

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Barb Gross, Adele Enright  
and Jean Tehle have all  
worked hard to facilitate  
free and fair elections  
for registered voters  
in Dewey County

## Poll tenders rock the vote

**Election workers are  
dedicated to the task**  
Pages 8-9

**Freshman Impact  
teaches sound  
decision making**  
Pages 12-13

# Cooperation Among Cooperatives



**Brad Kool**  
CEO

When you think about Butte Electric Cooperative, you probably associate us with Butte, Lawrence, and Meade counties, and you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors, and employees all live and work in the communities we serve. But you may not realize that Butte Electric is part of a nationwide cooperative network that brings additional value, tools, and knowledge that benefit our members.

When we expect a severe weather event for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. We coordinate with other co-ops through a mutual aid system to bring additional trucks, equipment, and lineworkers to our service territory. As a cooperative network, we work together and share resources to restore power to our communities. And Butte Electric reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

One of our seven principles is “cooperation among cooperatives.” For example, cooperative lineworkers from ten surrounding states traveled to Florida last month to assist with the restoration efforts from Hurricane Ian. This is an example of how we work together to meet challenges after a severe weather event.

Another area in which Butte Electric benefits from cooperation among cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) “Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program” (RC3), we can access training, resources, and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats.

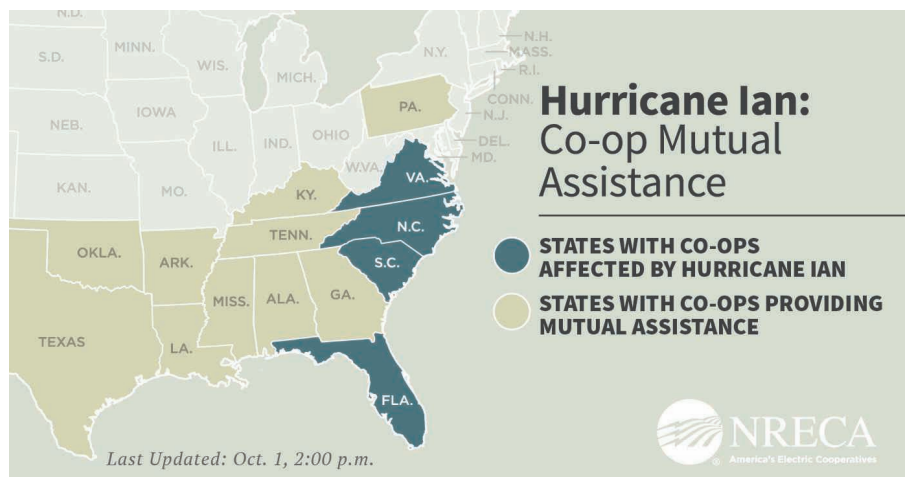
Butte Electric’s ability to tap into the more extensive cooperative network and access tools, products, resources, and leading practices from across the nation ultimately strengthens our cooperative and our communities.

Additionally, communities across the globe have benefitted from the lessons learned and experience of cooperatives in the electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of electric cooperatives in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers, and office personnel have volunteered to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to serve you and our broader community better. When electric cooperatives collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve – which is something to be genuinely thankful for. On behalf of the board of directors and staff at Butte Electric, we wish our members a Happy Thanksgiving.





## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### BUTTE ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1531-1031)

#### Board of Directors

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

#### Office Personnel

Brad Kool - Chief Executive Officer  
 Kim Wince - Chief Financial Officer  
 Laine Mitchell - Communications Director  
 Lee Ann Gaer - Staff Accountant  
 Angie Alexander - Administrative Assistant  
 Heather McCann - Member Services

#### Operations Personnel

Brett Fosheim - Chief Operations Officer  
 Bart McLellan - Spearfish Operations Manager  
 Craig Douthit - Work Order Clerk  
 Adam Zvorak - Foreman  
 Chuck Even - Foreman  
 Jeff Hughes - Foreman  
 Lineman:  
 John Branham  
 Jacob Breidenbach  
 Mike Davis  
 James Gyles  
 Corey Hines  
 Kyle Nudd  
 Dave Pietz  
 Elliot Rayman  
 Dalton Steiger  
 Adam Willuweit

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](mailto:butte@butteelectric.com)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. 82ND ANNUAL MEETING

5:30 PM • Friday, Oct. 28, 2022

Belle Fourche Area Community Center

Join us for the Butte Electric Annual Meeting and enjoy a free roast beef dinner and learn 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            |

If you are disabled and need a special accommodation to have full and equal enjoyment of this program, call 605-456-2494 or 1-800-928-8839.

### Nondiscrimination Statement

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410,

# A heaping helping of holiday home 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 helpful tips:

- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces.
- 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 3 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 3 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.

## LINEMEN PARTICIPATE IN RUBBER GLOVING SCHOOL



Roughly 50 electric cooperative linemen from across the state recently participated in a Rubber Gloving School at the Mitchell Technical College training facility. The program included simulating maintenance and repair work on energized power lines, awareness of proper safety procedures, grounding and insulation of vehicles, operation of aerial lift devices and more.

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




## Don't play on transformer boxes

### Traci Tschetter

Traci, 11, warns readers to stay away from transformer boxes, which contain high-voltage underground electrical equipment inside. Traci is the child of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter and they are members of Whetstone Valley 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.





# CROCKPOT CREATIONS

## SLOW COOKER CHILI

### Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 pkg. McCormick Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning
- 2 cans (14.4 ozs. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cans (16 ozs. each) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15.5 ozs.) tomato sauce

### METHOD

Brown ground beef or turkey in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Place cooked beef, Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, beans and tomato sauce in slow cooker. Stir until well mixed. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high. Stir before serving. For best results, do not remove cover during cooking.

**McCormick.com**

## SLOW COOKER TURKEY BREAST

### Ingredients:

- 2 tsps. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 2 tsps. McCormick Paprika
- 2 tsps. McCormick Rubbed Sage
- 2 tsps. Sicilian Sea Salt
- 1 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1 tsp. McCormick Whole Thyme Leaves
- 1 turkey breast, (about 6 lbs.) fresh or frozen, thawed
- 3 tsps. butter, melted

### METHOD

Mix seasonings in small bowl; set aside. Rinse turkey and pat dry. Brush turkey with melted butter. Sprinkle seasoning mixture over entire surface and under skin of turkey. Place turkey breast in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 1 hour on high. Reduce heat to low; cook 7 hours longer or until turkey is cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165 degrees). Transfer to platter or carving board and slice.

**McCormick.com**

## SLOW COOKER MASHED POTATOES

### Ingredients:

- 5 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 1 c. chicken stock
- 2 McCormick Bay Leaves
- 1/2 c. (1 stick) butter, cut into chunks
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 1/2 -1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. McCormick Parsley Flakes

### METHOD

Spray inside of 6-quart slow cooker with no-stick cooking spray. Add potatoes, stock and bay leaves. Cover. Cook 4 hours on high or until potatoes are tender, stirring after each hour. Remove bay leaves. Stir in butter, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Cover. Let stand 5 minutes. Beat potatoes with electric mixer on medium-high speed or mash with potato masher, gradually adding milk, until smooth. Stir in parsley. Top with additional butter, if desired. Serve with McCormick Brown Gravy or Perfect Brown Gravy.

**McCormick.com**

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Financial Report

Statement of Operations – Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2022

Assets	
Electric Plant in Service	\$78,745,206
Construction Work in Progress	\$465,180
Total Electric Plant	\$79,210,386
Less Reserve for Depreciation	\$26,499,793
Net Electric Plant	\$52,710,593
Investments in Associate Organizations	\$6,191,920
Other Investments	\$4,440,739
Total Other Investments	\$10,632,659
Cash - General Fund	\$648,350
Cash - Construction Fund	\$0
Temporary Investments	\$300,000
Accounts Receivable (Less Uncollectibles)	\$1,421,360
Material and Supplies	\$1,985,904
Prepayments	\$123,764
Interest Receivable	\$13,432
Total Current Assets	\$4,492,810
Deferred Charges	\$162,870
Other Accounts Receivable	\$0
Total Assets	\$67,998,932
Equities	
Patronage Capital	\$22,766,190
Other Equities	\$1,553,980
Total Equities	\$24,320,170

Margins	
Electric Operating Margins	\$2,130,287
Fixed Charges (Interest on Long-Term Debt)	\$1,266,191
Operating Margin (After Fixed Charges)	\$864,096
G&T and Other Capital Credits	\$297,845
Non-operating Margin	\$437,885
Net Margins	\$1,599,826
Long-Term Liabilities	
Long-Term Debt – RUS & CFC	\$40,134,495
Capital Lease	\$41,412
Current/Non-Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$919,401
Customer Deposits	\$369,395
Taxes	\$305,872
Other Current Liabilities	\$176,245
Total Current Liabilities	\$1,770,913
Deferred Credits	\$1,731,942
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$67,998,932

Facts and Figures ENDING JULY 31, 2022	
Number of Members	5,401
Number of Meters	6,738
Miles of Line	
Transmission Line	63.15
Underground Line	554.91
Overhead Line	767.39
Meters per Mile of Line	4.86
New Services – 2021	174
Outage Time (Minutes per meter per year)	54
Taxes Paid	
Gross Revenue Tax	
Meade County	\$16,023
Lawrence County	\$103,669
Butte County	\$44,540
City of Newell	\$869
City of Spearfish	\$108,968
City of Sturgis	\$9,699
City of Belle Fourche	\$8,497
Total	\$292,265
2021 Real Estate Tax	
Butte County	\$28,427
Lawrence County	\$4,725
Meade County	\$7,148
Total	\$40,300



Residential .....	\$8,862,395
Large Commercial.....	\$3,469,124
Small Commercial.....	\$1,609,294
Other .....	\$570,256
Irrigation and Grain .....	\$450,713
Seasonal.....	\$227,962

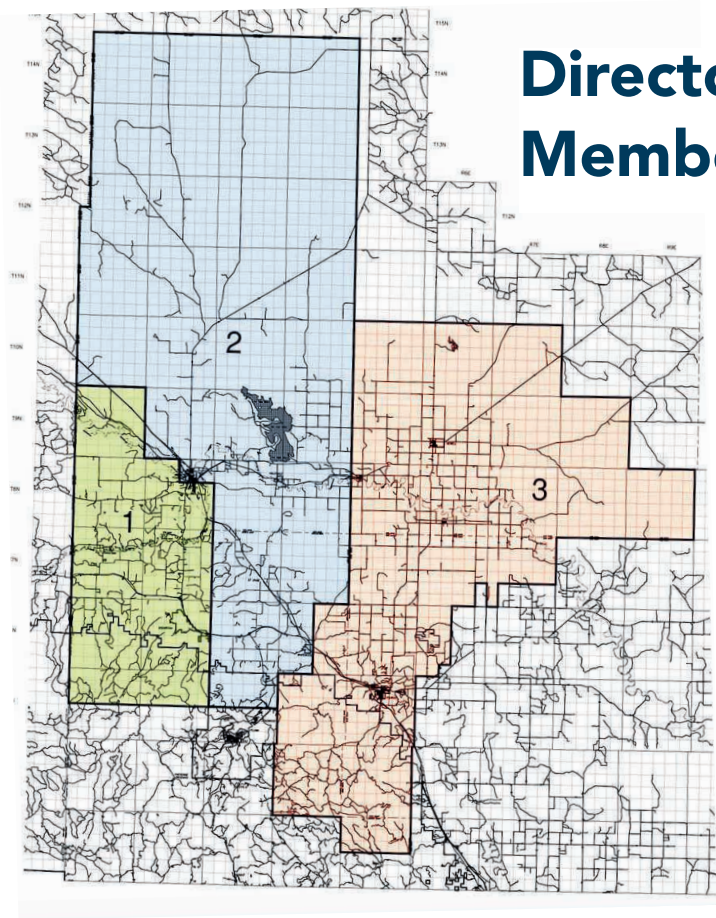
**Total Operating Revenue: \$15,189,744**



Cost of Power.....	\$7,543,997
Depreciation.....	\$2,113,726
Distribution Expenses .....	\$1,742,109
Administrative and General Expense ...	\$932,666
Customer Accounts Expense .....	\$366,703
Customer Service and Info Expense ...	\$329,094
Transmission Expense.....	\$0
Other.....	\$31,162

**Total Operating Expenses: \$13,059,457**





# 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 Smeenk are up for re-election.

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



**Paul Winkler**  
Newell



Jamalia Franzen, auditor deputy in Dewey County, encourages all eligible citizens to register to vote. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## Poll workers urge voters to stay active in the election process

**Billy Gibson**

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

About 10 years ago, Michele Moore was newly retired and looking for something interesting to occupy her time. Out of the blue, she received a call from the Clay County elections auditor.

"She wanted to know if I was interested in working the elections and I told her I'd do it. It's been very rewarding and it feels like I'm doing something important and worthwhile," Moore said.

When she's not facilitating the election process, Moore takes care of the bookkeeping for the family's welding and manufacturing business operated by her husband, David.

While election work isn't a full-time gig, poll tenders put in long hours on voting day. They typically report to the local precinct at 6 a.m. before the polls open an hour later. The shift goes straight through to 7 p.m. when the polls close, although any voters still

standing in line at that time are allowed to cast their ballots. Workers have to stay on duty the entire time and often pack their own lunch and dinner.

After the last voter is done, all the sealed ballots and accompanying paperwork are brought to the auditor's office for verification and certification to ensure the election is "free and fair."

Moore said all the workers at her precinct located at the National Guard Armory in Vermillion are diligent, dependable, thorough and conscientious. She said they take their jobs very seriously and are careful not to be "political" in any way, a guideline contained in the orientation and training process that workers go through before each election regardless of one's years of service.

The training material requires that workers be professional, punctual, respectful to voters, team-oriented and "leave partisan leanings at the door." Anyone concerned about the validity of the election process can appear at

Number of South  
Dakota citizens

**62,429**

registered to vote but  
considered inactive

the precinct as a "poll watcher" or "poll observer," however, those individuals must adhere to a separate set of guidelines as set forth by the Secretary of State's Office.

"We're not here to change anyone's mind or influence how anyone votes," Moore said. "We're just here to do anything we can to help them vote as quickly and smoothly as possible and make sure the process goes well. We try to make it easy for them."

That doesn't mean everything always goes according to plan. As the political passions and divisions have grown more intense over recent years, Moore said she's encountered some fairly tense situations. But she said she generally





Poll workers are on the job from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time. If the polls close while you are in line, you will still be permitted to vote.

Here is a breakdown of party identification as of Sept. 1, 2022:

- Republican - 291,956
- Democrat - 150,760
- No party/Ind. - 142,538
- Libertarian - 2,733
- Other - 1,376

**Total - 589,363**

# V O T E

Election poll workers see themselves as doing something helpful to support and facilitate the democratic process.

feels safe while doing her work inside the armory.

Some voters can get upset when they try to make requests that violate the voting rules, such as attempting to change their party affiliation on voting day or not providing the proper identification. She said tensions can run high during contentious presidential or mid-term elections.



“Sometimes people get angry and you just try to calm them down. They don’t know how things work and what’s required because they’re not paying attention,” she said. “Social media and TV stirs up their passion and they don’t always know how to control that.”

She recalled one particular fellow who insisted on voting without presenting the proper identification. When he was

told he would have to use a provisional ballot, he became agitated and stormed out of the precinct. Moore was “a little nervous” about the man returning and what he might do, but she took comfort in the fact that the National Guard soldiers were right there in the building.

Cris Sichmeller, a resident of Webster, signed on to join her local precinct in Roslyn six years ago and enjoys the



Michele Moore

social aspects of the assignment. A self-described “farm wife,” Sichmeller said she doesn’t often have an opportunity to sit down and visit with friends, but being at the polling place means visiting with folks and catching up on current events.

“People used to spend time just visiting with one another, going to houses and having coffee and playing cards, but that doesn’t happen a lot these days,” she said. “There’s a lot of camaraderie that comes with being around people you know in the community that you have something in common with.”

She said at her precinct things normally proceed “without a lot of drama,” but she remembers that the Covid pandemic did cause a few wrinkles. Several workers contracted the virus, along with the precinct deputy.

The workers had to wear face shields, and Plexiglas was set up in the voting area and at the registration tables.

“I remember a man who had just retired from the military and he came in and saw the face shields and just laughed,” Sichmeller recalled. “He said that wasn’t going to keep us from getting the virus or passing it on to others. He said we needed a hazmat suit for that. I guess he was right.”

Barb Gross recently retired after tending the polls in Dewey County since the 1980s. She describes herself as a stickler for adhering to the rules and buttoning everything down.

“We always made sure everything tallied up because we knew we were going to be audited and we invited that because it was a challenge to see if we could pull it off without a hitch and without anything slipping through the cracks,” she said.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett emphasized the fact that poll workers serve a very valuable role in society.

“They’re on the front lines of the election process. You couldn’t run an election without them,” he said.

Barnett stressed importance of voters meeting their obligation to stay actively involved and make sure they are familiar with the rules and regulations. To find out more about voting rights and responsibilities, visit [www.sdsos.gov](http://www.sdsos.gov).



# Working for Our Members

The employees of Butte Electric Cooperative work hard to meet the energy needs of the cooperative's members. You'll see us in the office, working on the lines, and in the community serving our members with innovation, accountability, integrity and commitment to community.

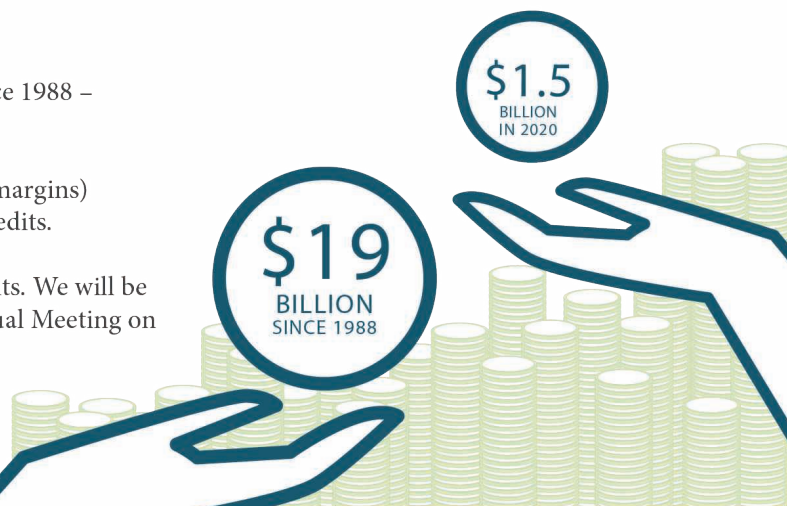
## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$19 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.5 billion in 2020 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Since 2020, Butte Electric has retired \$931,396 in capital credits. We will be announcing the 2022 capital credit allocation at the 82nd Annual Meeting on October 28.

*Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation*





# Our Mission

The mission of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to continually improve customer services; provide safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity; and continue to lead in developing our communities for the benefit of our members.



**Brad Kool**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Kim Wince**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Brett Fosheim**  
Chief Operations Officer



**Bart McLellan**  
Manager of Operations,  
Spearfish



**Laine Mitchell**  
Marketing & Communications  
Director



**Angie Alexander**  
Administrative Assistant



**Lee Ann Gaer**  
Staff Accountant



**Heather McCann**  
Member Services



**Craig Douthit**  
Work Order Clerk



**Chuck Even**  
Sturgis Foreman



**Jeff Hughes**  
Newell Foreman



**Adam Zvorak**  
Spearfish Foreman



**John Branham**  
Spearfish Lineman



**Jacob Breidenbach**  
Sturgis Lineman



**Mike Davis**  
Spearfish Lineman



**James Gyles**  
Sturgis Lineman



**Corey Hines**  
Newell Lineman



**Kyle Nudd**  
Newell Lineman



**Dave Pietz**  
Newell Lineman



**Elliot Rayman**  
Spearfish Lineman



**Dalton Steiger**  
Newell Lineman



**Adam Willuweit**  
Sturgis Lineman



# SOUND DECISIONS

Central Electric lineman Cody Riggs uses a hot stick to simulate de-energizing a power line during a Freshman Impact emergency exercise at Hanson High School in Alexandria. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Freshman Impact program promotes sound safety practices for students

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The students at Hanson High School were stunned and aghast at the horrific scene unfolding right before their eyes.

There were two wrecked sedans, a downed utility pole and tangled wires strewn across the road. Emergency responders were swarming everywhere as a fire truck barreled onto the scene with its sirens blaring. And the most unsettling sight of all: four of their fellow students lying in the crumpled cars with massive wounds and barely clinging to life.

Fortunately, it turns out the accident scene was just a drill staged by a group known as Freshman Impact: Caught in the Moment, and coordinated as part of Cornbelt Program Day at the school located in Alexandria.

Nearly 200 students came from surrounding schools for a full slate of

learning opportunities centered around vehicle safety, first aid, emergency response, drug abuse awareness and much more. Participating schools were Hanson High School, Armour, Bridgewater-Emery, Ethan, Marion, McCook Central, Plankinton and Wessington Springs.

Local organizers Yolanda Price and Don Huber worked with Freshman Impact Executive Director Rick McPherson, local school officials and emergency response agencies to plan the event.

The morning session included seven separate stations scattered throughout the school's parking lot and in the gymnasium. The learning stations focused on the following subjects: teen mental health; healthy relationships; jaws of life and ambulance demonstration; seatbelt awareness; drug dog; social media dangers; and a distracted driving course where the



West River Electric is one of several electric cooperatives that support the Freshman Impact program.

students wore goggles simulating drug and alcohol impaired vision and attempted to navigate a short course behind the wheel of an ATV.

Taking part in the program was Central Electric Cooperative, which provided the downed power pole and wires. Once the emergency exercise was set into motion, two co-op linemen promptly arrived on the scene to de-energize the lines and worked with other responders to secure the area and form a safe perimeter.

Central Electric's Manager of Communications Tara Miller helped





A Hanson High School student takes on the role of an accident victim during a recent mock emergency scenario. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

facilitate the partnership while working alongside local organizers.

"This is an incredible opportunity for area students to learn about good decision-making, safety and the real dangers that are out there," Miller said. "Concern for community is one of our guiding principles as a cooperative. This experience serves to educate first responders and students. It aligns with our values, and we are pleased to support it."

The day's program covered just about all the bases. The schedule included a poignant perspective of loss and grief from LeAnn Moe, who lost her teenage daughter to an automobile accident. During the mock accident response, one of the crash victims was carried away in a hearse furnished by a local funeral

home. And after all the activity settled down outside, the students returned to the gymnasium to observe a mock legal trial and sentencing hearing over the car accident they had witnessed.

The day ended with the distribution of educational materials by CORE (Community Organized Resources for Educating), the parent organization of Freshman Impact.

McPherson said he has found that the teaching method employed by Freshman Impact is successful in driving the message home to students, and they also develop a rapport with local

agencies and emergency responders.

"The students see up close and learn through hands-on activities the possible consequences of wrong choices and the lasting effects physically and emotionally on their bodies, their families and friends and their community," he said, noting that West River Electric based in Wall is also an event sponsor. "It's all about making safe choices and preventing destructive behaviors, and it's important our teens learn the life-long skills and values to help them make the best possible decisions."

Visit [www.freshmanimpact.com](http://www.freshmanimpact.com).

Central Electric Cooperative of Mitchell presented CORE with a \$2,500 Operation Round Up grant to help fund the local program. Pictured left to right are Freshman Impact founder Rick McPherson, CORE Coordinator Yolanda Price, CORE Coordinator Don Huber, Operation Round-Up Trustee LeAnn Moe, Central Electric Director Merl Bechen and Hanson County Chief Deputy Mike Brown. *Photo by Tara Miller*



### Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# 81ST ANNUAL MEETING

October 26, 2021 • Belle Fourche, South Dakota

The Eight-First Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at 6:00 p.m., on October 26, 2021, at the Belle Fourche Area Community Center in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, under 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 119 members registered and declared a quorum was present.

Thomas Brunner, Secretary of the Board of Directors, called the 81st Annual Membership Meeting of Butte Electric Cooperative, Inc. to order.

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

Secretary Brunner then introduced CEO John Lee who welcomed the members to Belle Fourche.

Mary Ann Huffman's name was drawn for a \$20.00 attendance prize.

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

Secretary Brunner 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 by Joyce Hall, seconded by Karl Jensen, and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented.

After introducing the members of the election and credentials committee, Secretary Brunner 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 - Paul Slavec and Travis Schenk

District 2 - Stan Smith and Tom Brunner

District 3 - Paul Winkler

Attorney Miller introduced the candidates. Each candidate gave a brief speech introducing themselves to the members and explaining why they wanted to run for the Board. A motion was made by Paul Marrs and seconded by Karl Jensen that a unanimous ballot be cast for Paul Winkler. The motion carried.

Attorney Miller explained the election procedures as it is contained in the Bylaws. The Credentials Committee was directed to gather ballots.

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

Director and Treasurer Travis Schenk presented the Financial Report for the previous year.

He pointed out that the total revenue from energy sales was \$15.8 million for the year. Operating expenses were \$12.9 million. Net investment in plant is just over \$5,496,396 this year. Long term debt is \$38,157,364 while total electric plant owned is \$76,177,690. The number of meters has reached the 6,570 mark as we continue to grow.

Vice President Dan Marrs asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and Financial Statement as presented. A motion was made by Cliff Jensen, seconded by Diane Miller, and carried out to approve the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements as presented.

Doug Pavel's name was drawn for the \$20.00 attendance prize.

CEO Lee introduced special guests in attendance at the meeting.

CEO Lee introduced our guest speaker Chris Nelson from the South Dakota PUC. Commissioner Nelson talked about the electric trends and the renewable energy

push that is going on in the State.

CEO John Lee then gave the manager's report. CEO Lee explained that President Cris Miller would not be here in person due to a conflict in his schedule.

CEO Lee started by first thanking the Board of Directors for their continued dedication to keeping our electrical system efficient and affordable. He then introduced the Board members.

CEO Lee then talked about the mission statement and core values and how they tie into the daily operations of the Cooperative.

CEO Lee gave an overview of the past year. Some of the community events the Butte Electric hosted in our communities were the Butte/Lawrence County Fair and the Tailgate Party in Belle Fourche. CEO Lee also spoke of over 300 volunteer hours from the staff and the \$500 each Butte Electric employee donated in 2021.

He delineated the record growth in our area and the approximate number of new services and upgrades we will be performing in the coming future. He also recognized that we received our highest-ever American Customer Satisfaction Index Score, which was an 8% increase from 2019. He stated that our membership programs remain strong, with \$41,307 disbursed in rebates to the members for making energy efficiency changes in 2021. He highlighted that we had added several new scholarship opportunities to help build leadership development among our youth.

CEO Lee explained our new program Operation Round-up that we would be adding this coming year to help non-profit organizations in our communities.

CEO Lee stated that Butte Electric services grew by 2.5 percent in 2020, and by quarter 3 of this year, we had reached 4.6 percent growth. He highlighted that our priority remains to serve our members and provide the reliable service our members deserve.



# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

He also reported that there would be no rate increase for 2022.  
CEO Lee reported that the Board of Directors voted to return 2021 margins back to the membership by waiving the availability charge on the member's next bill.

CEO Lee then recognized multiple employees and board members for their milestone years of service. He also shared a special video tribute from President Miller to outgoing board member Tom Casteel.

Kelly Moore's name was drawn for a \$20.00 attendance prize.

Vice President Dan Marrs 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.

A \$20.00 attendance prize was given away.

Vice President Marrs introduced Director Mortenson to talk about the new Butte Electric Scholarship program. Director Mortenson introduced the five scholarship winners. Director Mortenson drew for the Annual Meeting attendance scholarship, and Jonathon Bloom's name was drawn for the annual meeting attendance scholarship.

Drawings were made for several door prizes, which were donated by businesses that sell supplies, equipment, and services to the Cooperative.

The winner of the pre-registration prize, a TV, was Kelly Moore.

The Election results were given by Attorney Miller, with Travis Schenk and Thomas Brunner being re-elected.

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

Cris Miller, President

Thomas Brunner, Secretary

## 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: 10-01-2022

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

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):  
Laine Mitchell  
PO Box 137  
Newell, SD 57760  
Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
Laine Mitchell  
PO Box 137  
Newell, SD 57760  
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
Brad Kool  
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  
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

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one):  
☐ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months  
☒ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4) (See instructions page 4) PSN 7530-01-000-9031 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

13. Publication Title: Butte Electric Cooperative Connections

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 9/28/22

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	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)	4614	4614	4614
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	3	3	3
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	3	3	3
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS	3	3	3
<b>c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))</b>	<b>4614</b>	<b>4614</b>	<b>4614</b>
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	62	62	62
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	3	3	3
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	3	3	3
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	3	3	3
<b>e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)</b>	<b>4676</b>	<b>4676</b>	<b>4676</b>
<b>g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)</b>	<b>4686</b>	<b>4686</b>	<b>4686</b>
<b>i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>

\* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

16. Electronic Copy Circulation

a. Paid Electronic Copies		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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 times 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: Laine Mitchell  
Date: 09-28-22

I certify that all 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

### 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 26, 2021, 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 28th day of October, 2022.

(SEAL)

Thomas Brunner, Secretary



**NOV. 3-5**  
**Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge**  
Huron, SD

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

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.

**OCT. 28-30**

**ZooBoo**

Great Plains Zoo  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-367-7003

**OCT. 31**

**Halloween Parade**

Belle Fourche, SD

**NOV. 3-5**

**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
Downtown, Yankton, SD

**NOV. 3-5**

**Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge**

100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD  
605-352-0000

**NOV. 4-6**

**Girlfriends' Weekend**

Hill City, SD

**NOV. 5-20**

**Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show**

9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily  
Ethan, SD  
605-770-2411

**NOV. 5**

**Fairburn Community Center Bazaar**

Fairburn, SD

**NOV. 11-13**

**Christmas at the Barn**

Front Porch 605  
Groton, SD  
605-216-4202

**NOV. 12**

**Black Hills Meat Festival**

Black Hills Harley Davidson  
2820 Harley Dr.  
Rapid City, SD  
605-390-7917

**NOV. 12**

**Holiday Extravaganza**

Sisseton, SD  
605-698-7425

**NOV. 13**

**Lutefisk, Lefse, Meatball Supper**

Chamberlain, SD  
605-234-6698

**NOV. 18-20**

**Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival**

Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1876

**NOV. 19**

**Fall Craft Show**

Minneluzahan Senior Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-1887

**NOV. 19**

**Lille Norge Fest**

Canyon Lake Activity Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-342-4226

**NOV. 25**

**Olde Tyme Christmas Kick-off and Parade**

Hill City, SD

**NOV. 25**

**Trap Shoot**

Izaak Walton League  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-332-9527

**NOV. 25**

**"Light up the Night" Parade and Fireworks**

Belle Fourche, SD

**NOV. 25-26**

**Kris Kringle Kraft Fair**

Hill City, SD

**DEC. 2-3**

**Gregory Mid-Winter Fair**

Gregory Auditorium  
Gregory, SD  
605-830-9778

**DEC. 2-3**

**Christmas in the Hills**

Mueller Center  
Hot Springs, SD  
605-745-4140

**DEC. 3**

**Santa's Thrift Village**

Minneluzahan Senior Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-1887

**DEC. 3**

**60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale**

Central States Fair Grounds,  
Rapid City, SD  
605-343-0710

**DEC. 17**

**Custer Christmas for Kids**

Custer High School  
Custer, SD  
custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com

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