

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



**Get Out & Vote!**

**It's Your Civic Duty**

Pages 8-9

**Upcoming Energy Projects**

Pages 12-13

# GEARING UP FOR SUMMER:

## Operationally and District Information Meetings



**Stephanie Horst**  
horst@byelectric.com

As we head into the summer months, there's a noticeable shift here at B-Y Electric. The pace picks up, the projects line up, and across every department, there's a shared focus on one thing — making sure we're ready to serve you well in the months ahead.

Out in the field, our operations team is gearing up for a busy construction season. We have several lines scheduled to be converted to underground, and you'll find maps included on page 6 showing where that work will take place. These projects are part of our ongoing effort to improve reliability and reduce future outages for our members.

The crews are working through maintenance items identified during winter line patrol and preparing to replace poles flagged during this spring's inspections. These aren't always the most visible projects, but they are some of the most important. It's the kind of work that helps prevent problems before they happen — and that's always our goal.

We're also continuing to keep up with new services and upgrades. Growth in our area is something we're proud to support, and we work hard to make sure every new connection meets the same level of reliability our members count on.

Back at the office, there's just as much happening behind the scenes. Our team is wrapping up the annual audit with Eide Bailly on our 2025 financials, and things are progressing well. At the same time, they're handling the day-to-day work that keeps everything moving — processing orders,

managing billing, documenting field work and taking care of member needs as they come in. A lot of what happens in the office is driven by the work happening out in the field, and I'm always reminded how closely connected those roles are. It truly takes both teams working together to provide the level of service our members expect.

Looking ahead, our Annual Meeting will be held on August 18. We will again be using the drive-through format. Based on your feedback and strong participation, we know this is the format that works best for many of our members. That said, we also heard clearly through our recent survey that some are looking for more opportunities to connect with us — and we take that seriously.

This year, we will be hosting district informational meetings. These will be a chance for you to sit down with our employees and directors, hear updates about your cooperative, learn more about industry changes and ask questions. Just as importantly, it gives us the opportunity to listen. Details on those meetings will be shared in the next issue of Cooperative Connections, as well as on our website and social media. We're making an effort to hold these meetings within or near your districts to make attending as convenient as possible. I truly hope you'll join us.

As we are preparing for the Annual Meeting, petitions are also available for Director Districts 1, 6 and 4. See page 11 for more information. District 4 is currently vacant, and we are actively looking for someone willing to step forward and serve. Serving on the board is a meaningful way to give back to your community and help guide the future of your cooperative. If you've ever considered it, or even if you're just curious about what's involved, I encourage you to reach out to me. I'd be happy to visit with you.

At the end of the day, everything we do — whether it's replacing a pole, answering a phone call or planning for the future — comes back to serving our members. That's why we're here, and that's what drives the work ahead of us this summer.

**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

**BON HOMME YANKTON ELECTRIC**

(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 - 4:00pm

**Pay by Phone, call:**  
 1-855-941-3507

**To report an outage, call:**  
**Local call from Tabor, Tyndall, and Yankton:**  
 605-463-2507

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

**Board President:** Dave Sykora  
**Board of Directors**  
 Rick Cheloha - Vice President  
 Brian Brandt - Secretary  
 Robert Ruppelt - Treasurer  
 Paul Voigt  
 Tom Boyko

**General Manager:** Stephanie Horst  
**Operations Manager:** Ken Carda  
**Office Manager:** Nicole Einrem  
**Members Service Advisor:** Aaron Melichar  
**Editor:** Chantelle Jungemann

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, Inc, PO Box 158, 134 S. Lidice St., Tabor, SD 57063-0158. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections 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 Tabor, SD 57063.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 158, Tabor, SD 57063; telephone (605) 463-2507. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Bon Homme Yankton Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**



# MARCH BOARD MEETING

The March board meeting was held on March 25, 2026 at 8:00 am. Directors present were Dave Sykora, Robert Ruppelt, Paul Voigt, Tom Boyko and Brian Brandt. Others present were the attorney, management staff and guest employee.

**THE BOARD APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

- February 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- Capital Credits to Estates - \$8,850.22
- Review New Members & Cancellations
- Review Closed Work Order - \$286,635.65
- Review Special Equipment Purchases - None

**THE BOARD REVIEWED AND ACCEPTED FOLLOWING REPORTS:**

- Member Service Report
- Operations & Safety Report
- Office & Financial Reports

- General Manager Report
- East River Cyber Security/IT Report
- SDREA Report
- East River Report
- NRECA Power Exchange Report

**OTHER GOVERNANCE**

- Reviewed REED Application
- Reviewed/Approved Policy 80-13, Payroll Payments to Employees
- Enter/Exit Executive Session
- Next Meeting date set for Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 8:00 am.

FINANCIAL REPORT	FEBRUARY		YTD
	2025	2026	2026
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,152,818</b>	<b>\$1,242,476</b>	<b>\$2,596,954</b>
<b>COST OF POWER</b>	<b>\$747,432</b>	<b>\$710,360</b>	<b>\$1,570,322</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF SERVICE</b>	<b>\$1,183,417</b>	<b>\$1,114,310</b>	<b>\$2,493,228</b>
<b>KWHS PURCHASED</b>	<b>10,710,013</b>	<b>8,483,953</b>	<b>19,966,917</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE KWH</b>	<b>2,224</b>	<b>1,615</b>	
<b>RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE BILL</b>	<b>\$242</b>	<b>\$219</b>	

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Tabor**  
 Robert Wuestewald

**Springfield**  
 Liam Quedensley

**Tyndall**  
 Alec Johnson & Taylor Hamilton

**Irene**  
 Colleen Banks  
 Debra Vanderpoel

Joshua Healy  
**Yankton**  
 Cottonwood LLC

Ediel Pantoja  
 Christian & Gretchen Tieszen  
 Jackie Mohr  
 Jo Ellen Neumayr  
 Monica Puentes  
 Scott Sand  
 Steve & Tammy Brinkman  
 Steven Scott

**Our offices will be closed Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day. We honor and remember those who have served.**

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH: TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING SAFETY

At your local cooperative, Electrical Safety Month is recognized every May, but the importance of practicing safety year-round is always emphasized. From co-op crews to the consumer-members served, everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity that powers daily life, but it can also be dangerous — something your local cooperative understands firsthand from working with it 365 days a year.

Safety is more than a catchphrase. Cooperative leadership recognizes the responsibility to keep employees safe while also helping protect members and the broader community. That's why your local cooperative hosts safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, highlighting the dangers of electricity. These demonstrations often include emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, along with discussions about the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the widespread use of electrical devices, tools and appliances, here are a few practical electrical safety tips:

Watch for frayed wires. Power cords can become damaged from age, heavy use or excessive current flow. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them to avoid shock hazards.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only handle a limited amount of electricity. Running too many devices on one circuit can lead to overheating and potential fire risk.

Label circuit breakers. Understanding your home's electrical system can help prevent overloads. If your home is more than 40 years old and you plan to install large appliances, contact a qualified electrician.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug one extension cord into another. "Daisy chaining" can cause overheating and fire hazards. Do not exceed the cord's wattage, and avoid using extension cords as permanent solutions. If additional outlets are needed, consult a licensed electrician.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with children

about playing it safe and smart around electricity, including staying aware of overhead power lines near outdoor play areas.

Providing a reliable energy supply 24/7, 365 days a year is a top priority. Equally important is keeping the community safe around electricity.

Contact your local cooperative for additional electrical safety tips or to request a safety demonstration at a school or upcoming community event.



**"Do not fly kites by power lines!"**

**Casen Yuker**

Casen cautions readers not to fly kites around power lines. Thank you for sharing your picture, Casen! Casen's parents are Lance and Tarah Yuker from Aberdeen S.D.

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

# Delicious DESSERTS

## RHUBARB CAKE DESSERT

### Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix  
1 cup sugar  
4 cups rhubarb, diced  
2 cups half and half

### Method

Prepare cake mix as directed on package and pour into a greased 9x13 pan. Mix sugar and rhubarb together. Spoon evenly over cake batter. Pour half and half over top of rhubarb mixture. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes. This is like an upside-down cake with custard on the bottom of the cake.

**Marla Gilbert**  
Southeastern Electric

## FUZZY NAVEL CAKE

### Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix  
1 instant vanilla pudding (large, 5.1 oz. size)  
3/4 cup peach schnapps  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup orange juice  
4 eggs

### Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar  
4 tbsps. orange juice  
2 tbsps. peach schnapps

### Method

Spray a 12-cup fluted baking pan with cooking spray, dust with flour. Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended, spread evenly in pan. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes until golden brown and cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool cake for 20 minutes. Run a long, sharp knife around the edges to loosen, and invert onto platter. Whisk glaze ingredients together until smooth. With wooden skewer, poke holes on top and around sides of cake. Spoon glaze over the warm cake, allowing to seep in holes, and drizzle down the sides and center. Cool completely before slicing.

**Sally Florey**  
Charles Mix Electric

## HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE CAKE

### Ingredients:

2 cups flour  
2 cups sugar  
2 eggs  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. vanilla  
Pinch salt  
1 20 oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained (in natural juice, not heavy syrup)

### Frosting

1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 8 oz. cream cheese softened  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

### Method

Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended. Bake in greased 9x13 pan at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Beat until smooth and creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar. Spread frosting on cake while still warm. Garnish with some toasted coconut if desired.

**Sally Florey**  
Charles Mix Electric

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture submitted by William Berry via Shutterstock.

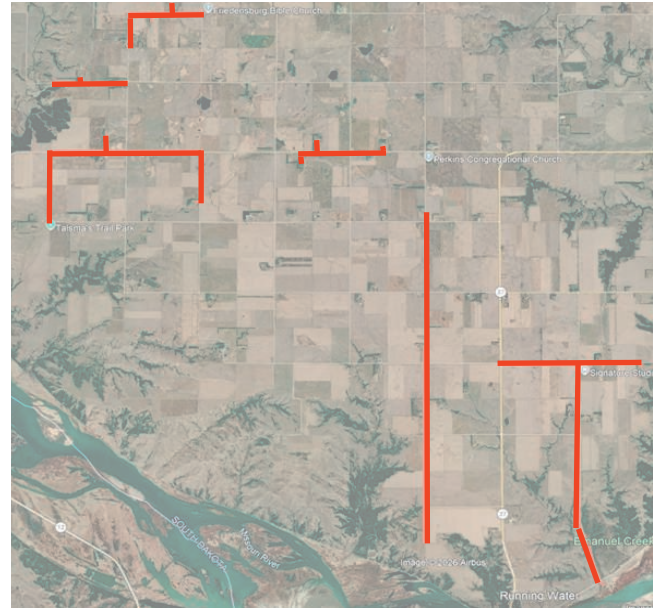
# 2026 SPRING AND SUMMER PROJECTS

These photos represent approximately 42 miles of planned overhead-to-underground line conversions. We anticipate completing around 35 miles of these projects this spring and into the summer months.

At this time, we are awaiting notification on a potential grant that could help offset a portion of the project costs. Once that information is available, it will play a key role in determining which lines are completed this year and which may be deferred to 2027.

Landowners along these routes have been contacted regarding easements, allowing us to install lines on private property where possible. This approach helps protect the cooperative's investment by reducing the risk of costly repairs or replacements that can occur when roadside ditches are cleaned and underground cable is left with insufficient soil cover.

If you have any questions about these projects, call B-Y Electric at 605-463-2507 and ask for Ken Carda.



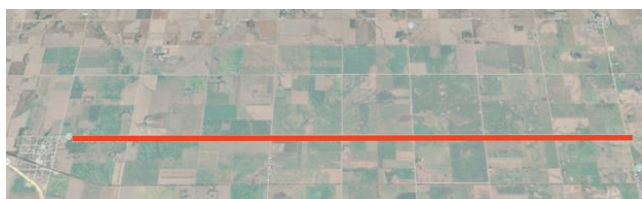
SW of Springfield, Running Water area - 315th Street and south on 411th Ave - 409th Street - 312th Street - 311th Street - 310th Street



Country Ford to county landfill - on 301st Street 416th to 420th Ave.



Jamesville Colony area - 436th Ave - road going north of Hwy 46



306th Street - road going east out of Tabor to Utica road



429th Ave - road going south of 300th street just west of Lesterville

**Our crews are out working to improve your service, help us keep them safe. Slow down and use caution in all work zones.**

# CO-OP FAMILY LEGACY

## Mother & Daughter Duo Find Careers in Co-ops

Jacob Boyko

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

Ask any longtime electric cooperative employee what makes the co-op network special, and the answers often sound the same: It feels like family.

For Sharla and Amanda Haugen, that's more than a figure of speech. Working for electric cooperatives on opposite ends of South Dakota, the mother and daughter pair share a commitment to service and community.

Sharla is the manager of dispatch at Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, overseeing 24-hour radio dispatch for line crews from Sioux Valley Energy, Kingsbury Electric Cooperative, Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, Union County Electric Cooperative, Nobles Cooperative Electric and the City of Brookings.

Sharla has worked at Sioux Valley Energy for 35 years, starting as a dispatcher nearly a decade before Amanda was born. Amanda understood at a young age that whenever there was a severe snow, wind or ice storm, her mom would be out the door and off to work to help get the lights back on.

"Seeing how my mom dropped everything to serve the members and go above and beyond, and my dad supporting her role, it really opened my eyes to what a co-op does for a community," Amanda said.

Growing up in rural Moody County on Sioux Valley Energy lines, Amanda was very involved in the co-op. In high school, she helped serve the meals at district meetings, attended annual meetings, and even traveled to North Dakota on Youth Excursion – a co-op event promoting youth education in energy careers and production. On the trip, Amanda toured the Antelope Valley coal-fired power plant and other facilities, getting a behind-the-scenes look at how electricity is generated and transported to co-op members. She also participated in Sioux Valley Energy's youth leadership programs, which prepped students with professional skills for future careers.

"The Empower Youth Leadership program went over different leadership skills and how to find strengths and weaknesses," Amanda recalled. "That involvement is really how I got ingrained with the co-op."

Years later, as Amanda worked to finish her marketing degree at Lake Area Technical College, she was on the hunt for internship openings to help kick off her career.

"I gave it to God and put it in his hands," Amanda said.

One Thursday afternoon, during class, Amanda's phone started



Now living at opposite ends of the state, Sharla and Amanda enjoy time together in the Black Hills during visits. When in each other's company, other family members suggest there's perhaps too much talk about electric cooperatives. Photo submitted by Sharla Haugen.

buzzing over and over again. When she glanced down, she saw multiple missed calls and texts from her mom. West River Electric Association had an opening for a member services representative at their Rapid City office, and applications were due the next day.

"Friday morning, I worked on a revamped resume and cover letter and sent it off," Amanda said. West River Electric Association reached out shortly after for an interview, and less than two weeks later, Amanda was offered the job.

"It's like the stars aligned," Amanda said. "When I told my mom, she was ecstatic – I'm pretty sure she started crying."

For Sharla, it was a joyful moment, knowing Amanda was part of the co-op family that had treated her so well over her decades at Sioux Valley Energy.

"If Amanda got out there and she had car trouble, I knew the co-op people would take care of her," Sharla said. "It was just a sense of relief for me to know if something were to happen, there'd be people there to help her."

Amanda, now five years into the job at West River Electric, works on the co-op's Cooperative Connections magazine, communications and public relations, and youth initiatives similar to the ones at Sioux Valley Energy that lead to her co-op career. Much like her mom, Amanda said her co-op now feels like family.

"Coming to work every day, you kind of have this second family that always has your back," Amanda said. "They are there for you and will help you whenever you need it."

That's exactly what Sharla wanted for her daughter.

"Co-ops are big on employee growth, so I knew Amanda would always be learning and improving. I knew she wouldn't be stagnant in a career at a cooperative because they're always investing in their employees. It was just such a proud moment when she joined the co-op world."

## ONE VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



**Chuck Sloan • Piedmont, S.D.**

**Board Treasurer, West River Electric Association**

**U.S. Air Force 1983-2003**

Chuck Sloan has spent much of his life serving his nation.

Sloan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and served 21 years on active duty before retiring as a master sergeant in 2004. In that time, he was stationed at bases all around the world, including Oman, South Korea, Turkey, and the Pacific. Since 2004, Sloan has worked as a civilian at Ellsworth Air Force Base, where today he is Chief of Operations Compliance.

Serving in the military, Sloan observed firsthand how seriously service members took absentee voting and civic participation, despite being thousands of miles from American soil. Their passion helped ignite Sloan's own admiration for America's democratic system of government.

"If I found somebody a little laissez-faire about voting, saying, 'my vote probably won't count,' I would give them a spiel," Sloan explained. "Yes, your vote does count, and you'll want to be able to say that you made that vote."

He continued, "If you don't choose to exercise that responsibility, then later on if you're displeased, you really can't

complain about it because you didn't make a choice – If anything, vote and give yourself the opportunity to legitimately complain!"

Sloan said people should never underestimate the importance of showing up and making their voices heard, because in close races, one vote can tip the scale.

"There are many instances when one vote may have been a determining factor," Sloan said. "It may not be a general election, but how about in a state or local election where one vote can be the deciding factor? That happens more often than one would think. Your vote matters, no matter what you do."

Sloan brought that civic-mindedness along with him to West River Electric Association, where he serves on the Board of Directors and helps make decisions in the interest of his neighbors and communities he represents.

Sloan said it all just comes back to civic responsibility and staying involved.

"From the time I turned 18, I've never missed a vote," Sloan said. "It's second nature. It's too important to not do."



## VOTING STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES



**Evan Buckmiller • De Smet, S.D.**

**General Manager, Kingsbury Electric Cooperative**

**De Smet School District Board**

For Kingsbury Electric Cooperative General Manager Evan Buckmiller, his call to public service came after a mid-term resignation on the De Smet School District

Board left a vacancy that needed to be filled.

"The board had to appoint someone to fill the seat," Buckmiller said. "Initially when I was asked, I didn't know if I wanted to do it, but I also knew that my wife and I have two young kids in the school system, so I agreed to fill the spot until the next election."

Buckmiller wasn't expecting to develop a passion for civic-service, but six years and two election cycles later, he's still representing the De Smet community on the school board.

"It's for my kids, to make sure they have the best education opportunities possible to prepare them for their future," Buckmiller added.

He said that while serving on the school board has been a

rewarding endeavor, there are also moments that are discouraging; some people will sit out elections, but are also vocal about board decisions they disagree with.

"I receive phone calls about how we are doing everything wrong, but they don't want to step up to be a part of change," Buckmiller explained.

His advice is simple: show up.

"Public participation at the monthly school board meetings is always encouraged," Buckmiller said. "When a community is engaged, there is more diverse input and you get to see the needs of everyone. The needs for one person might not be the same as another, and when you are sitting on a board you want to hear the needs of everyone so you can make the best decision possible for everyone."

Buckmiller said when more people get involved and exercise their civic duties, the communities like his are better for it.

"Being active in the community makes the community stronger and allows different opinions to be heard," Buckmiller said.

"When you show up to meetings and vote, you are giving the board direction so they can make decisions that are in the best interest of everyone."

## STICK UP FOR YOURSELF & VOTE



**Don Schurdevin • Elk Point, S.D.**  
**Board President, Union County Electric Cooperative**  
**U.S. Navy 1962-1968**

Serving on the Union County Electric Cooperative board for more than 25 years, Don Schurdevin has built a reputation for steady leadership and a strong commitment

to the cooperative and its members. But before serving his neighbors and community on the co-op board, Schurdevin first served in a different way. He served not just his Union County neighbors, but his entire country in the U.S. Navy. Schurdevin enrolled during his junior year of high school in 1962, serving active duty in Vietnam from 1963 to 1965, some of that time aboard the USS Midway. The experience helped shape his views on patriotism, civic duty and personal responsibility.

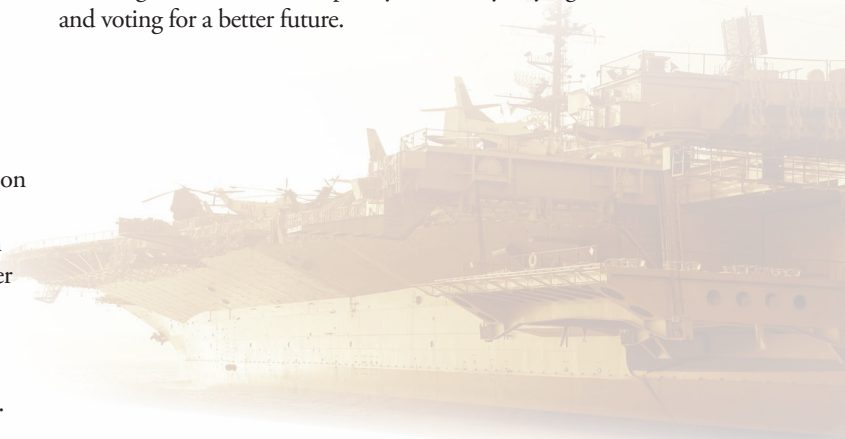
“In the navy, you learn to get along with people, but you learn to also stick up for yourself, because nobody else – is so you better take care of your own business,” he said.

That’s the attitude that Schurdevin brings to his civic participation. He said serving in the military gave him a deeper appreciation for the freedoms Americans enjoy, including voting.

Schurdevin believes participating in elections is one of the most important ways citizens can stay involved in their communities and help shape the future of their community, state and country.

“I think I voted in every election since I could,” Schurdevin recalled. “School board election, county, state – if I was able to vote I was voting.”

That sense of duty carried into his years of cooperative service. As a director, Schurdevin remains focused on serving members and ensuring the co-op continues to meet local needs. Schurdevin encourages others to “stick up for yourself” by staying informed and voting for a better future.



## LEADERS DEPEND ON YOU SPEAKING UP



**Chris Rahn • Mission, S.D.**  
**Member Services Manager, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative**  
**Todd County School District Board, Rosebud Sioux Tribe**

Chris Rahn was not always interested in his local government. In fact, up until just several years ago, he sat many elections out.

But through his work at Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative and the commitment to community that came with it, Rahn gained a new perspective on civic participation, realizing that change only happens when peoples’ voices are heard.

“I believe everybody who has an opinion should come out and vote,” Rahn said. “One vote matters. One vote can change an entire election.”

Rahn’s indifference to voting began to change as he was asked to take on more responsibilities with the co-op. Cherry-Todd Electric General Manager Tim Grablander nominated Rahn to the Rushmore Electric Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, where Rahn now serves as president.

Shortly after, he was encouraged by local community leaders to apply for a board seat with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. The tribal

council voted to seat Rahn on the judiciary committee, leading to his first real experience with public service. Like flipping a switch, Rahn’s enthusiasm led to his appointment to other tribal boards, including the Tribal Utilities Commission, Tribal Tax Commission, and the Rosebud Energy Services Company.

Rahn said serving in tribal government opened his mind to the impact he can have on his community. That realization inspired Rahn to run for his first publicly-elected position as a school board member for the Todd County School District.

“I wanted to be more involved in my daughter’s education and just listen to the community’s input,” Rahn said, restating the importance of community members actively engaging with elected officials and sharing feedback.

He continued: “I feel like I’ve been able to bridge the gap between the people I represent and the administration and other public leaders.”

As Rahn looks ahead to years of future public service to work for a better community, he encourages others to step up as well — and all it takes is a vote.

“If you speak up, your voice is heard,” he continued. “When everyone’s voice is heard, we can make better decisions for the community as a whole.”

*Photos by Shutterstock*

# 2026 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**Luke Guthmiller**

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Awards \$1,000 Scholarship to Luke Guthmiller. He will graduate from Bon Homme High School in May.

Luke is active in Football, Wrestling, Track, FFA, National Honor Society and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Some of his honors include 2024 Defensive Player of the Year, 2025 Will-to-Win Player of the Year, 2025 Academic All-State, 2025 Little Missouri Valley All-Conference Team, 2025 Homecoming Court, VFW Citizenship Award. He plans to attend South Dakota State University in Brookings and major in Agricultural Business. After college, he will return to the family farm with plans to take over and expand it.

Luke's parents are David and Kyla Guthmiller of Scotland.



**Jennifer (Jenny) Stark**

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Awards \$1,000 Scholarship to Jenny Stark. She will graduate from Scotland High School in May.

Jenny is active in National Honor Society, Play, Band, Choir, Oral Interpretation, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FFA, Student Council, Volleyball, Cheerleader, Girls Basketball Statistician and Student Body President. She has received numerous academic awards such as the Bausch+Lomb Honorary Science Award and recognized as one of SDSU's Distinguished Scholars for 2026. She plans to attend South Dakota State University in Brookings. She plans to attend college and major in Human Biology. Her long term career plans are to become a ER or OB/GYN physician in a rural healthcare setting.

Jenny's parents are Jared and Jessi Stark of Lesterville.



**Gracie Gutzmann**

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Awards \$1,500 Basin Scholarship to Gracie Gutzman. She will graduate from Yankton High School in May.

Gracie is active in Volleyball, Track, Golf and National Honors Society. Some of her high school achievements include Academic Letter, Varsity Athletics Letter, 4.0+ GPA, 30+ ACT Club, National Honors Society, Roll of Excellence, Academic All State, Team Captain, Team Gazelle Award, Voice of Democracy Essay Winner, College Board National Recognition Program Awardee and Motivational Teammate Award.

She plans to attend University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the fall of 2026 and pursue a nursing degree. Her long term career plans are to be an ICU nurse.

Gracie's parents are Corey and Michelle Peterson of Yankton.

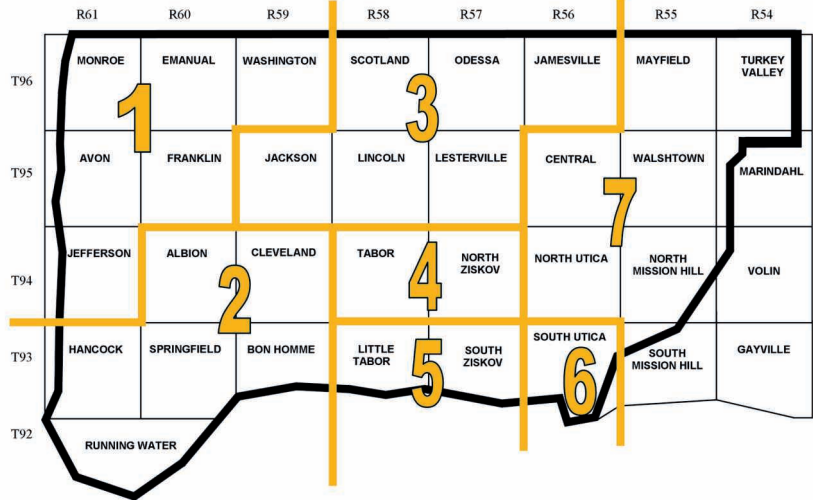
# DIRECTOR PETITION DEADLINE THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026

Bon Homme Yankton Electric is making plans for its annual meeting. The meeting will be held August 18, 2026.

Director positions with three year terms expiring this year are districts one, four and six.

Incumbent directors are District 1-Paul Voigt, District 4- Vacant and District 6 Rick Cheloha.

According to the B-Y Electric Bylaws any person wishing to run for a directorship of Bon Homme Yankton Electric will need to file a nominating petition. The petition must have at least 15 signatures of members living in the appropriate district in Bon Homme Yankton Electric's service area. Petitioners must reside in the district and have an active membership in the cooperative.



BON HOMME COUNTY YANKTON COUNTY

If you are interested, contact General Manager Stephanie Horst for more information regarding the responsibilities and qualifications for being a cooperative director and we will send the petition paperwork via mail. Petitions will be available in the main office April 27th and must be filed at the Bon Homme Yankton Electric office by 4:00p.m. June 18, 2026. Returning the petition before the deadline allows time for validation and, if needed, corrections to ensure it meets all requirements.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2026 SENIORS.



# BUILDING FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Basin Electric's Pioneer Generation Station, located near Williston, N.D.  
*Photo Submitted by Basin Electric*

## Basin Electric Expands Generation Capacity to Meet Growing Demand

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Although the flick of a switch can seem close at hand, the electricity that powers our world is often generated many miles away.

For rural cooperative members, electricity often comes from North Dakota, where Basin Electric Power Cooperative operates a fleet of power plants to serve rural communities across nine states. As demand continues to build across that system, the infrastructure behind it is growing right alongside it.

This steady growth has shaped the work now underway across Basin Electric's service territory. In response, the cooperative has kept up with demand by expanding existing generation facilities, building a new power plant and supporting the system with additional transmission projects in just a few short years.

"We're seeing load growth across our system, and it's coming from a combination of residential, agricultural, commercial and energy development," said Gavin McCollam, Basin Electric's senior vice president and chief operating officer. "When you step back and look at it as a whole, it becomes clear that we need to continue building to keep pace with that growth."



New transmission lines in western North Dakota support Basin Electric's newest generation assets.  
*Photo Submitted by Basin Electric*

### Pioneer Generation Station

To maintain reliability and keep the lights on for their members, Basin Electric recently expanded its generation capacity through new development to Pioneer Generation Station near Williston, N.D.

Originally developed in the early 2010s, the facility grew in phases over time. Those additions turned Pioneer Generation Station into one of Basin Electric's most important generation assets, but within a decade, the pace of that growth had begun to change.

"Coming out of COVID, not just us but everybody

was seeing rapid increases in loads,” McCollam said. “At that point, we were asking what we could do the quickest to add capacity.”

To meet the need, Basin Electric moved forward with Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. The cooperative completed the project in 2025, adding about 580 megawatts of generation and bringing the site’s total capacity to 822 megawatts, enough to power roughly 400,000 homes.

The expansion moved quickly in part because Basin Electric built on what it already had.

“We had the site and the people that worked there, so we could add onto it a lot quicker than we could analyze and research new sites,” McCollam said.

## Bison Generation Station

Still, Basin Electric continued building for traditional member load growth, beyond Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV, turning to a new project: Bison Generation Station.

Located near Epping, N.D., the natural gas-fueled generation project is being built from the ground up as a large-scale, natural gas facility designed to meet future demand. Once completed, the combined-cycle power plant will produce approximately 1,490

megawatts of electricity, making it the largest power plant solely owned by Basin Electric – almost double the capacity of Pioneer Generation Station. The plant is expected to come online in two phases, with the first unit operating in 2029 and the second in 2030.

Unlike Pioneer Generation Station, which expanded over time, Bison Generation Station is being built as a single, large project.

“We had a history of building small units, piecemealing them in as quickly as we could. That worked for a long time, but eventually we reached a point where we needed to think about building differently,” McCollam said. “There was a point where we recognized that continuing to add smaller pieces wasn’t going to be the most effective approach. We needed to build something at a scale that would allow us to stay ahead of that growth.”

Serendipitously, the transition from Pioneer Generation Station to Bison Generation Station happened on the same day. Basin Electric finished construction at Pioneer and turned the facility over to operations, then received the permits to begin construction on Bison.

“I’m kind of a nerd,” McCollam

said, laughing. “I’m nerdy enough to think this wasn’t a coincidence, and the power plant gods were smiling on us.”

Once complete, it will become a central part of Basin Electric’s generation portfolio.

“It’s going to be the flagship of our gas fleet,” McCollam said. “It’s being designed with the understanding that the system we’re serving today is going to continue to grow.”

## Looking Ahead

According to McCollam, these new generation assets are a response to the organic growth Basin Electric is seeing across its traditional membership, including residential demand, agriculture, commercial activity and energy production.

“We support that growth where it happens, and we make sure the system can deliver power where it’s needed,” he said.

For Basin Electric, the work underway now is part of a longer process to ensure reliability in a time of growing energy demand.

“The entire purpose of Basin Electric is to provide reliable service to our membership,” McCollam said. “As that system grows, we have to continue building to keep up with it.”



This architectural rendering depicts Bison Generation Station, a natural gas-fueled plant project slated to begin operations in 2030.

*Photo Submitted by Basin Electric*

# FROM FIELD TO FUEL

A new multi-seed crush processing facility, served by Central Electric Cooperative, is now operational after two years of construction near Mitchell. Photo submitted by High Plains Processing

## New High Plains Processing Seed-Crush Facility Opens Near Mitchell, S.D.

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sirea.coop

A new multi-seed crush processing facility is now operational after nearly two years of construction, and its impact is taking shape across the region.

Located two miles south of Mitchell, the High Plains Processing plant is a large-scale seed crush and refining facility, powered by Central Electric Cooperative in the heart of South Dakota's soybean country.

The facility is backed by South Dakota Soybean Processors, the majority owner and operator, which also operates soybean crush facilities in Volga and Miller, along with a large group of local investors.

"There's a lot of local influence in this plant," said Pat Gathman, general manager of the facility. "Many of the investors originally invested in South Dakota Soybean Processors in Volga, and others invested directly into this project here in Mitchell."

That local investment shows up not

just in ownership, but in how the facility fits into the broader agricultural system. For local producers, it means more of what they grow can be processed closer to the farm.

"Instead of having the soybeans go to an elevator to be processed someplace else, they're being processed right here in Mitchell," Gathman said. "It gives farmers a better opportunity from a market standpoint."

For Central Electric Cooperative members, the plant represents one of three industrial loads being served by the cooperative. In addition to strengthening the local economy, large industrial loads like the multi-seed crush facility provide a consistent demand for electricity and help justify new investments in local infrastructure.

"The soybean plant brings new revenues to Central Electric Cooperative, which helps minimize rates for the entire cooperative membership," said Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen.

As part of the proposal process and selection as the electric provider, East River Electric Power Cooperative built a new substation and made additional system upgrades to serve the facility. Central Electric Cooperative also completed system improvements to support the load.

"The work was completed over a two-year window," Schlimgen said. "The project was on time and under budget during the worst of the supply chain delays."

Inside the facility, energy from the electric cooperative is used to turn familiar crops into multiple usable products, with the primary goal of separating oil from soybeans, sunflowers and camelina and preparing it for a range of markets. Currently, the plant is only accepting soybeans.

"We go through the preparation area where we crack the beans, heat them up, separate the hulls from the soybean itself, flake it, and then send it over to the extraction area," Gathman said.

The process separates oil from the soybean. The oil is refined and prepared for a range of uses, including renewable

fuels and food products, while the remaining material becomes soybean meal, a high-protein livestock feed.

“We bring it into our oil refinery where we refine it, bleach it, deodorize it and send it to storage,” Gathman said. “From there, it can go out by truck or rail to be turned into renewable fuels.”

The Mitchell location was selected in part because it brings together several key pieces of infrastructure needed to support a facility of this scale. Rail access, utilities and proximity to soybean production all played a role in the decision.

“We’ve looked at Mitchell for many, many years,” said Tom Kersting, CEO of South Dakota Soybean Processors. “You’re on a mainline railroad, it’s good soybean ground, and there’s a strong production history in that area. As we look at other seeds like sunflowers or camelina, you don’t have to go very far west of Mitchell before that becomes even more suitable.”

He added that finding a location with the right infrastructure is becoming increasingly difficult.

“There’s just not a lot of good sites left if you want to be on rail, next to a natural gas line, have a good electrical source and access to wastewater,” Kersting said. “There are a lot of infrastructure needs for a large facility like this, and it’s tough to find all of that in one place.”

That infrastructure includes electric service, which was a key part of the project from the beginning.

“Central Electric has been great to work with,” Kersting said. “They built a large substation not just for this plant, but to expand service throughout the area. It’s been a great partnership, and they’ve been very accommodating and easy to work with.”

Since becoming operational, the plant has already made an impact on the local community. The facility employs about 80 people, with the majority coming from the surrounding area.

“We’ve got some outstanding employees here that are really a part of things,” Gathman added.

For Gathman, the experience of moving to Mitchell has stood out just as

much as the work itself.

“The community has been outstanding,” he said. “Not just from the neighbors that we live around, but the community as a whole. It’s been very welcoming and very inviting.”

After moving multiple times throughout his career, including time spent outside the country, the difference was noticeable.

“My wife and I have moved 12 times, mostly around the U.S., and we did a stint in Brazil,” Gathman said. “I grew up in Fargo, and I love Fargo, but it was nothing compared to the reception we got when we came here.”

That sense of connection is something he hopes to carry forward.

“I can’t say enough about it,” he said. “I really want to help pay that back in the long term.”

As High Plains Processing continues to ramp up, its presence is expected to grow alongside it. The facility adds new demand for infrastructure, new options for producers and a new step in how agricultural products move through the region.



High Plains Processing celebrates the groundbreaking of its seed-crush facility in 2023.  
Photo submitted by High Plains Processing

**MAY 18**  
**Voter Registration  
Deadline for Primary  
Election**

5 p.m.  
(South Dakota)

**JUNE 1**  
**Last Day to Request  
Absentee Ballot.**

5 p.m.  
(South Dakota)

**JUNE 2**  
**Primary Election**  
7 a.m.-7 p.m.  
(South Dakota)

*Photo by Shutterstock*

**MAY 2-10**  
**Rustic Designs & More Spring  
Show, Flea Market**  
41450 264th St.  
Ethan, SD  
605-770-2411

**MAY 2**  
**Consignment Auction**  
7 a.m. Gates Open  
10 a.m. Auction  
Prairie Village  
Madison, SD

**MAY 2**  
**Cinco de Mayo Fiesta**  
2-8 p.m.  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656

**MAY 3**  
**Prairie Village Opening Day**  
2 p.m. Train Ride  
Prairie Village  
Madison, SD

**MAY 6-7**  
**Energize! Exploring Innovative  
Rural Communities Conference**  
Hosted by SDSU Extension  
Community Vitality  
Community Center  
Wall, SD  
[extension.sdstate.edu/energize](http://extension.sdstate.edu/energize)

**MAY 9**  
**1880 Train Opens**  
Hill City, SD

**MAY 15-17**  
**Open House Weekend**  
Free Entrance  
Custer State Park  
Custer, SD

**MAY 16**  
**2nd Annual Bird Bash**  
8 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Bear Butte State Park  
Sturgis, SD  
605-390-2901  
[valleyhummingbird@yahoo.com](mailto:valleyhummingbird@yahoo.com)

**MAY 23**  
**Free Christian Men's Event**  
8 a.m.-2 p.m.  
The Barn at Aspen Acres  
Spearfish, SD  
Register: [RiseUpMen.com](http://RiseUpMen.com)

**MAY 30**  
**Familyfest Fun Cruise  
& SDSC Safety Fair**  
9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Bucket Trucks, Safety & More  
Sioux Falls, SD  
[thehoodmagazine.com/ff-faqs/](http://thehoodmagazine.com/ff-faqs/)

**MAY 30**  
**Frühlingsfest**  
Spring Street Market  
1-5 p.m.  
Main Street Square  
Rapid City, SD  
605-718-8484

**MAY 30**  
**Miss Prairie Village/Miss  
Prairie Princess Pageant**  
6:30 p.m.  
Lawrence Welk Opera House  
Prairie Village  
Madison, SD

**JUNE 4-6**  
**Black Hills Quilt Show**  
Thurs. 5-8 p.m.  
Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Rushmore Hall  
at the Monument  
Rapid City, SD

**JUNE 13**  
**Journey Into Historic Pickstown**  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Ft. Randall Town & Museum  
Pickstown, SD  
605-487-7299

**JUNE 13**  
**Luce Pioneer Day**  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Rope & Candle Making, Butter  
Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking  
Lake Herman State Park  
Madison, SD  
605-880-5077

**JUNE 19-20**  
**77th Annual Czech Days**  
Tabor, SD  
[www.taborczechdays.com](http://www.taborczechdays.com)

**JUNE 24-27**  
**Crystal Springs Rodeo**  
Clear Lake, SD  
605-874-2996

**JUNE 26-27**  
**Buckhorn Rodeo**  
Britton, SD  
605-880-5077

**Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.**

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.