUST 20-22
Yankton Riverboat Days
City-wide, Yankton, SD, 605-665-1657

AUGUST 20-29
Central States Fair & Rodeo
800 San Francisco Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

AUGUST 20-21
Sunset Farmers Market
Sunset Colony, Britton, SD, contact Aaron Waldner at 605-290-9035 for details

AUGUST 25-29
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 26-29
58th Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

SEPTEMBER 11-12
Fall Harvest Festival
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

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