

# South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

FEBRUARY 2016 VOL. 68 NO. 2



# Heating It Up

A Look at Hot  
Mineral Baths

P8-9



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# South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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## Editorial

# Hydroelectric Power: Clean, Green and Renewable



**Bill Drummond, Executive Director**  
Mid-West Electric Consumers Association

Hydroelectric power has come under recent criticism by some in the environmental community to prevent passage of bipartisan legislation aimed at speeding up the federal review process for licensing new hydroelectric projects. These opponents view the hydroelectric licensing process as the means by which to forestall the construction of any new dams. Unfortunately, the very reasons they give for opposing this legislation are exactly the reasons this country needs additional hydroelectric power.

Some of these opponents have argued that electricity generated at dams is not “green” because it impacts land use, fish and wildlife and local economies. Without ever defining the term “green,” opponents are usually willing to acknowledge that hydroelectric generation is clean, renewable and non-carbon emitting and superior to some other forms of electric generation.

Dams provide multiple benefits that can include flood control, recreation, irrigation, navigation, municipal and industrial water and, yes, hydroelectric generation. This multi-purpose aspect to building and operating dams is critical not only to the reasons dams are constructed, but also to the value they provide. The flood damage prevented from the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program dams versus the pre-dam era are estimated to exceed \$1 billion/year in today’s dollars. Tonnage transported on the Missouri from Sioux City to St. Louis went from 51,000 in 1951 to 3,261,000 in 1979. Lands irrigated by this project produce crops with a gross value of more than \$200 million. The almost 3,000 mega-watts of hydroelectric generating capacity not only prevented the need to construct an equal amount of thermal generation, but also allows for the integration into the grid of thousands of mega-watts of wind and solar generation. And more people recreate at Corps of Engineers’ facilities than at all of our national parks combined.

Construction and operation of dams definitely have fish and wildlife, land use and societal impacts. Yet, electric ratepayers and the federal government have invested billions of dollars in mitigation, dam modifications and fish and wildlife projects to mitigate for the dams’ impacts.

Finally, hydroelectric opponents appear to cavalierly ignore the fact that all electric generation systems have environmental impacts. Even the intermittent renewable wind and solar projects have significant land use, and visual and wildlife impacts, to say nothing of the thermal generation necessary to integrate wind and solar into the grid. The Minneapolis *StarTribune’s* article last year (<http://www.startribune.com/emerging-solar-plants-scorch-birds-in-mid-air/271624061/>) is an excellent description of a severe environmental impact from a “green” resource.

The current hydro licensing process is broken; it can take 10 years or more to obtain a federal license for a new hydroelectric facility. Two bills currently before Congress, H.R. 8 and S. 2012, would make rational changes to the hydro licensing process while maintaining the important environmental safeguards in the current licensing process.

With the current concern about carbon-based generation and the need to integrate additional intermittent renewable resources into the electric grid, taking aim at a clean, renewable, non-carbon emitting resource like hydropower stands the whole concept of “green” on its head. Please contact your U.S. senators and representatives and ask them to support H.R. 8 and S. 2012 to remove barriers to the development of additional hydroelectric power.

# Protect Your Older Home from Electrical Hazards

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), half of all homes in the United States were built before the advent of automatic coffeemakers or garage door openers, and one-third were built before hair dryers or electric can openers. Add to that computers, cell phones and other electrical devices and you have a great many residences with potential electric wiring problems.

Research from ESFI shows that faulty or overloaded wiring accounts for an estimated 67,800 fires, 500 deaths and more than 2,000 injuries each year and a whopping \$868 million in property damage. By educating yourself about common hazards in older homes and installing lifesaving electrical safety devices, these risks can be reduced greatly.

The lifesaving technology available includes:

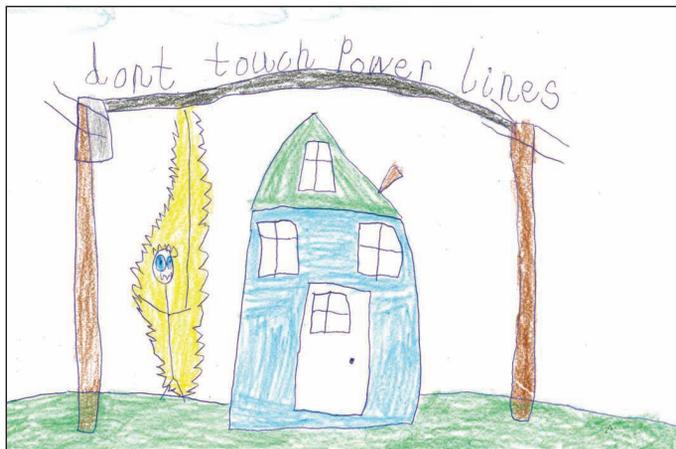
- AFCIs – an outlet that recognizes fire hazards and immediately shuts off power.
- GFCIs – an outlet that senses when water comes into contact and cuts out to prevent electrocution.
- Tamper-Resistant Outlets – designed to protect children from inserting small objects into them.

## In addition to installing the technology above, here are some additional safety tips:

- Make sure functioning smoke alarms are installed on every floor and in every sleeping area.
- Look for telltale signs of electrical problems such as dimming lights, frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses.
- Limit use of extension cords, particularly cords used to power room air conditioners.
- Use lightbulbs that are the proper wattage for a fixture; higher wattage bulbs can degrade wires.

Source: ESFI; Consumer Product Safety Commission

## Kids' Corner Safety Poster



### "Don't touch power lines"

**Cole Kieffer,  
5 years old**

*Cole is the son of Mike and Brittany Kieffer, Kennebec, S.D. They are members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Murdo, 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.

## Current Issues

# Congress Votes Against EPA Clean Power Plan

Congress registered its disapproval of how the Obama Administration wants to proceed on climate change with overwhelming votes against the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan.

Following Senate votes, the House on Dec. 1 passed two resolutions of disapproval regarding the regulation that targets carbon dioxide emissions from existing fossil fuel generation.

The House voted 242-180 for Senate Joint Resolution 24 to halt the Clean Power Plan and 235-188 for Senate Joint Resolution 23 to block EPA's carbon dioxide standard for new, modified or reconstructed plants.

President Obama has said he will veto the resolutions. Proponents contend that the votes show widespread opposition to the EPA rule for the next administration to consider.

The Clean Power Plan became law Dec. 22, 2015, and will require states to reduce carbon dioxide produced within their borders by slashing power plant emissions beginning in 2022.

Electric cooperatives say the rule will force some coal units into premature retirement, threaten reliability and hammer members with more expensive electricity to replace the lost generation.

Lisa Johnson, CEO of Seminole Electric Cooperative in Tampa, Fla., told the White House officials how the EPA rule will shutter the co-op's 1,300-megawatt generating station in Putnam County and cost the financially-challenged area more than 300 jobs.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., whose district includes more than 200,000 electric co-op members, underscored Seminole's concerns to his House colleagues prior to the vote on the resolutions.

"If the EPA forces the plant to close prematurely, these jobs are at risk and rural electric cooperative members like my constituents will still have to pay for the closed plant in their rates through 2042, while also paying for a new electricity source," Bilirakis said.

– By Cathy Cash, ECT.coop Staff Writer

# Bountiful Brunch



## Amish Breakfast Casserole

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 lb. bacon, diced                         | 1/4 tsp. pepper                  |
| 1/2 cup diced onion                        | 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese   |
| 8 eggs                                     | 1-1/4 cups shredded Swiss cheese |
| 4 cups frozen shredded hash browns, thawed | 1-1/2 cups 2% cottage cheese     |

In a large skillet, cook bacon and onion over medium heat until bacon is crispy; drain. In large bowl, lightly beat eggs. Stir in hash browns, pepper and cheeses. Add bacon and onions, stirring well. Transfer to greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 35 to 40 minutes or until a knife inserted in center comes out clean.

**Amy Schoenfelder, Cavour**

## Easy Cinnamon Pull-Aparts

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 2 (16.3 oz.) cans Grands!® refrigerated biscuits | 1 stick butter    |
| 1/2 cup sugar                                    | 1 cup brown sugar |
| 1 T. cinnamon                                    | 2 T. milk         |
|  | 1 tsp. vanilla    |

Heat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease 12-cup fluted tube pan with shortening or cooking spray. In large storage plastic food bag, mix granulated sugar and cinnamon. Separate dough into 16 biscuits. Shake in bag to coat. Arrange standing in pan. In a small saucepan, combine butter, brown sugar and milk. Heat until dissolved and bubbly around edges; remove from heat. Add vanilla. Pour over biscuits. Bake for 30 minutes. May sprinkle walnuts or pecans in bottom of pan before adding biscuits.

**Pam Hofer, Carpenter**

## Breakfast Enchiladas

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2 cups cubed cooked ham  | 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese, divided |
| 1/2 cup chopped onions   | 1 T. flour                              |
| 1/2 cup chopped green peppers or 1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chilies | 2 cups half-and-half                    |
| 10 8-inch flour or corn tortillas                                    | 6 eggs, beaten                          |
|  | 1/4 tsp. salt                           |

Combine ham, onions and peppers. Place about 1/3 cup down the center of each tortilla; top with 2 T. cheese. Roll up and place seam-side down in a 9x13-inch greased baking dish. In a bowl, combine flour, cream, eggs and salt; mix until smooth. Pour over tortillas. Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate overnight. Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Leaving tortillas covered, bake at 350°F. for 25 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining cheese; bake 3 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serve with salsa and sour cream if desired.

**Jan Gossman, Bison**

## Ham and Almond Pastry Ring

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1/2 cup chive and onion cream cheese spread | 1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped          |
| 2 T. Caesar salad dressing                  | 1/4 cup green bell pepper, diced           |
| 1 cup ham, diced                            | 2 (8 oz.) cans refrigerated crescent rolls |
| 1 large apple, seeded and chopped           | 1 egg, beaten                              |
| 1/2 cup grapes, red or green, quartered     | 1/4 cup almonds, finely chopped            |

In large bowl, blend cream cheese spread and dressing. Add ham, apple, grapes, onion and green pepper; gently stir until coated. Set aside. Line a large baking sheet with heavy foil. Lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray. Unroll both cans of crescent rolls and separate. On prepared baking sheet, arrange triangles overlapping with shortest side of each roll toward center leaving 5-inch circle open in center. Points of crescent dough may hang over edge of baking sheet. Press overlapping dough to flatten and close center circle to 4-inches. Spoon mixture evenly over widest part of dough. Pull points of dough over filling and tuck dough under dough in center to form ring. (Some filling will be visible.) Brush dough evenly with beaten egg and sprinkle with almonds. Bake at 375°F. for 20 to 30 minutes or until golden and pastry in inner circle is baked. (If necessary, loosely cover outer edge of pastry with foil during the last 10 minutes of baking to prevent over-browning.) Remove from oven and cool for 5 minutes. Using large spatula, slide onto large serving platter. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

*Nutritional analysis per serving: 385 calories; 23 g total fat (8 g saturated fat); 58 mg cholesterol; 30 g carbohydrates; 1 g fiber; 12 g protein; 573 mg sodium*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Sunday Morning Coffee Cake

- |                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 T. butter, softened        | 3 tsp. baking powder   |
| 1/2 cup sugar                | <b>Topping:</b>        |
| 1/2 tsp. salt                | 1/4 cup sugar          |
| 1 egg                        | 2 T. all-purpose flour |
| 2/3 cup milk                 | 1 T. ground cinnamon   |
| 1 tsp. vanilla extract       | 1/4 cup cold butter    |
| 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour |                        |

In a small mixing bowl, beat butter, sugar and salt until crumbly. Add egg, milk and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to butter mixture. Transfer to a greased 8-inch square baking dish. For topping, in a small bowl, combine sugar, flour and cinnamon; cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle over batter. Bake at 350°F. for 25 to 30 minutes.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson**

## Good Pancakes

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 egg whites          | 2 cups flour       |
| 2 egg yolks           | 1 tsp. salt        |
| 2-1/2 cups buttermilk | 1 tsp. baking soda |

Beat egg whites and set aside. In a large bowl, beat egg yolks. Add buttermilk, flour, salt and soda; stir. Add beaten egg whites. Fry on hot griddle.

**Linda Rauscher, Aberdeen**

*Please send your favorite seafood, appetizer, beverage and casserole recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2016. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*

# Keeping Your Pets (and Your Energy Bill!) Comfortable



**Patrick Keegan**  
Collaborative Efficiency

their high energy bills and discovered an uninsulated double garage was being heated all winter to keep the dog warm! Keeping your pet comfortable and entertained when you're away doesn't have to take a bite out of your energy bill.

Pet owners often assume their indoor pets want the same level of cooling and heating as the rest of the family. However, most dogs and cats can be comfortable with a wider range of temperatures. An exception might be an older pet or one with medical issues, which might require consultation with your veterinarian.

## Here are a few tips to keep your pet cozy without cranking up the thermostat:

- A cozy, insulated doghouse might be all your outdoor dog needs, except on the very coldest days.
- Make sure that your indoor pet has a warm place to sleep, like a pet bed with a blanket. Consider giving him a few sleeping options throughout your home in different temperature zones, so your pet can adjust his comfort as needed.
- If you have a very drafty home or an older pet who may appreciate more warmth, a heated pet bed or bed warmer will use far less energy than running your central heating high all day. This solution can also be good for those who keep their pets in the garage and worry about them staying warm enough. Instead of heating a large, uninsulated space,

**Dear Pat:** I recently adopted a dog, but I work during the day. I want to make sure he stays comfortable without making my electrical bill go haywire. Can you offer any tips? – Annie D.

**Dear Annie:** Congratulations on your new furry family member! It's a good idea to think about your energy bills. I remember working with a homeowner concerned about

provide a nice warm bed! If you only plug in the heated beds when needed, they will use far less energy.

Those with unique pets, like birds or lizards, may need to keep them in warmer environments. Consider moving these pets to a room that can be easily kept warm, but note that this may change over the course of a year. David Bopp, an energy advisor at Flathead Electric Cooperative in Montana, shared that he performed an energy audit for a member with tropical birds kept in a sunroom at more than 80 degrees Fahrenheit. While this temperature was easy to reach in the summer, winter weather – combined with the sunroom's windows – resulted in very high heating bills.

Pet doors are popular, but they can also be a major air leak that drives up your energy use. When purchasing a pet door, make sure it has energy-efficient features, like thick construction, weather sealing and the ability to be closed off when not in use. Some newer models have magnet or battery locks: a small magnet or sensor on your pet's collar opens the door and the rest of the time, the door is shut tight, keeping out other critters – as well as blowing wind and snow!

Some people also leave their televisions or radios on while they're away, thinking that the voices will keep their pets from being bored (and destroying their shoes!). However, there are ways other than flipping a switch to keep your pooches and kitties entertained. Exercising your pet when you're home and giving them a variety of toys or a nice perch to see out a window when you leave will be more entertaining and less energy intensive than a TV. If you must leave something on when you're away, try soothing, calm music instead of a blaring TV.

We all love our furry family members, but remember, keeping them comfortable doesn't mean you have to pay more on your monthly bill.

*This column was co-written by Patrick Keegan and Amy Wheelless of Collaborative Efficiency. Patrick Keegan writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

## Prepare for the dog days of summer

**When summer comes**, you don't need to leave the air conditioning on full blast for Spot and Fluffy. Dogs and cats have higher body temperatures than humans and they are comfortable with temperatures between 78 degrees Fahrenheit and 82 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition, dogs and cats sweat differently than humans, so running fans

will not have the same effect it has on you.

Other ways to keep your pets comfortable when it's warm out include:

- For indoor pets, keep shades drawn and direct light filtered. Provide cool areas to rest, such as a basement or a tile floor with a cooling mat. For outdoor pets, provide a shady spot with

plenty of airflow, such as under a tree or a tarp.

- Give them plenty of water, perhaps with ice, and cool treats, like peanut butter popsicles.
- Exercise pets during the cooler parts of the day to prevent heat fatigue.

# Rural Electric Consumers Win Big in 2015

**Rural electric consumers** across the nation stand to benefit from an array of new and revised laws and rules coming out of Washington, D.C., in 2015. From increased funding for an efficiency loan program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to improved coordination on cybersecurity and consumer protections against monopoly business practices, policymakers demonstrated they were listening to the concerns of America's electric cooperatives looking out for their member consumers.

## Energy efficiency

Congress showed demand response programs some much-needed love, passing the "Energy Efficiency Improvement Act" in April.

The Act paved the way for co-ops to expand the use of large-capacity electric resistance water heaters to reduce electric usage during peak demand times and, thanks to new technology, integrate more renewable resources into the electric power grid. Collectively, the co-op programs can reduce demand by an estimated 500 megawatts, saving consumers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Thanks to the recently-passed Omnibus budget, USDA will have \$8 million to fund electric co-op relending programs offering low-interest consumer loans that can be used to cover the cost of energy efficiency improvements. Consumer members can repay these loans from energy savings on their electric bill.

## Surface Transportation Board reforms

In December Congress passed the Surface Transportation Board (STB) Reauthorization Act of 2015, which electric co-ops believe will help level the playing field in pricing disputes with freight rail companies. For years, following the consolidation of railroads, co-ops have been subjected to monopoly practices that have drastically raised shipping costs. This bill represents the first major changes in freight rail regulation since the

Staggers Act deregulated the business in 1980. Co-ops will continue to work for a dispute resolution process that produces fair and equitable results for electric co-ops and their consumer members.

## Cybersecurity

The electric sector, in coordination with federal agencies and Congress, has made significant progress both in cybersecurity research and development and improved standards and planning.

The Omnibus bill signed by the President contained long-sought legislation to promote robust information-sharing about cybersecurity threats between and among federal agencies and the utility industry. Real-time intelligence will be absolutely vital to electric utilities, including America's electric cooperatives, in the event of a cyber-attack.

A total of 18 co-ops from around the country joined in the electric sector's national exercise simulating physical and cyber attacks. The drill gave co-ops a chance to put contingency and disaster plans to the test, including plans for responding to a major cyber event.

## Endangered species protections

Electric co-ops are encouraged by the willingness of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to hear co-op concerns and find solutions that reduce the burden of species protection while accomplishing the goals of the Endangered Species Act.

A FWS proposal to list the northern long-eared bat as an endangered species would have put more than 650 co-ops in an untenable position, forced to choose between complying with reliability requirements or species protection requirements. In complying with habitat protection rules enforced by the FWS, co-ops would find themselves out of compliance with reliability standards enforced by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. Co-ops worked with FWS officials to craft a responsible

approach that balances bat preservation and electric reliability. The FWS listed the bat as threatened rather than endangered and finalized a special rule that allows co-ops to carry out the tree-trimming needed to maintain reliability.



# NRECA

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Environmental regulation

The recently enacted "Highway Bill" includes a provision that should help streamline and coordinate environmental reviews of energy infrastructure projects. This was the first re-write of environmental review laws in nearly 40 years.

The Supreme Court ruled in electric cooperatives' favor that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should have considered costs when determining the appropriateness and necessity of regulating mercury in the Mercury and Air Toxics regulation finalized several years ago.

Both EPA and the Corps of Engineers clarified that the final Waters of the U.S. rule does not narrow the scope and applicability of general permits. If projects could be conducted under nationwide permits before the rule, they can still be used under the new rule.

NRECA worked diligently to advocate for the interests of America's not-for-profit, member-owned cooperatives and their 42 million consumer-members all across the country. Every victory that allows co-ops to continue to honor their obligation to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity is a victory for those consumers.

*The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide service to 42 million people in 47 states.*

# Time for A Good Soak

## Hot Mineral Baths Provide Relaxation, Restoration

By  
Terry Woster

**I**F GEORGE STROPPEL'S FATHER HADN'T TALKED HIM into taking a course in Swedish massage therapy long ago, the 89-year-old Midland resident might have spent his working life in the saddle of heavy earth-moving equipment.

Instead, Stroppel stepped away from moving dirt to spend his days – and nights – bringing comfort to the bodies and spirits of travelers with hot baths, steams and massages at the Stroppel Inn, a business his father, John Stroppel, started in 1939.

“Dad needed mineral baths for his health,”

George Stroppel said during a recent conversation.

The elder Stroppel, whose lungs were damaged by a childhood illness, found that the warm waters of a well in nearby Capa were soothing. He considered buying that business, decided against the idea and instead opened a hotel in Midland and drilled a deep (nearly 1,800 feet) well to reach hot (115 degrees Fahrenheit), mineral-rich water.

“Things just seemed to click,” Stroppel said.

They did, indeed. People began traveling to Midland, many staying at the hotel for 21 days of





baths and massages. Room and board was \$15 a week. Stropfel recalls that sometimes the place had so many guests, meals were served in shifts.

Healing powers of hot springs have been touted for centuries in many parts of the world. The website Livestrong.com says warm springs and mineral baths are a natural treatment option for many common ailments, relieving pain, skin problems, stress and more. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal programs included the Rural Electrification Administration, regularly traveled to Warm Springs, Ga., for treatments.

Several areas in South Dakota have warm-water springs or wells. Perhaps the best advertised is Evans Plunge in Hot Springs. The Plunge has been in operation for more than a century. It has the amenities of a water park, with slides and swinging rings. But it was established in 1890 because the 87-degree spring water was considered a cure-all for almost anything that ailed a body.

Besides tourism and recreation, the Plunge hosts practices of the Fall River Swim Team, says supervisor Kris Hanson. The fun-and-games remain an attraction, but Hanson says she sees a trend toward more customers arriving specifically to soak in the water.

“It feels like we are moving back more in that direction, to where it is about the water,” Hanson says. “People absolutely believe in the water. They swear by it.”

Back in Midland, the elder Stropfel retired from the business after 10 years. George’s brother, Jack, took over for 17 years, before George became proprietor. He operated the inn and baths until he sold it in 2002. He continues to give massages and customers continue to stop in. A newer well brings in water with a temperature of 119 degrees.

Jeremiah M. Murphy of Rapid City lobbies for several organizations during the annual South Dakota Legislature. He’s a believer in the value of a pause in his travel for a hot soak and steam.

“With all the trips I take to and from Pierre, I’ll find a few occasions a year to stop and have a soak,” Murphy said. “It’s great – relaxing, refreshing.”

It’s especially refreshing after a day of pheasant hunting, he said. Murphy is among the regulars at an annual pheasant hunt in the Highmore area. He usually stops in Midland on his way home.

“It’s a nice antidote to a day of tromping around on uneven ground,” Murphy said.

Vickie Droze, who came to Midland from Charleston, S.C., more than four years ago to work at the hotel, bought the business in 2015. She calls Stropfel “Mr. George” and she says the customers are like family and Midland is home.

“When I first got here, I thought ‘what am I getting into,’ but it’s just a wonderful place,” Droze said. “We get 15, sometimes 20 people a day. It’s about half regulars and half new customers, drawn by the billboards or word-of-mouth. I love it.”

George Stropfel is convinced of the healing properties of hot water.

“My own conclusion,” Stropfel said, “Is that you heat your body and sweat the impurities out of it. That’s just what makes sense to me.”

And that massage training? Stropfel’s dad talked him into the course in 1958, but Stropfel never figured to use it. Then one day a trio of travelers asked for massages.

“I said I might hurt them. I’d never done a real one. But they kept asking,” Stropfel said. “I must have been like a bear, but they told another guest ‘you haven’t had a massage until you’ve had one from him.’”

That was in 1966. This spring Stropfel will turn 90, after 50 years of giving massages.

“It’s been a good life,” he said. “I sure met a lot of people.”

**I’ll find  
a few  
occasions  
a year to  
stop and  
have a  
soak.  
It’s great –  
relaxing,  
refreshing.**



**Above Left: George Stropfel has sold the hotel, but continues to give massages. Left: One of the baths. Opposite Page: Vickie Droze, who came to Midland from Charleston, S.C., more than four years ago to work at the Stropfel Hotel, bought the business in 2015.**

*Action Committee for Rural Electrification® Marks*

# 50th Anniversary

**W**HEN RURAL AMERICANS WANTED ACCESS TO THE same modern comforts enjoyed by their urban friends, they banded together to form not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives.

When America's electric cooperatives wanted another way to participate in the political process and advocate for issues related to the cost and reliability of electricity, they formed the Action Committee for Rural Electrification®.

Commonly known as ACRE®, this political action committee is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016.

Political action committees, or PACs, allow people to pool their personal money to support candidates for office. PACs support political candidates

who support the interests of their members.

PACs that contribute to federal candidates are regulated by the Federal Election Committee and come in several different structures.

ACRE is a "connected" PAC, which means it can only accept contributions from eligible individuals who have a connection to the organization sponsoring it – in this case, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

ACRE raises personal, voluntary contributions from eligible individuals connected to the NRECA and its members. Federal law prohibits soliciting contributions from individuals other than NRECA and its member systems' eligible employees, boards of directors, consumer-members and families of



such individuals.

This differs from other types of political action committees, including Super PACs, which have been covered by many news outlets in recent years.

ACRE is a bipartisan PAC and supports candidates based solely on their support for issues that impact electric cooperatives. A candidate's political affiliation is never taken into account.

ACRE is truly a grassroots PAC. It's backed by more than 33,000 eligible employees, directors, managers and members of electric cooperatives

across 47 states who give an average contribution of \$56. In South Dakota, 696 people were part of the national or state PAC.

ACRE is just one way America's electric cooperatives participate in the political process. Other forms of political advocacy include grassroots letter writing campaigns, testimony before lawmakers and regulators in state capitals and Washington, D.C., and meeting with elected officials to educate them about issues of importance to our members.

## Looking Out for Co-op Members: Then and Now

**Some people might wonder** why not-for-profit rural electric cooperatives would be involved in politics in the first place.

In 2016, it seems obvious that every American would have access to affordable and reliable electricity – regardless of where they live. But that wasn't always the case.

The first big political threat to rural energy consumers came in the early 1940s. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the government official who oversaw raw materials needed for national defense banned the use of copper and aluminum for building power lines in rural America.

On the surface, this might seem like a reasonable step to take as the nation prepared for war, but the government official who issued the order had previously worked for the large investor-owned utilities that served big cities. Although these for-profit utilities had no interest in serving rural America, they wanted to eliminate any competitive threat – real or imagined – posed by electric cooperatives.

Co-ops quickly realized they would need to band together to protect the interests of the rural energy consumers they served. In 1942, they formed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) to fight for their members in Washington.

The newly formed association successfully demonstrated that farms with electricity produced more food, which was critical to supporting the war effort at home and abroad.

Based on this information, rural electrification was allowed to continue on a limited basis through the war.

This was just the first of many battles America's electric cooperatives have fought on behalf of the families, farms and businesses they serve.

Though the benefit of rural electrification is no longer up for debate, there are still many energy policy issues that could have a significant impact on co-op members, including continued support of the RUS electric loan program, pushing

back against over-reaching environmental rules and shining a light on the need to bring broadband to rural America, just to name a few.

Just last year, electric cooperatives lobbied Congress and the President to enact a law that allowed co-ops to continue offering a water heater demand response program that saves consumers money and helps power companies operate more efficiently.

As with many regulations, the ban on these electric water heaters was the unintended consequence of a law designed to promote efficiency.

While some water heaters are inefficient, specially designed water heaters that can "talk" to the electric grid can be used to help reduce energy consumption at times of peak demand.

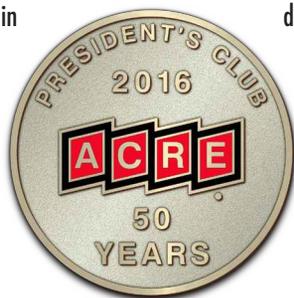
When used as part of an energy management program called demand response, these special water heaters can create and store large quantities of hot water at off-peak times and hold it for use at busier times of the day when demand for energy is at its highest.

Though this water heater program is popular with consumers and good for the environment, government regulations put it in jeopardy.

Electric co-ops began a multi-year effort to educate regulators and lawmakers about this issue and in April 2015, President Obama signed a law repealing the ban and saving the program.

Electric cooperatives know that you and millions of other co-op members across the country have entrusted them with the responsibility to ensure access to safe, reliable and affordable energy. That's a serious responsibility and one they don't take lightly.

It's often said in politics that if you aren't at the table, you're on the menu. Through the coordinated efforts of your local co-op, statewide associations and the national association in Washington, electric cooperatives work hard to ensure there's always a spot at the table for you and your neighbors.



# Adding Value: Dakota Gasification Plant's Role

**I**T HAS BEEN NEARLY 27 YEARS SINCE BASIN ELECTRIC Power Cooperative's membership voted to purchase the Great Plains Synfuels Plant and form Dakota Gasification Company.

It's no secret that purchasing the facility posed a risk for the cooperative and its membership, but taking bold initiatives had been the basis for founding Basin Electric.

It's taken some time and innovation, but the value that purchase has provided to Basin Electric and the membership over the years has proven to be significant and can be measured by more than just dollars.

Basin Electric staff conducted a study to show the benefits Dakota Gas brings to Basin Electric and its members. The information was shared during the March board of directors meeting.

When the plant was purchased in 1988, the Synfuels Plant's value proved to be about \$37 million a year considering the fuel supply, power supply and shared facilities.

Around the year 2000, the plant was in a construction phase and then was repaying debt to Basin Electric for several years. By 2008, debt was paid off and dividends were coming back to Basin Electric members. Currently, the plant is in a construction phase again with the urea plant project.

Working with several components, the recent study found Dakota Gas brings a benefit of \$59 million per year to Basin Electric and its membership. This includes the fuel supply, power supply, shared facilities, allocations and other miscellaneous benefits. To the membership, that equates to a 2.5 mill on-going benefit.

Over the years of operating the Synfuels Plant, the business model has changed significantly from primarily producing natural gas, to producing a slate of products. Currently, the Synfuels Plant produces 10 products including natural gas, anhydrous ammonia, ammonium sulfate, cresylic acid, phenol, krypton-xenon, liquid nitrogen, carbon dioxide, naphtha and tar oil. With the completion of the urea plant projected for spring 2017, sales of urea and diesel exhaust fluid will be added to that list of products.

Manager of Financial Planning and Forecasting Andrew Buntrock explains why the value of Dakota Gas has grown. "Several things have changed in the past five years for Basin Electric – mainly that Basin continues to grow at a record pace, so it is not surprising that the benefit that Dakota Gas provides to Basin grew, as well," Buntrock said.

"We also keep our eye on the historical benefit that Dakota Gas brings to the table from a cash

By  
BEPC



perspective. This includes the purchase price of the plant, dividends received and the loan advances and repayments, which of course includes interest. At the end of the day, the current cash flow from Dakota Gas to Basin is positive by over \$200 million. So if we wrap this all together, we estimate that Dakota Gas has benefited the cooperative by over \$1.1 billion since Basin Electric purchased the plant in 1988.”

Additionally, value is added, not monetarily, but with infrastructure. The shared benefits that come with in-house medical services provided to employees cooperative-wide, the use of machine shop services to fix equipment at the power plants and the fire-fighting capability available to the area power plant facilities continue to add value, along with sharing the water intake, rail spur, coal facilities and purchasing electricity from Basin Electric.

The medical services team at Dakota Gas provides a benefit to employees that saves on medical costs. Dr. Tom Kaspari and his staff see employees throughout the cooperative, traveling between the facilities each month. Employees save time away from their jobs, as well as the cost of an office visit, by seeing Dr. Kaspari at their job site. Whether employees are visiting medical services for their yearly physicals, a random drug test, a rash, strained back, respiratory infection or the annual influenza injection, Dr. Kaspari and his staff are available to provide on-the-spot medical care.

Emergency services provide coverage not only at the

Synfuels Plant, but also to area Basin Electric facilities and the local communities. A fleet of two ambulances and five fire and rescue vehicles are available for emergency response and have aided in emergencies in Mercer County, as well as at area electric-generating facilities. Having trained emergency medical technicians, nurses, a family nurse practitioner and doctor on staff, ready to respond at a moment's notice to save lives, is more than valuable, it's invaluable.

Full-scale mass casualty exercises held in 2013 and 2014 are an example of the efforts to improve emergency response and coordination within the community. The exercises were coordinated by Synfuels Plant personnel with the assistance of the Mercer County emergency manager and Local Emergency Planning Committee. Participants included representatives from local fire departments, emergency medical services, law enforcement, hospitals and the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. This proactive approach provides value to Dakota Gas and Basin Electric, as well as the local communities and other energy facilities.

The ongoing study of Dakota Gas in relation to Basin Electric indicates continued benefit for Basin Electric, its members and surrounding communities. Basin Electric's members made a wise investment in Dakota Gas in 1988 to support the goal of minimizing and stabilizing the cost of power. And this benefit can be seen even when Dakota Gas profit margins are low as a result of commodity prices.

## Urea Plant Taking Shape

**A Dakota Gasification Company project to add a urea plant to the company's Beulah, N.D., complex is on schedule and within budget.**

Several milestones have been realized recently as urea project activities at Dakota Gasification Company's Great Plains Synfuels Plant continue to ramp up.

Jim Greer, senior project manager, said the project is on schedule and within budget.

The \$500 million urea plant construction project began last year and is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. During the first quarter of 2017, the equipment will be commissioned with product ready for sale by second quarter 2017. The addition of the urea plant will bring three additional products for sale from the Synfuels Plant: urea, diesel exhaust fluid, commonly referred to as DEF, and liquefied carbon dioxide.

Urea is a dry, solid crystalline containing 46 percent nitrogen that is widely used in the agricultural industry as a fertilizer and sometimes as animal feed.

The project's first piece of steel was erected for the melt building the end of October. Pipe-rack steel was also put in place in early November, an important part of the project, as it will hold the pipe that will bring anhydrous ammonia from the storage tank to the urea plant. Another important milestone in the project included completing the underground cooling water pipeline.

Some of the major pieces of equipment are

also arriving was the granulator, the heart of the granulation building, was delivered last week from Germany.

Three very large pieces of equipment for the project are expected on site soon. The high pressure scrubber, high pressure stripper and pool reactor were fabricated by Stamicarbon in Ternitz, Austria. The equipment was loaded onto a barge on the Danube River in October and traveled to the Port of Antwerp, Belgium. From Belgium, the equipment was sent to the Port of Houston, Texas, where it was loaded onto rail cars. The railcars transported the equipment to the Synfuels Plant in November

Engineering for the project is about 93 percent complete, with more than 300 contract employees on site working on the project. Greer said that number will continue to grow over the coming months with RUST, the general contractor, actively recruiting contractors for the project.

"RUST has set up a recruiting trailer in the craft parking lot, where they are interviewing, drug testing and safety training new employees hired to work on the project," Greer said. "They will continue to add staff and more trades as the project continues."

Other activities include the electric duct bank work for the primary distribution of power from Substation 28 to Substation 29.

"We are finalizing the construction power plan for the project, which will include supplying about

five megawatts of electricity for the project site," Greer said.

Great Southwestern Construction of Castle Rock, Colo., is the electrical contractor who will pull the 69 kV transmission line to the site and install the substation.

Concrete pours also continue with grade beams and pile caps in the melt and granulation buildings. "These beams will connect the building laterally, holding the foundation together," Greer said. A pad for the carbon dioxide compressor building, as well as a tabletop, elevated platform for the carbon dioxide compressor, are also being poured.

Marten Brenny is building the control room for the urea plant and has completed the shell, walls and roof. They are currently working indoors, putting up wall frames for interior rooms.

US Wick Drain finished the storage building rigid inclusions work at the end of October, ahead of schedule and within budget. They demobilized and are no longer on plant site.

The pipe fabrication contract was recently awarded to Enerpipe of New London, Wis. They have purchased the carbon steel to fabricate the necessary pipe for the project.

The civil contract for the materials handling and storage building was awarded in November.

Not only is the project on schedule and within budget, Greer said it is also progressing safely. "RUST just had a 100-day celebration for strong safety performance."

# All About That LED

*Efficiency, Longevity of LED Bulbs Make Technology Shine Bright*

**L**EDS ARE ONE OF TODAY'S MOST ENERGY-EFFICIENT and rapidly developing lighting technologies. Once used mainly for commercial use, LED bulbs are gaining popularity as a home-lighting option that saves money and energy.

LEDs (light emitting diodes) are different from traditional lighting sources because they don't "burn out." Rather, the amount of light produced decreases.

## Benefits of LED lighting:

- Energy efficiency.
- Environmentally friendly due to no mercury content.
- Durable quality that is resistant to breakage and can withstand rough conditions.
- Perform well in extremely cold temperatures, especially outdoors.
- Instant light when turned on.
- Frequent switching on and off doesn't impact LED's lifetime.
- Can be dimmed and produce a more pleasing light.

## Look for the ENERGY STAR®

Many LED products found on store shelves are of poor quality. Some are manufactured outside of the United States with components that produce low light

levels, don't have a long service life or make exaggerated energy savings claims.

Look for the U.S. Department of Energy's ENERGY STAR logo on LED lighting.

ENERGY STAR certified light bulbs meet strict quality and efficiency standards that are tested by accredited labs and certified by a third party. The ENERGY STAR logo guarantees high efficiency, color quality and steady light output over the bulb's lifetime, and a warranty.

While LEDs are more expensive up front, the true value is in the lifetime and long-term savings of the bulb.

Compared to a traditional incandescent bulb, an

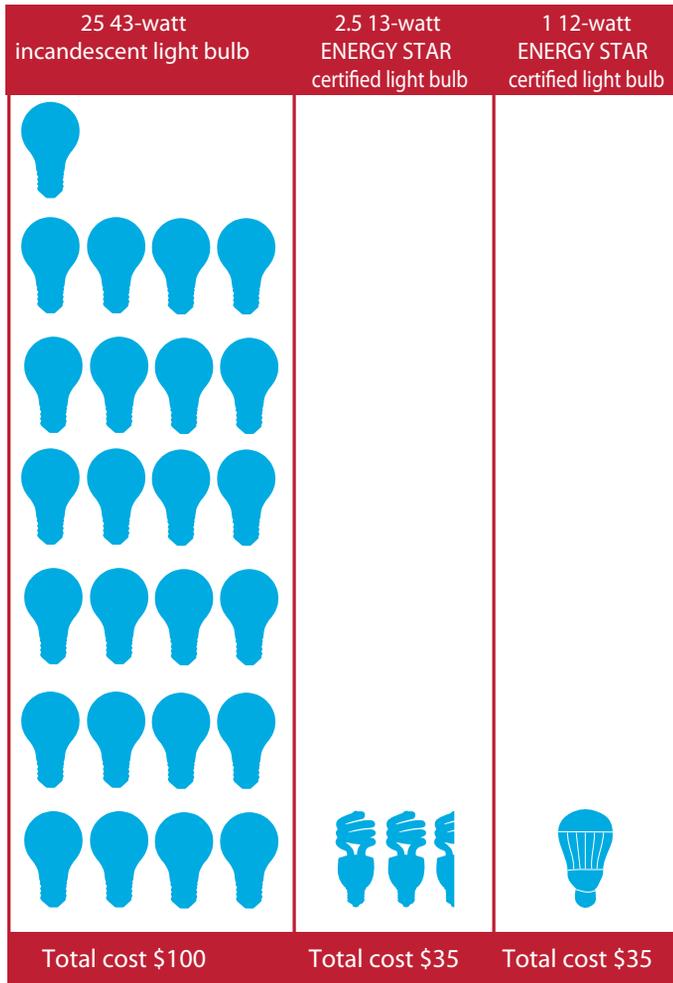
		BULB TYPES				
TABLE OR FLOOR LAMPS		 SPIRAL	 A SHAPE			
PENDANT FIXTURES		 SPIRAL	 A SHAPE	 GLOBE	 MR16	 CANDLE
CEILING FIXTURES		 SPIRAL	 A SHAPE	 CANDLE		
CEILING FANS		 SPIRAL	 A SHAPE	 CANDLE		
WALL SCONCES		 SPIRAL	 A SHAPE	 GLOBE	 CANDLE	
RECESSED CANS		 MR16	 SPOT	 FLOOD		
ACCENT LIGHTING		 MR16	 SPOT			

ENERGY STAR-qualified LED bulb:

- Can last about 22 years, or as much as 25 times longer.
- Uses only 20 percent to 25 percent of the energy.
- Produces about 70 percent to 90 percent less heat, making it safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling.

### Light your home with the same amount of light for less money

ENERGY STAR certified bulbs use 70 percent to 90 percent less energy than incandescents, last 10 to 25 times longer, and save you \$30 to \$80 in energy bills over their lifetime.



### Color/appearance

ENERGY STAR certified bulbs are available in a wide range of colors. Light colors, or appearance, matches a temperature on the Kelvin scale (K). Lower K means warmer, yellowish light, while higher K means cooler, bluer light.

### Saving green by being green

- The average home has more than 50 light bulbs.
- By changing one light bulb, you can save between \$30 and \$80 in electricity costs over the lifetime of the bulb.

# LIGHTING MADE EASY

Even with all the new lighting choices, saving money on your electricity bill is still simple: Look for the ENERGY STAR for energy savings. No matter the technology or the performance claims, only bulbs with the ENERGY STAR label meet strict guidelines for efficiency and performance that set them apart.

## BRIGHTEN OUR PLANET'S FUTURE WITH ENERGY STAR®

### Look for the ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR MEANS HIGH QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE. BULBS WITH THE LABEL HAVE BEEN INDEPENDENTLY CERTIFIED AND UNDERGONE EXTENSIVE TESTING.

ENERGY STAR certified bulbs use less energy, so they cost less to operate than standard incandescent bulbs. And less energy means fewer greenhouse gas emissions.



- ★ Use **70-90%** less energy than incandescent bulbs
- ★ Save **\$30-\$75** in energy bills
- ★ Provide the same brightness (**lumens**) with less energy (**watts**)
- ★ Last **10-25** times longer than incandescent bulbs
- ★ Help protect the environment and prevent climate change

### Choosing the Right Brightness & Color

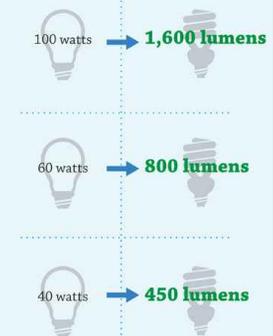
INSTEAD OF WATTS, LOOK FOR LUMENS TO MEASURE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE BULB.

[ MORE LUMENS = MORE LIGHT ]

Look for the light output you need to match the brightness of your old incandescent bulbs.

Old Incandescent Bulbs (Watts)	ENERGY STAR Bulb Brightness (Minimum Lumens)
100 watts	1,600 lumens
60 watts	800 lumens
40 watts	450 lumens

Watts measure the amount of electricity a bulb needs to operate. ENERGY STAR certified bulbs provide the same brightness (lumens) with less energy (watts).



ENERGY STAR bulbs are available in a wide range of colors. Light color, or appearance, matches a temperature on the Kelvin scale (K). Lower K means warmer, yellowish light, while higher K means cooler, bluer light.



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## Regional Dateline

### January 22-23

Monster Jam, Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-7288

### January 23

Coors Light Extreme Indoor  
 Enduro, Rapid City, SD  
 605-394-4115

### January 23-24

Broadway Play Series Dirty  
 Dancing, Fine Arts Theatre  
 Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
 Rapid City, SD 1-800-468-6463

### January 24, 31

Foreign Film Festival  
 Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7973  
 www.matthewsopera.com

### January 29-30

35th Annual Farm, Home  
 and Sport Show, Armory  
 Webster, SD, 605-345-4468

### January 29-February 7

Black Hills Stock Show &  
 Rodeo, Rapid City, SD  
 605-355-3861

### January 30

Jason Aldean, 7:30 p.m.  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### January 31

Eureka Hymns Annual  
 Concert, Eureka, SD  
 jalvarez@mmgyglobal.com

### February 2

High Voltage Safety  
 Demonstration, 8:30 and  
 10 a.m. Barnett Arena  
 Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
 Rapid City, SD, 605-224-8823



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHAD COPPERS, S.D. TOURISM

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.

## Events of Special Note

### January 21-24

Snowmobile Rally  
 Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

### January 22-23

ISOC SnoCross Shootout, 12:45  
 to 8:30 p.m., Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

### February 5-6

Living History Fair  
 Watertown, SD, 605-886-7335

### February 5-7

Winterfest of Wheels Indoor  
 Car Show, Convention Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100  
 www.winterfestofwheels.com

### February 6

Sioux Empire on Tap  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### February 7

South Dakota's Largest Tailgate  
 Party, Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

### February 9-13

Winter Farm Show  
 Watertown, SD, 605-886-5814

### February 12

Strawbale Winery Valentine  
 Twilight Flights 2016  
 6 to 10 p.m., Renner, SD  
 605-543-5071

### February 19-20

Second Annual Frost Fest  
 Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

### February 24-28

SD State Dart Tournament  
 Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

### February 26-28

Sioux Empire Wacipi  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### March 5-8

2016 Summit League  
 Basketball Championship  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### March 12-13

2016 Gun Show  
 American Legion Hall  
 Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Sunday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. MST  
 Philip, SD, 605-859-2635  
 605-859-2280, 605-859-2892  
 or 605-859-2219

### March 18-20

South Dakota Taxidermy  
 Competition and Convention  
 Watertown, SD, 712-540-5868

### March 19-20

Curt Carter Memorial Gun  
 Show, Watertown, SD  
 605-793-2347

### April 2-3

Annual Hat's Off to the Artists  
 Art Show, Faulkton, SD  
 605-598-6525

### April 2-3

Professional Bull Riders  
 Built Ford Tough Series  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### April 8

The Big Grape, 7 to 10 p.m.  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-322-8900

### April 8-10

Sioux Empire Film Festival  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-4616