

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **Botanical Brilliance**

**McCrary Gardens at SDSU Turns 60**

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# Investing in Reliability: What's Driving Rate Increases



**Stephanie Horst**  
horst@byelectric.com

When it comes to electricity, there are a lot of moving parts and pieces working together behind the scenes. That complex system has to be maintained and upgraded to keep your lights on and your power reliable — and that work comes at a cost.

B-Y Electric, like many other electric utilities across the country, is facing increasing cost pressures this year and likely in the years ahead. Nationally, the Energy Information Administration reports that electricity prices have gone up between 13 and 18% since 2002, and that trend is expected to continue.

At the heart of the issue is growing demand for electricity. Across the country, many utilities don't have enough generation or transmission in place to meet that demand. Part of the reason is that many traditional power plants — especially coal facilities — have been shut down without enough new generation being added to replace them. While that's a simple explanation for a complex challenge, the bottom line is this: new generation and transmission have to be built to meet demand, and that requires major investment.

We are expecting a significant cost increase from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier. At the same time, East River Electric and B-Y Electric need to continue investing in our local transmission and distribution systems to keep it safe and reliable. There are four main factors driving these cost increases:

**1. Higher Demand for Electricity** – While you may hear about huge data centers using large amounts of power, that's not the main factor affecting our costs. The growth we're seeing comes from our own members — homes, farms, and businesses. Basin Electric plans to invest \$10.6 billion over the next decade to meet this demand.

**2. Aging Infrastructure** – B-Y Electric was founded in 1945, and our members then did an amazing job building the power lines that brought electricity to rural Bon Homme and

Yankton counties. Much of that system has served us well for decades, but now it's time for upgrades. Over the next several years, our crews will be busy replacing equipment that has reached the end of its useful life.

**3. New Reliability Requirements** – Basin Electric is required to build additional generation and transmission to meet new reliability standards set by the Southwest Power Pool. This ensures there's enough reserve power available during emergencies — like the widespread outages many of us remember from February 2021. These upgrades are essential to keeping electricity reliable for everyone.

**4. Investments in Reliability** – Beyond new construction, Basin must also invest in maintaining and improving existing facilities to make sure the system continues to serve members well today and into the future.

We know this is a lot to take in, but we want to keep you informed about why rates are expected to increase in 2026. Based on our budget, B-Y Electric will need about 10.5% more revenue to meet financial obligations and continue delivering the reliable service you count on. The Board of Directors will review and approve the 2026 rates at the November board meeting.

Rate changes are never easy, but these investments ensure that B-Y Electric remains dependable, resilient, and ready for the future. Thank you for your understanding, your trust, and your continued support of your cooperative.

Until next month, stay safe and God bless.

**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

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

The October board meeting was held on October 22, 2025 at 8:00 am. Directors present were Dave Sykora, Rick Cheloha, 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:**

- September 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- Capital Credits to Estates - \$127.94
- Review New Members & Cancellations
- Review Closed Work Order Inventory - none
- Review Special Equipment Purchases

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

- Member Service Report
- Operations & Safety Report
- Office & Financial Reports
  - 2026 preliminary operating budget presented
- General Manager Report
- East River Cyber Security/IT Report
- SDREA Report - none

- SDREA Legislative Committee Report
  - East River Report
  - NRECA Region 5/6 Meeting Report
- OTHER GOVERNANCE**

- RS Plan Benefit Level to 1.05 2025-10-01 resolution
- Approved 2026 Capital Budget
- Approved Policy 50-22 Cargill Large Load Rate 2026
- Reviewed Basin Load Forecast
- 2026 Basin Load Forecast Resolution 2025-10-02
- Reviewed 2026 Meeting Schedule
- Enter/Exit Executive Session - None
- Next Meeting date set for Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 8:00 am.

FINANCIAL REPORT	SEPTEMBER		YTD
	2024	2025	2025
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC REVENUE</b>	<b>\$951,581</b>	<b>\$925,826</b>	<b>\$9,532,785</b>
<b>COST OF POWER</b>	<b>\$526,517</b>	<b>\$531,498</b>	<b>\$5,607,301</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF SERVICE</b>	<b>\$891,144</b>	<b>\$931,499</b>	<b>\$9,285,188</b>
<b>KWHS PURCHASED</b>	<b>8,064,899</b>	<b>6,845,392</b>	<b>76,925,756</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE KWH</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>1,077</b>	
<b>RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE BILL</b>	<b>\$152</b>	<b>\$160</b>	

**Welcome New Members**

- Utica
- Annie Miles
- Tabor
- Kenneth & Renee Tichota
- Travis Skorepa
- Irene
- Anthony Fockler

- Tyndall
- Cody Rous
- Springfield
- Estate of Margaret Konrad
- Tripp
- Michele Peitz
- Yankton
- Alex Johnson
- Carson & Kylie Fast
- Emy & Fred Carlson

- Jeff Nohr
- Joe & Mollie Mutschelknaus
- Mark & Traci Christensen
- Melissa Ackley
- Patrick & Linda Kenny
- Tamera Binder & John Coutts
- Tyler & Jena Johnson

# So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

## If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

## If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

## If you come across downed power lines...

Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines – not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

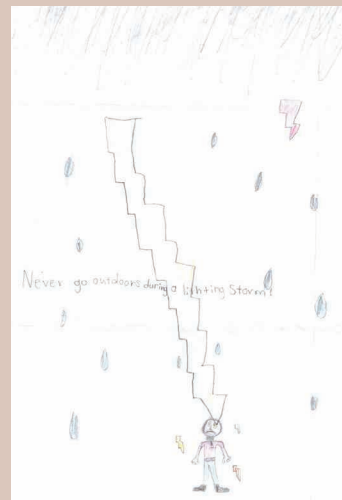
## If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



Always assume a downed power line is energized. A downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

## "Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



**Josiah Krcil,  
Age 9**

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, 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.

# Specialty SOUPS

## CHEESEBURGER VEGETABLE SOUP

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese
- (2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk
- (3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
- 10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup
- 1 can French style green beans
- 1 can mixed vegetables
- 1 can diced potatoes

### Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

**Wendy Thorson**  
Northern Electric

## DUMPLING SOUP

### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 tsps. sesame oil
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 5 green onions, thinly sliced (whites and greens separated)
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 cup white miso paste
- 6 cups chicken vegetable broth, divided
- 1 lb. frozen mini dumplings
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 3 tsps. soy sauce (plus more to serve)
- Hot sauce or chili oil to serve

### Method

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

**Susan Forma**  
Union County Electric

## PHEASANT CHOWDER

### Ingredients:

- 2 pheasants (thighs and breasts: or only breasts if preferred)
- 4 celery stalks, sliced
- 1/2 lb. bacon strips, sliced
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 4 medium size Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 5 tsps. flour
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- Salt and Pepper

### Method

Put cubed potatoes in a separate pot, cover with the chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they are soft.

Slice the pheasant meat, across grain into 1/4 to 1/2 inch strips.

Cut bacon slices into small pieces and put in a Dutch oven on medium heat. Add diced celery and onion and cook until the bacon and celery are cooked through and onions are transparent. Add the garlic and pheasant. The meat should cook quickly because of the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

**Nick Kvernevig**  
Lake Region Electric

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture submitted by Laurie Wernke



# We are celebrating 80 years of service!

## District 7 Director: Tom Boyko

I became a member of the B-Y Electric Board of Directors in September 2025. While I have not been on the board long, I have experience working at an electric cooperative. The electric cooperative business model is the best model for providing value to the consumers. The consumers are member owners of the cooperative and run the cooperative as directors. The cooperative exists to serve the end member, not a stockholder.

I am originally from Stanton North Dakota and went to college at North Dakota State University (Go Bison!). There I obtained a degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 1985. I worked for the Western Area Power Administration in Bismarck ND, Huron SD, Fort Peck MT and Sacramento CA for a total of 28 years. Starting as a construction engineer and ending up as a manager for the California office. I then was fortunate to be offered the CEO/Manager position at East River Electric in Madison SD in 2014. We moved to Madison and lived there until we moved to Yankton in 2023.

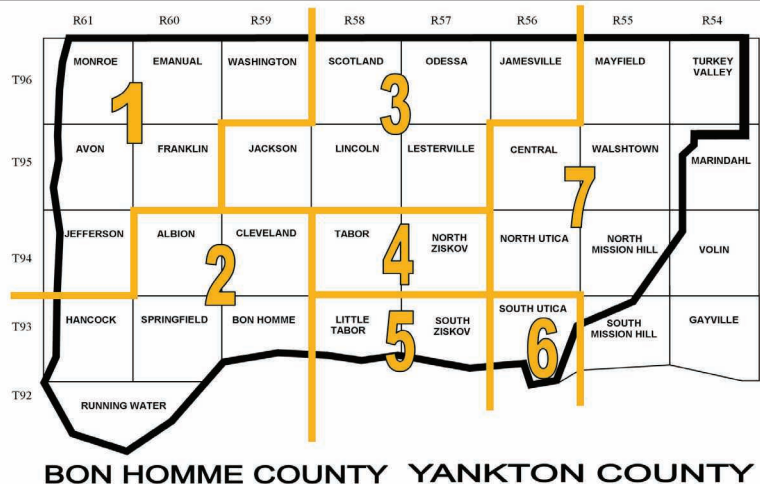
My wife Kim and I have been married since 1998. We have a 25 year old son, Jacob, who works for the South Dakota Rural Electric Cooperative in Pierre and a 23 year old daughter, Claire, who is working on her pharmacy degree at South Dakota State University in Brookings. We purchased a property north of Yankton in 2023 and enjoy the area.



All active members in district 7 were put in a drawing in November for a chance to win an \$80 bill credit. We will apply the \$80 credit to the next months bill.

- Schedule for bill credit drawing:
- June - District 1 (John W Sedlacek)
  - July - District 2 (William P Minow)
  - August - District 3 (John Haase)
  - September - District 4 (Kenneth Decker)
  - October - District 5 (Gary B Gates)
  - November - District 6 (Richard Strom)
  - December - District 7 (Michael Lathrop)

**District 7 \$80 Bill Credit Drawing Winner: Michael Lathrop**



# Employee Spotlight: Travis Gause



**How long have you been at Bon Homme Yankton Electric?**  
I have been with B-Y Electric for 21 years.

**What does your job entail?**

My job entails a variety of different activities which is also one of the best things about the job. From changing out poles and working on underground services when weather permits, to line inspections and voltage checks in the winter.

**What do you love most about B-Y Electric?**

What it brings to the community, besides bringing power to our members B-Y is also involved in quite a few projects which help out in our local area like scholarships, education, and volunteer man hours.

**What is your favorite memory since starting work at B-Y Electric?**

Working the storm job out at Lacreek Electric. While working to restore power to their members it was interesting to see more of how life on the reservations really is.

**How would you describe B-Y Electric in three words?**

Progressive. Community. Economical.

**A little about you outside of work.**

I have three kids and my favorite thing to do is spend time with them.



Submit to be entered into  
a drawing for 1 of 2  
\$100 Visa gift cards

Submit recipes to  
[graphics@eastriver.coop](mailto:graphics@eastriver.coop)  
or contact your local co-op  
for more information.



*Deadline for recipe submissions is December 15th.*



During the annual Garden Glow event, McCrory Gardens in Brookings is transformed into a winter wonderland. Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

# NATURE GROWS & GLOWS AT MCCRORY GARDENS

**Jacob Boyko**

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

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, community-focused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a spring-time syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summertime TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see — just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summertime home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

"We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace."



Lisa Marotz – McCrory Gardens Director since 2016 – with intern Kathryn Bowar, who is beginning her third fall working at the garden. Photo by Jacob Boyko

With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators.  
 Photo by Jacob Boyko



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024.  
 Photo by Jacob Boyko



Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring.  
 Photo by Jacob Boyko



The 1991 Sioux Quartzite rock garden and 2013 waterfall are a favorite fixture in the garden — and the site of numerous summertime marriage proposals.  
 Photo by Jacob Boyko



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.  
 Photo by Jacob Boyko



During the Garden Glow event, the East Terrace Lawn and Gazebo becomes The Enchanted Forest. Marotz notes this was the site of the first Garden Glow in 2015 — miniscule compared to today's expansive decorating.

**This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.**

Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

# 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY STORY

Photos submitted by  
 McCrory Gardens

## 1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.



## 1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



## 1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



## 1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



## 1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



## 1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



## 2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



## 2025

McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!

# BATTERY DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

**Steff Joven**

NRECA

Batteries are part of everyday life – from the ones in our TV remotes and flashlights to the big ones that power electric vehicles and even energy storage systems used by electric utilities. But when batteries are disposed the wrong way, they can leak harmful chemicals, catch fire and waste valuable materials that we need to recycle.

Globally, electronic waste (also known as “e-waste”) is one of the fastest-growing types of trash. In 2022, people worldwide threw away more than 62 billion kilograms of it. In the U.S. alone, that adds up to 21 kilograms (about 46 pounds) of e-waste per person each year. Yet only about 22% of that waste is recycled properly.

The good news: safe disposal and recycling options are available, and you can help make a difference.

## Battery Types and How to Dispose of Them

Not all batteries are the same, and how you get rid of them depends on their components. Some batteries can be recycled easily, while others can be dangerous if tossed in the wrong place they may leak toxic chemicals or even start fires. That’s why the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends following local rules or using national collection programs like Call2Recycle, Earth911 or drop-off bins at hardware stores to make sure batteries are handled safely.

**Single-use batteries** are designed

to be used once, then replaced. These include alkaline and zinc-carbon batteries – the common AA, AAA, C, D and 9-volt sizes used in remotes, flashlights and other small devices. Some areas allow these batteries to go in household trash, but recycling is always the better choice. Button or coin batteries (used in watches, hearing aids and car key fobs) are often lithium-based. These should never be thrown away in regular trash or recycling bins, because they can spark fires. Instead, cover the battery terminals with tape or seal them in small bags, and take them to a certified recycling facility.

**Rechargeable batteries** power many of our everyday devices – cordless tools, phones, laptops, cameras and even scooters. Types include nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd), lithium-ion (Li-ion), nickel-metal hydride (Ni-MH), nickel-zinc (Ni-Zn) and small sealed lead-acid batteries. While these look different, they all share one rule: never throw them in the trash. They must go to a recycling facility. For devices with built-in,

non-removable batteries, recycle the entire device, making sure the battery ends are taped or bagged to prevent sparks.

**Automotive and large batteries** are more powerful and require special care. Lead-acid batteries, found in cars, boats, motorcycles and ATVs, contain lead and acid, which are hazardous. These should always be returned to a retailer, repair shop or a local hazardous waste program. Larger lithium-ion batteries – like those in electric vehicles (EVs) and home or utility-scale energy storage systems – are even more complex. They should only be handled by dealers, repair shops or the manufacturer. These should never be discarded in curbside waste or recycling.

Proper battery disposal is less about danger and more about opportunity. By recycling, we can recover valuable materials, reduce waste and support reliable energy systems in our communities. With a few simple steps, each of us can do our part – and together, we can keep our homes and community a little cleaner and safer.

If you have questions about battery disposal, check out programs like Call2Recycle or Earth911 for guidance.



# Celebrating Co-op Month with members in the field!



Co-op Month is celebrated by cooperatives nation wide during the month of October. This is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, inclusive communities.

B-Y Electric celebrated Co-op Month by stopping in on rural members in the heat of harvest with goodies and beverages. Though we could not see everyone, we enjoyed getting to see some of the members.



## B-Y Holiday Closure Notice

Please be advised Bon Homme Yankton Electric will be closed during the upcoming Holiday Season on the following days:

**Thanksgiving Holiday**  
Thursday, November 27th  
Friday, November, 28th

**Christmas Holiday**  
Wednesday, December 24th  
Thursday, December 25th

**New Year's Holiday**  
Thursday, January 1st

*We wish all our employees and members a safe and enjoyable holiday season with family and friends.*

## Watch your bill for a credit!

The next capital credit refund is scheduled for December 1st pending board approval at the November board meeting. If you were a member in 2006-2007 you may receive a capital credit refund.



The 2006 Youth Tour group takes a photo on the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C.  
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

# YOUTH TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

## South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

**Frank Turner**  
frank.turner@sdra.coop

Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent

its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Foberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

### Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025

he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

“These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids,” Larsen said. “I’m from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota – a lot of people don’t even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody’s home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm.”

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. “You build connections you don’t expect,” he said. “One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife’s, and years later he attended our wedding.”

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. “She was so passionate about the places we visited,” he said. “We weren’t just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant.”

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. “That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen,” he said. “When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I’d get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too.”

## Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. “I’m pretty sure my best



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006.  
*Photo by Brenda Kleinjan*



**Kevin Larsen**  
2006 Youth Tour Alum  
*Submitted Photo*



**Andi Fouberg**  
1994 Youth Tour Alum  
*Submitted Photo*

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool,” she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an unusual reason.

“The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles,” she said with a laugh. “We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together.”

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune’s communications director.

“Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point,” Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

“I’d see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I’d think, that was me,” she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

“The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment,” she said. “It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people.”

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

“Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don’t know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour,” she said. “Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour.”

# Connecting Great Pets and Great People.

## Stuff the Kennel (with Kindness!)



Join us in supporting our local animal shelter, Heartland Humane Society in Yankton, SD. We're collecting donations to help provide food, care, and comfort to animals in need.



The biggest need is dog and cat food (all ages). Brands used at the shelter are: Iams, Hills Science Diet, Purina Pro Plan, and Purina One. Both dry and wet food are appreciated.

They can always use clumping cat litter, bully sticks, dog and cat treats, long-lasting chews (rawhide-free), spray cheese, and peanut butter. Other needs: laundry detergent, bleach, distilled water, hand soap, toilet paper, and paper towels.



Donations can be dropped off or shipped via Amazon/Walmart/Chewy/FedEx to Bon Homme Yankton Electric from December 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.



Deliver or Mail to:  
Bon Homme Yankton Electric  
Attn: Angie  
134 S Lidice  
Tabor, SD 57063

Or

Deliver to:  
The Heartland Human Society  
3400 E Hwy 50  
Yankton, SD 57078  
Tues – Fri 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Sat 10:00 am – 12:00 pm



# Youth Opportunities!

## Apply for 2026 Youth Tour

Bon Homme Yankton Electric will once again sponsor a high school student on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Each June, over 1,800 high schoolers travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. Throughout the week, participants will explore Washington, D.C., learning about government, cooperative philosophy and rural electrification. The students are selected and sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives with the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) coordinating the trip for South Dakota students.

Tour highlights include the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Ford's Theatre, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives, U.S. Supreme Court, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial among other exciting sites. Students will also participate in a briefing with the South Dakota Congressional Delegation and a river boat cruise across the Potomac River.

Join students from across South Dakota on the 2026 Youth Tour. Tour is set for June 14th-20th, 2026.

Application deadline is Friday, December 19th, 2025.

Applications are available at your guidance counselor's office, Bon Homme Yankton Electric or [www.byelectric.coop](http://www.byelectric.coop).



## Apply for 2026 Scholarships

B-Y Electric is now taking applications for one \$1,000 and two \$500 academic scholarships for the 2026-2027 school year.

The \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship is in its 35th consecutive year and is funded by Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, ND.

B-Y Electric is offering the two additional \$500 scholarships. These scholarships are designed to recognize and encourage the academic and community achievements of the students in our area.

Applicants must be a dependent of an active electric member and must be students enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school.

Scholarship recipients will be chosen on a combination of SAT/ACT scores, overall grade point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals, a written recommendation letter, and an essay relating to cooperative business.

For more information and for a scholarship application form, contact Bon Homme Yankton Electric, your school's guidance counselor, or visit our website: [www.byelectric.coop/scholarships](http://www.byelectric.coop/scholarships). Applications must be returned to Bon Homme Yankton Electric, PO Box 158, Tabor, SD 57063 by 4:00pm on Friday, February 13, 2026. Winners will be announced in March 2026.



## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**NOV. 25-DEC. 26**  
**Christmas at the Capitol**  
**8 a.m.-10 p.m. (holidays included)**  
Pierre, SD  
605-773-3178  
[christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov](http://christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov)

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.

**NOV. 29**  
**Gregory Mid-Winter Fair**  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Gregory Memorial Auditorium  
Gregory, SD  
605-830-9778

**DEC. 1-30**  
**Trees & Trains Exhibit**  
SD State Railroad Museum  
Hill City, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**SunCatcher TRA Chilli Cook-off & Dessert Silent Auction**  
841 E. St. Patrick St.  
Rapid City, SD  
[info@suncatchertra.org](mailto:info@suncatchertra.org)

**DEC. 4**  
**Parade of Lights**  
6-7 p.m.  
Vermillion, SD  
605-624-5571

**DEC. 5**  
**Kimball's Hometown Holiday**  
Main Street  
Kimball, SD

**DEC. 5-6**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
Mueller Center  
Hot Springs, SD  
605-890-2974

**DEC. 5-7, 12-14**  
**Mighty Corson Players Humbug**  
Dec. 5-6, 12-13: 7:30 p.m.  
Dec. 7, 14: 2:30 p.m.  
Corson, SD  
[www.mightycorson.com](http://www.mightycorson.com)

**DEC. 6**  
**Hometown Christmas**  
All Day  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656  
[milbanksd.com/chamber](http://milbanksd.com/chamber)

**DEC. 6**  
**KJAM Parade of Lights**  
5:30 p.m.  
Madison, SD  
605-256-4514

**DEC. 6**  
**Holly Jolly HoeDown on Ice**  
Fort Pierre Expo Center  
Pierre, SD  
605-289-1334

**DEC. 7**  
**KCBA Hometown Christmas**  
10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Kadoka City Auditorium  
Kadoka, SD  
605-488-0151

**DEC. 13**  
**Parade of Lights**  
5:30 p.m.  
Aberdeen, SD

**DEC. 14**  
**A Poker Alice Christmas**  
2 p.m.  
Gayville Music Hall  
Gayville, SD  
605-760-5799

**DEC. 14**  
**Celebration of the St. Lucia Tradition**  
3 p.m.  
Dalesburg Lutheran Church  
Vermillion, SD  
[ron@dalesburg.org](mailto:ron@dalesburg.org)

**DEC. 15**  
**Holiday Jam with the Hegg Brothers**  
7-9 p.m.  
H.S. Performing Arts Center  
Mitchell, SD

**DEC. 21**  
**Bethlehem in Brule County**  
5 p.m.  
Ag Building  
Pukwana, SD  
605-730-0553

**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.**