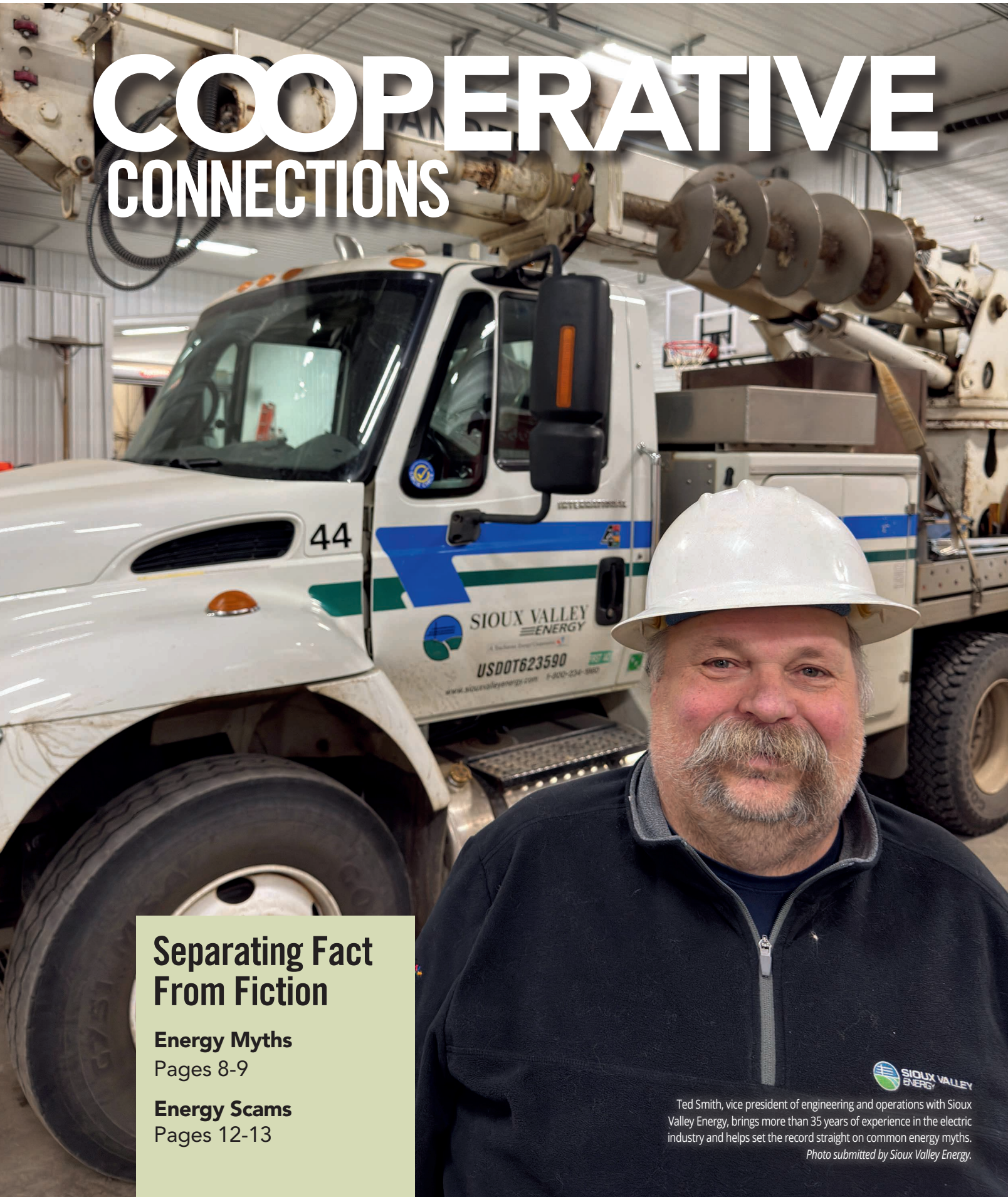


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Separating Fact From Fiction

Energy Myths

Pages 8-9

Energy Scams

Pages 12-13



Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations with Sioux Valley Energy, brings more than 35 years of experience in the electric industry and helps set the record straight on common energy myths.

Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy.

Director Candidates File Petitions

Incumbent director Ben Schleusner, Clay Schuchard and Jared Knock will run unopposed when Codington-Clark Electric Co-op members elect directors during the March 31 annual meeting. They were the only members to submit nominating petitions as candidates for the board of directors.

Directors serve a three-year term. Terms are staggered so one-third of the board is elected each year.

Serving as a director is more than just attending a monthly board meeting. Serving as a director is a large responsibility. A director must act in good faith and always in the best interest of the cooperative.

The cooperative's bylaws state that no person is eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the cooperative who:

- Is not a member and bona fide resident physically residing in the area served or to be served by the cooperative and in the district which the member is to represent; or



District 4 - Clay Schuchard
Watertown, S.D.



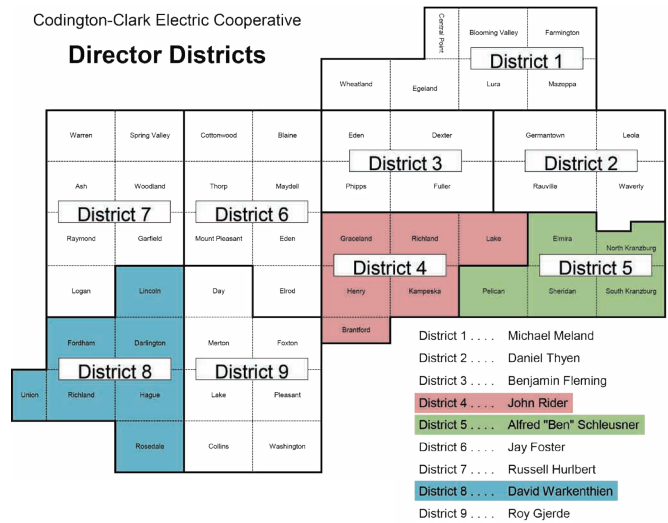
District 5 - Ben Schleusner
Watertown, S.D.



District 8 - Jared Knock
Willow Lake, S.D.

Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative

Director Districts



- Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative; or
- Is an employee of the cooperative or was an employee of the cooperative and less than three (3) years have passed since the last day of employment; is a close relative of an employee of the cooperative; or is a close relative of an incumbent director; or
- Does not have the legal capacity to enter into a binding contract.

The board of directors and management work as a team, but each has different responsibilities and objectives. The board is primarily concerned with idea decisions while management is primarily concerned with action decisions.

Designated Voting Representative for Organizations

Any member corporation, LCC, partnership, church, township, school or any other non-natural person member of Codington-Clark Electric Co-op that wants to be represented at Codington-Clark's annual meeting in Watertown on March 31, 2026, should complete the following form, have it signed by an authorized officer of the organization and present the form at the annual meeting registration table. The representative must be affiliated with the organization, e.g. officer, director, partner, member, trustee, etc.

_____ hereby authorizes _____
PLEASE PRINT Name of Member Organization PLEASE PRINT Name of Designated Voting Representative

to represent our organization at any meeting of the members of Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative held in 2026, in any and all business, including voting, that may be conducted at said meeting.

Signature and Title of Authorized Officer

Date

Notice of Annual Membership Meeting

The annual meeting of the members of Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative Inc. will be held in the Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, S.D., on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Registration opens at 6:00 p.m. Meal served from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Business meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. to take action on the following:

1. The reports of officers, management and others.
2. The election of three directors.
3. All other business, which may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.

A cooperative business needs its member/owners to participate in the democratic process to prosper. Registered members attending will have a chance to win a \$1,000 cash prize and 10 - \$50 cash prizes, must be present. Kids 18 and under have a chance to win a Kindle Fire, must be present.

This notice posted by Roy A. Gjerde, Secretary

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CODINGTON-CLARK ELECTRIC

(USPS 019-073)

Board of Directors

President:

Alfred "Ben" Schleusner, Watertown

Vice President:

Daniel Thyen, Watertown

Secretary:

Roy Gjerde, Vienna

Treasurer:

John Rider, Henry

Directors:

Benjamin Fleming, Florence

Jay Foster, Garden City

Russell Hurlbert, Raymond

Michael Meland, Webster

David Warkenthien, Clark

Management Staff

Dave Eide, Manager

Tammy Popham, Staff Assistant

Tasha Torgerson, Office Services

Manager

Jarod Suttan, Member Services

Manager

Jared Terhark, Distribution System

Manager

To report a power outage:

1-844-968-1976

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

Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Annual Meeting Prizes

GIFT FOR ALL WHO ATTEND!

Codington-Clark Electric Co-op Annual Membership Meeting

Tuesday, March 31

Codington County Extension Complex, 1910 West Kemp, Watertown, SD
6 p.m. - Registration opens • 6-6:30 p.m. - Meal served • 6:30 p.m. - Business meeting



Cash drawings for registered members in attendance:

- \$1,000 Cash Drawing
- 10 - \$50 Drawings

Special drawing for a Kindle Fire for kids 18 and under

(must be present to win)



STAYING FOCUSED BEHIND THE WHEEL: A SIMPLE GUIDE TO SAFER ROADS

Distractions behind the wheel aren't just inconvenient – they're deadly. Each moment you allocate to anything other than driving increases the risk for you and everyone sharing the road. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in the United States in 2021, underscoring how costly a split-second lapse can be. The good news is that small, deliberate habits behind the wheel can make a big difference. Here are three practical ways to stay focused.

First, minimize phone use. Store your device out of sight before starting the engine. Texting or scrolling through apps draws your eyes from the road, your hands from the wheel and your mind from the task at hand. If you must communicate, pull over safely or use hands-free features only if absolutely necessary and legal in your area. Remember, many places have laws prohibiting texting while driving, with penalties that reflect the risk. Consider enabling “do not disturb” modes that silence notifications while you drive, and set your status to indicate you're driving. This simple barrier can prevent impulsive checks and help you maintain steady attention.

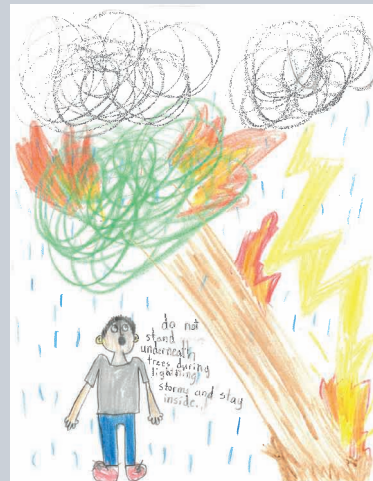
Second, plan your route before you depart. Entering a destination while driving is a dangerous distraction. Take a few minutes to review the route, check traffic conditions, and set your navigation system in advance. With your route loaded, you can keep your attention on driving rather than on-screen instructions during the journey. If possible, choose routes with fewer turns or fewer heavy-traffic segments, and be ready to adjust if conditions change. Having a mental map of the journey can also reduce the need to peek at the screen for updates.

Third, ensure you are well rested. Fatigue can dull reaction times, reduce concentration, and cause your eyes or your vehicle to drift. Prioritize a good night's sleep before long trips, and consider stopping for short breaks on extended drives to refresh your focus. Even brief pauses for stretching and deep breathing can reset your alertness and help you respond more quickly to changing road situations.

Beyond these tips, practice general safe-driving habits: obey speed limits, maintain a safe following distance and stay alert for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists. If you feel distracted or fatigued, it's wiser to pause and reassess rather than press on. Safe driving is about consistent, proactive choices that protect everyone on the road.



"Do not stand underneath trees during lightning storms and stay inside."



**Ramsey Faini,
Age 8**

Ramsey warns readers about the dangers of lightning storms. Thank you for sharing your picture, Ramsey! Ramsey's mom is Katie Faini from Rapid City, 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.

MAIN DISHES

HOMEMADE MAC & CHEESE

Ingredients:

16 oz. box elbow macaroni noodles
Oil
1 pkg. bacon
3 cups whole milk
1/2 cup butter (melted)
5 oz. can (about 2/3 cup) evaporated milk
16 oz. block Velveeta cheese (cut into cubes)
1 tsp. salt
Guda cheese
Parsley (to taste)
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Method

Cook noodles as directed. Drain noodles and pour a small amount of oil on them while in the strainer. Cook bacon and cut into small pieces. Add all of the ingredients into a Crock-Pot and mix. Cover and cook on low for 1.5 hours, stirring once or twice while cooking. Serve and enjoy.

Cindi Foster
Codington-Clark Electric

CHEDDAR POTATO SOUP

Ingredients:

1 medium onion, chopped
3/4 cup celery, chopped
1/4 cup butter
5 cups peeled potatoes, cubed
3 cups water
3 cups milk, divided
4 tps. chicken bouillon granules
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup flour
4 cups (16 oz.) cheddar cheese, shredded

Method

In large Dutch oven or kettle, saute onion and celery in butter for 5 minutes. Add potatoes and water, bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in 2 cups milk, bouillon, salt and pepper. Combine flour and remaining milk until smooth, gradually stir into soup. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat, add cheese and stir until cheese is melted.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
1/4 cup horseradish sauce (optional)
12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you will have 24 squares of cheese)
Sauce
1/2 cup butter
1/4 tsp. onion powder
2 tbsps. brown sugar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tps. poppy seeds
1 1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese. Replace tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

Sauce

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald & Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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.

ELECTRIFY YOUR LAWN CARE



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Electric lawn equipment has seen drastic improvements in cost, motor efficiency and battery power in recent years. From hedge and string trimmers to leaf blowers, chainsaws, and push and riding mowers, there are lots of options for electric lawn equipment.

Electric equipment is quieter than its gas-powered counterparts and typically needs less maintenance. There's no more mixing fuel, changing spark plugs or worrying about gas going bad over the winter. Advances in rechargeable battery technology eliminate having to lug around a heavy extension cord to get your work done. Just pop in a battery and go.

Most popular lawn equipment brands offer battery-powered options, along with newer brands that specialize in electric tools. If you need multiple tools, buying the same brand with the same battery type allows you to swap batteries between different pieces of equipment. That also means fewer battery chargers to store or keep on your workbench.

Opt for equipment with brushless motors. They are more efficient, more powerful and have a longer lifespan than traditional brushed motors. A brushless motor typically costs more but is worth the improved efficiency. A brushed motor transfers electricity using physical brushes, which can wear down over time. The

friction caused by the brushes makes equipment run hotter and noisier. A brushless motor uses electronic commutation with less friction, which makes it more powerful, extends the lifespan and allows you to get more done on a single charge.

Just as gas-powered lawnmowers require safe storage and handling of gas and oil, battery-powered equipment requires proper care for maintenance, charging and disposal. Always use the manufacturer's original charging equipment, charge batteries on hard surfaces away from anything flammable, and store chargers in a cool, dry place.

Most manufacturers recommend charging batteries only until they reach full capacity instead of leaving them on the charger until you are ready to use them. This helps prevent damage to the battery from overcharging and heat buildup and reduces potential fire hazards. Unplug chargers when not in use to avoid energy waste.

Similar to gas and oil, old or damaged batteries should not end up in household garbage and landfills, where they can ignite fires and leak toxic chemicals into soil and groundwater. Instead, recycle them at a big-box store or at a county or city waste management site.

If you're looking for a quieter, more efficient, lower maintenance lawn care routine, rethink your equipment options and consider electric models. If you decide to make the switch, check with your electric utility or state agency for potential rebates.





Butte Electric Cooperative employees and other volunteers with Betty Krause after painting her house in Belle Fourche. Photo submitted by Clint Haffner

Co-ops in the Community

Butte Electric Volunteers Bring Fresh Paint and a Smile to Retired Nurse

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Concern for community is the seventh cooperative principle, and when Butte Electric Cooperative CEO Matt Sleep was approached to help with a nearby volunteer project, he knew it was his co-op's time to act.

•••

In Belle Fourche, about 25 miles southwest of Butte Electric's headquarters in Newell, City Code Enforcement Officer Clint Haffner keeps a busy schedule. When he's not on the clock for the city handling code enforcement and animal control matters, he's helping lead the local United Way chapter, where he organizes volunteering projects aiming to make Belle Fourche shine a little brighter.

"When I started the job [with the city], I'd come across situations where people are just physically unable to shovel a sidewalk or take care of things," Haffner said. "Some are simply too old. That's kind of how our group began – there just wasn't anyone helping the people who can't do it."

When Butte Electric reached out

to Haffner about potential volunteer opportunities, it didn't take him long to think of a project. Betty Krause, a 97-year-old retired nurse had spent 45 years of her life from 1950 to 1995 taking care of the Belle Fourche community. Haffner figured it was time the community gave something back to her.

Haffner approached Butte Electric about painting Betty's house, garage and shed. After all, who would be better than linemen with experience on ladders and working with their hands?

CEO Matt Sleep enthusiastically accepted, and a few weeks later on a warm September morning, volunteers from Butte Electric, Monument Health and the Belle Fourche United Way arrived at Betty's house to begin the work.

"We descended on the property with ladders, scrapers, paint buckets, paint brushes, a paint sprayer, weed eaters, tree trimmers, etc. and got busy," Sleep recalled.

The Butte Electric employees split into four teams; two would tackle the house, one the shed, and the other the garage. They made quick work of the project as Haffner kept everyone fed and hydrated.

"The Butte Electric guys are wonderful," Haffner said. "They're hard workers, handy, crafty, good on ladders. The paint job at Betty's place was smooth and efficient work."

It took about a day of work between the setup, scraping and painting of the three

buildings – Betty was awestruck when she went outside to see the finished job.

"It was pretty wonderful, and I've had many compliments," she said of the result. "It shows it's a caring community. It's just awesome and amazing that they'd do it for one person."

While Betty's house received a coat of fresh paint, Sleep said the volunteers also took something back with them.

"When the painting was done, I think Betty's appreciation and thankfulness brought a great feeling of joy and accomplishment to all of us there – maybe even a tear or two," Sleep said. "A project like this just adds a little bit of goodness back into a community. And, we all need a little bit of goodness in our lives."



Butte Electric Cooperative employees paint a house in Belle Fourche in Sept. 2025. Photo submitted by Clint Haffner



From left, in the Sioux Valley Energy shop: Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations; Chad Williams, manager of operations; journey lineworker Jager Rus; and journey lineworker Paul Schamber. Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy

BUSTING ENERGY MYTHS

with Ted Smith of Sioux Valley Energy

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Electricity powers nearly every part of daily life, yet most people only think about it when the lights flicker or a bill arrives. Because the system works quietly in the background, assumptions about how it operates tend to fill the gaps.

To sort through several common misconceptions, Cooperative Connections spoke with Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations at Sioux Valley Energy, the cooperative serving South Dakota counties of Brookings, Lake, Moody, Kingsbury, and Minnehaha and Minnesota counties of Rock and Pipestone. Smith has worked in the electric industry for 35 years, including 20 years at Sioux Valley, where he

oversees engineering, line crews and dispatch.

Here are several claims he regularly hears from members and how he responds.

Myth: If the lights go out, it must be a local problem.
Smith: That's definitely a myth.

An outage can begin anywhere from inside your home all the way back to a generating station two states away. The electric grid is highly interconnected. A disruption in one area can ripple outward across transmission lines that serve multiple utilities.

There have been large historical outages, especially in the eastern United States, where a single event such as a tree contacting a transmission line triggered a cascading failure across multiple states. Entire cities lost power

because one initiating fault spread across the network.

Closer to home, severe weather in one region can affect transmission lines feeding a much broader footprint. If a major transmission line trips offline, and another line is already out for maintenance, service interruptions can extend far beyond the original storm area.

“Just because your lights go out doesn't mean the problem started down the road, close to home” Smith said. “It could be much farther upstream.”

Myth: The grid can be powered entirely by renewable energy.
Smith: At times, yes. Around the clock, no.

Smith pointed to hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River as renewable generation that run continuously, but other renewable resources, such as wind and solar, simply aren't reliable sources of energy and only contribute

significantly when conditions allow.

“Although sometimes it seems like it, the wind doesn’t always blow in South Dakota,” Smith said. “And solar only produces during daylight hours.”

Although battery storage has improved in recent years, Smith says storing enough energy to power the grid around the clock is prohibitively expensive at this point in time.

For now, maintaining reliability requires a mix of generation resources so supply remains available regardless of weather or time of day.

Myth: If my neighbor has power and I do not after a storm, the cooperative skipped me.

Smith: That’s not how it works.

In some cases, the cooperative may not yet know a member is without service. Reporting outages remains important.

Another possibility is that the issue is on the member side of the meter. Crews may restore cooperative equipment and determine that the damage is within the member’s own service.

“When crews see it’s a problem on the member side of the meter, they will call dispatch and have them contact the member,” Smith said.

He also emphasized the importance of keeping current phone numbers on file. Fewer households rely on landlines today, which makes updated cell phone numbers critical during storm response.

Myth: Burying all power lines would eliminate outages.

Smith: No.

Underground lines are not exposed to wind and ice, but they are not immune to failure. Over time, underground conductors deteriorate. Rodents such as gophers can damage them. Excavation damage is also common when individuals dig without confirming where utilities are buried.

Before digging, members should always contact 811, the national call-before-you-dig number. That service

notifies utility providers so buried lines can be located and marked before excavation begins. Failing to call 811 can be dangerous and increase the risk of damaging underground infrastructure, causing outages.

And even when damage occurs naturally, locating the fault underground can take time.

“With overhead lines, crews can usually see the damage,” Smith said. “Underground, it takes troubleshooting to figure out exactly where the fault is, sometimes leading to longer outage durations.”

He recalled one outage that proved especially difficult to diagnose.

“One time we had an outage that we just could not narrow down,” he said. “When we finally found the damage, we saw that a gopher had chewed the bottom of the wire. You could not see it from the top. We had to dig up about 20 feet of cable and turn it over before we could see the damage.”

Underground systems can reduce certain types of outages, but they do not eliminate them, and repairs often require more time and labor.

Myth: Wind and solar power are free once installed.

Smith: The fuel is free, but that’s the only thing that’s free.

Wind turbines require ongoing maintenance, including mechanical components that need to be regularly serviced. Solar power relies on inverters and other equipment that must be maintained and eventually replaced.

There are construction costs, financing costs and transmission costs involved in delivering electricity from generation sites to homes and businesses. Those transmission and maintenance assets are accounted for over time and included in the overall cost of electricity.

Free fuel lowers one portion of cost. It does not remove the need to build, maintain and replace infrastructure.

Myth: Electric cooperatives raise rates to increase profits.

Smith: No. Cooperatives are not-for-profit.

Electric cooperatives are member owned, not investor owned. That means there are no outside shareholders expecting earnings. Instead, cooperatives operate on margins, collecting enough revenue to pay expenses, maintain infrastructure and meet financial obligations.

“The only place we get money is from the people at the end of the line,” Smith said. “We don’t have a printing press in the basement.”

In fact, if revenue exceeds expenses in a given year, a portion of those margins are allocated back to members as capital credits when the board determines it’s financially appropriate. Capital credits represent a member’s share of the cooperative’s financial performance during the years they received service.

However, in recent years, equipment costs have risen significantly. Smith cited bucket trucks that once cost around \$220,000 have since more than doubled in price, and major system components have seen similar increases. Usually, the cost of wholesale power from the cooperative’s power suppliers makes up the largest share of the budget and those costs have been increasing as well.

Rate adjustments reflect those rising operational costs and the need to maintain reliable service, not profit distribution.

Electricity may seem simple at the flip of a switch, but as Smith makes clear, the system behind it involves infrastructure, coordination and constant evaluation. Understanding how it works helps members separate assumption from reality and better appreciate the network that serves them every day.

Unapproved minutes of Codington-Clark Electric's 2025 Annual Membership Meeting

Pursuant to notice duly given, the members of Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative Inc. held a membership meeting at Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, South Dakota, on Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

President Alfred Schleusner called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Secretary Roy Gjerde recorded the minutes of the meeting.

Tasha Torgerson delivered the invocation.

President Schleusner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon question of the president, Secretary Gjerde reported the meeting's registration list revealed a quorum present. A list of registered members is attached to the minutes of this meeting and identified as Exhibit "A".

Secretary Gjerde presented and read the Notice of Meeting and the Proof of Mailing. A copy of the Notice of Meeting and Proof of Mailing are attached to the minutes of this meeting and identified as Exhibits "B" and "C", respectively.

President Schleusner presented the minutes of the 2024 annual membership meeting. Motion by Paul Dulitz, second by Roger Stimson, to dispense with the reading of the 2024 minutes and to approve the minutes as recorded, printed and distributed to the members attending the meeting. MOTION CARRIED

Treasurer Rider summarized the financial condition of the cooperative as of December 31, 2024. Motion by Greg Johnson, second by Nathan Thyen, to accept the treasurer's report as presented. MOTION CARRIED

President Schleusner reviewed the qualifications for director and called on Secretary Gjerde for a report on nominations. Secretary Gjerde explained the nominating process and reported that Daniel J. Thyen, Watertown, South Dakota, submitted a valid petition nominating him as a director candidate for District 2; that Jay Foster, Garden City, South Dakota, and James Pearson, Clark, South Dakota, submitted valid petitions nominating them as director candidate for District 6; and that Roy Gjerde, Vienna, South Dakota, submitted a valid petition nominating him as a director candidates for District 9. He stated he had no knowledge of any other candidates.

President Schleusner introduced Jay Foster and James Pearson, who were candidates for District 6 director. Each spoke briefly.

President Schleusner called on Attorney Knight to conduct the election of directors.

Attorney Knight suggested dispensing with ballot voting for District 2 and District 9 since each district had only one candidate and asked for a motion to instruct the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for each candidate

Motion by Marlowe Lamb, second by Francis Hass, to dispense with ballot voting and to instruct the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for Daniel J. Thyen for District 2 director and Roy A. Gjerde for District 9 director, each for a three-year term. MOTION CARRIED

Attorney Knight appointed Breanna Beebe, Vikki Beebe and Paul Dulitz, to act as tellers and inspectors to canvass and tally the ballots

under the direction of Attorney Knight. Attorney Knight reported later in the meeting that Jay N. Foster was elected for District 6 director, for a three-year term. Certificate is attached to the minutes of this meeting and identified as Exhibit "D".

Manager Dave Eide updated the membership on power supply, SPB, nuclear power, construction and rates.

Weber Livestock & Grain, Watertown, South Dakota was drawn as the winner of the \$1,000 cash prize.

Winners of \$50 cash prize drawings included: Josephine Maag, South Shore, South Dakota; Richard Reints, Willow Lake, South Dakota; Lance & Vikki Beebe, Watertown, South Dakota; Charles L. & Kathryn Tollefson, Clark, South Dakota; R & R Farms, Raymond, South Dakota; Good Hope Lutheran Church, Vienna, South Dakota; Randy Schmeling, Watertown, South Dakota; Laverne E. Schmig, South Shore, South Dakota; Pauline & Mitchell Schmidt, Willow Lake, South Dakota; and John H. Johnson, Ortle, South Dakota.

Winner of the door prize was Francis Hass, Raymond, South Dakota.

Winner of the Kindle Fire was Lizzie Schleusner, Watertown, South Dakota.

Absent further business to come before the meeting, motion by Russ Hurlbert, second by Chris Bultsma, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED

Roy A. Gjerde, Secretary
Alfred B. Schleusner, President

Sign up for Operation Round Up at the Annual Meeting

All current ORU participants attending the annual meeting and all additional co-op members enrolling at the meeting will be in the drawing to win a Blackstone electric griddle.



Happy Easter

Codington-Clark Electric's office will be closed on April 3 for Good Friday.

We hope you have a wonderful holiday.



Operating Summary

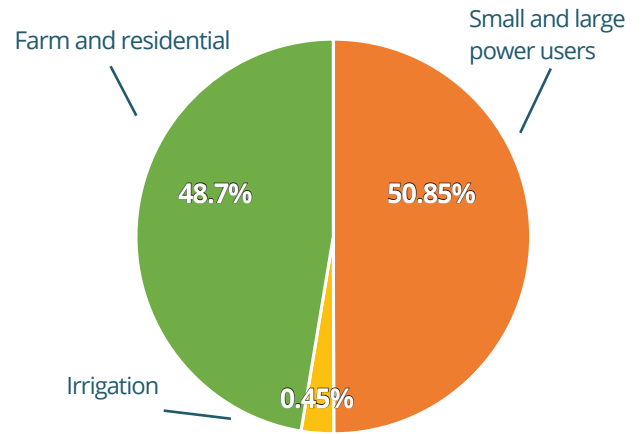
INCOME	2025	2024	2023
Revenue from sales and other	\$16,838,306	\$15,516,176	\$14,166,817
EXPENSES			
Cost of purchased power	\$10,864,142	\$9,798,418	\$8,865,138
Distribution expense - Operations	665,640	663,763	636,519
Distribution expense - Maintenance	387,074	457,765	370,024
Consumer accounts expense	195,066	198,106	236,879
Customer service & informational expense	36,345	34,288	43,551
Sales expense	16,650	16,805	24,455
Administrative and general expense	1,214,907	1,139,533	1,113,414
Depreciation expense	1,676,290	1,591,852	1,472,536
Tax expense	268,776	259,849	248,064
Interest expense for RUS, CFC, CoBank & FFB loans	1,079,700	970,464	865,333
Other deductions	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$16,404,590	\$15,130,843	\$13,875,913
OPERATING MARGIN	\$433,716	\$385,333	\$290,904
Non-operating margins	105,035	67,351	141,763
Patronage credits from others	908,200	849,287	923,843
TOTAL MARGINS	\$1,446,951	\$1,301,971	\$1,356,510

Balance Sheet

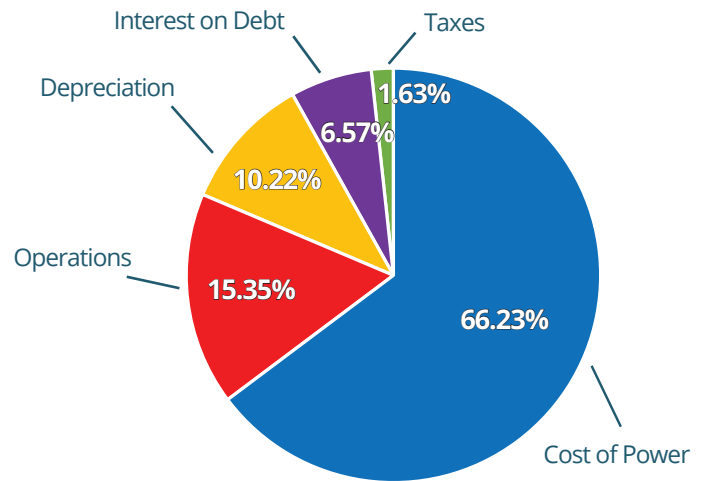
ASSETS	12/31/25	12/31/24	12/31/23
We have an electric system that costs	\$65,777,290	\$63,131,915	\$59,694,058
Less: Depreciation	20,182,972	18,731,845	17,876,950
Net value of property	\$45,594,318	\$44,400,070	\$41,817,108
<i>plus</i>			
We have cash on hand	3,202,146	3,378,334	3,180,284
We have investments	10,895,896	10,381,810	9,935,340
We have owed to us	1,579,229	1,496,456	887,429
We have material on hand	2,135,061	1,939,164	1,811,085
We have prepayments	15,485	5,961	-2,342
We have other assets	3,750	3,750	3,750
We have deferred debits	55,661	73,497	74,548
TOTAL ASSETS	\$63,481,546	\$61,679,042	\$57,707,202
LIABILITIES			
We owe RUS, CFC, CoBank & FFB	33,867,515	33,431,358	30,052,802
We owe for taxes, insurance and other	3,898,888	2,988,893	3,522,686
We owe other deferred credits	4,358,204	4,829,968	4,489,525
Total Liabilities	\$42,124,607	\$41,250,219	\$38,065,013
NET WORTH			
We have patronage capital credits	18,827,531	18,073,410	17,260,095
We have margins this year	1,446,951	1,301,971	1,356,510
We have other margins and equities	1,082,457	1,053,442	1,025,584
TOTAL NET WORTH	\$21,356,939	\$20,428,823	\$19,642,189
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH	\$63,481,546	\$61,679,042	\$57,707,202

All about the cash

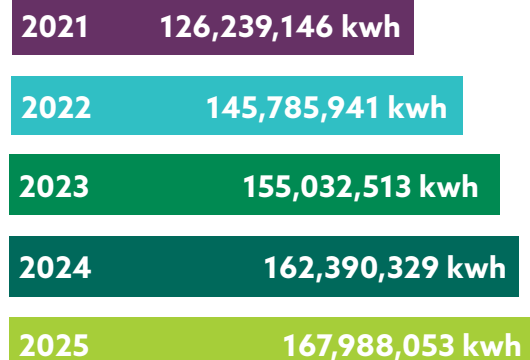
2025 Revenue by Source



2025 Expenses by Type



5-year comparison of total sales



ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ENERGY SCAMS

Photo by Frank Turner

Frank Turner

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It's no April Fools' joke. Consumers with an electricity connection have long been targets for scams. In today's digital world, those schemes have evolved. As more daily business is conducted online, scammers have shifted their tactics to match. They now use phone calls, texts and emails to create urgency, confusion and fear, hoping consumers will act before taking time to verify the claim.

For victims, these scams can lead to financial loss and identity theft, but understanding how the most common schemes work and what they typically look like is one of the best defenses to staying safe.

The "Past Due" Disconnection Threat

One of the most common tactics that scammers use is the disconnection threat. They use a fake message claiming a bill is past due and that service will be disconnected immediately unless payment is made on the spot.

The call may sound official. The message may include account numbers

or appear to come from your local cooperative's phone number due to caller ID spoofing. The scammer's goal is simple: create panic so you pay first and question later.

In reality, cooperatives follow clear procedures and provide advance notice before any disconnection. A demand for instant payment, especially with threats attached, is a major red flag.

The "You Overpaid" Refund Scam

Who would not want a refund? Scammers take advantage of that instinct.

In this scheme, a text, call or email claims a member overpaid an electric bill and is owed money. The message often includes instructions to click a link or provide banking information so the refund can be "processed."

The message can sound especially convincing to cooperative members because electric cooperatives do return margins to members in the form of capital credits. Capital credits represent a member's share of the cooperative's annual margins and are returned over time.

However, capital credits are distributed through established,

official processes. They are not issued through unsolicited texts, surprise phone calls or links requesting personal banking information. When your local cooperative retires capital credits, members are notified through official channels such as billing statements, newsletters, verified mailings or even through Cooperative Connections.

An unexpected refund message that asks for sensitive information is a red flag. When in doubt, pause and contact your local cooperative directly using trusted contact information.

Gift Card and Cryptocurrency Demands

Scammers often insist on unusual payment methods such as gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency. They may provide detailed instructions on how to purchase gift cards and read the numbers over the phone.

This is a clear warning sign. Legitimate cooperatives do not request payment in gift cards or cryptocurrency. These forms of payment are nearly impossible to trace or recover, which makes them attractive to criminals.

Spotting a Scam

Regardless of the method, every scam has similar warning signs that members can watch for:

- High-pressure tactics that demand immediate payment
- Requests for payment through gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency
- Emails or text messages with poor grammar, spelling errors or unfamiliar web addresses

Scammers rely on urgency. Taking a few extra minutes to verify a message can prevent lasting financial consequences.

What Your Local Cooperative Will and Will Not Do

Your local cooperative will not demand immediate payment without prior notice. Cooperatives follow

established procedures and provide advance communication before any service interruption.

Your local cooperative will not ask for Social Security numbers, banking details or other sensitive information through unsolicited phone calls, emails or text messages.

Members have secure payment options available through official cooperative channels, including the cooperative's verified website and approved payment systems. When in doubt, independently locate the cooperative's official contact information rather than using links or phone numbers included in a message.

Text alerts are only sent to members who have enrolled in official notification programs, such as outage updates.

Avoiding Energy Scams

If you receive a suspicious call, text or email claiming to be from your local cooperative, do not use the contact information provided in that message. Instead, use the phone number printed on your billing statement or listed on the cooperative's verified website.

Also, reporting suspected scams helps protect fellow members. By alerting your local cooperative to fraudulent activity, members help strengthen the community's defense against energy scams and ensure the cooperative network remains secure for everyone.

Have a question about whether something is real or not? Reach out to your local cooperative. Electric cooperatives are owned by the members they serve and powered by the communities around them.

SIGNS OF AN

ENERGY SCAM

High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.





DIAL 8-1-1 BEFORE DIGGING

South Dakota One Call teamed up with South Dakota's Electric Cooperatives to promote safety at the South Dakota State Fair.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

S.D. One Call/811 Q&A With Steve Barnett

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

When planning any excavation project in South Dakota – whether installing a backyard fence, planting trees or building an outdoor shop – one simple phone call can protect lives, property and vital infrastructure. South Dakota One Call is the statewide system that helps homeowners, contractors and landowners locate underground utilities before digging begins. It's easy to get started – all you do is call 8-1-1.

Steve Barnett has served on the S.D. Call Board since 2022 when he was hired as the general manager of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association.

Barnett attends S.D. One Call's board meetings where he advocates for the interests of the utilities and co-op member-owners he represents, while helping guide the organization to better respond to the needs of utilities, rate payers, excavators and everyone else who may use the service.



Steve Barnett
S.D. One Call Board Member
Representing Electric Cooperatives
SDREA General Manager

Barnett sat down with Cooperative Connections to discuss the importance of S.D. One Call and how it benefits electric cooperatives and their members.

Q: What's your role on the South Dakota One Call board?

I serve on the South Dakota One Call Board of Directors as the representative for the 31 rural electric cooperatives operating within our state. The One Call board includes representatives from different utility sectors as well as excavators. I've been involved in this role to help ensure our members' infrastructure is protected and that we're promoting safe excavation practices statewide.

Q: Why was South Dakota One Call founded, and why is calling 811 so important?

South Dakota One Call serves as a centralized notification center for underground infrastructure. The system was created in 1993 to provide one central point of contact for excavators to encourage more responsible digging. Prior to the founding of S.D. One Call, excavators doing their due diligence needed to make multiple calls to various utilities. Today, thanks to S.D. One Call, the only number you need to dial is 811. That call triggers notification to all participating utilities in the area so they can send locators out to the digsite.

It's important to call 811 because state law requires it. If someone digs without a locate ticket and damages a buried utility, they are fully responsible for the damages and liability. Beyond that, hitting a gas or electric line can be extremely dangerous. There are thousands of miles of buried electric, gas, water, sewer, communication lines and drain tile underground.

Calling 811 is free, and it protects the excavator and the utilities.

Q: What happens after I call 811?

When you call 811 or submit a request through sdonecall.com:

- Your information goes to the South Dakota One Call center.
- You identify and map out where you plan to dig.
- The system notifies all utilities with infrastructure in that area.

Utilities have 48 hours from the start of the next business day to respond by marking their lines with paint or flags.

After that 48-hour period, excavation can begin.

The service is free to the caller, as the utilities fund the system by paying a small fee every time their infrastructure is identified in an excavation area. The utility is responsible for marking its own facilities.

During this year's legislative session in Pierre, legislators voted to enact a change to how the 48-hour locate window is determined.

Starting July 1, South Dakota will be a "midnight state," meaning the day you submit the ticket does not count toward the 48-hour window. The clock begins at 12:01 a.m. the next business day.

If you submit a ticket at 4 p.m. on a Tuesday, the 48-hour window will start Wednesday at 12:01 a.m. Your project start time will be Friday.

Q: Since serving on the One Call board, what's one interesting thing you've learned?

What I've come to better understand is how much protection the system provides the excavator. When you call 811 and obtain a valid locate ticket, you've documented that you followed state law and gave utilities the opportunity to mark their facilities. If something is properly marked and you dig carefully around those markings, you've significantly reduced both safety risks and liability exposure. On the other hand, if you dig without a ticket and hit a line, you are fully responsible for the damages and any related costs.

I've also learned how many different types of underground infrastructure exist – everything from electric and fiber to water, sewer, gas, and even private drain tile that crosses into public right-of-way.

Q: What's the mission of the One Call board?

I think you can summarize the board's mission pretty succinctly: promote public safety by preventing damage to underground utilities, and ensuring excavation across the state is conducted safely and responsibly.

Apart from that, our goal is to continue improving our one-call notification system, making it more efficient and effective, as well as just getting the word out. We've done some of that through letters to the editor in various newspapers and with booths at events including, the South Dakota State Fair. The more we can get the word out, the less problems we have, and that means keeping costs low for our member-owners.

At its core, the board's mission is to reduce injuries, prevent service disruptions and protect both excavators and utility providers through communication, compliance and education.



Mark Meier, Chairman

Watertown Municipal Utilities
South Dakota Municipalities

Ryan Barr, Vice Chairman

Midco
Community Antenna Television Companies

Kay Braaten

Northern Border Pipeline
Interstate Pipeline Carriers

Steve Barnett

South Dakota Rural Electric Association
Rural Electric Cooperatives

Scott Wiese

Otter Tail Power Co.
Investor-Owned Electric Utilities

Brad Wenande

NorthWestern Energy
Investor-Owned Natural Gas Companies

Loren Beld

LL & Sons Excavating, Inc.
Excavating Contractors

Jim Wedin

CenturyLink
Telecommunications with > 50,000 customers

Lloyd Rave

Minnehaha Community Water Corporation Board
Rural Water Systems

John Morris

Morris Inc
Excavating Contractors

Jake VanDewater

SDN Communications
Small Telecommunications with < 50,000 customers



APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Festival of
 Tasting
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

Travel South Dakota Photo

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.

MARCH 27-APRIL 4
The Passion and the Cross
 Orpheum Theatre
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000
 www.ThePassionMusical.com

APRIL 3
**Bachelors of Broadway:
 Gentlemen of the Theatre**
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 5
Easter Sunrise Service
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore

APRIL 9
**McCrossan Wildest Banquet
 Auction in the Midwest**
 Jimmy Buffett Tribute
 Polynesian Paradise Dancers
 Sioux Falls, SD
 www.mccrossan.org

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 11
Women VetsConnect Retreat
 A Wellness Retreat for
 Women Veterans and Military
 Spouses
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Our Savior's Lutheran Church
 909 W. 33rd St.
 Sioux Falls, SD

APRIL 11
**Minnehaha County Pheasants
 Forever Annual Banquet**
 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m.
 Blue Haven Atrium
 46594 268th St.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-214-1415

APRIL 11-12
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-6004

APRIL 18
Brookings Quilt Show XII
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Admission: \$10
 Dakota Bank Center
 Brookings, SD
 605-690-3246

APRIL 18
**Tri-Valley Chorus
 75th Annual Show**
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD
 605-201-9398

APRIL 20
The Bronx Wanderers
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 25
**Screams by Night
 Halfway to Halloween Con**
 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
 The Social
 Sioux Falls, SD

APRIL 28
American Legion Bingo
 5-6 p.m. Social
 6-6:30 p.m. Meal
 6:45 p.m. Bingo
 American Legion Post 15
 1600 W. Russell
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-682-1222

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

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

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

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

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