

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



This year's sunflower crop is expected to be bountiful as market forces have driven up demand and prices

Sensational Sunflowers

Sunflower market blooms

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Everyone's welcome in the Chislic Circle

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**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA
ELECTRIC**

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THE POWER OF PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STORM EVENT

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, I want to remind members of our community about the power of preparation. While you don't have to achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.



Billy Gibson
 Dir. of Communications
 SDREA

Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio and phone chargers.
- Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in a safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- Fill your car with gas.
- Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress, especially if you need to make an important decision during an emergency.

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up-to-date.
- Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications and other supplies).

Your co-op cares about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

Take safety precautions during harvest season

Harvest season brings long, grueling hours in the field, which can make workers weary and prone to neglect safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks.

Farm operators, their family members and farm employees are urged to beware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allows operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from these lines. Maintain a minimum 10-foot radius around electric lines.

Portable augers are the No. 1 cause of electrocution on the farm. Augers being maneuvered by hand around bin sites have caused the deaths of many farmworkers who became the path to ground for electricity when the top of the auger touched overhead power lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Other equipment commonly involved in power line accidents includes oversized wagons, large combines and other tall equipment.

Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That's exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. He was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.

Follow these safety measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

STUDENTS LEARN HOW POWER IS PRODUCED

A group of high school students recently gathered together to take a trip and learn how electricity is produced and how it is used to power their homes, farms, appliances and local businesses.

The students traveled to Bismarck, N.D., to tour the power generation facilities of Basin Electric, which supplies electricity across nine states and is one of the largest power producers in the country.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Don't Mess With a Transformer Box



Beware of the green box

Cambrie Koistinen

Cambrie, age 11, advises electric cooperative members to use caution around pad-mounted transformers, also known as green boxes, because they contain high-voltage power equipment. Cambrie is the child of Lance and Holly Koistinen of Hayti.

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.

FRESH FROM THE GARDEN

ZUCCHINI SPINACH CASSEROLE

Ingredients:
 2 lbs. zucchini
 1 lbs. frozen spinach
 1 chopped onion
 4 cloves of garlic
 5 beaten eggs
 1/2 cup salad oil
 1-1/2 cup cracker crumbs (save 1/2 cup for top)
 1-1/2 cup cheddar cheese (save 1/2 for top)

METHOD

Cook and drain first four ingredients. Add eggs, salad oil, cracker crumbs and cheddar cheese. Add salt, pepper and parsley to taste. Spread the remaining crumbs and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.
Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls

CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

Ingredients:
 1 1/2 long English cucumbers cut in half moons
 1 1/2 lb tomatoes on the vine sliced in segments
 1/4 cup red onion thinly sliced (optional)
 3 tbsp dill finely chopped
 2 small garlic cloves grated
 1/2 cup sour cream
 1/2 tsp salt
 Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, dill, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir gently from the bottom in the center of the bowl until well combined. Serve salad within next six hours or so.
ifoodreal.com

CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

Ingredients:
 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
 1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix (dry)
 1 mini loaf of cocktail rye bread
 1 cucumber, sliced
 fresh dill weed, chopped

METHOD

The night before serving the cucumber sandwiches, mix together the cream cheese and the Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix. Refrigerate overnight. Shortly before serving, spread some of the cream cheese mixture on a slice of the cocktail rye bread. Top with a slice of cucumber and sprinkle with dill weed.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

CHERI'S SALAD

Ingredients:
 1-1 lb. pkg. veggie spiral noodles
 2 1/2 c. diced ham
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
 1 c. chopped celery
 1 bag frozen peas, thawed

Dressing:
 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 1/2 c. sour cream
 1 tbsp. mustard
 1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice
 3/4 tsp. onion powder
 1/3 c. sugar

METHOD

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse. Mix ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Mix until blended and pour over salad. Stir until well blended.

Jan Antonen, Arlington

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Q: I'm a firm believer that saving energy helps the environment as well as the pocketbook. So, how can I help others improve their energy savings at home?



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

A: Helping people feels good. Supporting community is sewn into the fabric of your electric co-op, which is guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles that put the needs of members first.

On National Good Neighbor Day, which is Sept. 28, join in the cooperative spirit and help your neighbors, friends and family save at home with these do-it-yourself energy-saving tips.

Tips range in physicality and cost, providing options based on your ability.

CHANGE LIGHTBULBS

Prioritize changing lights that are used the most, such as incandescent porch lights left on all night. LEDs use about 75 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Some neighbors can't climb step stools or ladders, so help them out if you are able. Be sure to check for overhead power lines when using ladders outside.

SWAP THE FILTER

Furnace filters should be checked regularly and replaced when they are dirty. Simply writing down the dimensions of the furnace filter can help your neighbor, who can pick up a pack of new ones in the store or order online.

If you find a really dirty furnace filter, don't remove it until you have a replacement. Operating your system without a filter allows dirt and dust in the system to go directly to the heating and cooling components, which can damage the system and necessitate costly repairs.

OPEN THE DAMPERS

Register dampers allow heated and cooled air to properly circulate throughout the home. If you have a central air heating or cooling system, dampers should be left open. The idea

that closing registers saves energy is a common misconception. If furniture is on top of dampers, move it to a new permanent spot so it does not block air flow.

ADJUST THE WATER HEATER

Check the water heater and set it to 120 degrees. Use a kitchen thermometer to test the water temperature. At the faucet nearest the water heater, turn only the hot water on and wait until it gets hot. Let the hot water run into a glass and place a kitchen thermometer in it. Wait until it registers the highest temperature. If the water heater is set too high, you can save energy by lowering the setting.



KEEP OUTDOOR UNITS CLEAR

Clean brush and debris from around the air conditioner or heat pump. If leaves or brush pile up around the outdoor unit of a heat pump or air-conditioning system, it can reduce the airflow, making the system work harder than it should. That uses more energy and can reduce the life of the unit.

REMOVE THE WINDOW AC

By removing the unit before wintertime, the window can close properly. This prevents heat from escaping and wasting energy. It also keeps the room more comfortable. Window AC units are heavy and awkward. This project is best done with a buddy. Get that person to commit to helping put the unit back next spring.

SHARE ENERGY-SAVING PROGRAMS

Information is a great way to help, and it's free. Look into programs your co-op offers and share that information with your neighbor. Don't forget to check the U.S. Department of Energy for federal tax credits for upgrades.

Wordes works to master complexity of the pipe organ

Billy Gibson

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The many pastimes of Rachel Wordes include popular activities such as dance, soccer and volunteer work through her church.

And then there's the pipe organ. Wordes, a native of Clara City and recent graduate of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, has been on a quest to perfect her musical skills on this arcane instrument since she joined the music program at Dordt.

She received scholarship support in dance and education, but also received a special private scholarship to study the pipe organ because of her proficiency on piano, her passion for music and eagerness to learn. She sat down at the imposing Casavant organ at Dordt and it was love at first listen.

Wordes read a history of the vaunted Casavant organ written by Dr. Joan Ringerwole, who described it as having voice and breath and taking on the qualities of a living being. The massive organ has 2,865 pipes, 57 ranks, 37 stops and 32 pedals.

"The appeal to me is that the pipe organ is like a palette you can use to paint a musical picture," Wordes said. "Every one is different and has its own unique tone and timbre."

Throughout her college career, Wordes taught piano and pipe organ lessons, led summer music camps, participated in recitals and distinguished herself in her ability to play and teach.



Rachel Wordes plays an organ at St. Bavorkerk in Haarlem, Netherlands. The instrument was built in the early 1700s and was played by Handel and Mozart.

During two weeks last spring, she was selected to take part in a pipe organ tour across the Netherlands. She has also traveled with her fellow Dordt College students and faculty to Europe for the opportunity to play 24 famous and historic pipe organs.

"The Netherlands trip was remarkable," she said. "We got to play two or three pipe organs a day. We had some pieces picked out and played in the style represented during the time the organ was made, going all the way back to the 1300s. It was kind of like driving a car that's not yours. They're all different with

different tones, temperaments, character and personality. I learned a lot."

Knowledge is something Wordes is more than eager to share. In 2019, she spent the summer teaching music in La Entrada, Honduras. During the first five months of 2022, Wordes worked with students in Managua, Nicaragua, and recently returned there with a year-long commitment to teach English and music at a local private school.

Her career goal is to teach English as a Second Language (ESL).

"I love to teach and watch students expand their skills," she said.



Sunflower commodity prices are making farmers smile

Billy Gibson

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It's hard to keep from smiling when you're driving past a field of golden sunflowers in full bloom during the late summer months.

Wall Drug billboards, old red barns and shiny grain bins are no match for the attention of motorists along I-90 when the sunflowers are bursting forth in all their spectacular yellow splendor stretching far into the horizon.

The subject of many aerial and terrestrial photographers across the region, sunflowers have a special appeal as they grow tall in the field and seem to greet the day leaning forward with a positive energy that exudes joy and optimism.

The current sunflower commodity market certainly has given farmers a reason to smile. South Dakota farmers raised nearly 600,000 acres and more than 1 billion pounds of sunflowers

last year, ranking second only to North Dakota for sunflower production. In fact, for the past decade the Dakotas and Minnesota have alternated the top three spots in their friendly competition depending largely on the vagaries of weather patterns. At least 75 percent of the U.S. commercial sunflower production has taken place in those three states.

About 1,000 of those South Dakota acres were grown by Brad Schecher, a fourth generation farmer who also rotates wheat, corn, flax and soybean crops on his 3,500-acre spread located near Bison in the northwestern part of the state, one of the hot-bed regions for sunflowers.

Schecher took over the family farm from his father nearly 10 years ago and said the military conflict in Ukraine and other economic factors have converged to form a "perfect storm" that has constricted international supplies and created a favorable environment for the

current global sunflower oil market. Commodity prices have broken all-time records by soaring 60 percent compared to a year ago.

"It's as good as any of the 10 years I've been involved in it," Schecher said. "Ukraine was the largest producer of sunflowers and the largest exporter of sunflower oil on the world market with about 50 percent of the overall market, but a lot of their crop has been destroyed or confiscated by the Russian military. That's one of the things that have driven prices up, and it's been good for the farmers."

High prices and high returns are keeping Schecher interested in raising sunflowers, but sometimes he has his doubts. Especially when he gets tired of fighting the fires, a battle that all sunflower farmers are bound to face at some point.

Schecher said that for all the eye appeal sunflowers hold, it's not always easy to bring in the crop. He explained that reaping the high-yield, high-oleic variety that he grows for the sunoil market can cause fires to break out during the combining process in the



Brad Schecher farms roughly 1,000 acres of sunflowers near Bison. *Photo by Brooke Schecher*

fall. The elevated oil content of the plant - ranging anywhere from 38 to 44 percent - along with the dust that's created during combining can result in a combustible mixture that is sometimes ignited by the presence of static electricity.

To make sure he's prepared, Schecher keeps a battery-operated leaf blower aboard the combine at all times.

"I have to keep blowing the combine off when I get to the end of the field to keep a fire from breaking out," he said. "You can see the accumulated piles of dust start glowing red-hot, and you can usually smell it and get it put out before it gets out of control. It's a hazard that you just have to contend with. Sometimes it can happen two or three times a day, especially when it's dry conditions."

Other farmers, such as Lance Hourigan of Lemmon, S.D., have addressed this common problem by investing in after-market solutions. Hourigan reached northward across the state border and recruited Stelter Repair out of New Leipzig, N.D., to manufacture an air tower to help

Estimated number
of sunflower acres

600,000

planted in South
Dakota in 2021

reduce the risk of fire during harvest time. Resembling a chimney, the device draws in air from above the combine where there is much less dust and debris billowing from the threshing process, and blows the air over the engine to help it stay cool and clean.

While Schecher focuses on the high-oleic variety that represents about 80 percent of the market, there are other varieties grown for silage, birdfeed and other uses. Confection sunflowers, grown mostly in the eastern part of the state, are those found bagged up on convenience store shelves, the kind loaded with an assortment of flavors and

seasonings and meant for chewing.

While sunflowers are native to the continent, their history in North America can be traced to American Indian tribes in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Archaeologists have found that these tribes domesticated the crop as early as 3000 B.C. The seed was ground or pounded into flour for cakes, mush or bread. Some tribes mixed the meal with vegetables such as beans and squash. The seed was cracked and eaten for snacking, while the oil was squeezed from the seed and used in making bread.

Non-food uses included purple dye for textiles, body painting and other decorations. Parts of the plant were used to treat snakebites. The oil was used on the skin and hair, and the dried stalk was used as a building material.

Today, agricultural scientists are exploring new uses for the plant while also figuring out how to provide protection from wireworms and other threats. Meanwhile, bullish farmers are keeping their eye on the global markets while exuding the same sense of sunny optimism associated with the sunflowers they work so hard to raise.

Driving toward the future

Katherine Loving

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, electric vehicle (EV) sales doubled from 2020 to 2021, reaching a record high of 608,000 sales. Sales of internal combustion engine vehicles grew by only 3 percent the same year.

The number of EVs on the road will continue to grow over the next five to 10 years, and many brands have pledged to convert to manufacturing only EVs within the next three to 12 years.

Part of this sales growth stems from more choices in the EV market. Today, more than 80 base models of sedans, SUVs and minivans are available. The number of automakers that are exclusively manufacturing plug-in vehicles is also increasing, from recognizable brands like Tesla to growing brands like Rivian, Polestar, Karma and Lucid. Ford introduced its now sold-out F-150 Lightning in April and is already taking orders for 2023.

While the EV market is growing, it has some challenges to overcome before broader adoption takes place. The upfront cost of an EV is more expensive than a comparable gas-powered vehicle, and many EVs are limited to a driving range of 250 miles on average - though there are exceptions. Some automakers offer EV models with ranges over 300 miles and a handful are approaching 400.

Ford, Hyundai, Kia and Nissan offer



EV models that are priced around \$30,000, and available federal tax credits can bring the initial costs down considerably. EV range numbers are approaching those of a tank of gas, but EVs require more time to charge compared to a gas-powered vehicle's quick fill-up. Even at the fastest charging level, it takes approximately 20 minutes to charge 80 percent capacity. This makes EVs suitable for daily driving needs like commuting or running errands but less suitable for longer road trips.

Access to publicly available charging stations is not as plentiful or as geographically accessible as gas stations, which makes using an EV for an extended road trip less straightforward. However, The Department of Transportation and the Department of Energy have teamed up to offer grants to help states and local partners, including electric cooperatives, to develop a national charging network with EV chargers located every 50 miles

on interstates. The goal is to place EV chargers where they make the most sense in terms of business or recreational activities. National parks, convenience stores and local businesses could be popular stops for EV charging.

Compared to a standard wall outlet, charging times can be shortened by using a Level 2 charger. Level 1 chargers are the standard charger that come with an EV and provide about 40 miles of range after eight hours of charging. Level 2 chargers provide about 25 miles per charging hour. They consume a lot of power over a short amount of time and require local electric infrastructure to support the increased energy load.

If you're considering a Level 2 charger, make sure your home's electrical system is in good shape and give your electric co-op a heads up. This allows the utility to ensure the transformer in your neighborhood can safely and reliably provide power - and your neighbors will thank you.



Co-ops and Critters

As solar energy use grows across the country, several co-ops are getting the grass under photovoltaic panels trimmed by goats and sheep. *Photo by Alange' Jacobs*

Paul Wesslund

One Monday morning last summer, a young brown bear climbed to the top of an electric co-op utility pole in Arizona, presumably to see what he could see.

But when two co-op employees spotted the bear, they knew it was nothing to joke about. His arms were draped between the crosspieces, paws on the pole's neutral conductor, head next to an energized 7,200-volt line.

So, they de-energized the line and called in 18-year co-op veteran Werner Neubauer. A bucket truck hoisted Neubauer, 8-foot-long fiberglass hot stick in hand, to meet the bear. The bear tucked his face under his front arm, covering his eyes.

"All right, little bear. Time to get off this pole," Neubauer encouraged. The bear nipped and grabbed at the stick, but Neubauer finally nudged him down, where he ran off into the desert.

Animal encounters are nothing new for electric co-ops. Getting their start in the 1930s to serve rural areas that had no electricity, they've always been

close to the land, and its creatures.

From bears to butterflies and sheep to seabirds, electric co-ops have a track record of showing they understand the importance of caring for wildlife.

Janelle Lemen, director for environmental policy at the National Rural Electric Association (NRECA), describes how co-ops across the country take actions like building nesting platforms for raptors and modifying electrical structures to reduce electrocutions of birds. Co-ops also work with other state, local and federal wildlife agencies to come up with the best ways to coexist with wildlife.

Several electric co-ops have become part of a group called the Pollinator Partnership to increase awareness of bee and butterfly habitats.

A more direct interest between co-ops and wildlife comes in the form of protecting birds from high-voltage equipment, both for the birds' own safety and to keep animal electrocutions from causing power outages.

Co-ops in several states have built platforms to keep ospreys and other

birds from nesting on power lines.

An electric co-op in Hawaii has even experimented with a laser fence system to keep seabirds from colliding with power lines.

And it's not always the co-ops protecting animals. Sometimes the critters help out the co-ops.

As solar energy use grows across the country, some co-ops are getting the grass under photovoltaic panels trimmed by goats and sheep. Well, maybe not goats so much.

With co-ops and other utilities finding economic and environmental benefits to grazing under and around solar panels, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory actually conducted a study called Solar Sheep and Voltaic Veggies: Uniting Solar Power and Agriculture.

Among its conclusions: "Sheep have often proven to be the best tenants of the land. Horses can be picky about what they eat, cows are large and require a lot of space, and goats tend to chew on wires and climb on panels."

CHISLIC FESTIVAL



Roger and Lori Pietz claimed the New Age Nosh Award at last year's Chislic Festival in Freeman. Photos by SD Chislic Festival

Step inside the Chislic Circle for unique food and lots of family fun

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In a world already rife with scads of dander-raising hot-button issues, add chislic to the list. It seems that anytime more than a few cocksure chislic chefs gather around a grill, controversy can't be too far away.

The bickering typically begins with picking the proper protein. Opt for the traditional scrumptious cubes of mutton or lamb, or take a risk and go hog-wild with pork or maybe buffalo? How about swinging farther to the edge with venison, goat, beef or chicken? Dare we add emu to the list?

At least one restaurant is sending the chislic cosmos into spasms by serving up plates of (gasp) "fish-lic."

The plethora of opinions surrounding the preparation of chislic starts with the choice of meat and springboards from there into seasonings, cooking methods and even serving techniques. Grilled,

deep fried or air fried? Fork, toothpick or skewer? Don't get a chislic enthusiast started on the sauce selection.

Many people and various cultures have a strong attachment to their particular favorite types of food, but South Dakota's desire for chislic is unusually intense – especially for those who dwell within the Chislic Circle.

If the name Chislic Circle evokes images of a secret society that conducts mysterious midnight rituals around a raging bonfire deep in the forest, well, it's not quite that. It's more of a clever marketing concept, and an effective one for community leaders who take pride in their chislic lore. In fact, everyone is invited to come inside this circle.

At the center of the Chislic Circle lies Freeman, S.D., with the chislic realm falling inside a 100-mile radius and including communities such as Kaylor, Menno, Hurley, Marion, Bridgewater, Emery and others. The Circle was spun into creation in 2018 when a small

but passionate contingent of chislic connoisseurs decided to celebrate and demonstrate their pride in their unique culinary heritage.

Andrea Baer was part of that early chislic cadre. She said the catalyst came when chislic was officially declared the "state nosh" by the Legislature four years ago.

"Before then, when you mentioned chislic outside of the area, there was hardly anyone who knew what you were talking about," said Baer, who is a native of Turkey Ridge still living on the farm her forebears from Denmark settled several generations ago. "It's something that's very unique to the area and we



like to celebrate it.”

That celebration has taken the form of an annual event that’s been recognized by tourism officials as one of the state’s fastest-growing festivals with an estimated 10,000 attendees last year after a pandemic pause in 2020. Organizers were expecting up to a couple thousand for the inaugural event in 2018, but four times that many showed up. The following year, the party was moved from the Freeman softball field to the more spacious 40-acre Prairie Arboretum.

This year’s festival was held on July 30 with the usual food vendors touting their unique savory recipes, libations, live music, a family-friendly kid zone, bingo, dancing, a cornhole competition, 5K run/walk, helicopter rides and other forms of family-oriented fun.

Festival board member and chislic expert Ian Tuttle also presented, “From Russia with Love: The History of Chislic” at the nearby Heritage Hall Museum and Archives.

Tuttle enjoys telling the story of how chislic arrived in the late 1800s with a particular group of immigrants described as “Germans from Russia.” A group of German Mennonites and Hutterites originally fled religious persecution in the 16th century and migrated eastward through the Russian Empire where they raised crops and sheep.

They chopped the meat into small pieces, cooked it over a fire and called it “shashlik,” a word for “skewer” rooted in the Turkic languages of Central Asia. The word is a close cousin to the more widely known “shish kebab.”

Eventually, those migrants found their way to present-day southeastern South Dakota and made sure to bring their shashlik with them. Those residing



inside the Chislic Circle generally recognize Johann Hoellwarth as the individual who introduced chislic to the Dakota Territory. Born in 1849 to a German Lutheran family in the Crimea, Hoellwarth settled just outside of where Freeman is today and was laid to eternal rest in the town.

Each year a panel of seven fearless judges takes on the task of naming the festival’s “best chislic.” For the past two years the top Traditional Division Award has gone to Kyle Sturzenbecker and his squad of Sheep Flockers.

Sturzenbecker said he and his fellow chef Josh Goehring don’t characterize themselves as competitive, but he also isn’t about to give away any trade secrets.

“You don’t have to do a whole lot. I just let the flavor of the meat speak for itself,” he said. “Honestly, I never

thought I’d win. I just like to cook good food that people enjoy eating.”

In 2021, the non-traditional New Age Nosh Award was claimed by Roger Pietz, owner of the Pietz Kuchen Kitchen. The establishment is mostly known for its rich custard dessert, but for the festival Pietz decided to go in a different direction and put together a tangy chislic pizza.

Ultimately, the Chislic Festival is about celebrating family, honoring the past and preserving the rural lifestyle.

“The tradition of chislic comes not from cities, the wealthy, or the privileged,” Baer said, “but from the rural, hardworking farm tradition of the people who settled this area. We thrive on the rural, while building the region through vibrant community.”



Anglers get hooked on fly fishing for fun and sport

Billy Gibson

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Tall tales, small tales, long tales, short tales...Buddy Seiner is interested in hearing any fishing tale you'd like to tell.

While he's partial to fly fishing, Seiner is passionate about fishing in all of its forms. And he offers an open invitation to anglers of every ilk to share their stories of fishing adventures enjoyed with friends, family members or in the presence of one's own company.

Seiner started www.fishstories.org after his grandfather passed away and he realized there were no audio or video recordings of the many outings they took together casting flies and chatting about whatever popped into their minds in the moment.

Several years ago, Seiner stood on the main stage during a TED X speech in Rapid City and explained his purpose in creating the website. Soon after, he began hauling in a mess of fish stories submitted by avid anglers from far and wide. Today, the archive holds more than 400 sagas of lunkers that were landed, the big ones that got away and precious time spent with loved ones in the great outdoors.

"I believe all fish stories need to be told," said Seiner, who works as a communications consultant based in Pierre. "I used to fish a lot with my grandpa and I realized I'd never hear his voice again after he passed away. He was full of wisdom and had a great sense of humor. I had some regrets about not recording him, so I started this project as a way for people to preserve those cherished voices and to preserve the memories."

Seiner observes that many people are in some way connected with fishing, whether they pursue it themselves or know someone who likes the feel of a rod and reel. He has found that the stories submitted to the site feature not only intriguing narratives of reaching the day's limits under clear cerulean skies but they also reveal relationships that run deeper than the deepest river channel. Some describe disastrous events.

One of those is the story of an outdoors escape that quickly turned tragic. A young woman tells how she lost her husband to an accident while the two were ice fishing on a frozen lake in Minnesota.

While there are stories of heartache and loss, Seiner said most tales tend to trend toward the positive. He has his own fond memories of how his uncle introduced him to fly fishing



Part art and part skill, fly fishing is an increasingly popular pastime across the region. *Photo by Travel South Dakota*

26 years ago and how he started tying his own flies as a college student.

“My Uncle Dwaine gave me a rod and I went in the back yard and started practicing. He always told me I’d enjoy it and he was right,” Seiner said.

It was at Bear Butte Creek near Sturgis that Seiner landed his first trout. He was casting for a brown trout beneath a willow tree. The fish went for the dry fly – a blue wing olive – and both the fish and Seiner were hooked. The fish was landed and released but Seiner’s love of the sport has never waned.

Fly fishing is growing in popularity across the region as more anglers discover the adventure and what many describe as the therapeutic benefits of casting flies out across the water. Though fly fishing is often associated with the clear, cold, fast-running streams found in the Black Hills area, Seiner said there is a wide range of options available depending on an angler’s tastes and preferences.

“We have a lot of water that’s prime for fly fishing,” he said. “It’s a sport Buddy Seiner started fishstories.org to preserve fishing tales and memories like those he has of his late fishing pal, Lucy.

that’s new to a lot of people and it’s gaining momentum. You can catch anything on a fly rod. You can go for trout and fish the stock dams out west, you can sight-fish for walleye or channel catfish in the clear waters of the Missouri River, you can fish the glacial lakes in the northeast or fish for carp out near Yankton.”

Whether they go for carp or brown trout, many fly fishers take an interest in maintaining and preserving the habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Seiner serves on the board of a group called Black Hills Fishers and works

with folks like Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler and Outfitter in Rapid City to promote the sport of fly fishing, support conservation and educate the public on how to preserve the environment.

“Fly fishing is so much fun,” he said, “but if we don’t do what we can to protect our woods and waters, it will be a tragedy. We need to stay committed to preservation and conservation, and I’ve found that most people who enjoy the outdoors are very conscientious. We want people to have fishing stories to share for generations to come.”



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SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair
Photo Credit: SD State Fair

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

AUGUST 24-28
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD,
605-995-8430

AUGUST 24-28
Kool Deadwood Nites
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

AUGUST 25-28
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD,
605-256-3644

AUGUST 26-27
Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywine
brewandbbq.com

AUGUST 26-27
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main St., Aberdeen, SD,
605-226-3441

AUGUST 26-28
Hot Air Balloon Festival
Various Locations, Hot Springs,
SD, fallriverballoonfest.com

AUG. 30-SEPT. 4
Sturgis Mustang Rally
Thunderdome, Sturgis, SD,
sturgismustangrally.com

SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD,
sdstatefair.com

SEPTEMBER 4
Dakota Five-O
City Park, Spearfish, SD,
dakotafiveo.com

SEPTEMBER 8-11
S.D. State Senior Games
Watertown, SD, 605-491-0635
or 605-753-3668

SEPTEMBER 10
605 Black Hills Classic
Lions Park, Spearfish, SD,
605-274-1999

SEPTEMBER 10
Germanfest
Fawick Park, Sioux Falls, SD,
siouxfallssistercities.com/event

SEPTEMBER 10
Insect Festival
McCrary Gardens, Brookings,
SD, 605-688-6707

SEPTEMBER 10
Sidewalk Arts Festival
Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD,
605-367-6000

SEPTEMBER 16-18
South Dakota Film Festival
Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen, SD,
southdakotafilmfest.org

SEPTEMBER 17-18
**Northeast South Dakota
Celtic Faire and Games**
37925 Youth Camp Rd.,
Aberdeen, SD, 605-622-0144

SEPTEMBER 23-24
Hops and Hogs Festival
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

SEPTEMBER 23-25
**HNIRC Championship of
Champions**
Stanley County Fairgrounds,
Fort Pierre, SD, horsenations
indianrelay.com

SEPTEMBER 24
**Great Downtown Pumpkin
Festival**
Main Street Square, Rapid City,
SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 24-25
Menno Pioneer Power Show
Pioneer Acres, Menno, SD,
mennopowershow@yahoo.com

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1
**Custer State Park Buffalo
Roundup & Arts Festival**
Custer, SD, gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-
roundup

SEPT. 30-OCT. 1
Oktoberfest
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

SEPT. 30-OCT. 2
SiouxperCon
1201 N West Ave., Sioux Falls,
SD, siouxpercon.com

Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.