

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Preserving Our Past

**Historical Society Unveils
New Cultural Heritage Center**
Pages 8-9

Co-op Summer Outreach
Pages 12-13

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, Inc.

Official Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

Notice is hereby given that the 2026 Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, Inc. Annual Meeting of Members will be held on Tuesday, the 18th of August, 2026 from 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM at 134 S. Lidice Street in Tabor, SD to conduct official business of the cooperative that includes the secretary business, financial report, and director elections in District 1, District 4 and District 6.

Petitioners filing for election are:

District 1 - Paul Voigt

District 4 - Ben Hellman

District 6 - Rick Cheloha

- Doug Dykstra

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Brandt, Secretary



Make Plans to Attend 2026 Drive-Thru Annual Meeting



Who: Bon Homme Yankton Electric Members

What: 2026 Bon Homme Yankton Electric Annual Meeting

When: Tuesday, August 18th, **4:00-6:30 PM**

Where: Lidice Street (main street) Tabor

Each membership that registers will receive an attendance gift, a \$20 meal certificate to their choice of Talsma's Cove in Avon, Joe's Substation in Lesterville, or The Marina Bar & Grill in Yankton. Limited number of The Keg, Tabor.

All registered members will also be entered for a chance to win one of five \$100 bill credits.

Current Seniors present will be entered to win a \$300 and \$500 scholarship,
"The John & Gunda Koble Scholarship".

Watch your mail in August for your Annual Meeting postcard!
Don't forget to bring it to the meeting for fast and easy registration!
**Reminder Voting Delegate for an Organization must be done 24 hours
before the Annual Meeting.**

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
Ben Hellmann
Tom Boyko

General Manager: Stephanie Horst

Operations Manager: Ken Carda

Office Manager: Jessica Cameron

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.

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JUNE BOARD MEETING

The June board meeting was held on June 24, 2026 at 8:01 am. Directors present were Dave Sykora, Robert Ruppelt, Paul Voigt, Rick Cheloha, Tom Boyko and Brian Brandt. Others present were the management staff, guest employee and attorney via zoom.

THE BOARD APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- May 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- Capital Credits to Estates - \$15,694.66
- Review New Members & Cancellations
- Review Closed Work Order Inventory - None
- 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
- CFC Form Update

OTHER GOVERNANCE

- Appointed East River Director (Voigt)
- Appointed East River Annual Meeting Voting Delegate/Alternate (Hellmann/Sykora)
- Approved 990 and 990T Returns
- Next Meeting date set for Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 8:00 am.

FINANCIAL REPORT	MAY		YTD
	2025	2026	2026
TOTAL ELECTRIC REVENUE	\$906,660	\$1,067,257	\$5,629,050
COST OF POWER	\$519,771	\$632,372	\$3,454,800
TOTAL COST OF SERVICE	\$889,878	\$1,035,624	\$5,718,378
KWHS PURCHASED	6,725,861	7,115,331	42,033,645
RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE KWH	1,037	1,083	
RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE BILL	\$156	\$179	

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Tabor

Denise Platt
Teresa Rentsch

Tyndall

Jason & Emily Dejong
Tyrell Becvar

Avon

Jackie Salmen

Irene

Jed Desmet

Tripp

T&T Farms

Yankton

Brent Parry
Jeff & Deanna Wiedner
Garret & Tess Weber
Jane Dubbelde

Jason & Janell Mount

John & Patricia Hart

Michael & Cary Specht

Penny Backman

Suzanne Hansen

Tony Kumm

Trey & Tori Christensen

Victoria Hanson

Wil Pease



As unmanned aerial systems (UAS) increasingly populate recreational and professional skies, safety remains paramount – especially near critical infrastructure such as overhead power lines. Today we reaffirm that drones should be flown in open spaces away from electrical lines and substations to prevent power outages and dangerous debris that can threaten public safety.

A drone colliding with a power line can cause outages and, if lines are downed, create serious electrical hazards for anyone nearby. Touching downed lines or debris that has fallen on fences, trees or other objects can result in severe injury or death. If you encounter downed power lines, immediately call 911 and notify emergency personnel and the utility company.

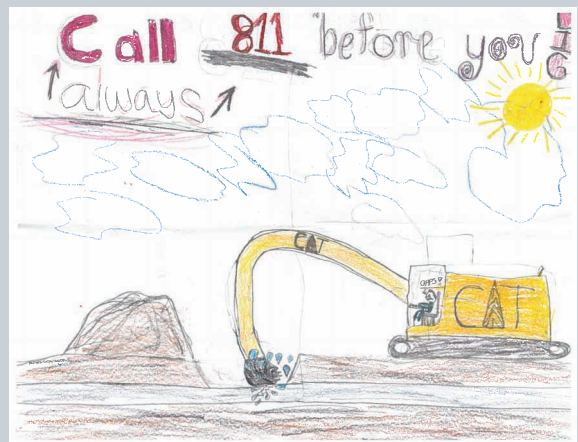
To ensure safe and compliant drone operations, follow federal registration and business-approval requirements, and stay informed about local, state and community regulations. FAA safety guidelines remain essential: Inspect your drone for damage before each flight and repair any issues prior to use. Fly at or below 400 feet unless FAA authorization or an allowed exception applies. Maintain visual line of sight; do not fly beyond it. Avoid airports, manned aircraft, stadiums and crowds of people. Do not fly for unapproved commercial purposes without FAA authorization. Refrain from flying in bad weather, including low visibility or high winds. Never fly recklessly or endanger others; violations can result in fines and penalties.

It is encouraged that drone operators plan routes

that maximize safety and minimize proximity to power infrastructure. Responsible pilots, adherence to FAA guidelines and awareness of local rules can prevent outages, injuries and potentially tragic consequences. For more information on legal requirements and best practices, consult FAA resources and your local utility providers.

Together, we can enjoy the benefits of drone technology while safeguarding our communities and critical electrical infrastructure.

As drone use expands, operators should build safety into every mission from the outset. Calibration, pre-flight checklists, and robust maintenance programs help catch issues before takeoff. Operators are encouraged to use situational awareness tools, such as real-time weather updates and wind assessments, to adjust flight plans accordingly. Community education events and outreach can foster a responsible culture among hobbyists and professionals alike, reinforcing the shared responsibility to protect power networks and nearby residents. By prioritizing safety, we preserve access to this transformative technology for all.



"Call 811 before you dig – always."

Laina Nelson, age 10

Laina reminds members to always call 811 before digging. Thank you for sharing your picture, Laina! Laina's parents are Nathan and Kristen Nelson – members of H-D Electric.

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



Family FAVORITES

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese,
shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside. Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted. Makes 9x13 inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

WALLEYE WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. walleye fillets
1 cup Lawry's Herb & Garlic
marinade
1 tsp. Lawry's Season Salt
1 tsp. lemon pepper
1/4 cup butter
2 tbsp. horseradish
2 tsp. dill

Method

Marinate fish in herb & garlic marinade for 30 minutes. Drain. Sprinkle with season salt and lemon pepper. Bake fish until it flakes. Melt butter in saucepan. Remove from heat and add horseradish. Spoon onto fillet after cooked. Sprinkle on dill and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

BBQ MEATBALLS

Ingredients:

Meatballs

3# ground beef
1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup cracker crumbs
2 eggs
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. chili powder

Sauce

2 cups ketchup
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke, or to taste
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 cup finely chopped onion

Method

Mix all meatball ingredients together and shape into meatballs. Place meatballs in a baking dish.

Mix all sauce ingredients together and pour over meatballs. Cover and bake at 350°F for one hour. The meatballs can be made ahead of time and frozen for several weeks. This makes a large batch, so it can be divided into smaller batches and frozen.

Karen Soulek
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.

DISTRICT 1 - PAUL VOIGT (I)



Paul Voigt - my wife, Tracy, and I have two children, Derian and Cassandra.

I graduated from Avon High School and earned a B.A. degree from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. I have

a farming background and have spent my career involved in agriculture and serving my community.

Before being elected to the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric Board of Directors, I served on the Avon Farmers Cooperative Board. I currently serve as a director on the East River Electric Board, where I work alongside other cooperative leaders to help ensure reliable, affordable electricity for our region.

Serving on the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric Board has been a rewarding experience. I would like to continue helping keep our cooperative locally governed while

providing members with electricity that is as reliable and affordable as realistically possible.

One of the things I enjoy most about serving on the board is working with the cooperative employees and my fellow directors. Together, we are committed to making decisions that serve the best interests of our members and the communities we call home.

DISTRICT 6 - DOUG DYKSTRA



Doug Dykstra - my wife, Trudy, and I have been blessed with three children and four grandchildren.

I graduated from Avon High School and attended Mitchell Technical College, where I completed the Electrical Construction and Maintenance program. I have been a licensed electrician since 1972. My career began with Black Hills Power & Light, followed by Schulte Electric and in 1978, I started my own Yankton electrical business finally retiring October 2025. Throughout my career, I have held electrical contractor licenses

in South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska.

I have always believed in giving back to my community. My involvement has included Yankton Riverboat Days, the Yankton Jaycees, Junior Leader Football, volunteering with Yankton High School Track & Field, serving on the Yankton High School Industrial Arts Advisory Board, sponsoring the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Community Feast, and serving at Sacred Heart.

My previous board and leadership experience includes approximately 25 years serving as a church missions committee member, trustee, deacon, and elder. I have also served four three-year terms with the International Technical and Electrical Construction Association in Pennsylvania, where I remain active today. In addition, I served two years on the Missouri Valley Christian Academy School Board.

I am seeking a position on the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric

Board because my 53 years in the electrical industry have given me a perspective on the challenges facing electric utilities. During my career, I have seen the National Electrical Code grow from a pocket-sized handbook to a comprehensive code exceeding 900 pages. I have also witnessed the increasing impact of OSHA regulations and additional state and local requirements on construction and utility projects.

Drawing on my experience as an employee, business owner, electrical contractor, and employer, I would be honored to serve as an advocate for our members and work alongside Bon Homme-Yankton Electric to help meet these future challenges while maintaining reliable, affordable electric service.

DISTRICT 4 - BEN HELLMANN (I)



Ben Hellman - my wife, Sara, and I are proud to call Bon Homme County home. We have four children: Kade (Raychel), Riley (Hannah), Peyton, and Asher, and we are blessed with one grandson, Liam. I am seeking election to the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric Board of Directors.

I graduated from Bon Homme

High School and earned an Associate Degree in General Agriculture from South Dakota State University. I am the owner of Elite Feeds in Tyndall, where I have built my career serving local producers and supporting agriculture in our community.

Giving back has always been important to me. Over the years, I have been actively involved in numerous organizations, including serving as a youth wrestling coach, junior football coach, assistant Bon Homme High School girls wrestling coach, 4-H leader, and member of the Tyndall Chamber of Commerce. I also served on the Bon Homme School Board for approximately 20 years.

Currently, I serve on the Avera St. Michael's Hospital Board, the

Tabor Fire Department Board, the SDUSAW Board, the Bon Homme Youth Wrestling Board, and the Bon Homme High School Wrestling Booster Board.

I am running for the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric Board because I want to represent the members of our cooperative and help make responsible, informed decisions that provide reliable, economical, and efficient electric service. I am committed to supporting the continued growth of our communities while creating opportunities that benefit both our members and the cooperative's employees. I look forward to serving and working on behalf of the members of Bon Homme-Yankton Electric.

DISTRICT 6 - RICK CHELOHA (I)



Rick Cheloha - my wife, Patty, and I will celebrate our 47th wedding anniversary this fall. We have four children and seven grandchildren.

I am originally from Columbus, Nebraska, in Platte County. I earned an Associate's Degree from Central Community College-Platte Campus. I worked as a home builder before spending 31 years with Loup Power District. There I held many roles from an Assistant Plant Operator at the Powerhouse to the New Business

Supervisor where I worked directly with contractors, engineers, architects, distributors, and customers on their electric bill, energy efficiency, over saw the EnergyWise program, promoted electric heat, and conducted home energy audits. After retiring from Loup Power District, Patty and I relocated to South Dakota.

Community involvement has always been important to me. Over the years, I have been active with United Way, my parish council, Habitat for Humanity, the Nebraska State and Local Home Builders Associations, and the Knights of Columbus. I have also served on the Natural Resources District Board, as well as on numerous boards and committees for the organizations in which I have been involved.

I have had the privilege of serving on the Bon Homme-Yankton Electric Board of Directors for the past six years. During that time, I

have worked to represent the best interests of our members while helping guide the cooperative toward a strong future.

If re-elected, I would continue to represent the members of the co-op by helping ensure Bon Homme-Yankton Electric provides reliable electricity at competitive and affordable rates while supporting responsible growth. My background in public power, combined with my experience serving on the B-Y Board of Directors, has given me the knowledge and perspective to help make sound decisions that benefit our membership today and for years to come.



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A PAST FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A new lobby welcomes visitors to the Cultural Heritage Center.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Cultural Center & State Museum Reopens After Extensive Renovation

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

After more than two years spent closed for renovation, South Dakota's state museum and cultural center is back up and running to share the story of South Dakota and its people with visitors from across the state and beyond.

The iconic museum built into the Pierre hillside held its grand reopening July 1 in time for the nation's 250th birthday, showing off new exhibits, a gift shop and an expansion that includes a larger meeting room and more space for its archives.

For Museum Director David Grabitske, the reopening marks a new chapter for the South Dakota State Historical Society, which oversees both the museum and state archives housed there. But it also honors the first laws set forth by the Dakota Territory's first territorial legislature, outlining specific steps and functions for historical preservation for untold future generations of its citizens.

According to Grabitske, many of the

first Dakotan settlers were determined to preserve the history they were making day by day as settlers on the vast American frontier.

"The first three acts [by the territorial legislature] were all about transferring property at the end of life – it's all about inheritance," Grabitske explained. "The fourth act of the territory created the historical society. In my mind, the fourth act goes along with those first three acts; it's about how we give things to the future."

Establishing a historical society demonstrated confidence that there would be a future for the Dakota Territory – complete with a permanent population that would live, grow and prosper there.

"We have a mantra around here," Grabitske said. "We collect today for tomorrow's history."

What that sentiment has amounted to is a sprawling collection of more than 17,000 cubic feet of paper, 50 terabytes of data on its servers, and more than 35,000 individual objects.

"The very first collections that arrived were in 1863, and we still have those in our library," Grabitske said. "They were

library books – 514 of them in 11 boxes."

In the process of collecting and disseminating information, historical societies at the time would collect and make copies of books to trade with other historical societies to expand their collections and diffuse knowledge across a wider area and reduce the risk of losing records to fire.

You'll find those 160 years' worth of books, deeds, contracts and reports



On the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Curator of Collections Katy L. Schmidt holds a can found on the battlefield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

throughout the high-ceilinged, climate-controlled archive wing of the building – but you'll also find objects that aren't necessarily old or inherently valuable.

"The reason we add something into our collection is because it's historic, and what we mean by historic is it has significance and integrity," Grabitske explained. "Something being 'old' just fixes it in time. What makes something historic is that it is significant – it tells the story of people in South Dakota, and it has integrity, which means a certain completeness to tell that story."

To illustrate the point, Grabitske described a recent addition to the museum's collection – a painted tire with the words "no hunting."

"You see these things going down the road [in South Dakota], and we realized we were missing [one for the museum]," he explained. "We found one near Timber Lake which had a story. The lady who gave it to us (family of Dorothy Dopp, courtesy of the Timber Lake & Area Museum) had put it up in 1967 and she had faithfully painted it over the years and knew the dates she had painted it. We don't need 400 of these tires – we need one to represent the whole state."

Visitors to the museum this summer can experience the first three rooms of the updated exhibits. These sections house a welcome area, 'What is History?' exhibit and a gallery. The remaining sections are slated for completion in December 2026 and will feature exhibits on South Dakota's environment, people, politics, conflicts and more.

For more information on the Cultural Heritage Center and the South Dakota State Historical Society, visit history.sd.gov.



An exhibit showcasing the famous people of South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



This plaster doll (left) was gifted to South Dakota by Japan in 1927 to commemorate the United States' 150th birthday. Fifty years later, for the nation's 200th birthday, Japan gifted South Dakota another doll (right).
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Museum Director and South Dakota State Historical Society Assistant Director David Grabitske walks through the extensive art archive, revealing a painting of an electrical lineman working through a winter storm.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Grabitske demonstrates the new movable shelves installed over tracks within the floor. This upgrade will maximize the available archival space.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

MODERN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGIES

Anthony Buckley
NRECA

“Nuclear energy” often conjures images from TV and movies, such as towering cooling structures, glowing green substances and frantic control rooms. In reality, modern nuclear power plants are far removed from these portrayals.

Today’s nuclear facilities operate more like high-tech industrial campuses that are clean, continuously monitored, extremely secure and designed with multiple, overlapping layers of safety.

In the United States, nuclear plants are among the most heavily regulated facilities of any kind, with a dense framework of state and federal oversight governing reactor licensing, fuel handling, plant maintenance, material disposal and emergency preparedness to ensure that nuclear plants operate safely and responsibly.

Safe operation begins in the control room. Plant operators must pass demanding written and operational examinations administered by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission before they are allowed to work – and training doesn’t stop once operators are licensed. Personnel are regularly tested on routine plant operations and on rare but high consequence emergency scenarios. As nuclear facilities modernize, operators are also trained using advanced digital systems that are replacing older, analog equipment. These upgrades improve automation, diagnostics and situational awareness.

Safety extends far beyond the

control room. Organization and discipline define how nuclear plants are designed and run. Facilities have clearly established security perimeters, controlled access points and rigorous maintenance programs to ensure reliability while protecting workers and surrounding communities. Critical components are housed in reinforced concrete and steel structures and are accessible only to essential personnel.

Reactor technology has also become safer as decades of experience have driven innovation. One of the most significant advances is the increased use of “passive safety” systems, built-in safety features that work automatically. Earlier reactors relied heavily on pumps, motors and operator intervention to perform critical functions like circulating cooling water. While modern designs still include active systems, they also integrate passive features that do not require external power or immediate human action. Instead, natural forces such as gravity, pressure and convection keep the reactor stable and cooled if disruptions occur. Passive safety increases resilience during grid outages and extreme weather events.

Another major area of innovation is the development of small modular reactors (SMRs) and microreactors. These reactors are far smaller than traditional nuclear plants and are designed to be manufactured in factories and assembled on-site. Existing U.S. nuclear plants typically produce between 600 and 1,500

megawatts (MW). By comparison, SMRs are expected to generate about 70–350 MW, while microreactors would produce just 1–20 MW. Their smaller size and standardized designs could shorten construction timelines and allow capacity to be added incrementally as energy demand grows.

SMRs and microreactors remain early-stage technologies. Most developers are still in the prototype phase, with no commercial deployments yet operating. Widespread adoption is unlikely before the end of the decade, but interest remains strong. The U.S. Department of Energy and numerous private investors, including large technology companies, are committing significant funding to accelerate research, licensing and deployment.

In a time of rapid electric demand growth, nuclear power offers zero-carbon baseload power, a potentially valuable attribute as fossil fuel plants retire and intermittent renewable resources expand. As the energy landscape shifts, nuclear energy may play an important role for cooperatives seeking dependable, long-term generation options.

Electric cooperatives are tracking these developments in their long-term planning. For co-ops and their consumer-members, nuclear energy can provide reliable, cost-effective, carbon-free electricity. Nationwide, generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, the wholesale power suppliers that provide electricity to your electric co-op, already partially own or contract for output from 16 operating nuclear reactors, including the nation’s two newest reactors at Plant Vogtle in Georgia. Two G&Ts are contracted to purchase the output of the Palisades Nuclear Plant in Michigan, the first of its kind “restart” of a recently retired nuclear reactor expected to come online this year.

HAVE A VOICE IN YOUR COOPERATIVE

As a cooperative, one of Bon Homme Yankton Electric's seven cooperative principles is Democratic Member Control.

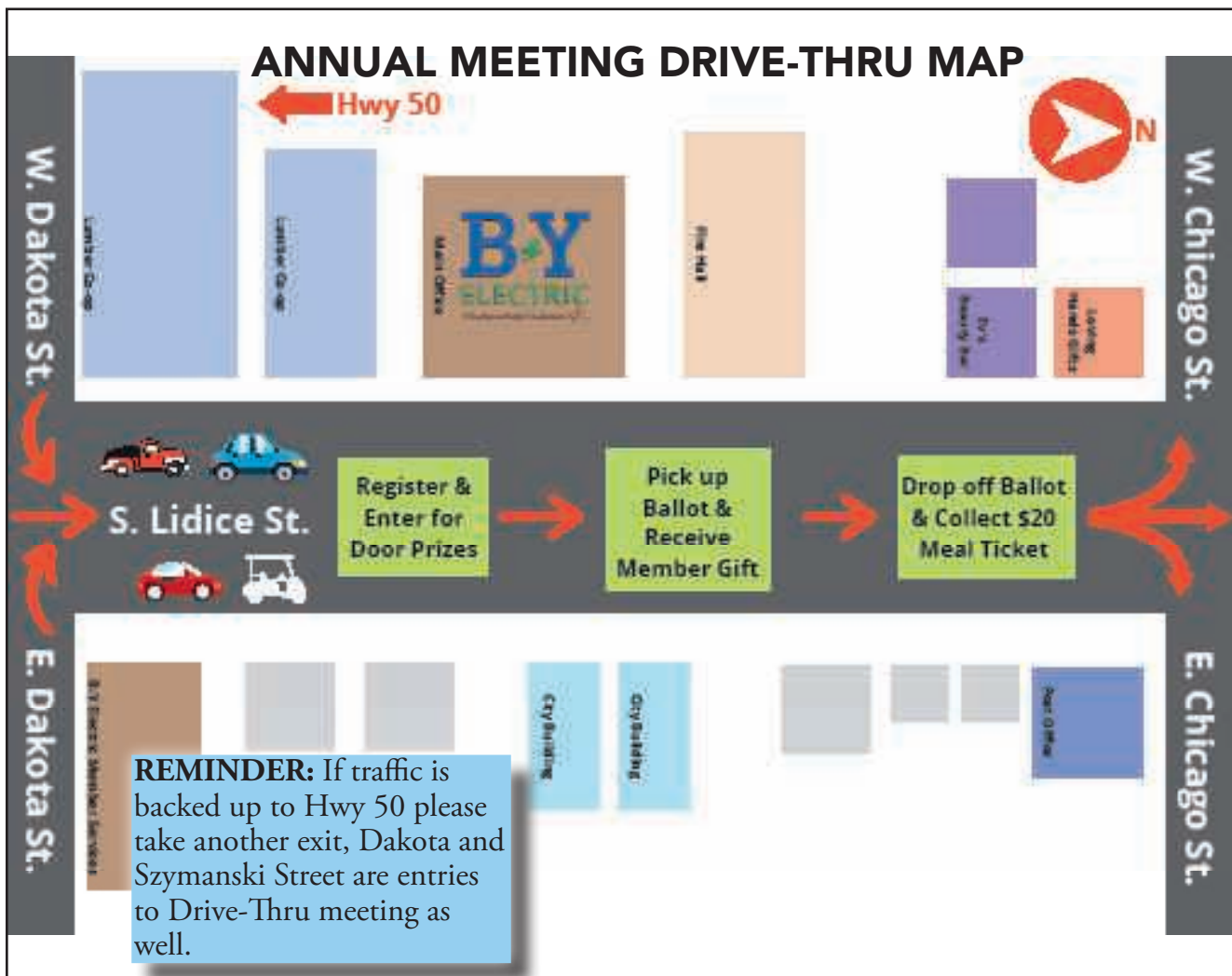
This principle states, "Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions."

Be an active participant in your cooperative by attending Bon Homme Yankton Electric's annual members meeting on August 18th from 4:00 to 6:30 PM in Tabor.

For attending, each membership will receive an attendance gift and a \$20 meal certificate to your choice of Talsma's Cove in Avon, Joe's Substation in Lesterville or The Marina Grill in Yankton. High School Seniors present at our annual meeting qualify for The John & Gunda Koble Scholarship. All registered members will also be entered for a chance to win one of five \$100 bill credits. Follow our Facebook page @ facebook.com/BonHommeYanktonElectric before the Annual Meeting and watch the Call to Order, Adjournment of Meeting and the Bill Credit Drawing LIVE.

Find more information on the annual meeting including the agenda and more in our Annual Report that is included as an insert in this publication.

Meal Certificate Choices:



CO-OP SUMMER OUTREACH

Join Us at S.D. State Fair, Dakotafest, Minn. Farmfest

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Attention all co-op members! If you're heading to the South Dakota State Fair, Dakotafest or Farmfest this summer, stop by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booths for some great family fun and a chance to win a prize!

Make sure you fill out your coupon on the back of this magazine and bring it with you to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair or Dakotafest for your chance to win one of two electric grills sponsored by Karl's TV & Appliance.

South Dakota State Fair – Sept. 3, 2026

South Dakota's electric cooperatives will host the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026.

This one-day event will feature a slew of energy-themed activities, from bucket truck rides lifting you more than 50 feet above the state fairgrounds to an interactive pole climbing demonstration complete with real spiked boots and climbing gear that linemen use every day on the job. We've also partnered up with South Dakota One Call to remind you to always call 811 before you start digging – but your kids are welcome to use our mini excavator in our sandbox to uncover buried treasure!

While you're here, check out our on-site displays for select highly efficient, all-electric heat pumps and mini-splits, water heaters, yard tools and more!

Find our booth near the Horticulture Building.

Dakotafest – Aug. 18-20, 2026

You'll want to stop by the South Dakota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives building at Dakotafest in Mitchell, Aug. 18-20!

Join us for fresh-off-the-grill brats, oven-baked cookies and freezie pops as you learn about the latest in home energy savings and efficiency. We'll have other cool stuff for you to check out, including an automatic lawn mower, a solar panel display and an EGO Power+ Portable Power Station.

Minnesota Farmfest – Aug. 4-6, 2026

Minnesota members, come visit your electric cooperative at Minnesota Farmfest near Redwood Falls, Aug. 4-6, 2026. Members may enter a raffle drawing for one of five battery-operated yard tools. We'll even have the high-voltage trailer on site for a live demonstration to remind visitors to be safe around overhead and buried power lines.



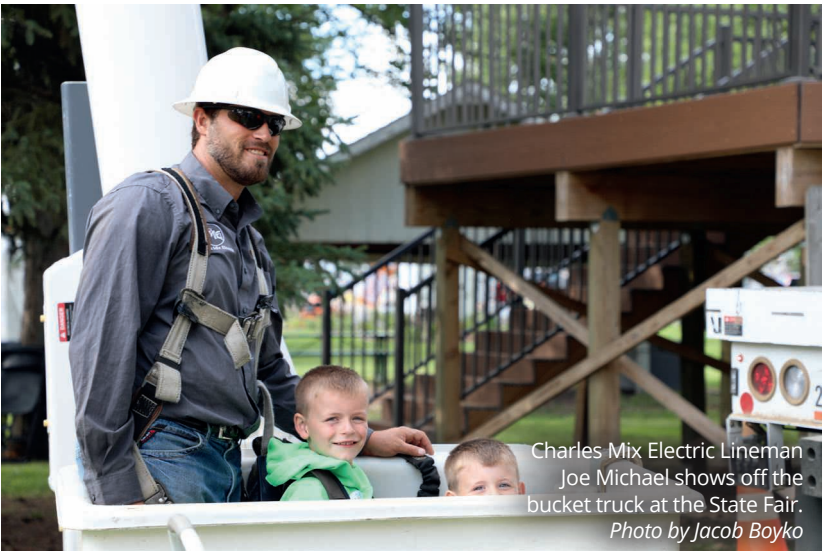
Kids perfected their utility pole climbing skills at the South Dakota State Fair.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives host a booth at Dakotafest in 2025.

Submitted Photo



Charles Mix Electric Lineman Joe Michael shows off the bucket truck at the State Fair.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Fairgoers get a lineman's view of the State Fair! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A future lineman readies for his climb.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Show off your co-op spirit with temporary tattoos! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A line forms for bucket truck rides.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Booth visitors can win prizes by playing Plinko.
Submitted Photo



THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

Sioux Valley Energy line workers take part in a job briefing before work begins. The tailgate safety discussion helps crews review the task, identify hazards and make sure each person understands the plan.
Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy

How Job Briefings Help Co-ops Think Through Safety

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Before an electric cooperative line crew begins work, the job starts with a pause.

The pause may only take a few minutes, but for crews working around energized equipment, changing weather and other hazards, those few minutes matter.

Before the first step of the job, line crews gather for a tailgate safety session – a documented pre-job briefing where they identify the task, hazards, protective equipment and plan.

For Travis Denison, manager of safety at Sioux Valley Energy, that conversation is one of the most important tools crews have to fight complacency.

“It forces our professionals to stop and go through the steps of the job they’re going to do and identify the hazards with each of

those steps,” Denison said.

Despite the casual name, a tailgate safety session is not a public demonstration or a quick conversation at the back of a pickup. It is a documented briefing used by crews before work begins. The goal is to slow down and communicate, making sure that everyone is focused on the work in front of them.

“These are jobs that our crews do every day, but all of a sudden something in the environment can change. There can be hazards that the crew didn’t talk about or recognize, and somebody can get hurt,” Denison said. “That job briefing or tailgate session is made to stop the crews, make them aware of their surroundings, talk about the job and each of the hazards, and discuss how they’re going to protect themselves.”

Denison’s focus on safety also runs in the

family. His brother, Joe Denison, is a loss control professional with SDREA – the same role Travis previously held before joining Sioux Valley Energy. Both came to safety work after years around line crews and firsthand experience with the risks of electric utility work.

“We were both linemen,” Travis said. “The more experienced you get as a lineman, the more you recognize the mistakes you made as an apprentice. You see the shortcuts that maybe you made yourself or that you see other linemen make.”

So how does a tailgate safety session actually work? The details change with the job, but the idea is the same: slow the job down before it starts.

For instance, if a crew is conducting a pole top rescue training, the briefing begins before anyone climbs. The crew identifies the emergency location, the people involved and who is leading the job and the protective equipment required.

Then they talk through the work itself. If the crew is practicing a mock mayday call or using a rescue manikin, they also talk through what could go wrong during the training. Someone could strain a muscle. A climber could make blunt contact with a pole or hardware. A falling object could injure someone below. Even a knife or hook could create its own hazard if people are not paying attention.

"We list the job, the steps of the job, the personal protective equipment we'll use and the energy sources," Travis said. "We talk about anything to do with the job before we start, so everybody's on the same page."

For Denison, the value of a job briefing is not limited to line crews. Members do not need a formal briefing form before starting work at home or on the farm, but they can use the same pattern to stay safe – name the job, look at the location, identify the equipment involved and talk through what could go wrong.

At home, that might mean looking up before raising a ladder, checking for power lines before trimming trees or calling 811

before digging a post hole, planting trees, building a deck or installing a sign.

That message is especially important on the farm, when large equipment may operate near overhead power lines.

"Be aware of the power lines," he said. "Have that talk. Communicate. Make the people you are working with aware of the potential dangers around them."

Sioux Valley Energy has also worked to carry that message to members through radio ads, videos and public outreach. The cooperative has shared reminders about overhead power lines, green boxes, construction work and the importance of locating underground utilities before digging. At times, Sioux Valley Energy has also partnered with Southeastern Electric Cooperative on public safety messaging.

Denison said the goal is similar to a crew's tailgate session: get people thinking before something goes wrong.

"Think about what you're doing," Denison said.

SDREA - Job Briefing			
Aerial Unit Testing			
Cooperative: <u>Thompson Center Coop</u>	Date of the Testing: <u>6-30-26</u>	Cooperative System Location: <u>L24C72</u>	
Emergency Location: <u>Substation #440</u>	Temperature: <u>76</u>	Humidity: <u>68%</u>	Voltage: <u>7200</u>
<u>Section 14 Township-112N Range-48west</u>			
Type of Personnel Involved:			
☒ Line Superintendent	☒ Lead Lineman	☒ SDREA Loss Control:	☒ Foreman
☒ Journeyman	☒ Groundman	☒ Contractor	☒ Apprentice
Work Procedures:			
☒ Person In Charge of the Aerial Unit Testing:	<u>N/A</u>	☒ Set Up Traffic Control Devices if Necessary	☒ Position Aerial Unit Next to Energized Line
☒ Safe Location for Testing	☒ Ground Each Truck to System Neutral	☒ Inspect the Aerial Unit Boom Condition	☒ Install Skarshaug Tester
☒ Competent Aerial Unit Operator Identified	☒ Aerial Unit will be tested for 3-5 minutes	☒ Competent Ground Personnel Identified	☒ Rubber Gloves Shall be Worn by both
☒ Removal of the Truck Ground from System U	☒ Retrack Boom to de-energizing test unit	☒ Repeat for the next Aerial Unit	☒ Remove Skarshaug Tester from Boom
Personal Protective Equipment			
☒ Truck Grounds	☒ Safety Glasses	☒ Work Area Protection Devices <u>out of Right a Way</u>	☒ Rubber Gloves
☒ High Visibility Vest	☒ Hard Hats	☒ Flagger Personnel	☒ Strokes or Beacons
Special Tools & Equipment Required			
☒ Aerial Unit Tester	☒ Spotting Scope	☒ Stop Watch/Watch	
Potential Hazards			
☒ Contact Energized Lines with Equipment	☒ Vehicular Traffic	☒ Discharge of Hot or Burning Oil	
Energy Source Control			
☒ Substation	☒ Sectionalizer	☒ OCR	☒ Installed 1 Shot
☒ Fuse Cutout	☒ SCADA	☒ Electronic VFI	☒ Other: _____
Personal at Job Site			
Signature	Signature	Signature	
<u>Joe Denison</u>	<u>Brad Rehner</u>		
<u>Danley Swartz</u>	<u>Tony Surana</u>		
<u>Billy Bob</u>	<u>Lynna Beck</u>		
<u>Heath Church</u>	<u>Larry Hardin</u>		
<u>Jaime Pike</u>	<u>Derek Donson</u>		

This mock SDREA job briefing form, created for illustration, shows how line crews may document pre-job planning before aerial unit testing. The example highlights the kinds of details crews review before work begins, including location, personnel, work procedures, protective equipment, tools, energy controls and potential hazards.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!



AUG. 18-20
Dakotafest
2300 E. Spruce St.
Mitchell, SD

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

JULY 31-AUG. 2
Sioux River Folk Festival
Newton Hills State Park
Sioux Falls, SD
SiouxRiverFolkFest.com

AUG. 1-2
Family Camping Weekend
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Morgan, MN
Ideagroup.com/Farmfest

AUG. 5
Ag Appreciation Day
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sioux Empire Fair
Sioux Falls, SD

AUG. 7
Raise Em' Rank Bull Riding & Breakaway Roping
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

AUG. 8-9
South Dakota Senior Games
Events for People Ages 50+
Huron, SD
Register by July 26
605-295-2039

AUG. 13-15
Clay County Fair
Vermillion, SD

AUG. 14
Member/Community Appreciation Day
Clay County Fair
Vermillion, SD

AUG. 21-23
Yankton Riverboat Days & Summer Arts Festival
Yankton, SD
605-665-1657

AUG. 22
Extreme Bull Riding Tour
7:30 p.m.
Yankton Rodeo Grounds
Yankton, SD
605-760-4217

AUG. 22
McCrosan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Challenge
3:30 p.m.
McCrosan Boys Ranch
Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 3
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives at the South Dakota State Fair
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
State Fairgrounds – Horticulture Park
Huron, SD
605-224-8823

SEPT. 11-12
Center of the Nation 9/11 Remembrance
6 p.m. Fri: Remembrance Walk
Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.: Blood Drive
Herrmann Park
Belle Fourche, SD
605-641-3245

SEPT. 12
The Hay Country Jamboree
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

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.