

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS**

**Honoring Cooperative  
Legacy With  
Time-honored Tradition**

Pages 8-9

**Rescuing Animals**

Pages 12-13

# Scholar of the Year Banquet Held in Watertown

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota honored some of the area's most impressive high school seniors Saturday, May 3, during the 23rd Annual Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year Banquet and recognition held at the Student Center on the campus of Lake Area Technical College.

The event honored the 33 high school students who were chosen each week throughout the school year as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. It's a program which recognizes students for academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, and community service. The students are featured in weekly segments which air on Dakota News Now television and each student receives a \$250

scholarship for being chosen as the Scholar of the Week.

Presley Slaba, a senior at Wagner High School within Charles Mix Electric's service territory, was selected during the banquet as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year and received a \$1,000 award. Lauren Hofer a senior at Mitchell High School, within Central Electric's territory, and Grayson Rice a senior at Gayville-Volin High School, within Clay-Union Electric's territory, received \$500 scholarship awards. The winners' names were drawn from among those in attendance.

Lake Area Technical College President Tiffany Sanderson was the keynote speaker. Dakota News Now multimedia journalist Parker Brown served as the master of

ceremonies.

Touchstone Energy is a network of over 720 electric cooperatives from around the country – including the electric cooperatives in our region – who are united in the four touchstone values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are local, active members of their communities, dedicated to building our communities, and improving our way of life. The cooperatives have sponsored the Scholar of the Week program since 2002. In that time Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to over 600 students as part of the Scholar of the Week program.



Codington-Clark Electric Scholar of the Week \$250 scholarship winners were Hannah Heiman, Clark High School (third row, middle) and Jaxon Orthaus, Florence High School (fifth row, far left).

# Taxes paid by your Cooperative support local schools

During June, Codington-Clark Electric wrote nine checks totaling \$510,808.31 for kWh taxes. The tax amount was based on the sale of electricity (kWh) during calendar year 2024.

The tax money was paid to the county treasurer, who in turn forwards the money to each school district operating in the county. Each school's share was based on the amount of electricity sold within the school district's boundaries.

Rural electric co-ops, including Codington-Clark Electric and the power suppliers East River Electric and Basin

Electric, each paid the kWh tax. Because of the way in which the cooperative power supply network is structured, Basin Electric Power Cooperative (the producer) paid the tax on electricity sold to East River Electric Power Cooperative (the wholesaler). East River paid the tax on electricity sold to Codington-Clark (the retailer) who in turn paid the tax on electricity sold to members.

The following chart shows the amounts received by the various school districts in Codington-Clark Electric's service territory. The amount is the combined total paid by the three co-ops.

<u>School District</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Castlewood 28-1 .....	979.71
Clark 12-2 .....	142,323.77
De Smet 38-2 .....	44.91
Deuel 19-4 .....	225.06
Doland 56-2 .....	605.11
Florence 14-1 .....	22,796.59
Groton 06-6.....	148.53
Hamlin 28-3 .....	3,976.36
Henry 14-2.....	12,224.28
Summit 54-6 .....	61,881.87
Watertown 14-4 .....	129,221.31
Waubay 18-3.....	6,746.24
Waverly 14-5.....	35,338.39
Webster 18-4.....	7,509.33
Willow Lake 12-3.....	86,786.85
TOTAL .....	\$510,808.31

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### CODINGTON-CLARK ELECTRIC

(USPS 019-073)

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**To report a power outage:**

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**Office Hours:**

Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly by Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, PO Box 880, 3520 9th Ave SW, Watertown, SD 57201-0880. Electric 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 Watertown Post Office, Watertown, SD 57201 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 880, 3520 9th Ave SW, Watertown, SD 57201-0880; telephone (605) 886-5848

**[www.ccelectric.coop](http://www.ccelectric.coop)**

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# Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

### Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

**Improper ground surfaces:** Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

**Overcrowded play areas:** The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

**Unprotected elevated areas:** Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

**Head entrapment spaces:** Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

**Sharp points and edges:** Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

### Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

### Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child’s bare skin.

### Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



### “Don’t go outside during lightning storms!”

#### Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah’s parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, 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.

# Delectable CHICKEN

## CHICKEN MILANESE

### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

### Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

**McCormick.com**

## SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

### Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. \*Makes 4 servings.

**Jan Grage**  
Clay-Union Electric Member

## CHICKEN POT PIE

### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

### Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

**Cindy Foster**  
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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.

# Efficiency Tips for Older Homes



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

**Q:** How do I improve the efficiency of my older home while keeping its charm?

**A:** I love old homes. The details and craftsmanship have always drawn me to them. The features of older homes can make them less efficient than modern construction, but it doesn't have to be that way. You can keep the charm and make your home more efficient.

Start by prioritizing the invisible upgrades that make your home more comfortable and efficient. When we were kids, I don't think any of us thought, "When I grow up, I want to spend my hard-earned money on insulation." It's not as exciting as new countertops or a remodeled bathroom, but air sealing and insulation can save you money every month. Then you can apply the savings to aesthetic improvements.

Many older homes are not properly insulated. Insulation has several benefits beyond sealing your home and keeping outdoor air from seeping in. It reduces outdoor noise, makes your home quieter and improves your overall comfort.

Always properly air seal before you insulate. Older homes with pocket doors, coved ceilings, dumbwaiters, doors to attic spaces and laundry chutes allow indoor air to escape through the cavities, gaps and cracks around these classic features. Sealing off open cavities around those features often requires plywood, rigid foam or drywall fastened into place and then caulked around the edges.

Keep an eye out for framing features that cause drafts. Balloon framing is a type of construction where wall studs run all the way from the foundation to the roof, allowing air to flow freely through those spaces. Second floors with knee wall attics on both sides are notorious for air leakage. Open cavities allow air to flow horizontally between the attic spaces, making the home uncomfortable and inefficient. Seal off the open cavities in the floor framing and insulate attic spaces.

Dense-packed cellulose or closed cell foam insulation can be sprayed into exterior walls. Skilled contractors can remove pieces of siding and drill holes to fill the wall cavities from the outside of the home.

For brick or stone homes, holes can be drilled from the inside and then patched and painted. Insulating walls from the inside of the home requires more time and effort in preparation and cleanup, but having well-insulated walls is worth it.

Knob and tube wiring – commonly used from the early 1880s to the 1930s with no grounding wire – should be replaced prior to insulating walls and attics for safety purposes. Contact between insulation and knob and tube wiring can create a fire hazard.

People often think new windows are the best way to improve a home's efficiency. Considering the cost of replacing windows, I recommend investing in air sealing and insulation first. Then consider storm windows to keep the charm of the original windows, such as leaded glass and stained-glass windows in good condition. Choose from interior or exterior options that are operable and inoperable.

Once you've addressed the envelope of your home, consider appliance improvements. Replace your old electric water heater with a heat pump water heater. This upgrade can save a family of four an estimated \$550 per year and more than \$5,600 over the lifetime of the water heater, according to ENERGY STAR®.

Invest in high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment. A mini-split heat pump, also known as a ductless heat pump, is a more efficient option than electric baseboard heating and provides the benefit of air conditioning.

Older homes don't have to be inefficient. Show your home some love and invest in energy efficient upgrades.





# YOU GOTTA HAVE A FIDDLE IN THE BAND

## Keeping Old-Time Music Alive One Jam at a Time

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@srea.coop

“If you’re gonna play in Texas, you gotta have a fiddle in the band,” the classic Alabama song goes — and South Dakota is no exception. The Fiddlers of South Dakota, a group of traveling fiddle enthusiasts and musicians, carry that spirit, bringing the joys of acoustic music and an old-time charm to parades, festivals and hometown celebrations across the state through the summer months.

One of these traveling musicians, Ken Nelson of South Shore who joined the group in 2010, describes the group as a “loose-knit group of people who like to get together and jam.” In total, the group has more than 30 members from eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. And it’s not just fiddlers — the ensemble includes other acoustic instruments, including mandolin, bass, banjo and harmonica.

According to Nelson, the group’s repertoire draws from old-time traditions — breakdowns, waltzes, reels and jigs — the kind of music once played on porches, at barn dances and around campfires.

The Fiddlers of South Dakota playing old-time tunes at Newton Hills State Park.  
Photo submitted by Ken Nelson

“You could call it old-time music,” Nelson said. “It’s not really bluegrass or folk music. It’s hard to describe it until you hear it.”

Whether the song is an Irish jig or a Croatian polka, Nelson said the music never fails to connect with the audience.

Nelson said that connection is what drives these musicians to travel hundreds of miles to gigs across the state — from Fort Sisseton’s Historic Festival to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet, to Prairie Village’s Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree in Madison. It’s not a living, he said, but more of a passion — a way to stay connected to music, to community, and to his fellow fiddlers.

“We play everywhere we can,” he said. “And everybody enjoys it. We usually only make enough money to pay for the gas but that’s all we really care about.”

“Once We played for Potato Days over in Clark,” Nelson laughed. “We were set up right next to the potato wrestling pit. We had to make sure we were sitting far enough back so that when mashed potato started flying, we didn’t get splashed.”

The Fiddlers of South Dakota expect to perform next at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant in De Smet in July. Nelson said the public is not only welcome to attend the show, but acoustic string players of all ages are encouraged to join the organization’s jam sessions and informal performances such as at Luce Cabin at Lake Herman State Park or after their performance in Fort Sisseton.

“We’re always trying to incorporate new players into the group,” he said. “Sometimes young students come and play with us, and they’re always welcome. It’s fun and humbling to have young players, sometimes as young as 10 or 11, join in, because, if you don’t include the young people, it’s not going to last.”



# SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.

*Photo by JJ Martin*

## Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sirea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sirea.coop)

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

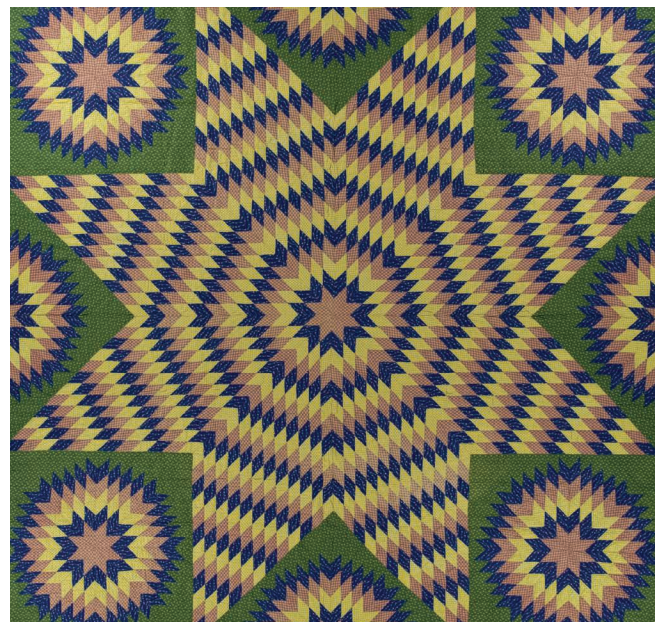
Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”



*Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123*

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

**Remembering Donovan Young Man**

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan’s commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community’s youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

“Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative,” Fanning said. “His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come.”

“We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community,” Fanning continued. “In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient’s enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations.”

**Honoring Melissa Maher**

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager’s secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric’s manager, the first woman to hold this title.

“I’ve always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come,” she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative. Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students’ families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

“It’s hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years,” Maher said. “Probably dozens if I had to guess.”

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

“We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager,” said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. “It’s a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that.”

## Avoid Hazards with Grain Bins and Power Lines

Electrical power is an indispensable part of modern agricultural operations. In fact, electricity is such a commonplace part of a farm operation that it can all too easily become a part of the scenery and its hazards overlooked. One often overlooked safety consideration is the power line clearance required for grain bins.

Electrical hazards include large equipment and farm structures near overhead power lines. The best way to avoid problems is to keep equipment and new constructions a safe distance from power lines.

Equipment and vehicles, such as augers and grain trucks, around grain bins are particularly at risk of coming into contact with overhead power lines. It is important that bins be built a safe distance from power lines to help ensure the safety of all farm workers.

The National Electrical Safety Code sets the minimum distance that power lines must be above and around grain bins. If planning on constructing a new grain bin, contact the Cooperative before any construction begins. We can help you determine minimum safety requirements.

Keep these additional safety tips in mind anytime you are operating large farm equipment around power lines:

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your local utility.

If equipment does come into contact with a power line, remember, stay on the equipment until the Cooperative has arrived to de-energize the lines. Warn others to stay away, and call the Cooperative immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away to safety.

For more electrical safety information, contact Codington-Clark Electric.



# Stay Safe After an Accident: Knowing What to Do Around Utility Equipment Could Save Your Life

**Q: My vehicle has struck a pad-mounted transformer “green box” or other utility equipment or lines: now what?**

**A:** First, assess the situation. If your car is not smoking or on fire, stay in your vehicle.

If you are in an accident or incident involving electrical equipment, remain in your vehicle or cab until the local utility arrives to de-energize power. Stepping out of your vehicle while touching it at the same time or trying to walk or run to safety can cause serious burn injuries or death.

Utility equipment includes:

- Pad-mounted transformers (metal boxes—usually green);
- Equipment such as a switching cabinet or junction box for underground utilities;
- Overhead power lines or poles; or
- Substations.

If you are in a multiple-car accident, yell to others (from your car) to warn them not to leave their vehicle. Also warn those who might stop to help to not approach the scene.

Call 9-1-1 to report the accident location and clearly state to the dispatcher that electrical lines or equipment is involved.

**Q: What if I see smoke or fire?**

**A:** Try to stay calm. Make a clear jump (without touching any part of the vehicle or tractor) and hop, shuffle or waddle like a penguin (with both feet together) at least 30 feet away to safety. Just like downed power lines, ANY damaged utility equipment such as pad-mounted transformers or cabinets that house electrical equipment can send electrical current through the pavement or ground.

If you walk across the energized ground or touch an energized vehicle and ground at the same time, something called “difference of potential” (also called step potential) can occur, according to CCEC’s Distribution System Manager Jared Terhark.

“When you pass from one area to

another by taking regular steps and cross varying voltages of electricity (think of how a water ripples—each ring represents a different voltage), this is difference of potential and it can cause extreme burn injuries or death,” explains Terhark. If you hop or shuffle, your body is much less likely to expose itself to different voltages at the same time.

DO NOT go near or touch electrical equipment. DO NOT move a downed wire with your hand or an object such as a stick.

**Q: Can there still be damage to equipment even if I don’t see anything?**

**A:** Yes, there can be damage to a pad-mounted transformer or other equipment that cannot be seen, even if metal boxes or cabinets look intact or appear to have minimal damage. When it comes to above-ground power lines, it is a fallacy that downed wires are insulated to the touch or that power is automatically cut once a power line is down or damaged.

**Q: What can happen if a pad-mounted transformer or other equipment has been hit? Fire? Outage?**

**A:** “Assuming the collision was hard enough there would be an outage,” Terhark said. “In a certain sense that would be the safest option. However, if the collision did not cause an outage there could be a fire,” adding that the worst possible option is that an outage did not occur, that the vehicle is energized and individ-

uals improperly exit the vehicle or others approach the scene.

Another dangerous outcome could include a vehicle hitting a transformer or underground enclosure hard enough to dislocate it, exposing energized conductors or creating an area/hole to fall into that could be energized. This scenario especially applies to first responders or those who stop to help but could apply to anyone at the scene.

**Q: So what is the bottom line?**

**A:** If you have been in an accident involving a pad-mounted transformer, a power pole or downed lines, or anything that looks like utility equipment, do not leave your vehicle unless you are in imminent danger, and then properly exit your vehicle. Make a clear jump (without touching any part of the vehicle or tractor) and hop or shuffle at least 30 feet away to safety. Also warn others about the dangers.

**Q: If I see damaged equipment or downed lines, should I report it to my utility?**

**A:** Yes, call us at (605) 886-5848 to report any damaged utility equipment you see. Most damage is reported, but not always.

For more information about dangerous situations around live power, call Codington-Clark Electric at (605) 886-5848. To schedule a presentation on staying safe around electricity or other related topics, please contact us.



(Left) Pad-mounter transformer and meter.  
(Above) Three-phase cabinet.



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

# RESCUING ANIMALS

## Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

**Jacob Boyko**

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

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being – Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.

"I figured it would be something myself and my children would be up to, and ever since then,

I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

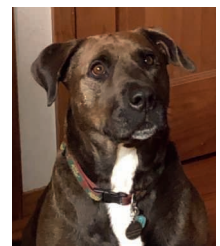
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

## HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

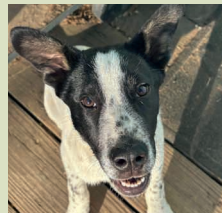
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.  
*Submitted Photo.*



## Looking for a new home...

(plus many more)



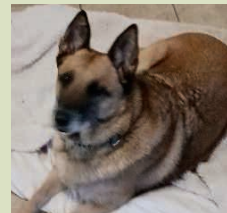
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Margot



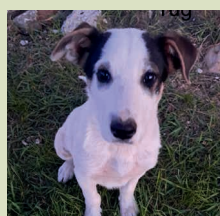
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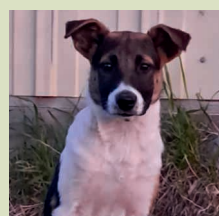
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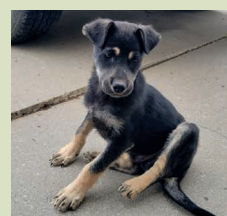
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



Central Electric Cooperative's distribution lines power members' farms and ranches throughout much of Central South Dakota.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*

# REMEMBERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

## Central South Dakota Rancher Looks Back to Days Before Power

**Jacob Boyko**  
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Near Big Bend Dam in central South Dakota, farmer and rancher Clayton Knippling works the same land his father and grandfather had decades before. The work he and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons do on the sprawling acre family ranch looks very different than it did back then, though. That's because today the ranch has electricity. Back in the 1940s and early 1950s,

having electricity was a luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by people in towns and cities, or rural folks who happened to live along major highways. With their homestead several miles northeast of Fort Thompson, the Knippings understood their odds of getting connected to a utility were slim for the time being. Their lives were powered by an old diesel generator out in the barn – enough to keep the kitchen refrigerator humming and a couple of light bulbs lit. “I remember being told, ‘Shut that

refrigerator door! You're wasting cold air!’” Knippling laughed, thinking back to that overworked generator. But as soon as the electric cooperative crews visited the ranch, that generator was permanently retired and would never run again. Knippling thought back to that day in the early 1950s when he was about six years old. He remembers watching the trench-diggers from Tri-County Electric – merged into Central Electric in 2000 – trench their way to each outbuilding. Hours later, he would see those buildings shining bright in the darkness for the first time ever. Having electricity didn't change the work out in the fields. Knippling said a lot of the work is the same in 2025 as it was in 1955. But back at the homestead, Tri-County Electric brought the Knippling ranch into the

20th century.

“We even had a welder after that,” Knippling recalled. “That took 220 volts, and I don’t think our old generator was putting off that. We could then fix our own iron.”

Electricity was a game-changer for the Knippings’ water needs. Seizing the opportunity, they dug a new, deeper well with an electric pump for better quality water and ran lines out to each building.

“[Before we had electricity] there was a stool and a nail where a tin cup sat, and there was a bucket of water and everybody that came through would drink out of that cup, so if somebody got a cold, we all got it,” Knippling laughed.

“Electricity allowed us to put in a pressure tank and then run the water lines to every house so we weren’t carrying a bucket anymore.”

The ranch also transitioned to all-electric pivot irrigation and pumps along the Missouri River. Today, Knippling Land and Cattle

irrigates 1,300 acres of farm land – an unimaginable figure before there was co-op power.

In the winter, the new electric block heaters for the diesel engines ensured there was always at least one tractor that would start up.

Life was just a little bit brighter, warmer and simpler with co-op power.

An advocate for rural life and progression, Clayton has also served the last 42 years on the board of directors for Midstate Communications, the local member-owned telecom cooperative, in an effort to equalize the disparities between urban and rural life.

“It changed the world back in the ‘50s when electricity came,” Clayton said. “A lot of kids left the farm because it was too rural. If you came from a farm, you didn’t want to come back. After electricity came, it became easier for younger people to stay on the farm.”



Clayton Knippling farms and raises cattle southeast of Fort Thompson on the same ranchland where he grew up, just 15 miles from his childhood home where Tri-County Electric first hooked up their power in the early 1950s.

*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



Pivot irrigation systems, like the one shown here along S.D. Highway 50 southeast of Fort Thompson, use electricity to rotate on a center pivot. Use of the systems can increase yields while reducing wasted water.

*Photo by Jacob Boyko*

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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**JULY 16-20**

### **Danish Days**

Dancing, food, parade, etc.  
Viborg, SD

*Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota*

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.

### **JUNE 20-21**

**Volunteer Fire Dept. Car Show**  
Fri. Cruise Night, Sat. Car Show  
Marion, SD  
Brad Schardin  
605-413-5653

### **JUNE 25-28**

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

### **JUNE 27-28**

**Buckhorn Rodeo**  
Britton, SD  
605-880-5077

### **JUNE 27-29**

**Leola Rhubarb Festival**  
Leola, SD

### **JUNE 27-29**

**Bowdle Tower Days**  
Bowdle, SD

### **JULY 1-5**

**106th Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
Rodeo, Parades, Concerts & Fun  
Belle Fourche, SD

### **JULY 9-12**

**Aberdeen Senior Games**  
605-626-7015

### **JULY 11-12**

**Frontier Days**  
White River, SD

### **JULY 12**

**39th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K**  
7 a.m.  
Spearfish, SD  
605-722-4558

### **JULY 12**

**Friendship Days Vendor Market**  
BBQ Cook Off, Prize Raffle  
10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
White Lake, SD

### **JULY 12**

**Fedora Fire Department Annual Appreciation Day**  
5 p.m.  
Meal, Pie Auction & Bingo  
Fedora, SD

### **JULY 17-20**

**Danish Days**  
Daneville Heritage Museum  
Viborg, SD  
danevilleheritage.com

### **JULY 19**

**6th Annual Wakonda American Legion Tractor Pull**  
3 p.m. Start  
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull  
Wakonda, SD

### **JULY 19-21**

**Burke Stampede Rodeo**  
Stampede Arena  
Burke, SD  
605-840-0824

### **JULY 25-27**

**Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape**  
Tripp Co. Fairgrounds  
Winner, SD  
605-842-5830

### **JULY 25-27**

**Clear Lake Days**  
Clear Lake, SD  
ClearLakeDays.com

### **JULY 26**

**Planes, Trains, & Automobiles**  
Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Prairie Village  
Madison, SD

### **JULY 26**

**South Dakota Chislic Festival**  
10 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Freeman, SD  
www.sdchislicfestival.com

### **JULY 26**

**Richmond Lake Association's Annual Pontoon Poker Run**  
Aberdeen, SD  
605-225-0609

**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.**