

Cooperative Connections

Winter Wonderland at Falls Park is a main attraction in Sioux Falls that draws visitors from far and near each year.

**COVID-19 Can't
Stop Christmas
from Coming**

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**Upgrade
Electronics to
Save Money**

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Cooperative Core Principle:

Giving Back to Our Community



Stephanie Horst

horst@byelectric.com

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on; but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all.

Over the years, you have probably heard or read about Bon Homme Yankton Electric's concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart. It's who we are as a co-op.

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Now, with holidays among us, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission--to be a catalyst for good.

You are probably aware of our Youth Tour program, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. Or our scholarship program where we award three area high school students helping them with college expenses.

We also have a strong commitment to safety--not just for our employees, but for our community as well. We visit schools to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We hold safety demonstrations at community meetings and other gatherings.

Bon Homme Yankton Electric is also committed to area economic development. In 2020, even amidst the pandemic, Bon Homme Yankton Electric helped by providing low interest financing of \$4.74 million through our Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund and using the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program to secure financing for the projects through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dakota Protein received construction funds for the new pellet plant at Napa Junction, Lesterville Fire Department received construction and equipment upgrade funds, and Horizon Health Care, Inc. (Horizon) received funds for their new health care facility in Yankton that offers medical, dental and behavioral health care services to the city of Yankton and the surrounding area.

We are so pleased to be able to help all three of these entities. A big part of our mission is to build stronger communities and helping to increase access to good-affordable health care, supporting local EMS services and help new businesses get established in our area are just a few ways we can keep our rural towns strong.

You will also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports, volunteering at charitable events. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is--after all, without you, the co-op would not exist.

We know that our core job is to keep the lights on; but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all.

If there's anything we can do to help you--whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discuss payment plan options during these difficult times--please reach out to us at 605-463-2507.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you.

Bon Homme Yankton Electric

Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-973)

**Bon Homme Yankton Electric
Association, Inc**
PO Box 158
134 S Lidice St
Tabor, SD 57063

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
7:30am - 4:30pm

To pay by phone, call:
1-888-395-5315

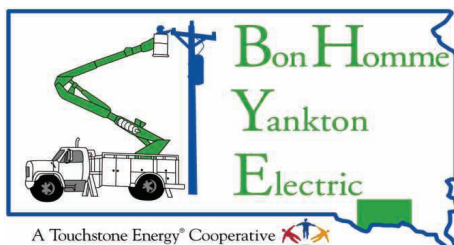
To report an outage, call:
**Local call from Tabor, Tyndall and
Yankton:**
605-463-2507
Toll Free in South Dakota:
1-800-925-2929

NOTICE: Electric bills must be paid
by 10:00am on the 20th of each
month to avoid a \$10 late fee.

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly by Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, Inc., PO Box 158, 134 S. Lidice St., Tabor, SD 57063-0158 for its members. Families subscribe to Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connection's purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living. Subscription information: Electric cooperative members devote \$6.00 from their electric payments annually for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Tabor, SD 57063 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections, Bon Homme Yankton Electric, PO Box 158, Tabor, S.D. 57063 TELEPHONE (605)463-2507; FAX (605) 463-2419.

Design assistance by TDG Communications, Deadwood, S.D.



Member Photo Contest

We are looking for local member photos to use in our upcoming 2021 calendar! Every year we send out a calendar for the upcoming year to all our members in the January issue of this magazine.

We know our members are surrounded by beautiful wildlife, landscapes, and festivals, and we would love to use these local images for our next calendar.

Submit your photos to Jaclyn Arens at jarens@byelectric.com for a chance to be featured in our calendar and a chance to win a \$20 bill credit!



Submit Your Favorite Local Business

In this magazine, we want to feature local businesses and individuals in our service territory that are doing great things in the community.

Have an idea for a business or community story? Submit your ideas to editor Jaclyn Arens at jarens@byelectric.com or call (605) 463-2507.



Decorate Your Home Safely

It's time to deck those halls - safely. More than 800 home fires are caused by Christmas and holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season:

- Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly - indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.
- Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.
- Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.



Correction: Pheasant bag limit unchanged

A story on pheasant hunting in last month's issue incorrectly stated that the daily bag limit was increased from three to four birds. This proposed change was considered by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; however, the proposal was not approved.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Do Not Shoot the Power Line!"

Luke Welsh, 10 years old

Luke is a resident of Oral, S.D., and is the son of Ryan and Rachel Welsh. He warns, "Do not shoot the power line. It might start a fire! Be safe."

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.

Delicious Holiday Desserts

Dorothy's Baked Carmel Corn

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 c. butter | 1/2 tsp. soda |
| 2 c. brown sugar | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/2 c. dark Karo syrup | 6 qts. (24 c.) popped corn |
| 1 tsp. salt | |

Add butter, brown sugar, syrup and salt to a large pan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 4 1/2 minutes without stirring. Remove from heat. Add soda and vanilla. Stir 1-2 minutes. Pour over popcorn and stir well. Divide into 2 cake pans. Bake 250 degrees 1 hour, mix every 15 minutes. Break up and store in tight container.

Gloria Puetz, Salem, SD

Chocolate Kissed Macaroons

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 14 oz. pkg. sweetened angel flaked coconut | 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk |
| 3/4 c. flour | 2 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1/4 c. salt | 24 chocolate kisses, unwrapped |
| 1 egg white, beaten til frothy | |

Line two baking sheets with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper. In a medium bowl, mix together coconut, flour and salt. Add sweetened milk, beaten egg white and vanilla. Mix well. Mixture will be stiff. Use a cookie scoop, ice cream scoop or tbsp. to divide the dough dropping two inches apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 16-18 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and gently press a candy kiss into the center. Remove to wire rack to cool.

Colleen Wolfe, Hot Springs, SD.

Scoops Ah Caramel

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1/2 c. butter | 1 can condensed milk |
| 1-1/2 c. brown sugar | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 3/4 c. white syrup | 3 9-oz. bags Scoops |

Bring the butter, brown and white sugar and condensed milk to a boil. Boil for 1 minute. Add vanilla. Stir. Put chips on a platter. Pour caramel over Scoops. May drizzle with hot fudge. Keep well refrigerated.

Ginny Jensen, Volga, SD

Reindeer Pecan Brownies

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Nonstick cooking spray | 1/2 cup cocoa powder |
| 1 stick (1/2 c.) unsalted butter, melted | 1 teaspoon espresso powder (optional) |
| 1 tablespoon pecan or canola oil | 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt |
| 1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, granulated sugar | 20 raw pecan halves, cut in half |
| 2 large eggs | 40 candy eyeballs |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract | 20 red chocolate candies |
| 1/2 cup all-purpose flour | 1/4 cup chocolate chips |

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. In large bowl, whisk melted butter, oil and sugar until well combined. Add eggs and vanilla extract; beat until mixture is thick and pale in color, about 1 minute. Sift in flour and cocoa powder. Add espresso powder, if desired, and salt. Using rubber spatula, fold dry ingredients into butter mixture until just combined. Batter should be thick. Using 1-tablespoon cookie scoop, transfer batter to prepared mini muffin tin. Bake 13-15 minutes until toothpick inserted in center comes out mostly clean, with some lingering crumbs. Add chocolate chips to heat-proof bowl; microwave until smooth and melted. Pour melted chocolate into sandwich bag and cut off small portion of one corner to use as tip. Use melted chocolate to "glue" on pecan antlers, candy eyeballs and red candy noses to brownies. Allow chocolate to set before transferring brownies to airtight container. Note: Brownies will stay fresh for up to three days.

AmericanPecan.com

Please send your favorite holiday 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

WELCOME MEMBERS

Avon

Krystal Tewalt

Irene

Tigertooth Fireworks LLC

Tabor

James & Joann Riley

Reed Forman

Utica

Mistie Geraets

Yankton

Bryce Roberts

Ana Alvarez

Adriana McManus

Ryan Lihs

Jamie Carda

Kenny Wapniarski

Steve Reiter

Ricardo Oliva Soria & Yeniset Dvorte

Judy & Travis Huchtmeier

Joshua Kramer

Adam Walter & Alison Veldhouse

Jason & Crystal Reisig

Michael Dietrich

Russell Beste Estate

David & Kay Shutt

Carrie & Jerome Svendsen

Brenda Greer

Statement of non-discrimination

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, 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, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

WINTER WONDERLAND WORD SEARCH

Can you find all the words associated with winter in the puzzle below?

Use the word bank to check your work.



WINTER ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP:

Instead of turning up the heat in your home, wear an extra layer of clothing or get cozy under your favorite blanket!

WORD BANK:

- snowflake
- mittens
- scarf
- snowball
- chilly
- icicles
- cocoa
- earmuffs
- fireplace
- blanket

FINANCIAL STATISTICAL COMPARISON

SEPTEMBER	2019	2020	2020 YTD
Number of Meters	3,866	3,894	
Total Revenue	\$744,773	\$803,966	\$8,321,408
Cost of Power	\$420,019	\$437,368	\$4,811,237
Total Cost of Service	\$757,457	\$733,492	\$7,622,847
kWhs Purchased	6,175,661	6,596,216	74,774,347
kWhs Sold	5,862,138	6,264,975	71,509,651
Line Loss %	4.90%	4.86%	4.12%
Residential Average kWh	1,177	1,077	
Residential Average Bill	\$157	\$149	

October Board Meeting Highlights

The October board meeting was held on October 21, at 8am via Zoom. All board members were present. Others present were Attorney Sheila Woodward, General Manager Stephanie Horst, Office Manager Nicole Einrem, Operations Manager Ken Carda, and Communications/Marketing Coordinator Jaclyn Arens.

The board reviewed and approved:

- Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- New Members & Cancellations
- Capital Credits to Estates in the amount of \$4,677.47
- Closed Work Order Inventory totaling \$143,503.45
- Special Equipment purchases totaling \$14,448.64
- Basin Annual Meeting Notice

The board reviewed and approved reports:

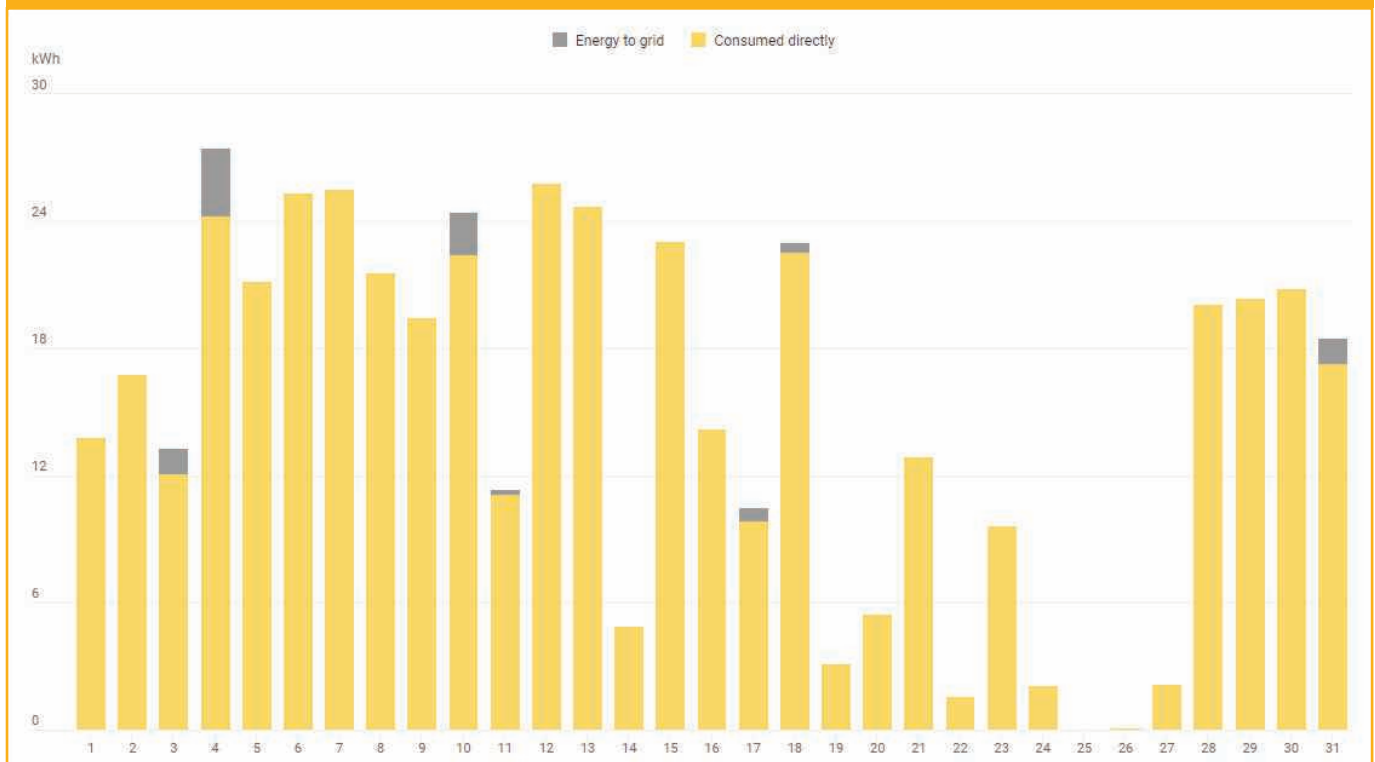
- East River Cyber Security/IT Report
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their departments.

- Office: Monthly Financial Report & Preliminary 2021 Capital Budget
- Member Service/Communications Report
- Operations Report
- Safety Report
- General Manager's Report
- Reports from board members
 - South Dakota Rural Electric
 - East River Electric Power Cooperative
 - Attorney Report
- Director Quarterly Expenses
- 2020-10-01 R&S 1.12 Resolution
- Policy 50-22- 2021 Market Rate-Dakota Plains
- Midwest Consumer's Electric Voting Delegate/alternate
- Set 2021 Annual Meeting Date as August 10, 2021

The board reviewed:

- Executive Session: None
- Next meeting date set for Wed., Nov. 18, at 8 am.

October Solar Stats





Storybook Island captures the imagination of the young and old alike both during the summer and the holiday season.

CHRISTMAS IN SD

COVID-19 Hasn't Stopped Christmas from Coming

Billy Gibson

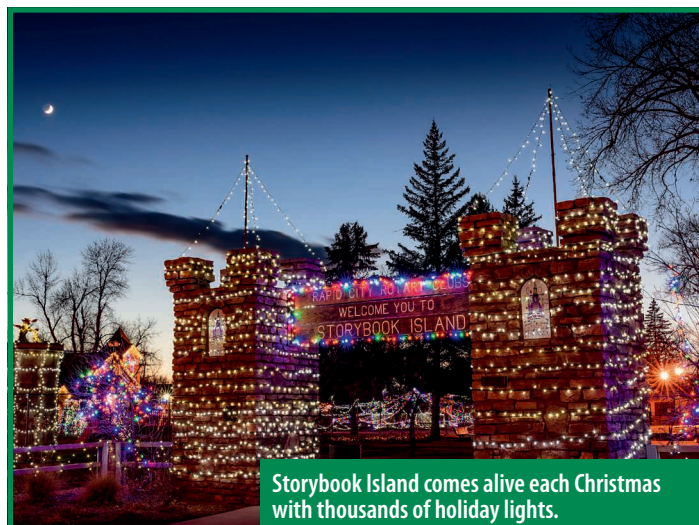
billy.gibson@sarea.coop

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly had a substantial “bah humbug” effect since it began sweeping across the globe last spring. And as the virus continues to pose a health risk going into the new year ahead, many familiar holiday festivals and events across the state have been canceled, curtailed or postponed until 2021.

But there are still a number of events across the state that are planning to proceed as scheduled, many of which have become annual holiday traditions for individuals and families looking to get into the Christmas spirit.

That’s the case for those who look forward every year to taking in the sights and sounds of the Winter Wonderland event held at Falls Park in Sioux Falls. For residents of the Sioux Falls area and thousands of out-of-town visitors each holiday season, the brilliant light display is a spectacle that not only sparks the Christmas spirit but also brings back memories of childhood wonder from previous seasons.

The Winter Wonderland exhibit includes 270 decorated trees and light poles and more than 25 miles of string lights throughout the complex that runs along the Big Sioux River. A five-story observation tower also gives park visitors a 360-degree bird’s eye view of the many eye-popping displays.



Storybook Island comes alive each Christmas with thousands of holiday lights.

The 29th Annual Parade of Lights will officially kick off the downtown Sioux Falls holiday season with festive music and a dazzling float parade along historic Phillips Avenue from 13th Street to 5th Street. But due to the pandemic this year, officials have announced there will be a twist: instead of the floats moving past the spectators, the spectators will walk along in front of the floats. The floats will remain stationary for the duration of the event and the public is invited to casually walk along the route and view the parked floats up close.

The “stationary parade” begins at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 27.



Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer shares the holiday spirit by decorating a bucket truck each year.

Everyone is encouraged to stay for an after-party and awards ceremony where there will be live musical entertainment and other activities. Admission is free.

Storybook Island, a popular attraction in the Rapid City area during the summer months, will hold its annual Christmas Nights of Lights display this season. The park boasts 16 miles of colorful lights, including dioramas, popular children's fictional characters and a variety of additional holiday-related themes. The event takes place Dec. 4-6, 11-23 and 26-31, from 5:30 to 8:30 each night at 1301 Sheridan Lake Rd. Admission is \$3 per person.

In Custer, the Annual Parade of Lights will take place downtown on Saturday, Dec. 5, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The annual event signals the kick-off of the holiday season in the Southern Hills area. After the parade, Santa and Mrs. Claus will make an appearance at Way Park for the Memorial Tree Lighting Ceremony. The parade begins at 8th and Mt. Rushmore Road and will end at Way Park on 4th and Mt. Rushmore Road.

The residents of Spearfish will celebrate the start of the season with the annual Holidazzle Light Parade and Christmas Stroll sponsored by the Downtown Business Association. The event will take place along Main Street on Saturday, Dec. 5, beginning in the morning and lasting all day.

The Christmas Stroll will take place immediately after the parade and will feature special sales and discounts at downtown merchants and business establishments. To add to the holiday mood, carolers will perform from 2 to 4 p.m., and there will be a



Winter Wonderland at Falls Park offers a unique light display along the Big Sioux River.

Community Chili Feed at Common Grounds at 5 p.m.

In Pierre, revelers will ring in the holiday season with the 20th Annual Parade of Lights on Monday, Nov. 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place entries and there will also be a Mayor's Choice Award as well as a Griswold Award for gaudiest float.

Also in Pierre, the highly anticipated "Christmas at the Capitol" event will take place once again this year from Nov. 25 through Dec. 26. The rotunda and the hallways of the Capitol Building will be filled with the sounds of carolers and musicians as well as the scent of mountain pine and the soft glow emanating from nearly 100 lighted Christmas trees. The trees are decorated by cities, businesses, non-profit groups and other civic organizations.

Popular displays inside the Capitol include a set of hand-painted porcelain ornaments and a wooden nativity scene believed to be nearly 125 years old located on the second floor.

Before scheduling a visit, check for the most recent updates at www.facebook.com/ChristmasattheCapitol.



The Pumpkin Carriage is a popular attraction at Storybook Island.

CLASSIFIEDS

January Issue Deadline: December 1, 2020. Email your classified ad to: jarens@byelectric.com. Members can post one free ad per year. Repeats or longer ads are \$1/ column inch.

FOR RENT: 1 bedroom apartment. Tabor Manor. Contact Gary at 605-463-2209 or Ron at 605-463-2256.

Beseda Hall, Tabor, SD for rent for any special occasion such as weddings, anniversaries, graduation or birthdays! For more information contact Linda Bares at 605-661-6220 or snlbare@gmail.com.

FOR RENT: Tabor Self Storage. Call 605-660-0274 or 605-660-3497.

FOR SALE: Firewood, split and stored inside, you haul. Call Roger at 660-5688 for details.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy bills can increase during winter for a variety of reasons, like houseguests, more time spent at home, and shorter days and longer nights. Small actions, like turning down your thermostat, replacing old bulbs with LEDs and washing clothes in cold water can help you save.



FREE Classified Ad Service

Members can submit classified ads for the following categories: Giveaway, For Sale, For Rent, and Wanted Ads. All ads must be received by the first of the month to be included in the following month's issue. Ads will run one time unless resubmitted. Bon Homme Yankton Electric reserves the right to edit content or exclude ads due to space restrictions. Email ads to [Jaclyn Arens at jarens@byelectric.com](mailto:jarens@byelectric.com).

Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week Hannah Lindula

Bon Homme Yankton Electric along with Dakota News Now are pleased to announce that Hannah Lindula, a senior at Bon Homme School District, was selected as a Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. Hannah's segment aired the week of November 1-7 on Dakota News Now.

Hannah has a 4.07 grade point average and is involved in track, softball, basketball, football manager, choir, National Honor Society, Health Occupation Students of America, Student Council, volunteer food drive, and she is a member of the Catholic church and a participant in their youth group.

Hannah is the daughter of Jennifer Boska and was nominated by Bon Homme teacher and coach Byron Pudwill.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives along with Dakota News Now have joined together to recognize the achievements of high school seniors throughout the region. "Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week" has been celebrating the achievements of high school seniors since 2002. Recipients are highly motivated high school seniors who excel in the classroom and community. This program was founded on the four pillars of Touchstone Energy: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and a Commitment to Community.



Marketing Communication Coordinator Jaclyn Arens (r) presents Hannah with \$250

Hannah received \$250 from Bon Homme Yankton Electric in recognition of her many accomplishments. She is also now eligible to receive a \$1,000 scholarship or one of two \$500 scholarships that will be given away this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.



Behind the scenes of Hannah's interview



Behind the scenes of Byron Pudwill's interview

Increasing Our Reliability:

Pole Testing Program



Ken Carda

kcarda@byelectric.com

This year Ram Utilities found 46 defective poles, and they tested approximately 2,500 poles.

This October Bon Homme Yankton Electric contracted Ram Utilities to perform pole testing in the blue and red areas on the map below.

Proper maintenance of our electrical system includes pole inspection. Pole testing helps add many years of safe, reliable service life to our electrical system, which reduces unnecessary or premature replacement costs.

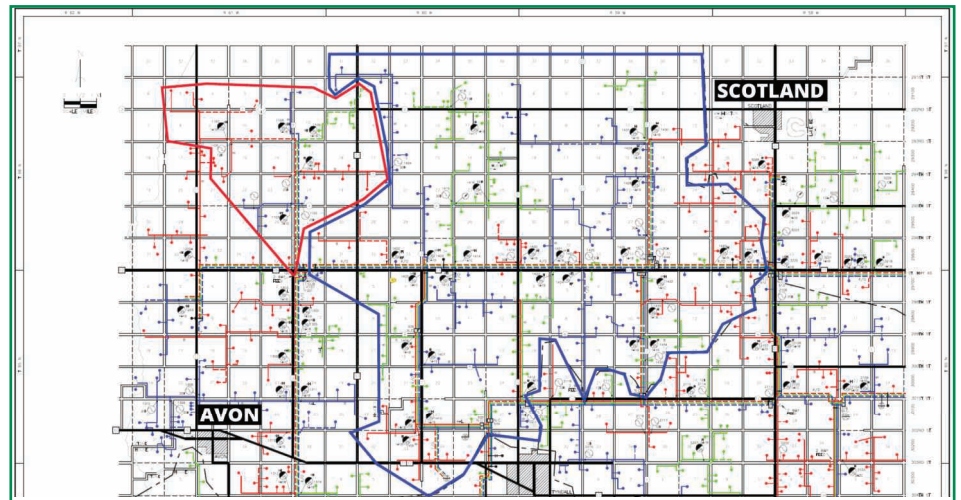
Pole performance is determined by strength, load, and cost. A successful pole inspection program identifies decay, measures defects, and estimates the pole's remaining strength.

Inaccurate strength calculations can be costly and lead to unnecessary spending on restoration or replacement. It can also lead to unsafe conditions that may lead to pole failures and costly damage and repairs.

Poles are tested by sounding with a hammer to detect internal decay. Poles that show signs of internal decay are bored to determine the location and extent of the decay.


This year Ram Utilities found 46 defective poles, and they tested approximately 2,500 poles.

Bon Homme Yankton Electric implements this program every year to determine which poles we need to replace. We test all our poles on a 10 year rotating schedule. This program increases the reliability and safety of our electrical system. It is one of the many ways we increase safety for our employees and our members.



Call in ASAP for Electrical Projects

Do you have any projects you'd like to get done this winter that need electrical service? Call our office at (605) 463-2507 and ask for our Operations Manager Ken Carda to get your project on our schedule.



There are several popular electronics on the market that can help you use energy more efficiently.

Cut Energy Consumption

Upgrade Electronics for Energy Savings

Are you looking for easy ways to save more money on your monthly energy bills as the year comes to a close?

Beyond some of the more traditional energy efficiency measures, such as sealing air leaks or adding additional insulation, there are several popular electronics that can help you use energy more efficiently.

These devices are relatively easy to incorporate into your home, making them a simple way to help manage your energy use.

Smart thermostats are becoming an increasingly popular option to help save energy at home. With smart thermostats, there's no longer a need to constantly adjust the temperature. They can be programmed to follow a pattern of heating and cooling throughout the day and year to maximize your comfort and energy use at the same time.

Some advanced smart thermostats out on the market today can even learn your habits and adjust the temperature in your home accordingly. Another great benefit is the ability to control a smart thermostat remotely from an app on your phone, allowing you to set the temperature to your liking before you even arrive home.

Lastly, some smart thermostats can be integrated with a more complete smart home hub, like Amazon Alexa or Google Home,

which are both hot sellers in the market. Smart thermostats can be pretty pricey upfront, but if it's time to upgrade your home's thermostat, you'll soon discover that smart options offer more convenience and savings that make them worth the initial investment.

If you're looking for ways to save energy while you and your family are on a budget, consider smart plugs. Smart plugs can be inserted into any standard electrical outlet and can help you manage the energy of the devices that are plugged in. With con-



Smart thermostats are becoming an increasingly popular option to help save energy. Photo provided by Ecobee.

If your goal is to reduce your energy use at home, energy monitors can give you the information you need to achieve this goal.

trol of the smart plug, you can stop power-hungry devices from being on longer than necessary.

Some smart plug models have a scheduling option, allowing you to turn on lights or turn off the TV at certain times of the day, such as when you leave in the morning and when you anticipate returning home. Others offer a dimming function, allowing you to change the brightness of lights that are plugged into the smart plug. These features can be controlled through an app on your phone, and some models also have voice-controlled options when connected to a smart home hub.

Another useful gadget is the home energy monitor, which helps you monitor home energy use and set energy budgets. If your goal is to reduce your energy use at home, energy monitors can give you the information you need to achieve this goal. They are connected to your electric meter and provide a big picture on your home's energy use.

Additionally, some home energy monitors can show which appliances are using the most energy, giving you the knowledge on which devices to cut down on. There are also a few additional features among home energy monitors that provide several different benefits. Some models can show you real-time electricity use and costs, while some can help create a personalized plan for energy efficiency. Most home energy monitors can be connected through a smart phone app, which can send notifications, warn about abnormal energy use and provide tips for further energy savings.

These simple devices can help you save a little more energy each month. Considering what your needs are will help you choose a device with the appropriate features. As with any new product, do some homework first to determine which device suits your home best.

Plug into Presents that Pay Off with Safety

During the holidays, many of us turn our attention to gift giving, and while the shiny, trendy and pricey may make a big splash when the unwrapping's done, practical gifts can leave lasting impressions. What's more, they can really make a difference by enhancing safety and improving security.

Here are a few practical gift ideas that can make a real difference in helping to reduce safety risks year-round.

Smoke Detectors: Most of us have at least one in our homes, but experts say that's not enough. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that a working smoke detector be installed in every bedroom, on every level of a home, and in hallways outside of sleeping areas. And, if smoke detectors are more than 10 years old, they should be replaced.



Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom on every level of a home.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless gas

created by incomplete consumption of fuels like gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane, oil, coal or methane. The gas is highly toxic, so having CO detectors outside of sleeping areas and on every level of a home improves safety. Local fire departments respond to about 80,000 non-fire CO incidents each year. Fuel-burning heating equipment and cooking appliances should be professionally inspected once a year to reduce the risks of malfunction and detect structural problems early.

Extension Cords: They are not all created equal; subject to wear; have specific use guidelines; and are never recommended for permanent use. Brittle and cracked plastic can indicate heat damage, and exposed wires or frayed connections increase risk of shock, shorts or fires. An extension cord that's warm or hot to the touch is a good indication it's not designed to safely do the job. Consider giving an assortment of extension cords designed for indoor or outdoor use. Before you buy, look for the label of a nationally recognized testing lab like Underwriters Laboratories (UL), CSA-International (CSA) or Intertek (ETL).

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters: Arcing and sparking are indications that a home's electrical wiring needs service. Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs) can help address fire hazards before they occur. Properly installed by a licensed electrician, AFCIs can often replace circuit breakers in the electrical panel box. This should be completed by a qualified electrician because the installation involves working inside the panel box, which carries current even when main circuit breakers are turned off.

Don't Wait for an Emergency to Test Your Generator

Use a nice day this fall to test your generator. Don't gamble and wait for an emergency to see if you are prepared.

Portable or permanently installed standby generators can come in handy during long-term power outages. However, if you do not know how to use them properly, they can be dangerous. Contact a qualified vendor or electrician to help you determine what generator is best suited to your needs. Before using, read, and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

If you are installing a permanent generator, it must have a transfer switch. The transfer switch prevents energy from leaving your generator and going back onto the utility electrical equipment when it could be dangerous to a lineman or others near downed power lines, a process known as "back feed." A qualified electrician should install your generator and transfer switch.

Safe Electricity has the following tips to use portable generators safely:

Operate it outdoors in an area with plenty of ventilation. Never run a generator in a home or garage. Generators give off deadly carbon monoxide.

Do not plug a generator into the wall to avoid back feed. Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances to the outlets on the generator.

Turn the generator on before plugging appliances to it. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage; prioritize your needs.

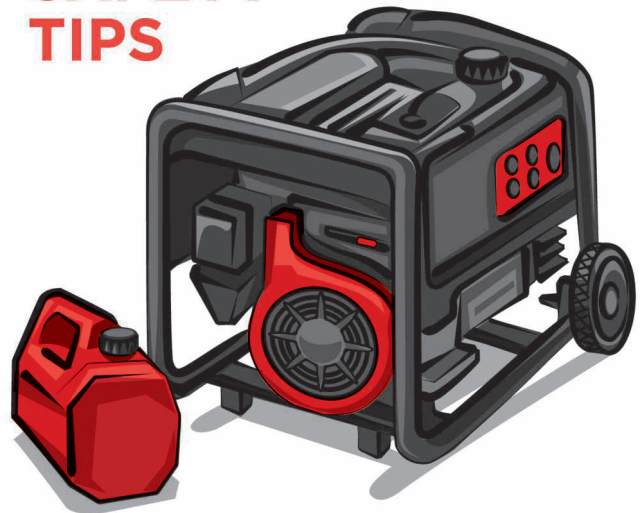
Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure your hands are dry before touching the generator.

Be sure the generator is turned off and cool before fueling it.

Keep children and pets away from portable generators. Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.

Safe Electricity suggests these safety guidelines and basic operating instructions be posted in the home and with the generator. Learn more at safeelectricity.org.

GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS



Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

Stationary Generator:

An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

Portable Generator:

Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is **deadly**.


Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

Start the generator first **before** connecting appliances.

Source: SafeElectricity.org

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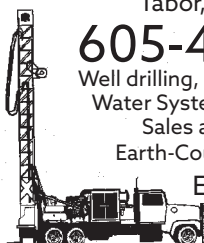
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Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

November 20-21

Holiday Arts Christmas Show, 112 E. 5th St. Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

November 21-22

Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival, 203 S. Washington St., Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-1557

November 24-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Free Admission, Pierre, SD

November 27

Hill City Olde Tyme Christmas Parade and Celebration Kick-Off, 5 p.m., Downtown Hill City, SD, 605-574-2368

November 27

Black Friday Trap Shoot, Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League, 10:30 a.m., Lunch Available, 5000 North Oakview Place, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-9527

November 27

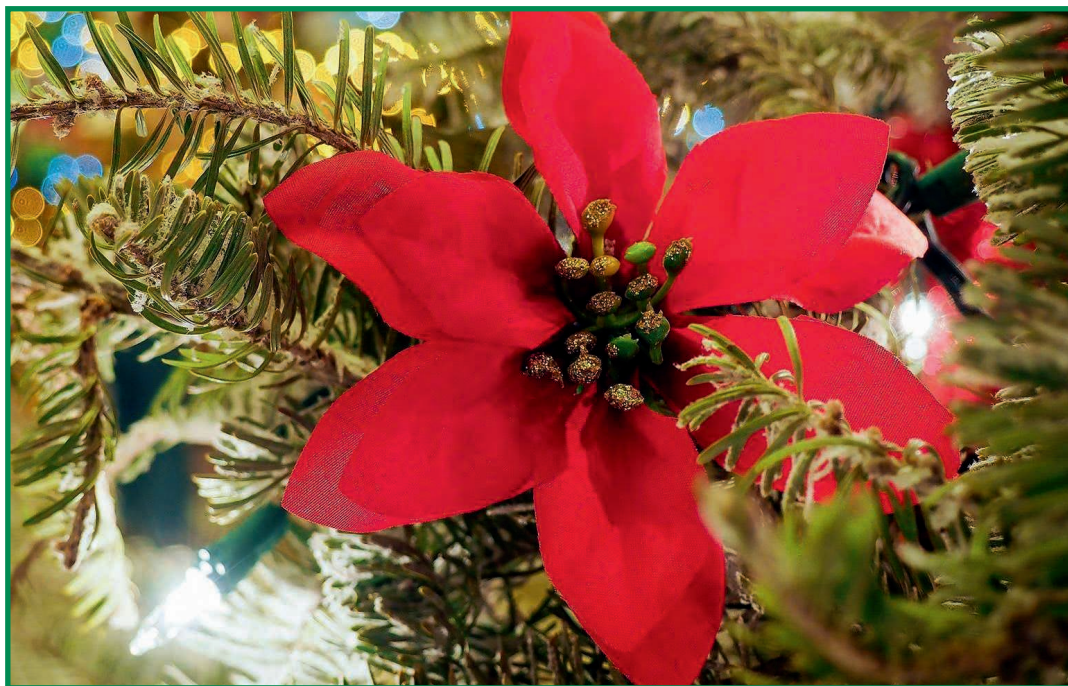
Annual Sioux Falls Parade of Lights, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Phillips Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 605-338-4009

November 28

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, 2 to 6 p.m., Free Admission, Main Street Square in Downtown Rapid City, SD

November 27-December 27

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD, 605-574-9000



December 4

Christmas in the Hills Parade of Lights, 6 p.m., Downtown Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

December 4-5

Creekside Crafters 13th Annual Bazaar, Snappers Club Building in City Campground, Friday 1 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Spearfish, SD

December 4-6 and 10-12

Same Time, Next Year, Dramatic Comedy by Bernard Slade, Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, www.pierreplayers.com

December 5

Manager Medlodies Concert Christmas in the Hills, 7 to 9 p.m., Mueller Center, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

December 5

Rapid City Garden Club's 59th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Lions' and Bridger Buildings, Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 5

Custer Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m., Downtown Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

December 5

Festival of Trees, Newell City Hall, Newell, SD, Admission: Two Cans of Non-Perishable Food Items Per Person, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 6, 20

VFW Bingo, Wall Community Center, Wall, SD, 605-279-2663

December 12

Christmas for Kids, Ages 0-10 visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, Custer High School, Preregistration is Required, Register via email custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com, Custer, SD

December 12

Frontier Christmas, 11907 434th Ave., Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

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.