

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Clarence Kooistra of VFW Post 628 in Sioux Falls salutes military veterans interred at the South Dakota State Cemetery

Honoring our Veterans

A new resting place for fallen soldiers
Pages 8-9

First responders in rural South Dakota
Page 12

It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles



John Lee
CEO

For me, this is a time of year for reflection, and I know I speak for all of us at Butte Electric Cooperative when I say that we are fortunate to live in the same place where we work - which makes our ties to this community that much stronger.

You may recall my column last month touched on the first three Cooperative Principles. So this month, I'd like to tell you about the remaining four principles. The Cooperative Principles are essential to the co-op business model and benefit all members of the co-op.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

The fourth principle, Autonomy and Independence, means that the co-op operates in an autonomous way that is directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the co-op is led by the local members it serves.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The fifth principle, Education and Training, focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members. This principle enables them to contribute to the development of the co-op.

By investing in continuous learning opportunities for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment to professional and personal growth, the future of the co-op, and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members about the mission and operations of the co-op. In fact, that's why you receive this magazine every

month, so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters the way that co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts—and we of course extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an everchanging energy landscape.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

The seventh principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service but by helping to power our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteerism, or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home too.

I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Butte Electric, we're thankful for your membership, and we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

BUTTE ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1531-1031)

Board of Directors

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

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 Laine Mitchell - Communications Director
 Colleen Schreiner - Billing Clerk
 Angie Alexander - Administrative Assistant
 Lee Ann Gaer - Member Services/Accountant

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 Bart McLellan - Spearfish Operations Manager
 Adam Zvorak - Foreman
 Chuck Even - Foreman
 Jeff Hughes - Foreman
 Journeyman Lineman:
 John Branham
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 James Gyles
 Corey Hines
 Kyle Nudd
 Dave Pietz
 Elliot Rayman
 Dalton Steiger
 Adam Willuweit
 Craig Douthit - Work Order Clerk

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.

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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

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Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. 81ST ANNUAL MEETING

5:30 PM • Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021
 Belle Fourche Area Community Center

Join us for the Butte Electric Annual Meeting and enjoy a free roast beef dinner while learning about the current happenings at Butte Electric Cooperative.

AGENDA

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

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A house full of Thanksgiving safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays - for cooking, decorating and heating. Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some tips:

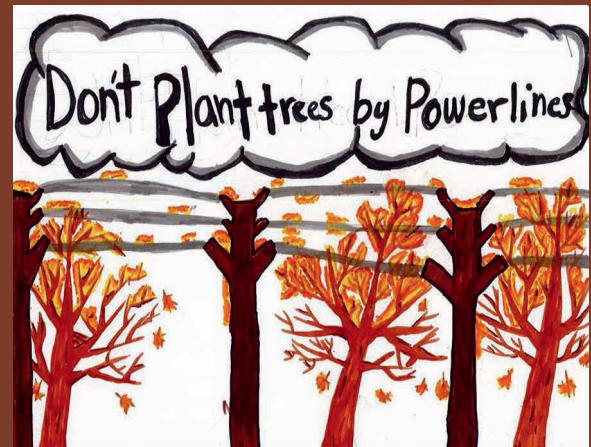
- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while the appliances are in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces in your kitchen.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet.
- Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least three feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

GOVERNOR'S STUDENT ART COMPETITION



The Governor's Office and the South Dakota Arts Council invite students to participate in the Governor's Student Art Competition.

Students in K-12 will compete in four age divisions. Winning entries will be exhibited in the State Capitol from January through September 2022. Submission deadline is Nov. 12, 2021. All artwork is to be submitted electronically as a high-resolution jpeg image, along with the Artwork Submission Form and the Authorization Release Form. Competition guidelines, instructions and all necessary forms are accessible at https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student_art_Main.aspx. Contact Rebecca.cruse@state.sd.us or call 605-773-3301 for details.



Don't plant trees by power lines

Jazzlyn Magera

Jazzlyn shares good advice to avoid planting trees near power lines. Jazzlyn attends Brandon Elementary School and is the daughter of Rachel Schettler. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

SLOW COOKING BRINGS OUT FLAVORS OF FALL

BABY BACK RIBS

Ingredients:

2-1/2 lbs. pork baby back ribs, cut into eight pieces
5 cups water
1 med. onion, sliced
2 celery ribs, cut in half
2 tsps. minced garlic, divided
1 tsp. whole peppercorns
1/2 cup barbecue sauce
1/4 cup plum sauce (Asian section of grocery store)
Dash of hot pepper sauce

METHOD

Place ribs in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Add water, onion, celery, 1 tsp. garlic and peppercorns. Cover and cook on low for six hours or until meat is tender. In a small saucepan, combine the barbecue sauce, plum sauce, hot pepper sauce and remaining garlic. Cook and stir over medium heat for five minutes or until heated through. Remove ribs. Discard cooking juices and vegetables. Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray before starting grill. Brush ribs with sauce. Grill, uncovered, over medium low heat for 8-10 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally and brushing with remaining sauce. Can also be finished in the oven using the broil setting.

Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls

CHILI BEEF AND PASTA

Ingredients:

2 lbs. lean ground beef
2 packages McCormick® Chili Seasoning Mix
1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes
2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce
1 cup coarsely chopped bell pepper
1 cup frozen or canned whole kernel corn
1 cup elbow macaroni, cooked and drained (about 2.25 cups)
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

METHOD

Cook ground beef in large skillet on medium-high heat until no longer pink; drain. Place in slow cooker. Stir in Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, tomato sauce, bell pepper and corn until well blended. Cover. Cook six hours on low or three hours on high. Stir in cheese and cooked macaroni during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

mccormick.com

WHITE PHEASANT CHILI

Ingredients:

3 boneless pheasants cooked and shredded
1 large onion chopped
4 Tbsps. butter
1/4 cup flour
3/4 cup chicken broth
2 cups half and half
2 cans Navy beans
1 tsp. Tabasco sauce
1-1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1-2 jalapeno peppers
1-1/2 cups Monterrey jack cheese
1/2 cup sour cream

METHOD

Cook and shred pheasant. Set aside. Cook onion with 2 Tbsps. butter until soft, add flour and remaining butter, whisking constantly. Add broth and half and half while whisking. Bring to boil for 5 minutes, or until onions are tender. Put in crockpot and add remaining ingredients. Put on high heat for one hour then reduce to low heat for one to two hours.

Alice DeHaai, Keystone

Please send your favorite holiday dessert 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.

Financial Report

Statement of Operations – Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2021

Assets	
Electric Plant in Service	\$76,085,028
Construction Work in Progress (WIP)	\$92,662
Total Electric Plant	\$76,177,690
Less Reserve for Depreciation	\$24,704,697
Net Electric Plant	\$51,472,993
Investments in Associate Organizations	\$6,304,537
Other Investments	\$4,181,963
Total Other Investments	\$10,486,500
Cash - General Fund	\$855,338
Cash - Construction Fund	\$0
Temporary Investments	\$0
Accounts Receivable (Less Uncollectibles)	\$1,540,435
Material and Supplies	\$1,280,504
Prepayments	\$119,626
Interest Receivable	\$10,182
Total Current Assets	\$3,806,085
Deferred Charges	\$211,536
Other Accounts Receivable	\$0
Total Assets	\$65,977,114
Equities	
Patronage Capital	\$21,633,680
Other Equities	\$1,458,689
Total Equities	\$23,092,369

Margins	
Electric Operating Margins	\$2,842,904
Fixed Charges (Interest on Long-Term Debt)	\$1,320,628
Operating Margin (After Fixed Charges)	\$1,522,276
G&T and Other Capital Credits	\$451,750
Non-operating Margin	\$128,465
Net Margins	\$2,102,491
Long-Term Liabilities	
Long-Term Debt – RUS & CFC	\$38,157,364
Capital Lease	\$43,766
Current/Non-Current Liabilities	
Notes Payable	\$2,109,446
Accounts Payable	\$1,043,920
Customer Deposits	\$345,585
Taxes	\$297,351
Other Current Liabilities	\$179,143
Total Current Liabilities	\$3,975,445
Deferred Credits	\$708,170
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$65,977,114

Facts and Figures ENDING JULY 31, 2021	
Number of Members	5,282
Number of Meters	6,570
Miles of Line	
Transmission Line	63.15
Underground Line	532.80
Overhead Line	775.28
Meters per Mile of Line	4.79
New Services – 2020	155
Outage Time (Minutes per meter per year)	138

Taxes Paid	
Gross Revenue Tax	
Meade County	\$13,499
Lawrence County	\$90,584
Butte County	\$38,230
City of Newell	\$902
City of Spearfish	\$104,289
City of Sturgis	\$9,303
City of Belle Fourche	\$8,057
Total	\$264,864
2020 Real Estate Tax	
Butte County	\$28,343
Lawrence County	\$4,690
Meade County	\$7,695
Total	\$40,728



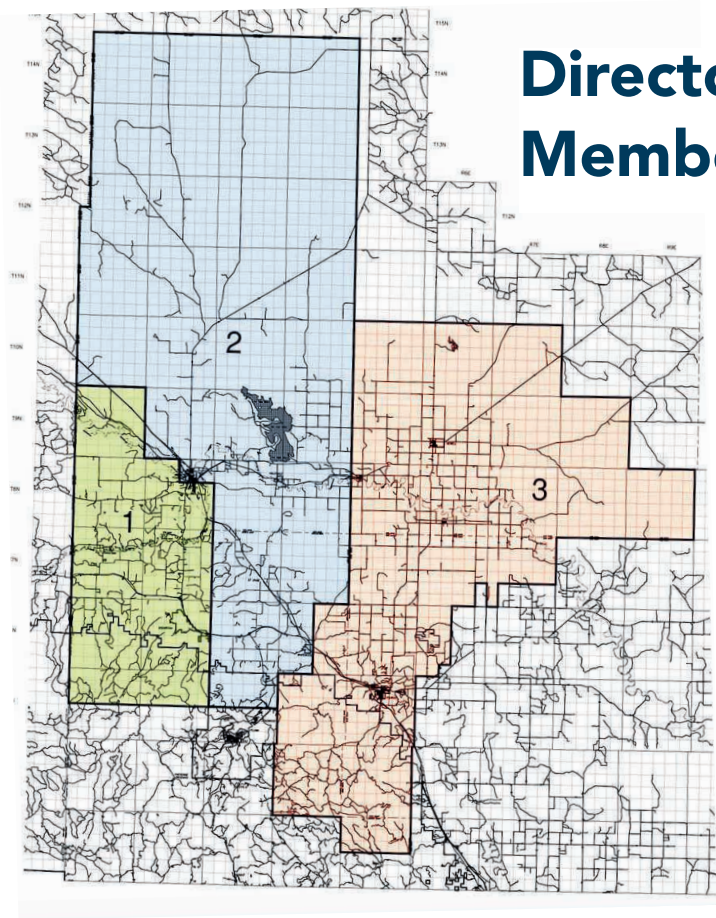
Residential	\$9,233,897
Large Commercial.....	\$3,460,449
Small Commercial	\$1,626,973
Other	\$632,907
Irrigation and Grain	\$616,322
Seasonal	\$234,683



Cost of Power.....	\$7,236,992
Depreciation	\$1,972,278
Distribution Expenses	\$1,493,768
Administrative and General Expense	\$979,547
Customer Accounts Expense	\$374,369
Customer Service and Info Expense.....	\$318,190
Transmission Expense.....	\$552,952
Other	\$34,231

Total Operating Revenue: \$15,805,231

Total Operating Expenses: \$12,962,327



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 Tom Brunner and Travis Schenk are up for election as well as the District 3 seat vacated by Thomas Casteel.

DISTRICT 1



Cris Miller
Spearfish



James Mortenson
Spearfish



Travis Schenk
Spearfish

DISTRICT 2



Chandy Olson
St. Onge



Dan Marrs
Spearfish



Tom Brunner
Nisland

DISTRICT 3



Dan Hefner
Whitewood



Steve Smeenk
Newell



Thomas Casteel
Vale

A PLACE TO REST

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery located northeast of Sioux Falls provides a new resting place for U.S. military veterans and their families. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls opens new options for military families

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

A dozen distraught family members surrounded the casket conspicuously draped with a bright, crisp American flag. The brilliant hues of red, white and blue stood in stark contrast to the slate gray sky hanging overhead and the slight chill that filled the air.

As the gathered mourners paid their last respects and turned back toward the administration building at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, the clouds suddenly burst open and a heavy rain began to fall.

“Well, your daddy was a rancher,” the grieving widow said to her son as they made their way down the hillside. “A good rain is exactly what he would have wanted. This would have made him smile.”

Erin Brown is director of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery (SDVC) located northeast of Sioux Falls and she often hears stories that family members share about their loved ones who arrive at their final resting

place there. A military veteran herself, Brown said those stories bring added meaning and significance to her work.

“The veterans – and their families – are very important to us,” she said. “When I hear those kinds of stories and hear them describe a lifetime of memories and all the good times they had together, it reinforces the idea that there’s real value in what we’re doing here at the cemetery.”

The SDVC is the first federally funded, state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in the state, although there is no residency requirement for military veterans to be interred there. The Black Hills National Cemetery is located a few miles east of Sturgis.

The facility is located on 60 acres donated by the City of Sioux Falls and ultimately will have enough space for over 28,000 casket grave sites, cremation grave sites, a columbarium for cremated remains and a scattering garden. More than 600 in-ground crypts have already been installed. The facility was made possible by more

than \$7 million in federal money, state funds and private donations.

Since the ribbon-cutting ceremony last Memorial Day, the cemetery has seen a steady stream of burials. There were four on a recent Friday.

SDVC staff works with the families to arrange details of the burial services which typically include a final pre-service consultation with the families, a processional to the committal shelter, a 15-20 minute service, folding and presentation of the flag, and a rifle salute and Taps presented by local military-related volunteer organizations.





Members of the grounds crew are all veterans and can relate to military families in their time of grief.

Clarence Kooistra is one of those volunteers who donates his time to make sure veterans receive a proper burial and their families receive the proper respect. He's a member of the VFW Post 628 Honor Guard based in Sioux Falls.

"I just feel it's very important that these men and women are treated with the respect they deserve for the sacrifices they've made to preserve our freedoms and democracy in our country," Kooistra said. "It's a privilege for me to come out here and do this for the families."

While construction commenced on the cemetery two years ago, it took several years to bring the project to fruition. At the time the first federal grant application was submitted in 2017, Brown was serving as a veterans program manager in the State Department of Veteran's Affairs helping veterans navigate through the federal bureaucracy to receive their rightful benefits. She often found, however, that some of the former soldiers would balk at the benefits "so that someone they felt needed it more than them could get it."

When the cemetery director position opened up, she jumped at the chance to find another way to help veterans.

In performing her job, Brown

calls on her own military experience, which includes joining the Minnesota National Guard in high school and receiving advanced individual training at Fort Lee in Virginia. She returned and attended college for three years before getting deployed to Iraq for nearly two years.

She worked in supply management at a Marine base between Ramadi and Fallujah and eventually left the service as an E-5.

When she and her staff are interacting with veterans and their families, they have little difficulty relating to them on a personal basis.

"The military is the kind of experience that you don't know you want or need until you have it," she said. "All of those experiences have put me into one of the most rewarding jobs I've been able to do. Without it, I wouldn't be able to relate to the families and get the help they need and have earned. Once they realize I'm also a veteran, things change and they see me differently."

Brown and her staff - all of whom are veterans themselves - have

developed personal relationships with the families whose loved ones are interred at the facility. During their visits to the cemetery, family members often express their gratitude to the staff for their work in keeping the facility well maintained and give updates on how the family is faring and if they have any further needs.

Brown said she is looking toward the future with optimism for the



The Committal Shelter is the site of many outdoor funeral services for veterans.

cemetery and its mission, especially after the South Dakota Veterans Council last summer announced a \$2.1 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, PREMIER Bankcard CEO Miles Beacom and his wife Lisa.

For more information, visit <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/>.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

District 1



Travis Schenk
Spearfish

Hello, my name is Travis Schenk. I am the fifth generation to live and work on my family's farm/ranch west of Spearfish. After graduating from Spearfish High School in 1996, I attended South Dakota State University and earned a degree in agricultural engineering.

I was then a test engineer for Bobcat Company in Gwinner, N.D. In 2003, I moved back to Spearfish and was a design engineer/production manager at RAMVAC Corporation. After that, I started a custom farming and irrigation business that I still own and operate today.

I strongly believe in cooperative principles and to be able to have a local influence on our power supply. My background in engineering and business has made me a valuable asset to Butte Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for the last three years. I look forward to continue serving you as a board member.



Paul Slavec
Spearfish

Hi, I am Paul Slavec and am running for District 1 representative. With over 44-years of financial service experience, I am hoping our electric cooperative can utilize some of my extensive financial analysis, risk management, audit, and loan structuring skills. CoBank, ACB is the one of the largest cooperative financial institutions in the United States and is considered Rural America's bank.

My undergraduate degree is from University of Northern Colorado, MBA from Regis University, and I am in my 27th year of teaching Finance and Economics at Regis University in Denver, Colorado. Course work has been conducted online for the past five-years during and after my career at CoBank.

The board is blessed to have so many legacy members. Having multi-generational knowledge and experience is critical to the success of this and other cooperatives. However, it is also important to blend historical knowledge and experience with additional experience and knowledge in cooperative policy and guidance from a multi-faceted rural and national perspective.

In addition to teaching, my time is spent volunteering with St. Vincent de Paul in Spearfish and Belle Fourche, Feeding South Dakota, and Spearfish Food Pantry.

District 2



Thomas Brunner
Nisland

Tom Brunner , 18769 Quin Road, Nisland , SD

Wife: Quin. Children: 7 children, 5 girls, 2 boys , scattered from coast to coast and in between

Education: Newell High School, Denver Institute of Technology, School of hard knocks

Occupation: Full time farmer, dairy, feedlot and various small businesses for 40+ years

Organizations: State Legislature, 14 years; Butte Electric director, 30 years; South Dakota Rural Electric, 25 years; Western Dakota Tech, Trustee; member of Nisland Independent Comm. Church

Reason for running: Keeping rates affordable of course is paramount but we also have made great progress in dependability and embracing new technology. My goals and that of the rest of the board is to continue to ensure that Butte Electric is a great place to work, takes care of our employees, and is a responsible, reliable and well thought of member of the community. I would like to continue to serve in this capacity so that our great traditions are honored as we embrace the future of this industry.



Stan Smith
Spearfish

I have resided in the Northern Black Hills for over 27 years. It was in Spearfish where I met and married my wife, Laura, and was blessed with a daughter and twin boys. Over the last 25 years, my wife and I have built three homes as our family situation changed. All three were serviced by the Butte Electric Cooperative and the reliable and personal service has been most appreciated.

My rural affiliation stems from my upbringing on the family farm in central Montana and active participation in the local FFA Chapter. My brother and I continue to manage a small wheat acreage in central Montana. A degree in Chemical Engineering from Montana State University led to a four-year stint in the nuclear industry in Idaho. I returned to graduate school at the University of Wyoming for a doctorate in mathematics and, upon completion, was fortunate to receive a faculty position at Black Hills State University. I had lived in some spectacular places with great people, but nothing compared to the Northern Black Hills.

District 2 continued...

In addition to teaching mathematics at BHSU, I served several years as the administrative chair for the department and regularly taught chemical engineering courses for the SDSMT. Envisioning a need for digital remote education, I began developing online mathematics courses and my tenure at BHSU ended in 2008 when The Pennsylvania State University, for whom I now work remotely, provided an opportunity to develop and administer online mathematics courses for the Penn State World Campus.

As an active member of the Spearfish Lions Club, I have served the Lions of South Dakota as District Governor, as Multi-District Council Chair, and as a member Board of Directors of the South Dakota Lions Eye Bank. I have also been called to serve as chair of the Finance Committee for the Spearfish United Methodist Church on numerous occasions.

As the norms for energy generation, efficiency, distribution, and usage rapidly change, it is important that our local cooperative have directors who understand both the urban and rural constituency and who have good technical backgrounds and histories of service leadership. I look forward to the prospect of representing and serving cooperative members.

District 3



Paul Winkler
Newell

I am a fifth generation rancher born and raised in Newell, SD graduating from Newell High School in 1989. I then attended South Dakota School of Mines and Technology earning a BS in Mechanical Engineering and a MS in Technology Management. After graduation I worked for International Truck as a Powertrain Engineer, Blount forestry equipment as the Electrical Systems Engineer, John Deere as a Performance and Emissions Test Engineer in Engine Engineering and for DENSO International as a Senior Engineer in Diesel Fuel Systems. In 2010, my family and I moved back to the family ranch, where my wife Cheyenne and I raise kids full time.

Many of the current and former Board Members have been role models to me, not only for their work on the Board but most importantly their involvement in the community. These people have lived the example of service that I want to set for my kids and hopefully others in the community, as a Butte Electric Cooperative Board Member.

The path that life has led me down has provided me with an array of experiences that I believe I can use to serve the board. I have worked around the world for companies large and small. I have raced solar powered cars across the country. I have worked with government agencies in many industries. I have also went out to hold a flashlight in appreciation when the linemen came out in the rain to get my power back on in the middle of the night. My roots run deep in this community and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve a Cooperative that is so important to me and my community.

A FOND FAREWELL

The Butte Electric Board and Staff thanks Director Tom Casteel for his remarkable 45 years of service. Since 1976, District 3 Director Casteel has given his time, talent, and efforts to enhance Butte Electric's communities and the members within. He's sat on numerous committees over the years and played an integral role in shaping the cooperative into what it is today. We are truly grateful to Director Casteel for dedicating the significant time and energy to help chart our past, present and future.



THE FIRST TO ACT



The state's emergency medical services workforce declined 30 percent last year, though some are still eager to serve.

Though rural South Dakota is experiencing a shortage of first responders, some are still eager to bear the responsibility

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The early morning fog had already settled in heavy and thick as a damp blanket when Joey Denison pulled out of his driveway in Lake Norden. He was headed to Lake Preston for his job as an electric lineman and just happened to be fresh off earning his paramedic license in his spare time.

Within just a few minutes of driving along Hwy. 81, the blurry image of a wrecked semi came into view through the haze. The rig was overturned and rested across the roadway. At first blush, the scene appeared to be a one-vehicle accident, but Denison soon saw the small pickup that was crushed beneath the trailer.

When he got close enough to peer inside the vehicle, he saw a young woman who had clearly sustained severe damage to her skull. His four years of training through EMT and paramedic school kicked into high gear.

"There were cars still running into the semi from the other side so I positioned

my truck where no one could run into her car," Denison recalled. "Then I pulled her car out from underneath the trailer with my truck. I could see her head was shattered and someone had already called 911 to report that she was dead. Eventually, we were able to get her out with the Jaws of Life and transport her to the hospital in Madison."

The young lady made a full recovery and she and Denison still stay in contact three years later.

Denison doesn't characterize his actions as heroic; he sees his response as something that neighbors and citizens simply do for one another. Spurred on by his passion for helping others, Denison began his EMT training seven years ago and now volunteers his services in Lake Norden and the surrounding area.

"I always kind of regretted not going into the military, so this is my way of being a community servant," he said.

These days he teaches classes in emergency training and notes a shortage of qualified volunteers to staff rural first responder operations.

According to the South Dakota Department of Health, over the past year the active EMS workforce has declined 30 percent.

Denison said assumptions sometimes depart from reality when it comes to EMS work, and he encourages those who have a penchant for serving others to consider first responder training.



Joey Denison says emergency response work is both challenging and rewarding.

"The physical act of rendering first aid is a lot of repetitive training and muscle memory, but people think it's too complex. If you can catch a baseball, you can put your hand over a cut. It's not that hard," he said. "We can't be afraid to help someone in need in an emergency situation. Someday it could be you who needs the help."

A LIFETIME OF CO-OP SERVICE TO MEMBERS

Co-op leaders recognized at SDAC Hall of Fame banquet

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Harry Thomas still remembers turning on the “power switch” for the first time at his home when he was a youngster.

That was made possible by his local electric cooperative, and for Thomas it was a life lesson about the great things that can happen through co-op organizations. He went on to serve for nearly four decades on the board of Venture Communications and was one of four recent inductees into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame.

Thomas and Paul Symens were recognized as 2021 inductees at the ceremony held in Watertown Sept. 22, while Chuck Birkholt and Dan Lindblom were honored as 2020 inductees. Last year’s banquet was canceled due to the pandemic.

“I’ve been around cooperative systems all my life,” Thomas said. “I remember when the co-op brought power to the farm and when Sully Buttes built the first telephone line out there. Those things would not have happened if not for cooperatives. The Bell companies built in the towns, but they had no



Inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame were Harry Thomas, Chuck Birkholt and Paul Symens. Not shown is Dan Lindblom, who was unable to attend the induction ceremony in Watertown.

interest in going into the country.”

Symens served on the board at Lake Region Electric in Webster before he was elected to the state Legislature in 1987 and again in 1996. He was a board member for Farmers Union Marketing and Processing for 36 years.

“I’ve put in a lot of time with cooperatives and I know how co-ops work. I was raised in co-ops and it has been a pleasure to be a part of that process. The magic of co-ops is people working together to help each other, and as long as board and management do their jobs, it’s going to be successful.”

Symens said his advice for the younger generation of co-op leaders would be to learn about the history of cooperatives, how they were founded and why they exist.

“Learning from history will teach you a lot and keep you from making mistakes,” he said.

Birkholt started his cooperative career

as a laborer at Cam Wal Electric in Selby. He went to work “digging holes and setting poles” for 85 cents an hour until he discovered he could make more money as a lineman.

He worked at the co-op for 45 years, the last eight as general manager. He went on to serve on the board at Venture Communications for the past 21 years.

“I told my wife I always wanted to see



Hall of Fame inductee Chuck Birkholt addresses the audience at the Watertown Event Center.

what it was like on the other side of the board table,” he said. “But I think she just wanted me out of the house.”

Lindblom, a long-time board member at Black Hills Electric in Custer, was unable to attend the banquet.



Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc.

80TH ANNUAL MEETING

October 20, 2020 • Belle Fourche, South Dakota

The Eightieth Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at 6:00 p.m., on October 20, 2020, at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, pursuant to 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 72 members registered and declared a quorum was present.

Cris Miller, President of the Board of Directors, called the 80th Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. to order.

President Miller introduced Director Thomas Brunner, who gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

President Miller then introduced CEO John Lee who welcomed the members to Belle Fourche and explained that due to COVID-19 the safety of our members is our main concern and would be keeping the meeting very short and to the point.

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 would someone make a motion to dispense with the reading and approve the minutes. A motion was made by Paul Marrs, seconded by Karl Jensen, and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented.

President Miller asked if the members would like the Treasurer's Report and

Financial Statement read or would someone make a motion to dispense with the reading and approve them as presented. A motion was made by Doug Pavel, seconded by Larry Vavruska, and carried to dispense with the reading of the treasurer's report and approve the financial statement as presented.

After introducing the members of the election and credentials committee, President Cris Miller turned the election over to Attorney Ronda Miller.

Ronda Miller called on Karl Jensen to read the Certificate of the Credentials Committee. Petitions were submitted by:

District 1 - Cris Miller

District 2 - Chandy Olson

District 3 - Dan Hefner

Attorney Miller introduced the candi-

dates. A motion was made by Karl Jensen and seconded by Peter Sikorski that a unanimous ballot be cast for Cris Miller, Chandy Olson, and Dan Hefner. The motion carried.

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.

Winner of the \$100.00 cash grand prize was Ronald Evenson.

A motion was made Tom Brunner, seconded by Chandy Olson, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Cris Miller, President
Thomas Brunner,
Secretary



Ronald Evenson won the door prize of \$100 at the 80th Annual Meeting.

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18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner	Date
	09-28-2021

I declare that the information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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 22, 2019, 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 20th day of October, 2020.

(SEAL)

Thomas Brunner, Secretary



Thanksgiving
November 25, 2021

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

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

OCTOBER 22-23

Governor's South Dakota Showcase
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-773-3301

OCTOBER 22-24, 28-30

A Little Piece of Heaven
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, call 605-224-7826 to purchase tickets

OCTOBER 23

Aberdeen Oktoberfest
Aberdeen Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-8448

OCTOBER 29-30

Deadweird
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

OCTOBER 30

16th Holiday Shopping Extravaganza
Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, call Cindy at 605-999-8563 for more info

OCTOBER 30

Scare in the Square
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

OCTOBER 30

Yankton's Harvest Halloween
Downtown, Yankton, SD, email mandi@bostonsyankton.com for more info

OCTOBER 31

Halloween Bash Weekend at Mazing Acres Pumpkin Patch
30851 433rd Avenue, Yankton, SD, 605-760-2759

NOVEMBER 4

Chris Young Famous Friends Tour
Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

NOVEMBER 6

Cyrus Steele Comedy Show
Homestead Opera House, Lead, SD, visit <https://www.homesteadoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

NOVEMBER 5-7, 12-14, 19-21

Julius Caesar
Black Hills Playhouse, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.bhct.org/> for more info and tickets

NOVEMBER 12-13

Sioux Empire Arts and Crafts Show
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

NOVEMBER 13

Christmas at the Homestead
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, North Sioux City, SD, 605-232-0873

NOVEMBER 13

Deadwood's Big Whiskey Fest
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

NOVEMBER 13

Sisseton Area Merchants and Crafters Holiday Open House Extravaganza
Sisseton, SD, call Beverly at 605-698-7425 for more info

NOVEMBER 19-20

Holiday Arts Christmas Show
Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

NOVEMBER 20

Little Norge Fest: A Taste of Scandinavia
Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-4226

NOVEMBER 26

Parade of Lights
Dakota Avenue, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

NOVEMBER 26-28

Beautiful - The Carole King Musical
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/> for more info and tickets

NOVEMBER 27

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market/Festival of Lights Parade
Downtown, Rapid City, SD, 605-381-4204

DECEMBER 2

Christmas on the Prairie
526 North Broadway Avenue Miller, SD, 605-853-3098

DECEMBER 3

Handel's Messiah
First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

DECEMBER 4

Scandinavian Christmas Festival and Bazaar
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Spearfish, SD, 605-642-3715

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