

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Caring for Caregivers

Exploring Family
Caregiving Services
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Emergency Training
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November Updates



Matt Sleep
CEO

Thank you to all who attended the Butte Electric Cooperative's annual meeting and celebrated our 85th anniversary!! A lot has changed since 1940.

In the October issue, I ended my column with a heads up about our power providers estimated 2026 rate increases. So, let's continue from there. Rates are going up, but not as much as the initial estimates we received. As you all know, you each have three basic charges on your electric bill:

1) Demand – the rate at which energy is used by you; 2) kWh – kilowatt hours – the amount of energy that is used by you; and 3) Service Charge – the fixed costs associated with delivering the energy to you. We in turn, essentially have those same three charges from our energy providers. I think that it is important for everyone to understand that there is a connection there so that provides a better understanding of what I am going to cover next – the 2026 changes.

Before I get started, please understand that I am only talking about the increases that Butte Electric will have from its power providers and NOT about the rate changes that you will have for 2026. I will cover the changes that we will make in the December issue. We just received the notice on the final rate changes, and I wanted to keep everyone informed. The Butte Electric Board is still working through the budget and rates to determine how this will all impact us and what the 2026 rates changes will be for all of you.

Our power providers have increased the demand charge to us by 10.64%. They have increased kWh charges to us by 9.83%. They have increased the fixed charges to us by 1.05%. I would like to note that over the last three years our power providers have increased their fixed charges by 27.86% and we have not increased ours at all. They have increased our heat rate by 10.81%. We have also received notice that they will be increasing the Security and Response rates to us by 17.5%. Security and Response is our after-hours service. You may have talked to one of their representatives if your power went out in the evening or on the weekend. They are the ones that will coordinate with our crews to work on outages after hours. This doesn't even cover all the inflationary pressures that we continue to face.

You're probably thinking, Matt, why is this happening?? Well, there are a "plethora" of reasons for this, more than I have space to cover. So, I'll just focus on one of the main drivers for this column. If you attended the 2024 annual meeting, you'll remember that I handed out a one-page information sheet titled, "What is 1 MW?" and I said, "I am handing this out to you and going over it because you are going to start hearing A LOT about Megawatts (MW) and I want you to know what it means!!" I will give you one example of one megawatt from that information sheet, just because space is limited, 1 megawatt is enough energy to power 750 to 1,000 homes. Also, at last year's annual meeting, I talked about SUPPLY and DEMAND. My basic economic analysis for those in attendance was that when you have a limited supply and an increasing demand, prices go up!

You're probably thinking, Matt, what does that have to do with the

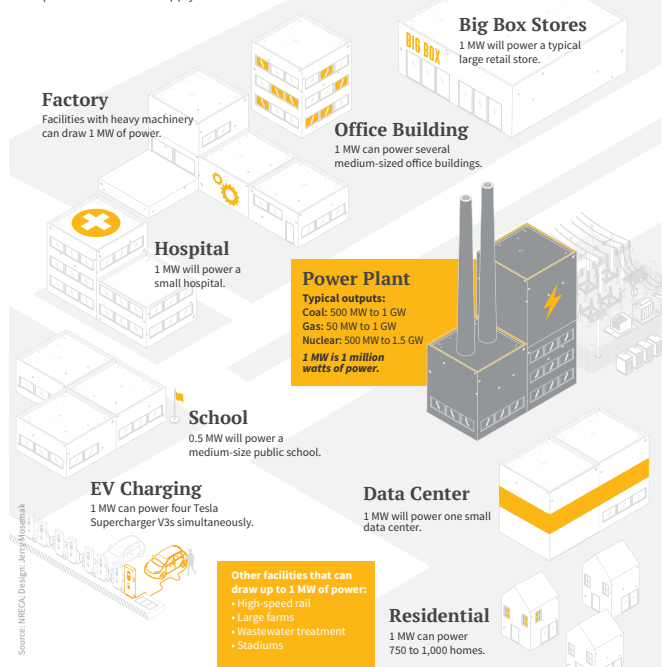
price of electricity now??? Well, my guess is that you or someone you know owns a smart phone or an iPad or a computer. My guess is that you or someone you know may look at one of those devices maybe once or twice a day. That creates data. That data must be stored somewhere and believe me, it is! If you listen to the news periodically, you might hear mention of "Data Centers". Data centers are set up to store all that data that we all create every day. Data centers take A LOT of energy to run. A data center that uses thousands of megawatts of energy can be built in less than a year (remember that 1 MW powers 750-1,000 homes). A power plant that generates that amount of energy takes 8 to 10 years to build. We are in the middle of a mismatch of electricity supply and demand; and, for the short term, it's going to continue to get worse, until we figure out a way to address the mismatch. I like to watch football in the fall. This year, I have started to cringe when I hear many of the commercials because many are focused on AI services (For the rancher reading this AI stands for Artificial Intelligence NOT Artificial Insemination). I googled "google search vs ai energy consumption" while writing this article. The AI overview said that a typical ChatGPT query uses .0029 kWh versus .0003 kWh for a google query. Essentially an AI query uses approximately 10 times the amount of electricity than a google query. The next stage in the electrification of our world is in full swing just a mere eighty-five years after Butte Electric Cooperative started.

Until next time, have a Happy Thanksgiving, thank you for your membership, and be safe!

What Is 1 MW?

First in a series

Exploding demand for electricity, lingering supply chain challenges and short-sighted public policy aimed at rapidly eliminating fossil fuels from power generation have forced large portions of the United States to confront unprecedented power shortages and soaring costs. This series of infographics will look at the most critical elements at play in this time of transition for our industry and our society. This month, we examine the familiar measurement of 1 megawatt and how much power is needed to supply common facilities in our communities.





Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc.

85TH ANNUAL MEETING

4:30 PM • Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2025

Belle Fourche Area Community Center

Join us for the Butte Electric Annual Meeting.

Registration starts at 4:30

Learn about the current happenings at Butte Electric Cooperative.

Agenda

- Call to Order
- Invocation
- National Anthem
- Welcome
- Approval of Minutes
- Election
- Treasurer's Report
- President's Report
- Manager's Report
- New Business
- Adjourn

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

BUTTE ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1531-1031)

Board of Directors

Cris Miller, Spearfish – President
James Mortenson, Spearfish – Vice President
Chandy Olson, St. Onge – Asst. Secretary
Thomas Brunner, Nisland – Secretary
Travis Schenk, Spearfish – Treasurer
Daniel Hefner, Whitewood
Steve Smeenk, Newell
Jessica Casteel, Vale
Dan Marrs, Whitewood

Office Personnel

Matt Sleep - Chief Executive Officer
Kim Wince - Chief Financial Officer
Lee Ann Gaer - Staff Accountant
Angie Alexander - Administrative Assistant
Heather McCann - Member Services
Norma Jo Wood - Member Services
Cheyenne Winkler - Office Services Rep.

Operations Personnel

Brett Fosheim - Chief Operations Officer
Bart McLellan - Member Services & Safety
Chuck Even - Operations Manager
Jacob Breidenbach - Work Order Clerk

Foreman:

Adam Zvorak - Spearfish
Jeff Hughes - Newell
James Gyles - Sturgis

Lead Lineman:

Mike Davis - Spearfish
Dave Pietz - Newell
Adam Willuweit - Sturgis

Linemen:

John Branham - Spearfish
Corey Hines - Spearfish
Keaten Benson - Spearfish
Taten Fox - Newell
Jade Lang - Newell
Kyle Nudd - Newell
Dalton Steiger - Sturgis
Ty Sweeter - Sturgis
Nathan McDonald - Sturgis

Butte Electric Beacon Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 137, Newell, SD 57760. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living.

Subscription information: Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals postage paid at City, SD 57427.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Butte Electric Beacon, PO Box 137, Newell, SD 57760; telephone (605) 456-2494; fax (605) 456-2496; email butte@butteelectric.com

Stay Safe This Holiday Season:

Tips for a Merry and Accident-Free Celebration

The holidays bring families together with twinkling lights, festive meals and cozy traditions. But they also bring seasonal risks that can turn celebrations into emergencies if precautions aren't taken. Local safety officials are reminding residents to keep safety in mind when cooking, decorating, and entertaining this year.

Extension Cords

With more lights and electronics plugged in during the holidays, extension cords are often stretched to their limits. Experts urge homeowners not to overload outlets and to replace any cords that are frayed or damaged. Only outdoor-rated cords should be used outside, especially in snowy or wet conditions.

Families should avoid running cords under rugs or across doorways where they can overheat or become tripping hazards.

Turkey Fryers

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners have grown to include deep-fried turkeys, but safety must come first. Fryers should only be used outdoors, on a flat surface and far away from buildings, garages or wooden decks. Fire officials caution that a partially frozen or wet turkey can cause oil to boil over and ignite, leading to severe burns or home fires.

A fire extinguisher rated for grease fires should always be kept nearby, and fryers should never be left unattended while in use. One distracted moment can cause a disaster.

Ladders

From hanging lights to topping off the tree, ladders are part of the holiday routine. Falls are among the most common seasonal injuries, so ladders should be set on level ground and never leaned against unstable surfaces. Having another person hold the ladder is strongly advised.

Candles and Fireplaces

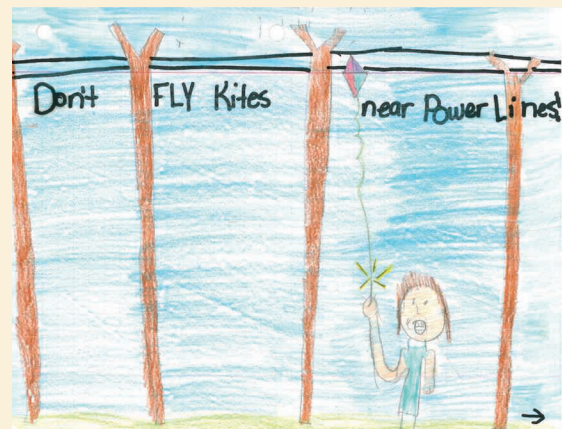
Candles and fireplaces are popular during the holiday season, but they also raise the risk of home fires, especially when combined with the extra decorations and greenery that fill many homes in December. According to the National Fire Protection Association, candles cause an average of

46% of fires in December each year. Never leaving a flame unattended and incorporating a few safety rules can prevent a devastating fire.

Lights and Decorations

Before hanging holiday lights, inspect strands for cracked socket, frayed wires or loose connections, and replace any damaged sets. Outdoor lights should always be weather-rated, and lights should be turned off before bedtime or when leaving the house. Timers and smart plugs can help make this easier.

Decorations should be securely fastened to prevent them from tipping or falling, especially in homes with children or pets. Heavy ornaments should be placed higher on the tree, out of reach of small hands and wagging tails. Fire officials also recommend choosing flame-resistant or non-combustible decor whenever possible and keeping all decorations away from heaters, fireplaces or open flames.



"Don't fly kites near power lines!"

Kristen Vanden Berg, Age 11

Kristen cautions readers on the dangers of flying kites near power lines. Great picture, Kristen! Kristen's parents are Andy and Geraldine Vanden Berg from Corsica, 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.

Holiday SIDE DISHES

CORN CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

2 15 oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained
15 oz. can cream corn
1/2 cup butter, melted
1 box Jiffy cornbread mix
1/2 pt. whipped cream

Method

Combine whole kernel corn, cream corn, butter, Jiffy cornbread mix and whipping cream. Mix thoroughly. Pour into greased 8.5"x11" pan and bake at 350° F for 40-45 minutes.

Sharon Houchin
Central Electric

BETTER THAN STUFFING

Ingredients:

1 box chicken/turkey stuffing mix
Chicken broth
Celery
Carrots
Onions
1 stick herbed butter (or make your own)
2 cups chicken/turkey gravy

Method

Prepare stuffing according to directions but substitute water with broth. Dice and sauté celery, carrots (total of two cups) and onions in herbed butter. Fold into stuffing. Put into baking pan and top with gravy. Poke gravy into stuffing – just a little bit. Don't completely mix. Bake at 350° F for 20 minutes and broil briefly at the end.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

RAW VEGETABLE SALSA

Ingredients:

2-4 medium cucumbers, cubed
2-4 medium tomatoes, cubed
1 small onion or 1/2 of a white or yellow onion sliced
1 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. sugar
2 tbsps. apple cider vinegar
Additions: black pepper to taste, chopped basil, or chopped green bell pepper.

Method

Place cubed tomatoes and peeled cucumbers into a bowl. Add sliced onion.

Mix in remaining ingredients and stir. Marinate for several hours or overnight.

This salad keeps for 3-4 days refrigerated.

Raw Vegetable salads full of electrolytes, vitamin C and fiber.

Laurie Wernke
Southeastern Electric

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Financial Report

Statement of Operations – Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2025

Assets		Other Equities	
Electric Plant in Service	\$88,780,664		\$1,843,747
Construction Work in Progress	\$275,198	Total Equities	\$29,684,164
Total Electric Plant	\$89,055,862	Margins	
Less Reserve for Depreciation	\$32,547,620	Electric Operating Margins	\$2,109,179
Net Electric Plant	\$56,508,242	Fixed Charges (Interest on Long-Term Debt)	\$1,286,279
Investments in Associate Organizations	\$7,897,092	Operating Margin (After Fixed Charges)	\$822,900
Other Investments	\$2,946,766	G&T and Other Capital Credits	\$561,232
Total Other Investments	\$10,843,858	Non-operating Margin	\$279,663
Cash - General Fund	\$666,739	Net Margins	\$1,663,795
Cash - Construction Fund	\$0	Long-Term Liabilities	
Temporary Investments	\$1,272,465	Long-Term Debt – RUS & CFC	\$38,019,355
Accounts Receivable (Less Uncollectibles)	\$1,640,955	Current Portion of Long-Term	\$1,856,078
Material and Supplies	\$2,167,166	Current/Non-Current Liabilities	
Prepayments	\$196,351	Accounts Payable	\$1,312,235
Interest Receivable	\$24,440	Customer Deposits	\$466,295
Total Current Assets	\$5,968,116	Taxes	\$416,115
Deferred Charges	\$161,660	Other Current Liabilities	\$210,884
Other Accounts Receivable	\$0		
Total Assets	\$73,481,876		
Equities			
Patronage Capital	\$27,840,417		

Facts and Figures ENDING JULY 31, 2025

Number of Members	5827
Number of Meters	7,438
Miles of Line	
Transmission Line	63.15
Underground Line	619.27
Overhead Line	749.28
Meters per Mile of Line	5.2
New Services – 2024	254
Outage Time (Minutes per meter per year)	34

Taxes Paid

Gross Revenue Tax	
Meade County	\$15,361
Lawrence County	\$97,232
Butte County	\$42,475
City of Newell	\$978
City of Spearfish	\$119,090
City of Sturgis	\$11,035
City of Belle Fourche	\$8,960
City of Deadwood	\$1,124
Total	\$296,255

2024 Real Estate Tax	
Butte County	\$32,948
Lawrence County	\$5,932
Meade County	\$7,485
Total	\$46,365



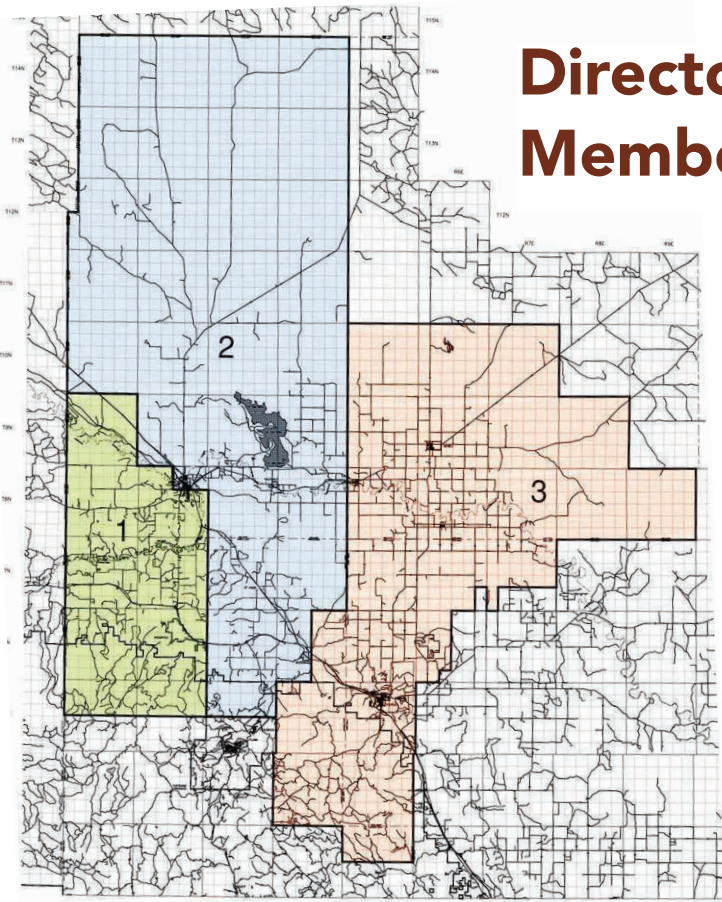
Residential	\$10,549,706
Large Commercial.....	\$4,001,932
Small Commercial	\$1,840,324
Irrigation and Grain	\$665,055
Seasonal.....	\$262,704
Other	\$96,567

Total Operating Revenue: \$17,416,287



Cost of Power	\$8,548,544
Distribution Expense	\$2,841,990
Depreciation	\$2,328,968
Administrative & General Expense ...	\$1,328,350
Customer Accounts Expense	\$396,578
Customer Service & Info Expense ...	\$211,335
Transmission Expense.....	\$188,031
Other.....	\$36,748

Total Operating Expenses: \$15,880,544



Directors Elected by the Members to Serve

The Butte Electric Cooperative board of directors consists of nine directors, elected by the cooperative’s membership, who represent one of the cooperative’s three districts. Each year at the annual meeting, cooperative members elect a director to represent each district for a three-year term. This year, the director seats held by James Mortenson, Dan Marrs, and Steve Smeenck are up for re-election.

DISTRICT 1



James Mortenson
Spearfish



Cris Miller
Spearfish



Travis Schenk
Spearfish

DISTRICT 2



Dan Marrs
Spearfish



Chandy Olson
St. Onge



Tom Brunner
Nisland

DISTRICT 3



Steve Smeenck
Newell



Dan Hefner
Whitewood



Jessica Casteel
Vale



CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

Exploring Structured Family Caregiving Services for South Dakota's Caregivers

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

November is recognized nationally as Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the essential role of caregivers and highlight the resources available to them and the loved ones they support.

Yet, families face a growing challenge: how to care for aging loved ones when services are often far from home. Nursing homes or assisted living centers may be located hours away, and even when they are nearby, the cost or availability of space can present real barriers.

One answer has been the Structured Family Caregiving program, launched by the South Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) in 2019.

According to Heather Krzmarzick, Director of the Division of Long-Term Services and Supports within DHS, the program is one of many resources at DHS that are

Several resources are available for caregivers in South Dakota through the Department of Human Services.

Photos by Homecare Services.

available to help older adults and their caregivers. It provides training, coaching, ongoing support and even a modest stipend to those offering significant care for an older adult in the home.

“Structured Family Caregiving serves caregivers who live with their family member and provide substantial care for them, including personal care, supervision, medication management and other things, such as managing finances and transportation for necessary appointments and community activities,” Krzmarzick said.

In many ways, the program echoes the electric cooperative story. Just as co-ops once brought electricity to rural areas that were otherwise overlooked, the program helps families meet a need that might otherwise go unserved. In places where nursing homes or assisted living centers are many miles away, the program gives families a practical way to continue care at home, often the place where people feel most comfortable.

“Structured Family Caregiving is important because it

supports the vital work of family caregivers, strengthens families and improves outcomes, especially in underserved or isolated regions,” she said. “The program honors South Dakota’s values of strong families, independence and community.”

In addition to expanding community-based care options to rural areas, the program allows families to potentially prevent or delay the move to a nursing home and reduce the economic burden that often comes with that transition. Krzmarzick said DHS also offers other programs for those that may need a little extra assistance to remain safely in their homes but don’t require the intensive services of a nursing facility.

“Each caregiver has unique needs and preferences,” she said. “As such, the services and supports are designed to meet the varying needs of each caregiver and help care for a person at home as long as possible.”

To be eligible for the program, the care recipient must be 65 or older or

18 or older with a qualifying disability and meet both functional and financial criteria to qualify for the program.

Since its creation, the program has grown steadily, giving more families the tools to succeed. Krzmarzick said it has allowed many older adults and adults with disabilities to remain in their homes while supporting family caregivers with knowledge, training and a small amount of financial assistance.

Agency Director Steven Novotny with Homecare Services of South Dakota, Inc., one of many in-home care providers in the state, said that few other programs reach and serve those who need care quite like the program.

“Structured Family Caregiving has the unique ability to serve consumers in every community across our state, large or small. Under this program, individuals can receive care from a trusted family member or friend, which allows them to remain independent and living in their community,” he said. “Our caring staff at Homecare Services of South Dakota have seen

firsthand the positive impact on families when we are able to provide support and training to the caregivers that are stepping into what is often a challenging role caring for a loved one.”

Krzmarzick said the Structured Family Caregiving program is just one of many support options that DHS offers individuals and their caregivers in South Dakota. Resources are available online at dhs.sd.gov or through Dakota at Home, South Dakota’s Aging and Disability Resource Center, at 1-833-663-9673.

“All caregivers, not just those utilizing the Structured Family Caregiving Program, may access free training and resources to help improve confidence in their caregiving abilities, reduce stress and prevent burnout,” Krzmarzick said. “Caregivers may also be eligible for other programs that offer respite options. Our Dakota at Home specialists are dedicated to helping you find services and supports to meet your specific needs or the needs of a family member.”



Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. 84TH ANNUAL MEETING

October 25, 2024 • Belle Fourche, South Dakota

The Eighty-Forth Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. was called to order at 6:00 p.m., on October 25, 2024, at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, pursuant to an official notice mailed to all members of the Cooperative at their last known address as shown on the records of the Cooperative.

Thomas Brunner, Secretary of the Board of Directors, advised there were 134 members registered and declared a quorum was present.

Cris Miller, President of the Board of Directors, called the 84th Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. to order.

Secretary Brunner gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Secretary Brunner introduced Matt Sleep, CEO of Butte Electric, who welcomed the members to Belle Fourche.

Barb Garness's name was drawn for a \$20.00 attendance prize.

Secretary Brunner read the Official Notice and the Affidavit of Mailing of the Notice.

President Miller asked if the members would like the minutes of last year's meeting read or if someone would make a motion to dispense with the reading and approve the minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approved them as presented.

Travis Schenk, Treasurer of the Board of Directors, presented the Financial Report for the previous year. Treasurer Schenk pointed out that total revenue from energy sales was \$17 million for the year. Operating expenses were \$14.5 million. Net investment in plant is just over \$5.1 million this year. Long-term debt is \$38.8 million while the total electric plant owned is just over \$87.3 million. The number of meters has reached the 7,285 mark as we continue to grow.

President Miller asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement as presented. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report and

Financial Statements as presented.

Gary Zimbleman's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

President Miller called on Attorney Ronda Miller to preside over the election. After introducing the members of the election and credentials committee, Attorney Miller called on Karl Jensen to read the Certificate of the Credentials Committee.

Petitions were submitted by:

District 1 - Travis Schenk

District 2 - Thomas Brunner

District 3 - Paul Winkler

Attorney Miller introduced the candidates. Attorney Miller asked for a motion that a unanimous ballot be cast for Travis Schenk, Thomas Brunner, and Paul Winkler. A motion was made, seconded, and carried.

Lily O'Dell's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

President Miller presented his annual report to the membership. He reviewed the Cooperative's progress since joining the Board in 1987, noting that membership has grown from 2,116 to 7,285, line miles from 1,097 to 1,413, annual revenue from \$3.3 million to \$10.3 million, and total assets from \$10.8 million to \$72.5 million. He highlighted that, while 17.4% of revenue once came from the United States Air Force, this figure is now zero. President Miller emphasized that this growth has been achieved with only minimal additions to staff, made possible through effective use of technology, which will continue to play a central role in meeting the Cooperative's future needs.

CEO Sleep gave the manager's report. He started out by expressing his appreciation for President Miller's dedication and service to the Cooperative Board. He continued his remarks from the previous year concerning the causes of power outages, providing illustrative examples, including a damaged pedestal box east of Belle Fourche, a fire designated "Flaming Bird #2" west of Belle Fourche, and a vehicle collision with a power pole along Sonoma Road. CEO Sleep further presented informational topics

regarding megawatts and transmission lines, highlighting their increasing relevance and noting that the membership's understanding of these subjects exceeds that of the general public.

CEO Sleep introduced the special guests in attendance.

Kristen Wing's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

CEO Sleep introduced special guest Chad Reisenauer, Director of Community and Member Support from Basin Electric Power Cooperative. Chad presented an overview of Basin Electric and all that it provides to Butte Electric.

Secretary Brunner introduced the next speaker, SD NRECA Rep Mark Hofer, Director from Central Electric in Mitchell. Director Hofer provided an overview of NRECA's preparations for the new administration and highlighted the organization's role in supporting local cooperatives. He noted that NRECA assists with legislative matters, advocates on behalf of cooperatives, and provides guidance on energy-related policies and initiatives.

Darren Engelhart's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

Secretary Brunner reported on the Butte Electric Scholarship program. Secretary Brunner introduced the six scholarship winners. Director Winkler had the honor of drawing for two 2024 Annual Meeting attendance scholarships, which were awarded to Elyse Bloom and Jack Faulkner.

Drawings were held for several door prizes generously donated by local businesses that provide supplies, equipment, and services to the Cooperative.

President Miller called for unfinished business. There was no unfinished business, so he asked for new business to be brought before the meeting. There was no new business.

President Miller drew for three pre-registration prizes. The winner of the \$100.00 bill credit was Janice Borden, the winner of the \$200.00 bill credit was Roxanne Neilan, and the winner of the \$300.00 bill credit was Benson Baker.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Cris Miller, President

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, Thomas Brunner, do hereby certify that I am the duly elected, qualified Secretary of the Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter called the "Cooperative"); that the foregoing is a complete and correct copy of the original minutes entered in the Minute Book of the Cooperative of the meeting of its members held October 25, 2024, that at the meeting a quorum of the members was present and acted throughout; and the resolutions contained in the minutes of the aforementioned meeting have not been modified or rescinded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name as Secretary and affixed the Corporate Seal of the Cooperative this 21st day of October, 2025.

(SEAL)

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF BUTTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. 85TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held October 21, 2025, at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center, Butte County, Belle Fourche, South Dakota beginning at 5:00 p.m. to take action on the following matters:

1. Report on the number of members present in person in order to determine the existence of a quorum.
2. Reading of the notice of the meeting and proof of the due publication or the mailing thereof, or the waivers of notice of the meeting, as the case may be.
3. Reading of unapproved minutes of previous meetings of the Members and the taking of necessary action thereon.
4. Election of Directors and bylaw changes.
5. Presentation and consideration of reports of Officers, Directors, and Committees.
6. Unfinished Business.
7. New Business.
8. Adjournment.

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

Dated at Belle Fourche, South Dakota, this 21st of October 2025.

Statement of Ownership

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)			
1. Publication Title Butte Electric Cooperative Connections		2. Publication Number 1 5 3 1 1 0 3 1	3. Filing Date 10-01-2025
4. Issue Frequency Once a month	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 12	6. Annual Subscription Price \$6.00	
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) PO Box 137 Newell, SD 57760			Contact Person Matt Sleep Telephone (include area code) 605-456-2494
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) PO Box 137 Newell, SD 57760			
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) Butte Electric Cooperative Connections PO Box 137 Newell, SD 57760			
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Matt Sleep PO Box 137 Newell, SD 57760			
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Matt Sleep PO Box 137 Newell, SD 57760			
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)			
Full Name Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc.		Complete Mailing Address PO Box 137, Newell, SD 57760	
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box ☒ None			
Full Name Rural Utilities Service		Complete Mailing Address Washington, D.C. 20255	
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) ☐ The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: ☐ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months ☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)			
13. Publication Title Butte Electric Cooperative Connections		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below 10-01-25	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		5274	
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		5315	
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®			
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)			
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		5274 5315	
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		38 39	
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541			
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541			
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)			
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)			
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		38 39	
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		5312 5354	
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		10 10	
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		5322 5364	
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		99% 99%	

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)			
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies			
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)			
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)			
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c × 100)			
☐ I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.			
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership ☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the November issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.			
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner J. H. P. S. L. P., CEO		Date 09-29-2025	



LINEMENS' TRAINING READYED CREW FOR CHAINSAW ACCIDENT

(From left) When Brandon Schmiege cut his forearm, fellow linemen Tristan Hall, Luke Koval and Brian Davis knew exactly how to respond.
Photo submitted by Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

When a Routine Day of Trimming Trees Turned Critical, Cooperative Employees Were Prepared to Help

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Perched within the manlift on a bucket truck, Brandon Schmiege methodically sawed away large tree branches near overhead power lines, dropping them to the ground more than 50 feet below.

It's nothing out of the ordinary, explained the 19-year veteran lineman from Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative in Milbank, South Dakota. After a while, you become accustomed to the work – and its hazards.

From the bucket he was standing in, Brandon reached with

his chainsaw for one of the last few cuts he'd need to make. But as he began the cut, the chainsaw kicked up and he lost control. Steadying himself and throwing the brake on the saw, Brandon looked down at his left arm. He'd been badly cut.

"I saw quite a bit of blood right away," Brandon said. "My first thought was that I needed to get down fast."

Gathering his strength and trying his best to stay calm, Brandon maneuvered his bucket down through the tree limbs back to the ground where linemen Brian Davis, Luke Koval and Tristan Hall noticed something wasn't right.

"I think we all sensed something happened," Brian explained. "The way he was coming down like that, and he'd just fueled up the saw, so we were wondering what had happened."

Luke ran to go shut off the woodchipper, which was drowning out Brandon's yelling. As the engine died, they finally heard Brandon yell, "Call for help!"

Brian raced to the truck to radio back to the office in Milbank, calling in a “Mayday” along with the crew’s location.

With a first-aid and tourniquet kit in hand, Brian sprinted toward Brandon, where Tristan and Luke had removed Brandon’s safety harness and wrapped a towel over the wound on Brandon’s forearm and applied pressure to slow the bleeding.

As the team secured a tourniquet tightly around Brandon’s upper arm, the crew kept in touch with the office by cell phone. The office staff, having called 911 as soon as they heard ‘Mayday,’ worked together to relay the street address and details of the injury to emergency dispatchers.

Seeing the urgency of the situation, the team placed Brandon in the service pickup and Tristan began driving him to the hospital. As the linemen were driving back into town, the ambulance met them and took Brandon to the hospital in Milbank where they stabilized him and discovered he’d severed two arteries in his forearm. He was then transferred to

Sioux Falls and underwent surgery.

Luckily, Whetstone Valley Electric and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association had conducted first-aid training for linemen just several weeks before. The instruction included CPR, AEDs, tourniquets and wound care.

“Regular first-aid training and keeping first-aid supplies on hand is so important because our linemen are often out somewhere rural,” explained Joe Denison, SDREA’s loss control professional and certified paramedic for the Arlington and Lake Norden ambulances. “If we have to wait 30 minutes for an ambulance, that can be too late.”

Whetstone Valley Electric General Manager Dave Page says despite the incident, he finds it encouraging that the employees followed procedure — maintaining clear communication with each other and with 911, administering first aid on site, and knowing exactly what to do each step of the way.

“It wasn’t only the training that was provided, but it was the attention that

these guys gave to that training - where it stuck, and their response was automatic,” Dave said. “In addition, the Mayday training that we do here at Whetstone went a long way to help us all stick to the plan and see a successful outcome.”

Now back on the job, Brandon credits his safe outcome to the co-op’s focus on regular safety training and having first aid supplies in the vehicles.

“I don’t think the makeshift towel tourniquet would have stopped the bleeding,” Brandon said, looking down at the scar on his forearm.

Brian added, “I don’t want to think about the outcome if we didn’t have a plan in place.”

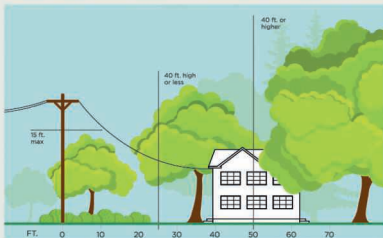
To help prevent those worst case scenarios, electric cooperatives continually scrutinize safety training and workplace incidents. Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is sharing this story with its members-owners and fellow cooperatives to promote preparedness for unexpected incidents like this one, and overall encourage a culture of safety awareness.

3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

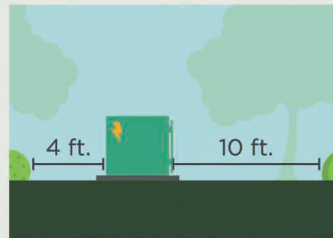
Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them.

Here’s how you can help:

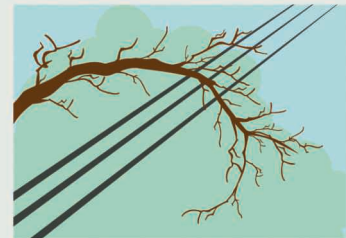
1. Plant trees in the right place. Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



2. Don’t block pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.



3. Report dangerous branches. If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



Trimming improves safety for all.

Let’s work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.



SUSTAINABLE SERVINGS

Frederick-Area Family Grows, Packages Specialty Oatmeal

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

For Taylor and Cassandra Sumption, there's nothing better than waking up early and enjoying a bowl of their very own home-grown oatmeal.

Well, maybe nothing better except sharing that taste of small-town South Dakota with the world.

Living and working on their five-generation family farm in northeast South Dakota, the Northern Electric Cooperative member-family dreamed, developed and launched Anthem Oats, which they say is a farm-to-table alternative that oatmeal enjoyers can feel good about.

But Anthem Oats isn't just a locally-sourced breakfast; it's a process rooted in sustainability.

The Sumptions' small-business journey began in 2016 when Taylor decided to replace his usual wheat cover crop with oats in his corn and soybean rotation.

"I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to crop rotation," Taylor laughed. "I started working with the USDA research farm north of Brookings, and they do a lot of rotational studies ... What I saw was a tremendous increase in yield for crops following oats."

Those increased yields are a result of the oats recycling nutrients like nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus back into the soil. Oats also increase the amount of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in the soil, which the USDA says helps roots intake more nutrients and moisture, making oats an ideal

This field of oats on Taylor and Cassandra Sumptions' farm near Frederick, S.D., will soon be milled and packaged for their oatmeal brand, Anthem Oats.

Photo submitted by Cassandra Sumption

cover crop to boost the next season's returns.

But an oat harvest doesn't bring in the same returns that corn and soybeans do – that had Taylor Sumption thinking about ways to add value to his product.

"It was Taylor's idea from the very beginning, from years and years ago, after many long hours in the tractor thinking about how to bring added value to our farm," Cassandra recalled. "And I loved his ideas. He would just kind of bounce things off me every now and then."

One day, it clicked in Taylor's head; he could add value to his oat harvest by producing a one-of-a-kind, high-quality breakfast product.

Taylor got in contact with the South Dakota Value-Added Agriculture Development Center (VAADC), whom he credits for helping navigate the first steps in starting the business.

Maple Pecan is one of Anthem Oats' top-selling flavors. Among other flavor options: pumpkin spice, vanilla chai, peach and cranberry, super fruit, and dark chocolate brownie.





Taylor and Cassandra Sumption sell their home-grown oatmeal in stores across the US.
Photo submitted by Cassandra Sumption

VAADC CEO Cheri Rath says Anthem Oats is one of the center's many success stories, and credits the Sumptions for coming up with a marketable idea and running a sustainable business.

"Anthem Oats takes a traditional commodity and adds value to it, helping their farm diversify and add profitability at a time when commodity prices are volatile," Rath said. "They've done an awesome job of branding themselves and getting out into the marketplace."

According to Taylor and Cassandra, feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive, with some customers noting that Anthem Oats' subtle differences have distinguished the brand from competition.

"When selecting our oat variety was we focused on nutrient density and nutritional value," Taylor explained. "Our oats mill a little tougher, but there's a little more flavor and a little more body. Consumers can tell when it's our oats."

Cassandra, now a full-time Anthem Oats employee, oversees the product from the harvest to the shelf, and everything in between. It's an around-the-clock job, and one she had to learn fast.

"I didn't have a clue – this was all so new to me," Cassandra laughed, thinking back to when she first jumped into the role. "I did manage a grocery store in Frederick here for a short time, so that kind of helped me with the logistics of shipping and freight and different things like that."

Today, after more than four years on the market and a continuously growing presence in grocery stores, the Sumption family has unofficially put Frederick on the map as the oatmeal capital of South Dakota.

Cassandra and Taylor also credit their five children, Trevor, Tristan, Preston, Miranda and Marissa for taking time out of their busy lives to help out when they're able, as the family works to build a brand that resonates with consumers in South Dakota and beyond.

"I get to answer all the emails, like all of the consumers' questions, and sometimes there's a complaint, but overall everybody is very kind and sweet in their messages," Cassandra said. "It helps make your day a little brighter, knowing that you're doing something that people actually really appreciate and love, and it just makes you feel good at the end of the day and keeps you going."



What Is the Value-Added Agriculture Development Center?

VAADC is a nonprofit that provides resources for the establishment and success of value-added agricultural businesses.

What Does Value-Added Mean?

When farmers add value to their product, it means they are taking a raw commodity and processing, marketing or otherwise enhancing so it can be sold at a higher price. The Sumption family adds value to their oat harvest by milling, packaging and distributing their product.

What Does VAADC Offer to Start-ups?

VAADC can assist start-ups with feasibility assessments, business plans, grant and funding opportunities, strategic planning and networking. VAADC has assisted more than 300 projects since its founding in 1999.

Who Is VAADC?

VAADC was started by agriculture industry supporters to support producers. VAADC is governed by a board of directors representing the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, East River Electric, Farm Credit Services of America, S.D. Association of Cooperatives, S.D. Bankers Association, S.D. Farmers Union, S.D. Soybean Research & Promotion Council, and the S.D. Wheat Commission.



NOV 22, 26, 28-29

Christmas Tree Sales

Nov. 22: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Nov. 26: 5-8 p.m.

Nov. 28-29: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

6B Seed And Supplies

Alpena, SD

www.6Bseedandsupplies.com

OCT. 25

Hill City Children's Boo Bash & Pumpkin Festival

Hill City, SD

OCT. 25

Lions Club Bingo

5 p.m. Food, 6 p.m. Bingo

Hill City Center

Hill City, SD

OCT. 31

Hill City Main Street Merchant Trick-or-treat Boys & Girls Club Annual Halloween Carnival

Hill City, SD

NOV. 1

Reliance Christmas Carousel

9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Reliance, SD

605-730-1462

NOV. 1

Spearfish Senior Center Fall Craft Fair & Bake Sale

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Spearfish, SD

605-642-2827

NOV. 1

Black Hills Meat Fest

2-4 p.m.

Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall

Rapid City, SD

NOV. 1

Fairburn Community Ctr. Bazaar

5:30 p.m.

Linn Street

Fairburn, SD

NOV. 2

Annual Turkey Dinner & Silent Auction Fundraiser

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Tickets In-Person or Online

Rapid Valley UMC

5103 Longview Rd.

Rapid City, SD

605-393-1526

NOV. 7-9

Hill City Girlfriends' Weekend

Information on Facebook Page

Hill City, SD

NOV. 9

Kadoka Holiday Festival

10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Kadoka City Auditorium

Kadoka, SD

605-488-0151

NOV. 15

Dueling Pianos Playing for Permanency

5:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn & Convention Center

Spearfish, SD

605-722-4558

NOV. 16

An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving

2 p.m.

Gayville Music Hall

Gayville, SD

605-760-5799

NOV. 22

Lille Norge Fest

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Viking Hall

2900 Canyon Lake Dr.

Rapid City, SD

NOV. 28

Snacks With Santa

2-4 p.m.

Hill City Center

Hill City, SD

NOV. 28-29

Kris Kringle Vendor Fair

Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Hill City High School

Hill City, SD

NOV. 29

Gregory Mid-Winter Fair

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Gregory Memorial Auditorium

Gregory, SD

605-295-4345

DEC. 5-6

Christmas in the Hills

Mueller Center

Hot Springs, SD

605-890-2974

DEC. 7

KCBA Hometown Christmas

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Kadoka City Auditorium

Kadoka, SD

605-488-0151

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.

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.