

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Caring for Caregivers

Exploring Family
Caregiving Services

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Emergency Training

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Director Updates: Welcoming New Leadership and Recognizing Service



Stephanie Horst
horst@byelectric.com

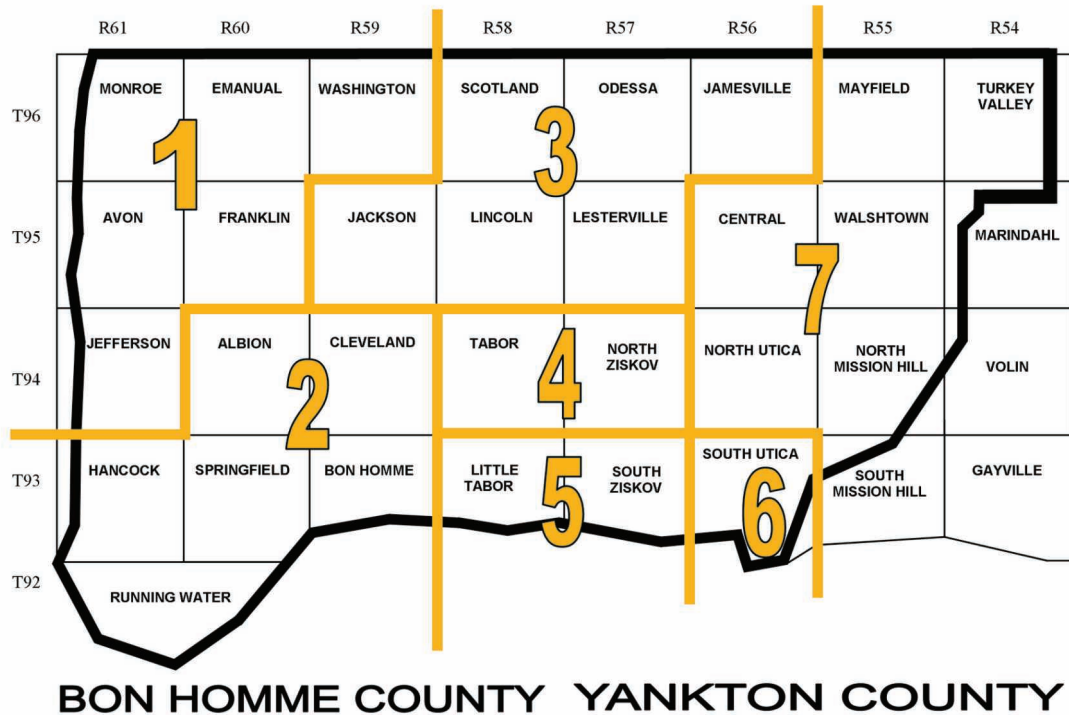
B-Y Electric Cooperative would like to update our members on recent changes to your Board of Directors.

For Director District 7, no petitions were submitted for the membership to vote on during the annual meeting. According to the cooperative's bylaws, when a vacancy exists without an elected candidate, the Board of Directors has the authority to appoint a qualified individual to serve the remainder of the term.

At the September Board meeting, the Board appointed Tom Boyko as Director for District 7. Tom brings extensive experience in the electric industry, most recently serving as CEO of East River Electric Power Cooperative before his retirement. His knowledge and leadership will be a great asset to B-Y Electric and its members. We welcome Tom and look forward to the insight he brings to our cooperative's future.

In other developments, District 4 Director Dean Sternhagen has announced that he will be moving out of his district. As outlined in the cooperative's bylaws, directors must reside within the district they represent to remain eligible to serve. The Board accepted Dean's resignation with appreciation for his service and commitment to B-Y Electric's members. The process to fill the vacant District 4 seat will follow the cooperative's bylaws, either by appointment or by petition at the 2026 annual meeting.

B-Y Electric extends sincere thanks to Dean for his contributions and welcomes Tom to the Board as we continue to work together to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electric service to our members.



**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.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The September board meeting was held on September 17, 2025 at 8:00 am. Directors present were Dave Sykora, Dean Sternhagen, Rick Cheloha, Robert Ruppelt, Paul Voigt and Brian Brandt via zoom. Tom Boyko was in attendance and appointed by the Board to serve as the District 7 Director. Others present were the attorney, management staff and guest employee.

THE BOARD APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- August 2025 Reorganization and Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- Capital Credits to Estates - \$6,709.51
- Review New Members & Cancellations
- Review Closed Work Order Inventory - #921 for \$498,816.89
- Review Special Equipment Purchases - \$67,793.85

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
- East River Report
- East River Annual Meeting Discussion

OTHER GOVERNANCE

- Appointed Tom Boyko as District 7 Director
- Appointed RESCO Voting Delegate (Brandt)
- Appointed Mid-West Electric Consumers Voting Delegate/Alternate (Sykora/Horst)
- Approved Eide Bailly Master Service Agreement
- Appoint Paul Voigt as Chair of Operation Roundup® Committee
- Accept Resignation of Dean Sternhagen (District 4)
- Enter/Exit Executive Session - None
- Next Meeting date set for Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 8:00 am.

| FINANCIAL REPORT | AUGUST | | YTD |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | 2024 | 2025 | 2025 |
| TOTAL ELECTRIC REVENUE | \$1,235,032 | \$1,144,091 | \$8,607,048 |
| COST OF POWER | \$709,750 | \$653,391 | \$5,075,803 |
| TOTAL COST OF SERVICE | \$1,131,115 | \$1,046,600 | \$8,353,688 |
| KWHS PURCHASED | 9,863,779 | 8,858,397 | 70,080,364 |
| RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE KWH | 1,417 | 1,360 | |
| RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE BILL | \$181 | \$189 | |

Welcome New Members

Utica

Alex & Madisen Wagner
Lamar Advertising Corporation

Tabor

Rick Haag
Robert Corbett

Yankton

Carla McConnell
Cynthia Morales
Ebony Creswell & John Wudel
Heather Rodunz & Montana Marinez

Jason & Jennifer Bernhardt

Jeffery S & Julie A Kool
Rush Property & Investment, LLC
Tommy G Tenfingers
Wyatt & McKenzie Jorgensen

Stay Safe This Holiday Season: Tips for a Merry and Accident-Free Celebration

The holidays bring families together with twinkling lights, festive meals and cozy traditions. But they also bring seasonal risks that can turn celebrations into emergencies if precautions aren't taken. Local safety officials are reminding residents to keep safety in mind when cooking, decorating, and entertaining this year.

Extension Cords

With more lights and electronics plugged in during the holidays, extension cords are often stretched to their limits. Experts urge homeowners not to overload outlets and to replace any cords that are frayed or damaged. Only outdoor-rated cords should be used outside, especially in snowy or wet conditions.

Families should avoid running cords under rugs or across doorways where they can overheat or become tripping hazards.

Turkey Fryers

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners have grown to include deep-fried turkeys, but safety must come first. Fryers should only be used outdoors, on a flat surface and far away from buildings, garages or wooden decks. Fire officials caution that a partially frozen or wet turkey can cause oil to boil over and ignite, leading to severe burns or home fires.

A fire extinguisher rated for grease fires should always be kept nearby, and fryers should never be left unattended while in use. One distracted moment can cause a disaster.

Ladders

From hanging lights to topping off the tree, ladders are part of the holiday routine. Falls are among the most common seasonal injuries, so ladders should be set on level ground and never leaned against unstable surfaces. Having another person hold the ladder is strongly advised.

Candles and Fireplaces

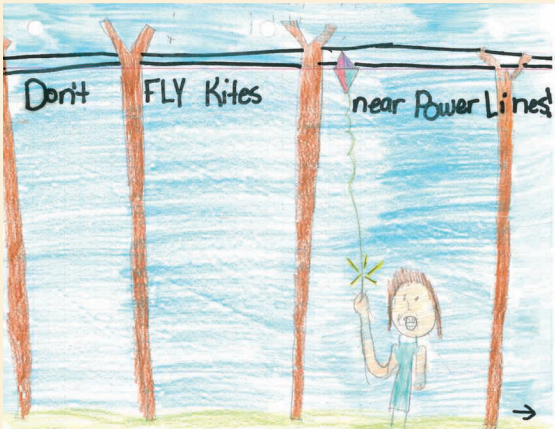
Candles and fireplaces are popular during the holiday season, but they also raise the risk of home fires, especially when combined with the extra decorations and greenery that fill many homes in December. According to the National Fire Protection Association, candles cause an average of

46% of fires in December each year. Never leaving a flame unattended and incorporating a few safety rules can prevent a devastating fire.

Lights and Decorations

Before hanging holiday lights, inspect strands for cracked socket, frayed wires or loose connections, and replace any damaged sets. Outdoor lights should always be weather-rated, and lights should be turned off before bedtime or when leaving the house. Timers and smart plugs can help make this easier.

Decorations should be securely fastened to prevent them from tipping or falling, especially in homes with children or pets. Heavy ornaments should be placed higher on the tree, out of reach of small hands and wagging tails. Fire officials also recommend choosing flame-resistant or non-combustible decor whenever possible and keeping all decorations away from heaters, fireplaces or open flames.



"Don't fly kites near power lines!"

Kristen Vanden Berg, Age 11

Kristen cautions readers on the dangers of flying kites near power lines. Great picture, Kristen! Kristen's parents are Andy and Geraldine Vanden Berg from Corsica, 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.

Holiday SIDE DISHES

CORN CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

2 15 oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained
 15 oz. can cream corn
 1/2 cup butter, melted
 1 box Jiffy cornbread mix
 1/2 pt. whipped cream

Method

Combine whole kernel corn, cream corn, butter, Jiffy cornbread mix and whipping cream. Mix thoroughly. Pour into greased 8.5"x11" pan and bake at 350° F for 40-45 minutes.

Sharon Houchin
 Central Electric

BETTER THAN STUFFING

Ingredients:

1 box chicken/turkey stuffing mix
 Chicken broth
 Celery
 Carrots
 Onions
 1 stick herbed butter (or make your own)
 2 cups chicken/turkey gravy

Method

Prepare stuffing according to directions but substitute water with broth. Dice and sauté celery, carrots (total of two cups) and onions in herbed butter. Fold into stuffing. Put into baking pan and top with gravy. Poke gravy into stuffing – just a little bit. Don't completely mix. Bake at 350° F for 20 minutes and broil briefly at the end.

Valerie Marso
 Oahe Electric

RAW VEGETABLE SALSA

Ingredients:

2-4 medium cucumbers, cubed
 2-4 medium tomatoes, cubed
 1 small onion or 1/2 of a white or yellow onion sliced
 1 tsp. salt
 1 tbsp. sugar
 2 tbsps. apple cider vinegar
 Additions: black pepper to taste, chopped basil, or chopped green bell pepper.

Method

Place cubed tomatoes and peeled cucumbers into a bowl. Add sliced onion.

Mix in remaining ingredients and stir. Marinate for several hours or overnight.

This salad keeps for 3-4 days refrigerated.

Raw Vegetable salads full of electrolytes, vitamin C and fiber.

Laurie Wernke
 Southeastern 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 6 Director: Rick Cheloha

I've been on the B-Y Board for five years. I worked for a public power district in Nebraska. After retiring and living in the Yankton area for two to three years, I decided to run for the co-op board. There are a lot of parallels between public power and co-ops, and while both are good, it's been interesting to learn more about how the cooperative world works.

One story that stands out is when I was elected, right in the middle of COVID. I'll never forget standing out in the middle of the Tabor baseball field while members voted from their vehicles. I thought that was an interesting way to be voted onto the board. That was the first of our drive-thru annual meetings.

Since then, I've been proud to see improvements like the

drive-thru meetings continue, as they have really increased member turnout and engagement. I'm also proud of Operation Round Up®, it's a great way for the co-op to give back to the community.

It's an honor to serve alongside such a dedicated board and an excellent group of employees. Everyone is engaged and focused on doing what is best for our members, and I value being part of that team.

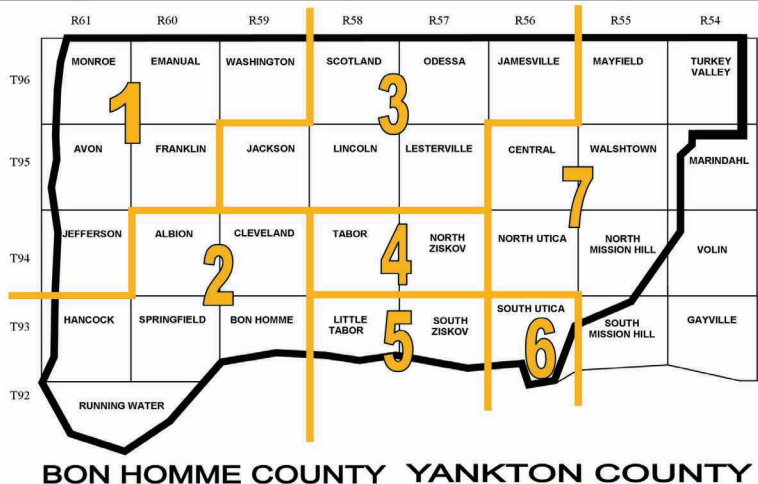
My wife and I have been married for 46 years. We have four kids and seven grandchildren. In retirement, I spend as much time as I can with my family, plenty of pickleball, hunting, and fishing. In fact, I'm doing this interview while I'm out fishing!



All active members in district 6 were put in a drawing in August 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

District 6 \$80 Bill Credit Drawing Winner: Richard Strom



Employee Spotlight: Travis Zomer



How long have you been at Bon Homme Yankton Electric?
I have been with B-Y Electric for 24 1/2 years.

What does your job entail?
In a typical day, I install new power lines and equipment, maintain and inspect existing lines to prevent outages, and repair damage caused by storms or accidents.

What do you love most about B-Y Electric?
I have always liked the variety of work I get to do and working outside.

What is your favorite memory since starting work at B-Y Electric?
The 2005 ice storm. Though it came with challenges, it was a reminder of the importance of reliable electricity and the dedication of crews working to restore power for members.

How would you describe B-Y Electric in three words?
Challenging. Rewarding. Fun.

A little about you outside of work.
My wife Kara and I live just outside of Tabor. We have three children. I enjoy attending their numerous activities, hunting, and time off from work.

2026 BASIN TOUR

Registration is now open for members interested in learning more about where your electricity is generated. Basin Electric Power Cooperative is open for tours and we are taking advantage of this. This FREE opportunity for our members will be held June 8-10, 2026. We will be traveling with members from Clay-Union Electric and Union County Electric. If you are interested in attending this tour, please fill out the form below and send to:
Bon Homme Yankton Electric Attn: Chantelle Jungemann | PO Box 158 | Tabor, SD 57063

Name: _____
(If registering as a couple/double, include both names.)

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Registration is due by April 1, 2026 to: Chantelle Jungemann - cjungemann@byelectric.com





CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

Exploring Structured Family Caregiving Services for South Dakota's Caregivers

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

November is recognized nationally as Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the essential role of caregivers and highlight the resources available to them and the loved ones they support.

Yet, families face a growing challenge: how to care for aging loved ones when services are often far from home. Nursing homes or assisted living centers may be located hours away, and even when they are nearby, the cost or availability of space can present real barriers.

One answer has been the Structured Family Caregiving program, launched by the South Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) in 2019.

According to Heather Krzmarzick, Director of the Division of Long-Term Services and Supports within DHS, the program is one of many resources at DHS that are

Several resources are available for caregivers in South Dakota through the Department of Human Services.

Photos by Homecare Services.

available to help older adults and their caregivers. It provides training, coaching, ongoing support and even a modest stipend to those offering significant care for an older adult in the home.

“Structured Family Caregiving serves caregivers who live with their family member and provide substantial care for them, including personal care, supervision, medication management and other things, such as managing finances and transportation for necessary appointments and community activities,” Krzmarzick said.

In many ways, the program echoes the electric cooperative story. Just as co-ops once brought electricity to rural areas that were otherwise overlooked, the program helps families meet a need that might otherwise go unserved. In places where nursing homes or assisted living centers are many miles away, the program gives families a practical way to continue care at home, often the place where people feel most comfortable.

“Structured Family Caregiving is important because it

supports the vital work of family caregivers, strengthens families and improves outcomes, especially in underserved or isolated regions,” she said. “The program honors South Dakota’s values of strong families, independence and community.”

In addition to expanding community-based care options to rural areas, the program allows families to potentially prevent or delay the move to a nursing home and reduce the economic burden that often comes with that transition. Krzmarzick said DHS also offers other programs for those that may need a little extra assistance to remain safely in their homes but don’t require the intensive services of a nursing facility.

“Each caregiver has unique needs and preferences,” she said. “As such, the services and supports are designed to meet the varying needs of each caregiver and help care for a person at home as long as possible.”

To be eligible for the program, the care recipient must be 65 or older or

18 or older with a qualifying disability and meet both functional and financial criteria to qualify for the program.

Since its creation, the program has grown steadily, giving more families the tools to succeed. Krzmarzick said it has allowed many older adults and adults with disabilities to remain in their homes while supporting family caregivers with knowledge, training and a small amount of financial assistance.

Agency Director Steven Novotny with Homecare Services of South Dakota, Inc., one of many in-home care providers in the state, said that few other programs reach and serve those who need care quite like the program.

“Structured Family Caregiving has the unique ability to serve consumers in every community across our state, large or small. Under this program, individuals can receive care from a trusted family member or friend, which allows them to remain independent and living in their community,” he said. “Our caring staff at Homecare Services of South Dakota have seen

firsthand the positive impact on families when we are able to provide support and training to the caregivers that are stepping into what is often a challenging role caring for a loved one.”

Krzmarzick said the Structured Family Caregiving program is just one of many support options that DHS offers individuals and their caregivers in South Dakota. Resources are available online at dhs.sd.gov or through Dakota at Home, South Dakota’s Aging and Disability Resource Center, at 1-833-663-9673.

“All caregivers, not just those utilizing the Structured Family Caregiving Program, may access free training and resources to help improve confidence in their caregiving abilities, reduce stress and prevent burnout,” Krzmarzick said. “Caregivers may also be eligible for other programs that offer respite options. Our Dakota at Home specialists are dedicated to helping you find services and supports to meet your specific needs or the needs of a family member.”



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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.

B-Y Electric Attends Homecoming Celebrations 2025

Bon Homme Yankton Electric is excited to participate in our local Homecoming Parade's.

We had a great time participating in the Yankton High School 150 year celebration, Avon High School and Bon Homme High School Homecoming Parades.



Travis Zomer attending Yankton High School Homecoming Parade on Friday, September 26th. Yankton's theme was celebrating 150 Years.



Aaron Melichar attending the Bon Homme High School Homecoming Parade Thursday, October 2nd. Bon Homme's theme was Monster Mash. Float was inspired by Monsters Inc.



Chantelle Jungemann attending Avon High School Homecoming Parade Friday, October 3rd. Avon's theme was movie. Float continued with the Monsters Inc.

Murphy





LINEMENS' TRAINING READYED CREW FOR CHAINSAW ACCIDENT

(From left) When Brandon Schmieg cut his forearm, fellow linemen Tristan Hall, Luke Koval and Brian Davis knew exactly how to respond. Photo submitted by Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

When a Routine Day of Trimming Trees Turned Critical, Cooperative Employees Were Prepared to Help

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Perched within the manlift on a bucket truck, Brandon Schmieg methodically sawed away large tree branches near overhead power lines, dropping them to the ground more than 50 feet below.

It's nothing out of the ordinary, explained the 19-year veteran lineman from Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative in Milbank, South Dakota. After a while, you become accustomed to the work – and its hazards.

From the bucket he was standing in, Brandon reached with

his chainsaw for one of the last few cuts he'd need to make. But as he began the cut, the chainsaw kicked up and he lost control. Steadying himself and throwing the brake on the saw, Brandon looked down at his left arm. He'd been badly cut.

"I saw quite a bit of blood right away," Brandon said. "My first thought was that I needed to get down fast."

Gathering his strength and trying his best to stay calm, Brandon maneuvered his bucket down through the tree limbs back to the ground where linemen Brian Davis, Luke Koval and Tristan Hall noticed something wasn't right.

"I think we all sensed something happened," Brian explained. "The way he was coming down like that, and he'd just fueled up the saw, so we were wondering what had happened."

Luke ran to go shut off the woodchipper, which was drowning out Brandon's yelling. As the engine died, they finally heard Brandon yell, "Call for help!"

Brian raced to the truck to radio back to the office in Milbank, calling in a “Mayday” along with the crew’s location.

With a first-aid and tourniquet kit in hand, Brian sprinted toward Brandon, where Tristan and Luke had removed Brandon’s safety harness and wrapped a towel over the wound on Brandon’s forearm and applied pressure to slow the bleeding.

As the team secured a tourniquet tightly around Brandon’s upper arm, the crew kept in touch with the office by cell phone. The office staff, having called 911 as soon as they heard ‘Mayday,’ worked together to relay the street address and details of the injury to emergency dispatchers.

Seeing the urgency of the situation, the team placed Brandon in the service pickup and Tristan began driving him to the hospital. As the linemen were driving back into town, the ambulance met them and took Brandon to the hospital in Milbank where they stabilized him and discovered he’d severed two arteries in his forearm. He was then transferred to

Sioux Falls and underwent surgery.

Luckily, Whetstone Valley Electric and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association had conducted first-aid training for linemen just several weeks before. The instruction included CPR, AEDs, tourniquets and wound care.

“Regular first-aid training and keeping first-aid supplies on hand is so important because our linemen are often out somewhere rural,” explained Joe Denison, SDREA’s loss control professional and certified paramedic for the Arlington and Lake Norden ambulances. “If we have to wait 30 minutes for an ambulance, that can be too late.”

Whetstone Valley Electric General Manager Dave Page says despite the incident, he finds it encouraging that the employees followed procedure — maintaining clear communication with each other and with 911, administering first aid on site, and knowing exactly what to do each step of the way.

“It wasn’t only the training that was provided, but it was the attention that

these guys gave to that training - where it stuck, and their response was automatic,” Dave said. “In addition, the Mayday training that we do here at Whetstone went a long way to help us all stick to the plan and see a successful outcome.”

Now back on the job, Brandon credits his safe outcome to the co-op’s focus on regular safety training and having first aid supplies in the vehicles.

“I don’t think the makeshift towel tourniquet would have stopped the bleeding,” Brandon said, looking down at the scar on his forearm.

Brian added, “I don’t want to think about the outcome if we didn’t have a plan in place.”

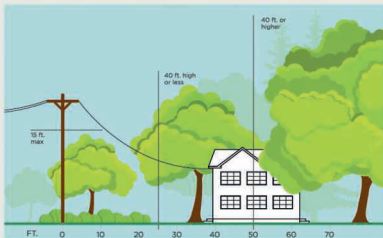
To help prevent those worst case scenarios, electric cooperatives continually scrutinize safety training and workplace incidents. Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is sharing this story with its members-owners and fellow cooperatives to promote preparedness for unexpected incidents like this one, and overall encourage a culture of safety awareness.

3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

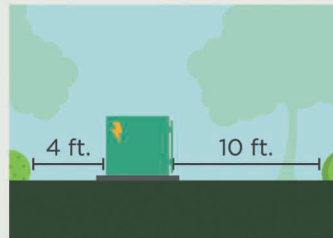
Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them.

Here’s how you can help:

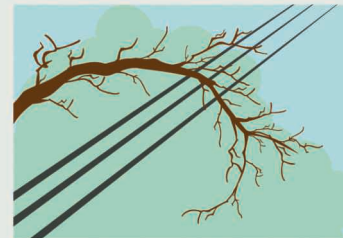
1. Plant trees in the right place. Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



2. Don’t block pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.



3. Report dangerous branches. If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



Trimming improves safety for all.

Let’s work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.



SUSTAINABLE SERVINGS

Frederick-Area Family Grows, Packages Specialty Oatmeal

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

For Taylor and Cassandra Sumption, there's nothing better than waking up early and enjoying a bowl of their very own home-grown oatmeal.

Well, maybe nothing better except sharing that taste of small-town South Dakota with the world.

Living and working on their five-generation family farm in northeast South Dakota, the Northern Electric Cooperative member-family dreamed, developed and launched Anthem Oats, which they say is a farm-to-table alternative that oatmeal enjoyers can feel good about.

But Anthem Oats isn't just a locally-sourced breakfast; it's a process rooted in sustainability.

The Sumptions' small-business journey began in 2016 when Taylor decided to replace his usual wheat cover crop with oats in his corn and soybean rotation.

"I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to crop rotation," Taylor laughed. "I started working with the USDA research farm north of Brookings, and they do a lot of rotational studies ... What I saw was a tremendous increase in yield for crops following oats."

Those increased yields are a result of the oats recycling nutrients like nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus back into the soil. Oats also increase the amount of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in the soil, which the USDA says helps roots intake more nutrients and moisture, making oats an ideal

This field of oats on Taylor and Cassandra Sumptions' farm near Frederick, S.D., will soon be milled and packaged for their oatmeal brand, Anthem Oats.

Photo submitted by Cassandra Sumption

cover crop to boost the next season's returns.

But an oat harvest doesn't bring in the same returns that corn and soybeans do – that had Taylor Sumption thinking about ways to add value to his product.

"It was Taylor's idea from the very beginning, from years and years ago, after many long hours in the tractor thinking about how to bring added value to our farm," Cassandra recalled. "And I loved his ideas. He would just kind of bounce things off me every now and then."

One day, it clicked in Taylor's head; he could add value to his oat harvest by producing a one-of-a-kind, high-quality breakfast product.

Taylor got in contact with the South Dakota Value-Added Agriculture Development Center (VAADC), whom he credits for helping navigate the first steps in starting the business.

Maple Pecan is one of Anthem Oats' top-selling flavors. Among other flavor options: pumpkin spice, vanilla chai, peach and cranberry, super fruit, and dark chocolate brownie.





Taylor and Cassandra Sumption sell their home-grown oatmeal in stores across the US. Photo submitted by Cassandra Sumption

VAADC CEO Cheri Rath says Anthem Oats is one of the center’s many success stories, and credits the Sumptions for coming up with a marketable idea and running a sustainable business.

“Anthem Oats takes a traditional commodity and adds value to it, helping their farm diversify and add profitability at a time when commodity prices are volatile,” Rath said. “They’ve done an awesome job of branding themselves and getting out into the marketplace.”

According to Taylor and Cassandra, feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive, with some customers noting that Anthem Oats’ subtle differences have distinguished the brand from competition.

“When selecting our oat variety was we focused on nutrient density and nutritional value,” Taylor explained. “Our oats mill a little tougher, but there’s a little more flavor and a little more body. Consumers can tell when it’s our oats.”

Cassandra, now a full-time Anthem Oats employee, oversees the product from the harvest to the shelf, and everything in between. It’s an around-the-clock job, and one she had to learn fast.

“I didn’t have a clue – this was all so new to me,” Cassandra laughed, thinking back to when she first jumped into the role. “I did manage a grocery store in Frederick here for a short time, so that kind of helped me with the logistics of shipping and freight and different things like that.”

Today, after more than four years on the market and a continuously growing presence in grocery stores, the Sumption family has unofficially put Frederick on the map as the oatmeal capital of South Dakota.

Cassandra and Taylor also credit their five children, Trevor, Tristan, Preston, Miranda and Marissa for taking time out of their busy lives to help out when they’re able, as the family works to build a brand that resonates with consumers in South Dakota and beyond.

“I get to answer all the emails, like all of the consumers’ questions, and sometimes there’s a complaint, but overall everybody is very kind and sweet in their messages,” Cassandra said. “It helps make your day a little brighter, knowing that you’re doing something that people actually really appreciate and love, and it just makes you feel good at the end of the day and keeps you going.”



What Is the Value-Added Agriculture Development Center?

VAADC is a nonprofit that provides resources for the establishment and success of value-added agricultural businesses.

What Does Value-Added Mean?

When farmers add value to their product, it means they are taking a raw commodity and processing, marketing or otherwise enhancing so it can be sold at a higher price. The Sumption family adds value to their oat harvest by milling, packaging and distributing their product.

What Does VAADC Offer to Start-ups?

VAADC can assist start-ups with feasibility assessments, business plans, grant and funding opportunities, strategic planning and networking. VAADC has assisted more than 300 projects since its founding in 1999.

Who Is VAADC?

VAADC was started by agriculture industry supporters to support producers. VAADC is governed by a board of directors representing the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, East River Electric, Farm Credit Services of America, S.D. Association of Cooperatives, S.D. Bankers Association, S.D. Farmers Union, S.D. Soybean Research & Promotion Council, and the S.D. Wheat Commission.



NOV 22, 26, 28-29

Christmas Tree Sales

Nov. 22: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Nov. 26: 5-8 p.m.

Nov. 28-29: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

6B Seed And Supplies

Alpena, SD

www.6Bseedandsupplies.com

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. 1

Reliance Christmas Carousel

9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Reliance, SD

605-730-1462

NOV. 1

Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Dakota Christian School

Corsica, SD

605-366-7940

NOV. 1

Black Hills Meat Fest

2-4 p.m.

Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall

Rapid City, SD

NOV. 1

Fairburn Community Center

Bazaar

5:30 p.m.

Linn St.

Fairburn, SD

NOV. 1-2

**The Black Market/
Formerly Benson's Flea Market**

Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.

Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 3

American Legion

Pancake Breakfast

8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

1600 W. Russell St.

Sioux Falls, SD

605-336-3470

NOV. 7-9

Hill City Girlfriends' Weekend

Information on Facebook Page

Hill City, SD

NOV. 8

TNT's Gifts & Goodies Galore

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

510 S. Main St.

Dimock, SD

NOV. 8

Lutefisk Supper

4:30 p.m., 5:45 p.m., 7 p.m.

Call for Reservations

Lake Campbell Lutheran Church

Volga, SD

605-690-4868 – Cheryl

605-693-4325 – Charlotte

NOV. 8

More Than a Meal Gala

5:30 p.m.

Aberdeen, SD

Tickets: 605-229-4741

NOV. 14-15

Junkin' Market Days

Fri. 4-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Ramkota Exhibit Hall

Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 15

Club 14 Craft + Vendor Fair

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Hendricks Public School

Hendricks, MN

605-690-5586

NOV. 15

Dueling Pianos

Playing for Permanency

5:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn & Convention Center

Spearfish, SD

605-722-4558

NOV. 16

An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving

2 p.m.

Gayville Music Hall

Gayville, SD

605-760-5799

NOV. 16

FEZtival of Trees

Mon.-Fri. 4-7 p.m.

Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

802 S. Main St.

Aberdeen, SD

605-225-4841

NOV. 22

Lille Norge Fest

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Canyon Lake Activity Center

Viking Hall

2900 Canyon Lake Dr.

Rapid City, SD

NOV. 28

Snacks With Santa

2-4 p.m.

Hill City Center

Hill City, SD

NOV. 29

Gregory Mid-Winter Fair

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Gregory Memorial Auditorium

Gregory, SD

605-295-4345

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.