


# South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

OCTOBER 2013 VOL. 65 NO. 10



# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Pg. 6

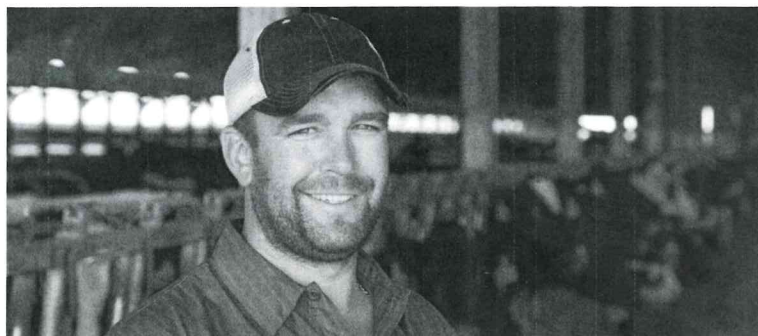
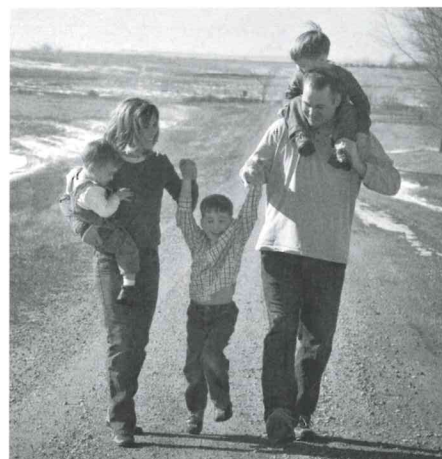
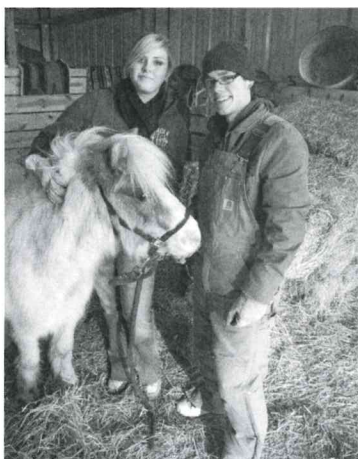


O C T O B E R I S C O - O P M O N T H




# Celebrating the Cooperative Difference

Our vision started with a small group of farmers and ranchers who united to bring electricity to their rural areas. Today, our membership spans nine states from the Canadian to the Mexican borders, generating and transmitting electricity that reaches 2.8 million member-owners and growing. From the generator to your home, we're right there with you.



**BASIN ELECTRIC  
POWER COOPERATIVE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**basinelectric.com  
touchstoneenergy.coop**

Basin Electric is a wholesale electricity supplier to 137 rural electric systems in nine states, including these electric cooperatives: Black Hills, Bon Homme Yankton, Butte, Cam Wal, Central, Charles Mix, Cherry-Todd, City of Elk Point, Clay Union, Codington-Clark, Dakota Energy, Douglas, East River, FEM, Grand, H-D Electric, Kingsbury, Lacreek, Lake Region, Lyon-Lincoln, Moreau-Grand, Northern, Oahe, Renville-Sibley, Rosebud, Rushmore, Sioux Valley, Southeastern, Union County, West Central, West River, and Whetstone Valley.



# South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

ISSN No. 1067-4977

Produced by the following electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota:

Black Hills Electric, Custer, S.D.  
Bon Homme Yankton Electric, Tabor, S.D.  
Butte Electric, Newell, S.D.  
Cam Wal Electric, Selby, S.D.  
Central Electric, Mitchell, S.D.  
Charles Mix Electric, Lake Andes, S.D.  
Cherry-Todd Electric, Mission, S.D.  
Clay-Union Electric, Vermillion, S.D.  
Codington-Clark Electric, Watertown, S.D.  
Dakota Energy, Huron, S.D.  
Douglas Electric, Armour, S.D.  
East River Electric, Madison, S.D.  
FEM Electric, Ipswich, S.D.  
Grand Electric, Bison, S.D.  
H-D Electric, Clear Lake, S.D.  
Kingsbury Electric, De Smet, S.D.  
Lacreek Electric, Martin, S.D.  
Lake Region Electric, Webster, S.D.  
Lyon-Lincoln Electric, Tyler, Minn.  
Moreau-Grand Electric, Timber Lake, S.D.  
Northern Electric, Bath, S.D.  
Oahe Electric, Blunt, S.D.  
Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, Danube, Minn.  
Rosebud Electric, Gregory, S.D.  
Rushmore Electric, Rapid City, S.D.  
Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.  
Southeastern Electric, Marion, S.D.  
Traverse Electric, Wheaton, Minn.  
Union County Electric, Elk Point, S.D.  
West Central Electric, Murdo, S.D.  
West River Electric, Wall, S.D.  
Whetstone Valley Electric, Milbank, S.D.  
City of Elk Point, S.D.

*South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections* is published monthly for \$6 annually for member cooperatives, \$12 annually for non-members by South Dakota Rural Electric Association, 222 W. Pleasant Drive, Pierre, S.D. 57501. Correspondence to: Editor, *South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 1138, Pierre, SD 57501; telephone (605) 224-8823; fax (605) 224-4430; e-mail editor@sdrea.coop

Brenda Kleinjan, Editor  
Dawn Trapp, Communications Specialist  
Design assistance by  
TDG Communications, Deadwood

## Editorial

# A Model of Cooperation



**Ed Anderson**  
General Manager, South Dakota  
Rural Electric Association

**If you've been** a loyal reader of *South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections*, the notion of "the cooperative difference" isn't new. We talk about electric co-ops supporting community programs and economic development efforts, offering value-added services like energy audits, and being locally owned and operated.

At the core of our not-for-profit, consumer-owned business model, each household or business that gets electricity from a South Dakota electric co-op has a voice in how the enterprise is run and gets the opportunity to elect directors from among the membership to represent them.

Cooperation remains an inherent part of cooperatives, right down to the root of the word. Today, more than 900 electric cooperatives serve approximately 75 of the nation's land area in 47 states. While all are independent utilities, we work together to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.

For example, whenever there's an ice storm or tornado, we know we can count on co-op lineworkers from neighboring states to help us get the power back on more quickly. That's called "mutual-aid assistance" – because when they need help, we send it, too.

**At the core of our not-for-profit, consumer-owned business model, each household or business that gets electricity from a South Dakota electric co-op has a voice in how the enterprise is run and gets the opportunity to elect directors or from among the membership to represent them.**

This past winter, the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives partnered with the National Weather Service on a new tool for rating ice storms – one that electric co-ops in several states have been using since 2009 to help determine whether to

pre-deploy line crews or request mutual aid in anticipation of an icing event. Now, all electric utilities can benefit from this technology and other innovations like it.

Our cooperative DNA also drives South Dakota electric cooperatives to create programs that benefit everyone. We're supporters of South Dakota High School Rodeo, Kids Voting-South Dakota and academic competitions such as the South Dakota Science Bowl and the South Dakota Conservation Speech Contest. Additionally, many South Dakota co-ops have Operation Round Up® programs and this year awarded more than \$80,000 to teens seeking to further their education.

At the end of the day, "cooperation" isn't just a word; for us, it's a way of life.



## Winning at Science



**Zarin Rahman**

**A Brookings, S.D., teen** is moving up the ranks of the science fair world with her award-winning study about maturing brains.

At the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair

held in May in Phoenix, Ariz., Zarin Rahman, who is now a senior at Brookings High School, was one of 17 student research projects to win Best of Category.

Rahman's study, "The At-Risk Maturing Brain: Effects of Stress Paradigms on Mood, Memory and Cognition in Adolescents and the Role of the Prefrontal Cortex," received Best of Category in the Behavioral and Social Sciences Category. She received more than \$10,000 in prize and scholarship money for her work.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which presented Rahman with their top National Institutes of Health Addiction Science Award, she hypothesized that excessive screen time with computers, phones and other electronic devices serves as a stressor ultimately affecting mood, academic performance and poor decision making. She asked 67 teens – divided into two groups – to take a series of tests measuring factors such as use of electronic devices, sleep patterns, anxiety, mood and attention.

She concluded that excessive screen time shapes adolescents' sleep patterns, compromising academic success and emotional health. Rahman noted that electronic devices are tools and like tools, they can be used to build or destroy. She hopes teens will re-think the amount of time they spend on these devices after reading about her project.

At age 15, she received honorable mention for her research in the 2012 ISEF.

## Safety Tips for All Hunters

**It's important** when you go hunting to make sure that you know enough about how to hunt safely in order to remain the hunter and not become the hunted. Here are several safety tips for beginning hunters to help you make it through hunting season alive:



- Every time you see a gun, pick up a gun or point a gun, assume that it's loaded.
- Make sure your safety is always on and that the barrel is pointing down when you are walking with or transporting your gun.
- Make sure that you are certain of your target before you take your shot.
- Wear the required amount of orange so that you don't become another hunter's target.
- Make sure all animals are dead before you put them in or strap them onto your vehicle.
- Do not bring small children with you hunting.
- Do not climb up or down a tree or over a fence with a loaded gun. Instead, hand your gun to a hunting partner with the safety on and allow them to hand it back to you when you are in position.
- Stay sober and do not take any mind-altering drugs before or during your hunting sessions.
- Look well beyond your target before you shoot.
- Hunt with a buddy. If you can't hunt with a buddy, make sure that someone knows where you will be and a time to expect you back.
- If using a tree stand to hunt, don't forget to wear a safety belt.
- Store and transport ammunition separate from your guns.
- Keep both your guns and your ammunition under lock and key.
- Never shoot at a sound or movement.
- Store firearms and bows in cool dry places.

Source: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

### Kids' Corner Safety Poster

**"Don't play in the trees near power lines"**



**Ashley Peters, 10 years old**

*Ashley is the daughter of Jeff and Chris Peters, Lennox, S.D. They are members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, Marion, 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.



# Pasta Perfection



## Cherry Chicken Pasta Salad

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 lb. rotini pasta           | 1/4 cup confectioner's sugar |
| 2 cups diced, cooked chicken | 2 T. cold water              |
| 1 cup dried cherries         | 1 T. champagne vinegar       |
| 1 cup diced celery           | 2 T. poppy seeds             |
| 1 cup sliced toasted almonds | 2 tsp. salt                  |
| 2 cups salad dressing        | 1/4 tsp. black pepper        |

Cook rotini in salted water about 8 minutes; drain and rinse under cold water. Combine pasta with chicken, cherries, celery and almonds. Mix together remaining ingredients. Fold into pasta-chicken mixture.

**Lois Hanson, Howard**

## Tomato and Spinach Pasta Toss

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 2 cups penne pasta, uncooked                        | 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese |
| 1/2 lb. hot Italian sausage                         |                                  |
| 1 pkg. baby spinach leaves                          | 2 T. Parmesan cheese             |
| 1 can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano |                                  |

Cook pasta as directed. Meanwhile crumble meat into large skillet; brown until cooked through. Drain. Add spinach and tomatoes; cook 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, cover and keep warm. Drain pasta; place in large bowl. Add meat mixture and cheeses; mix lightly.

**Kathleen Hahn, Lennox**

## Stop Watch Pasta Salad

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 (6 oz.) bottle Hidden Valley Ranch dressing | 1-1/2 cups diced celery           |
| 1/4 cup mayonnaise                            | 1/4 cup diced red onion           |
| 1/2 tsp. salt                                 | 1 can mandarin oranges, drained   |
| 1/4 tsp. pepper                               | 1 cup sliced, red seedless grapes |
| 1 tsp. dill weed                              |                                   |
| 1-1/3 cups corkscrew or penne pasta           | 1 can sliced water chestnuts      |

Blend first 5 ingredients; refrigerate. Cook pasta; drain and cool. Combine with remaining ingredients and dressing. Cooked chicken may be added.

**Renee Dale, Florence**

## Pumpkin Sage Pasta

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 6 cups cooked, short-cut pasta, such as tortole, spirals, penne or bow ties, kept warm | 3/4 tsp. MAGGI Instant Chicken Flavor Bouillon  |
| 2 T. butter  | 1 (12.5 oz.) can NESTLÉ® CARNATION® Evaporated Lowfat 2% Milk                               |
| 2 shallots, finely chopped (about 3/4 cup)   | 1 cup LIBBY'S® 100% Pure Pumpkin  |
| 2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped (about 2 T.)                                     | 1/4 to 1/2 cup BUITONI Refrigerated Freshly Shredded Parmesan Cheese, plus more for serving |
| 8 fresh sage leaves, plus more for garnish   | 2 T. grated Gruyère cheese  |
| 1/4 cup dry white wine   | Ground black pepper to taste  |
| 1 cup water  |   |

Melt butter in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots; cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and sage leaves; cook, stirring frequently, for about 1 minute. Stir in wine; cook for 2 minutes or until reduced slightly. Stir in water and bouillon; cook for 2 to 3 minutes to infuse flavors. With tongs, remove and discard sage leaves. Stir evaporated milk and pumpkin into skillet; heat through. Stir in Parmesan cheese and Gruyère cheese until melted. Add cooked pasta to skillet; stir to coat and heat through. Season with pepper. Sprinkle with additional Parmesan cheese. Garnish with fresh sage leaves, if desired. Yield: 6 servings

*Nutritional information per serving: Calories: 260; Calories from Fat: 70; Fat: 7g; Saturated Fat: 4.5g; Cholesterol: 25mg; Sodium: 280mg; Carbohydrates: 36g; Protein: 12g; Dietary Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 9g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Cheeseburger Pasta

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 lb. ground beef         | 1-1/2 cups water                          |
| 1 can Cheddar cheese soup | 2 cups uncooked medium shell-shaped pasta |
| 1 can tomato soup         |   |

Cook ground beef in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat until well browned, stirring often to separate meat; drain. Pour off fat. Stir in soups, water and pasta; heat to a boil. Reduce heat to medium. Cook for 10 minutes or until the pasta is tender, stirring often.

**Nikki Larson, Hayti**

## Lazy Beef Lasagna

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1-1/2 lbs. ground beef | 26 oz. jar spaghetti sauce |
| 1 T. minced garlic     | 1-1/2 cups water           |
| 1/2 tsp. salt          | No cook lasagna noodles    |
| 1/2 tsp. nutmeg        | 1 cup shredded cheese      |
| 1/4 tsp. pepper        |                            |

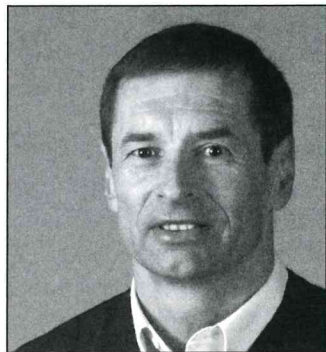
Brown beef with garlic; drain. Stir in spices, sauce and water; bring to a boil and cook 2 minutes. Layer lasagna noodles, beef sauce and cheese in a 9x13-inch pan. Repeat layers. Cover with foil. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 15 to 20 minutes until noodles are tender and sauce is bubbly.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird**

Please send your favorite wild game and holiday treat 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 2013. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



# Sizing Up Storm Doors



**Jim Dulley**  
www.dulley.com

**Dear Jim:** I feel air leaks around my doors, so I thought about adding storm doors. I want ones that also have screens, but my budget is limited. Is it worthwhile adding storm doors and what should I look for? – Candi M.

**Dear Candi:** Even though a door is a relatively small area as compared to the entire wall area of a house, just one door can lose a significant amount of energy. Even insulated doors typically have

some glass, which have lower insulation value and inadequate weather stripping will allow air to leak through.

Before buying anything new, make sure your primary doors are as airtight as possible. Adding storm doors can certainly improve the energy efficiency of almost any house, but they are not designed to correct efficiency problems of an old, warped primary door.

If possible, purchase replacement weather stripping for your existing doors from the original manufacturer. If you can't find it, most home improvement stores sell many styles of generic weather stripping that should fit. Pry off the old door molding, fill any gaps around the framing with non-expanding foam insulation and caulk around the door frame.

The quality of the storm door construction is important for a nice appearance, long life and security. It must withstand a lot of abuse, so don't just pick the cheapest one. From strictly an energy efficiency standpoint, though, the most important factors are the dead air space between the storm and primary doors and how well wind is blocked.

Buying an aluminum storm door and installing it yourself is the typical low-cost option. They're very lightweight and made to fit standard-sized openings, so installing one is a simple do-it-yourself project.

When you see the door on display attached to a wooden frame at the store, the aluminum frame will feel very strong. When you open the box at home, you may find the unattached aluminum frame strips are somewhat flexible. Be careful not to kink them during handling. Apply a generous bead of caulk on the back of the aluminum frame when screwing it to the door frame.

If you plan to use natural ventilation during the summer, a self-storing triple-track storm/screen door is your most convenient option. I use this type at my own home. The screen panel has its own vertical track in the door, so it never has to be

removed. At the end of winter, just slide one of the glass panels down and slide the screen panel up for ventilation.

A fairly new design of storm/screen door uses a spring-mounted roll-up retractable screen built into the door. When you are ready for ventilation, just lower the glass and pull the screen down as far as you wish. This design is attractive because the screen is hidden away during winter without having to remove and store the screen panels.

When your budget does open up someday, some very attractive all-wood frame (made with mortise and tenon joints) storm/screen doors are available. These are strong and secure but do require some regular maintenance similar to any wood door. For added security, ornate wrought iron storm doors are available with actual deadbolts and very tough, break-in resistant stainless steel screens.

If your budget is really tight, consider making your own storm door. It is easy to mount hinges in the existing door opening for the storm door. Make a simple wooden frame with only the top half open and a plywood lower panel. This panel improves rigidity for a more airtight seal and better durability.

Most home improvement stores carry sheets of clear acrylic plastic to mount in the frame. Make another narrow wooden frame slightly larger than the open half and mount the acrylic sheet in it. Screw it over the storm door opening. Make a similar frame with screening in it for summer use.

**If you plan to use natural ventilation during the summer, a self-storing triple-track storm/screen door is your most convenient option.**

If you prefer more durability and efficiency and a perfectly clear view outdoors is not critical, select double-walled polycarbonate instead of acrylic. You can barely break the polycarbonate even with a big hammer.

Nail spring steel weather stripping in the door opening on the latch side and top and bottom. This type of weather stripping is very durable where there is sliding friction. Adhesive-backed foam weather stripping is effective in compression on the hinge side.

The following companies offer storm/screen doors: Cumberland Woodcraft, 800-367-1884, www.cumberlandwoodcraft.com; Emco Specialties, 800-933-3626, www.emcodors.com; Homeguard Industries, 800-525-1885, www.homeguard.net; Pella, 800-374-4758, www.pella.com; and ProVia Door, 877-389-0835, www.proviadoor.com.

Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, *Cooperative Connections*, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).





**EVERY MEMBER  
HAS A VOICE.  
TOGETHER  
THEY WORK  
IN HARMONY.**

Every electric co-op member has a say in what's best for the community. Power to the people, from the people. Doesn't that sound good? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**

## Minnesota Electric Co-ops in Agreement to Acquire Territory

**Sioux Valley Energy** joined with 11 other electric distribution cooperatives serving Minnesota to form Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) as the single point of contact for the purchase of electric service territory in southern Minnesota from Alliant Energy. SMEC announced Sept. 3 that it has reached a definitive agreement to acquire territory from Alliant Energy. The transaction is contingent upon regulatory approval. Assuming the acquisition is approved by regulators, it is expected to close in 2014.

For Sioux Valley Energy, the new service territory would add approximately 800 members to its current membership of 22,000 in South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. The acquisition will add approximately 43,000 electric accounts to the systems of all of the 12 SMEC member cooperatives combined.

"This acquisition will give SMEC's 12 member cooperatives new economies of scale to spread our fixed costs over more member-owners," said Tim McCarthy, general manager and CEO. "Keeping rates stable is more challenging these days with the cost of environmental compliance, integrating renewables, declining energy sales and general inflation affecting our rates. This acquisition is the single biggest positive action we can take to offset a portion of these cost pressures."

The service territories of Alliant Energy and the 12 cooperatives overlap, serving mostly rural areas in the southern portion of Minnesota. Alliant Energy will continue to serve Minnesota through a 10-year wholesale power agreement with the 12 cooperatives.

"Like Sioux Valley, all 12 electric cooperatives have served southern Minnesota for more than 70 years," said McCarthy. "We look forward to extending our professional, high-quality service to the former Alliant Energy customers who will become our new member-owners."

All of the Alliant Energy electric employees will be offered positions with a local cooperative. All rates for electric cooperatives are set on a cost-of-service basis to provide the highest quality service at the lowest practical cost. While the 12 participating cooperatives have slightly different rates, services, billing options and programs, each is committed to seeing that this transaction provides a long-term, economies-of-scale benefit to both current and new member-owners.

"Adding the Alliant Energy customers through this proposed acquisition of territory will grow and increase the efficiency of each cooperative," added McCarthy. "This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity helps all of us continue to provide our electric cooperative member-owners with high-quality service at a competitive cost."

Should the acquisition receive all the requisite approvals, Alliant Energy customers will become member-owners of one of the 12 electric cooperatives and enjoy the benefits of cooperative ownership including voting rights, board representation and the opportunity for patronage capital refunds — the margins of a cooperative that are returned to member-owners over time.

Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) was formed by 12 electric distribution cooperatives as a single point of contact for the proposed purchase of electric service territory in southern Minnesota from Alliant Energy. The 12 cooperatives are BENCO Electric Cooperative, Brown County Rural Electrical Association, Federated Rural Electric, Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, Nobles Cooperative Electric, People's Energy Cooperative, Redwood Electric Cooperative, Sioux Valley Energy, South Central Electric Association, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric and Tri-County Electric Cooperative.



# Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives is Reaching New Heights

**“Today, it  
is now one  
of the most  
recognized  
and trusted  
brands in  
energy.”**

SINCE THE NATIONAL BRAND of America's electric cooperatives launched 15 years, it has been reaching new heights.

One of the more novel places the brand appears is aloft in the skies on the sides of balloons. Over the past few years, the balloons have been traveling the country, having made appearances at co-op annual meetings in Hartford and Marion, S.D., and Tyler, Minn., in June and another in Onida, S.D., in September.

But the brand that unifies America's electric



cooperatives is more than an image on a hot air balloon. Much more.

Established in 1998, the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives brand represents a nationwide alliance made of 750 local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives in 46 states. Collectively, these cooperatives deliver power and energy solutions to more than 30 million members every day. More than 2.4 million miles of power line are used by electric cooperatives to distribute power for 75 percent of the U.S. land mass.

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand was pioneered by a few incredibly ambitious individuals

by Brenda Kleinjan



**EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE.  
MAKE SURE YOURS IS HEARD.**

Here's something worth shouting about. As an electric co-op member, you have a say in how the co-op is run and the decisions that are made. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**



who had the idea to bring electric cooperatives from across the country together under one brand.

Today, it is now one of the most recognized and trusted brands in energy.

"The Touchstone Energy brand is more than just a logo with the three colorful characters. It means that as cooperatives, we hold ourselves to high standards of service according to our four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community," said Carrie Law, director of communications and member relations at Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, S.D. Law was recently elected to the 14-member Touchstone Energy Cooperatives board of directors which represents co-ops across the nation.

"Touchstone Energy provides integral employee training, educational programs for children and public messaging that informs members on energy efficiency and cooperative membership. These benefits just skim the surface of what Touchstone Energy provides both the cooperative and its members," said Law.

Throughout its 15 years, the brand has continually evolved to meet the needs of members. Today, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives provides co-ops with more than 50 powerful programs, including award winning advertising campaigns, nationally recognized energy saving initiatives, economic and business development tools and more. By providing these programs to cooperatives around the nation, it helps them focus on what they do best — making their communities stronger while delivering safe, reliable and affordable power.

According to Jim Bausell, former COO of Touchstone Energy, "While our membership has experienced steady growth over the years, so have the number of programs, products and services that we have developed for use by co-ops to educate and communicate with their member-owners — as well as assist them in using electricity more wisely to save money."

When asked about the evolution of the brand, Jim Bausell said, "It truly has been remarkable. Really, 15 years in the brand-building world is basically still the infancy stage. Yet, when you look at how we've grown in that time, it's almost mind boggling."

"People are more aware of who we are as cooperatives because of the Touchstone Energy brand," said Loren Noess, manager of Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell, S.D., and a former director on the Touchstone Energy board. "People relate to the Touchstone Energy brand — they know it's their cooperative — and that's powerful."

By working together, co-ops are able to get their message out better.

"The amount and quality of advertising is of value," said Noess. "There's no way we could do that on our own."

Among the tools that the Touchstone Energy brand brings to local cooperatives is the TogetherWeSave.com campaign, which allows home owners to digitally explore how various improvements to their homes could cut energy bills.

To learn more about Touchstone Energy, visit your cooperative's web page or [www.touchstoneenergy.com](http://www.touchstoneenergy.com). For more about the Touchstone Energy® Balloon Program, visit [www.cbaballoon.com](http://www.cbaballoon.com)

**Left:** Through the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives brand, electric cooperatives have access to a variety of materials that can help individual cooperative members use electricity wisely and save on electric bills. Co-op members visiting [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com) can take an online Home Energy Savings Tour to learn more about their home's energy use.

The Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives brand focuses on promoting the work of electric cooperatives and the benefits they bring to their community. Here, the Power of Membership is explored as an essential part of electric cooperatives.

**ELECTRICITY PUTS BREAD ON YOUR TABLE. AND KEEPS IT IN YOUR WALLET.**

| LOAF OF BREAD |        |
|---------------|--------|
| 1996          | \$1.41 |
| 2013          | \$1.41 |
| INCREASE 0%   |        |

| ELECTRICITY |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 1996        | 5¢  |
| 2013        | 11¢ |
| INCREASE 2X |     |

Affordable, reliable electricity it's the best thing since... well, since we first supplied it over 75 years ago. We've been feeding membership at [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com).

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

**HERE'S SOMETHING THAT WILL REALLY WAKE YOU UP.**

| POUND OF COFFEE |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| 1996            | \$1.40 |
| 2013            | \$7.43 |
| INCREASE 51X    |        |

| ELECTRICITY |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 1996        | 5¢  |
| 2013        | 11¢ |
| INCREASE 2X |     |

We know how you like your electricity... affordable. And for the past 75 years, we've helped to keep it that way. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com).

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

**THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID ABOUT STAYING IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD.**

| HOUSE        |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1996         | \$3,000   |
| 2013         | \$113,700 |
| INCREASE 38X |           |

| ELECTRICITY |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 1996        | 5¢  |
| 2013        | 11¢ |
| INCREASE 2X |     |

Over the past 75 years, the price of a home has increased dramatically. But we've helped to ensure that the price of electricity has barely moved. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com).

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM



# Building Communities Cooperatively

*Economic investment remains a hallmark of electric cooperatives*

By Meghaan  
Evans

**E**LECTRIC COOPERATIVES' COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY harkens back to their genesis. By bringing safe, reliable and affordable power to unserved rural areas, co-ops provided the ultimate economic development boost. And they're still offering that today.

"In our economy right now, the cooperative model makes it possible for communities to band together in ways that enrich the quality of life," says Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the organization that supports more than 900 electric co-ops across America.

Economic development efforts can range from building the relationships necessary to bring revenue-generating activities into a community to

investing in partnerships with other businesses to create new jobs.

Historically, electric cooperatives have fostered the concept of "self-help," enabling commerce and employment by bringing wealth to the communities they serve via different types of "capital." Electric cooperatives are perfectly positioned to do this because of their intimate knowledge of local assets and resources, as well as relationships with business, political and opinion leaders, Emerson explains.

"Personal relationships are at the core of the cooperative business model and the ability to establish and build those relationships is the key to successful economic development efforts," she says. "Electric





co-ops, for example, work hand-in-hand with chambers of commerce, industrial parks, agricultural producers, manufacturers and small businesses. Economic development is essential not only to the prosperity of rural communities, but also to the cooperatives that serve them.”

### Pitching partnerships

Flint Energies, based in Reynolds, Ga., has been able to work cooperatively to build programs in its service area that create value while supporting traditions that are deeply embedded in the local culture.

Little League baseball has been a staple within Flint Energies’ central Georgia service territory since 1952, when a local diamond in Warner Robins bore the name “Flint Field.” When the old field was eventually torn down, the co-op donated money toward building a sports complex so the next generation could keep playing ball.

In turn, the new facility attracted the Little League Southeast Regional tournament. This year marks the fourth summer that the event will take place at the new field, bringing close to 18,000 people who will infuse \$1.8 million into local businesses.

“We believe that the key to our success in bringing Little League International to Warner Robins was the fact that all the key players came together with a common purpose and that purpose was a commitment to the community we all serve,” says Jimmy Autry, Flint Energies senior vice president of member and community relations.

Georgia Electric Membership Corporation, the Tucker-based statewide association that supports Peach State cooperatives, and the Georgia Institute of Technology determined that electric cooperatives’ total economic impact on the state’s economy in 2004 was about \$6.1 billion. Cooperatives brought more than 25,270 jobs to Georgia communities, both in and out of cooperative service territory.

### Infusing economies

Nationally, electric cooperatives employ 70,000 people in the U.S. and pay \$1.4 billion in state and local taxes annually. They also retire hundreds of millions of dollars every year in capital credits, sometimes called patronage capital – margins credited to cooperative members each year based on their purchases (in the case of electric cooperatives, electricity). Patronage capital is used by the co-op as working capital for a period of time and then paid back to individual members.

In 2012 alone, electric co-ops retired \$768 million in capital

**Little League baseball has been a longtime tradition for Flint Energies members, dating back to 1952 when a local diamond was dubbed Flint Field. Flint Energies officials worked cooperatively with area businesses and agencies to bring the Little League World Series Championship tournament to Warner Robins, Ga., in 2009. Source: Flint Energies**



**Personal relationships are at the core of what locally owned and operated cooperatives are all about, which makes them perfectly positioned to foster economic development projects. Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives**

credits, for a total of \$11 billion since 1988.

The South Dakota Rural Electric Association, along with Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the national branding program for 750 electric co-ops, published a report showing how electric cooperatives impact local economies. The study documented that between 2007 and 2009, South Dakota electric cooperatives generated about 3,150 new jobs and re-

tained more than 3,000 existing jobs through the sponsorship of revolving loan funds, which help small businesses with expansion by using interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones.

“Individually, we know that electric cooperatives play an important role in the communities they serve,” explains Brenda Kleinjan, director of communications and member relations for the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. “The study al-

lowed us to aggregate those impacts and quantify the value our co-ops have on rural communities statewide.”

Collectively, South Dakota electric cooperatives invested more than \$2.4 million in business and economic development activities and have provided about \$48 million in economic and community development loans to 188 borrowers. As a result, electric cooperatives helped to infuse more than \$57 million into the state’s economy, which includes not just business revenue, but also the value of salaries created because of new construction.

Economic development doesn’t just provide the community with monetary value; it creates trusted partnerships between the co-ops and their communities, says NRECA’s Emerson. “The true value in economic development is the improvement to the co-op member’s quality of life. That is the cooperative purpose and it’s what we’re about.”

*Sources: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, South Dakota Rural Electric Association.*

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.*



# Raising Monsters

**“If you think you’re going to just plant it and grow it, you’re not going to do too well.”**

**by Brenda Kleinjan**

**W**HEN IT COMES TO PUMPKINS, GEORGE WITTER and Kevin Marsh think big. Really big.

Each year the two men grow giant pumpkins for competition. Unfortunately, the 2013 season didn’t shape up real well for them.

Witter’s big pumpkins didn’t survive the summer on his plot of land in eastern Sioux Falls, S.D., while Marsh’s dreams of a title-worthy fruit dwindled to a single thousand-pounder.

“I have one left, but I’m not sure if it’ll make it or not,” said Marsh of his 2013 crop. “I was hailed out in June, but they came back. Now they have disease. I have one that I estimate at 1,090 pounds, but it kind of quit growing, so I don’t know if it’ll make it or not,” Marsh said in early September.

If the pumpkin can hang on, it will likely make a trek from its patch north of Parker, S.D., to one of two giant pumpkin contests in South Dakota recognized by the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth, an international organization dedicated to giant pumpkin contests and weigh-ins. The Rapid City Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off is set for Saturday Sept. 28 in downtown Rapid City while the Southeastern South Dakota Great Pumpkin Weigh Off is set for Oct. 5 at the Country Apple Orchard near Harrisburg.

A giant pumpkin can be entered in only one contest.

While the 1,000-pound specimen that Marsh is nursing along sounds large, it is pint-size when compared to state and world records.

Marsh holds the South Dakota giant pumpkin record for a 1,674-pound fruit grown in 2010. The world record was set by a Rhode Island man in 2012 when he grew a 2,009-pound behemoth that holds both Marsh and Witter in a bit of awe.

Witter notes that growing competitive pumpkins is not for the faint-of-heart.

“If you think you’re going to just plant it and grow it, you’re not going to do too well,” said Witter.

Both men said they start their seeds indoors in April. In May, they’re planted

outdoors and a greenhouse is constructed around them to keep the plants warm. The structure is removed in early June and that’s when the work gets more intense.

The plants are carefully pruned with new portions of the vine getting buried to promote new root development. The vines can grow 18 inches a day.

“By the 20th of June, you hope to have the pumpkin set,” said Witter. “If they’re not set by the 10th of July, for competition, you might as well forget it.”

Witter has tried different methods to coax a scale-tipping pumpkin out of a small patch at his home.

“I thought I could push them enough in that small area. I can grow them up to 800 to 900 pounds, but not much more,” said Witter, who is now planning to dig up more of his yard to dedicate to growing a giant pumpkin. Witter said that the giant pumpkins really need 600 to 1,200 square feet of growing space. His attempts had been limited to a roughly 300-square foot area.

Throughout the growing season, the men will alter their fertilizer concentrations and mixes and



**Kevin Marsh turned his 2010 South Dakota record-setting 1,674-pound giant pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern at his home north of Parker, S.D. *Opposite page:* Marsh tests out a giant pumpkin’s functionality as a canoe.**

*Photos by Kevin Marsh*





carefully feed their plants.

"For a plant as big as they are, they're kind of fragile, too," said Witter, noting that diseases and bugs must be controlled.

"The big ones are almost like velvet when you touch them. They have very soft skin, extremely soft," said Witter.

At its peak, the pumpkin will grow 20 to 50 pounds a day.

"That's a small child," said Marsh.

"I spend an hour or two every night in the pumpkin patch," said Marsh.

"You have to train the vines. At every leaf, it will shoot down a root, which is good because it brings water back to the fruit. The pumpkin is a big blob of water."

Both Marsh and Witter agree that weather is the growing variable that they can't control.

"I can do the same thing as the guy in Rhode Island but have totally different results because of the weather," Marsh said.

When temperatures soar, canopies are constructed to keep the sun's harsh rays from the pumpkins. The heat and light can harden the pumpkin and restrict its growth or cause the shell to crack.

"Sometimes, a heavy rain will cause them to crack, as it can increase their growth rate," said Witter.

"The object is to keep them at the peak with the right food and moisture, but you can't control the weather," said Witter.

"Now, we're doctoring them all the way," said Witter.

Both men have something of a green thumb, which is obvious by the passion they have for growing giant pumpkins.

"It's a lot of fun if you've got the time. It takes time and effort," said Witter, 82, who has always gardened as a hobby and has been growing the giant pumpkins for competition for the past six years or so.

Marsh said when he was 9, he pretty much took over his mom's garden and would snatch up the Gurney's Seed Catalogue as soon as it arrived to start marking the plants he dreamed of growing. Now, he has children that age and grows the pumpkins as a hobby when not working as a mail carrier out of Parker.

While the variety of pumpkin grown for competition is edible, both Marsh and Witter said that fruits nurtured for the scale shouldn't be eaten as systemic bug killers are used on the plants.

Marsh has come up with some creative uses for the pumpkins after the competitions are over.

One year, he cut open the giant pumpkin and tooled around a body of water in his blob-shaped canoe. When his children were small, a hollowed out pumpkin was filled with warm water and the kids were able to take a dip in their very own biodegradable swimming pool...in mid November!

And, with Halloween around the corner, Marsh has even carved a giant jack-o-lantern for the end of his drive way. But don't look for paltry candles to illuminate it. The size warranted real lights complete with extension cords.

"The most fun part is the drive to the weigh off. If you stop, you won't move for another hour because so many people will come up to look at the trailer," said Marsh.

"The smiles you get makes it all worth it," said Marsh of growing the giant fall fruits.

## Bat Festival Builds Awareness

**For the past eight years,** biologists and bat enthusiasts have been building an awareness for the more than a dozen species of bats that call South Dakota home.



**The northern bat is one of 13 species found in South Dakota**

*Photo by Dr. Kristen Page*

Each August, the South Dakota Bat

Working Group's Annual Bat Festival is held at the Tatanka Theatre at Custer State Park. Biologists and other bat enthusiasts spend the evening discussing bats and bat-related topics.

After a lecture-presentation on bats, bat detectors are used to listen to echolocation calls of bats flying overhead in the campground.

"It's an opportunity to provide accurate information about an important animal," said Joel Tigner, who coordinates the festival and owns Batworks, a consulting company. "A lot of people have a lot of misconceptions about bats and don't understand the important role they play."

"Bats are important to agriculture. They're the main predator of night-flying insects which are often ag pests," Tigner said.

Tigner noted that one bat netted in the Black Hills was weighed, banded and released. When it returned to its roost three hours later after feasting on insects, its body weight had increased 40 percent.

"A lot of what they eat are forestry and agricultural pests," Tigner said. Tigner noted that the largest bat roost in the world is in Texas. The bats in that one cave eat the equivalent weight of 32 African elephants every night that they go out.

Tigner said that the smallest of the 13 bat species found in South Dakota can sit on the last joint of his thumb, while the largest — the Hoary bat — has a wing span of a couple of feet. South Dakotans are most likely to encounter the big brown bat, whose adult females can often be found roosting in buildings.

Bats are the only mammals that can fly and adult female bats usually give birth to one pup a year and many of the pups don't survive their first year.

"It's tough being a bat in South Dakota when you get the winters that we get," Tigner noted.

While bats in buildings can be a nuisance, they are not rodents, Tigner said.

"They don't build nests or chew on wires. There are ways of dealing with them without harming the bats," he said.

"They're more important than people realize."

The ninth annual South Dakota Bat Festival is set for Aug. 16, 2014.

For more on the South Dakota Bat Working Group and the 2014 Bat Festival, go to <http://sdbwg.org/>.



# Hunting Lodges

## *help boost local economies*

By Brenda  
Kleinjan

**A**N AVALANCHE OF HUNTER ORANGE WILL SOON descend on South Dakota as hunters of all shapes and sizes from destinations near and far come in search of the South Dakota state bird.

And while they hunt the colorful ring-necked pheasant and other wildlife, those hunters bring with them money that has far-reaching impacts on local economies.

In 2012, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks estimated that the 164,000 resident and non-resident pheasant hunters seeking

the birds spent \$172.5 million on items including food, gas, lodging, ammunition, guns, clothing and other items for successful and memorable hunts.

One segment of the hunting industry that gears up specifically for the annual influx of orange are the scores of private hunting lodges that work all year for the fall season.

Nailing down the number of private lodges catering to the orange invasion is a bit elusive – there is no one clearinghouse for the numbers, said Justin Larson, Outdoor Media and Industry Relations







## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PHEASANT HUNTING IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Pheasant hunting by the numbers\* in 2012 and 2011.

|   | 2012            | 2011          |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Number of resident and non-resident hunters:        | 163,041         | 164,197       |
| Pre-season pheasant population:                     | 7.6 million     | 6.6 million   |
| Number of pheasants harvested:                      | 1,428,873       | 1,555,307     |
| Dollars spent by resident and non-resident hunters: | \$172.5 million | \$226 million |

\*Source: [www.gfp.sd.gov](http://www.gfp.sd.gov)

Representative for the South Dakota Department of Tourism.

The state tourism department lists more than 280 South Dakota hunting related businesses, which include lodges, outfitters and private guides along with retail businesses and local establishments that cater to the specific needs of hunters.

However, one hunting Web site listed more than 400 lodges and hunt-related places in the state.

One such lodge catering to hunters is Horsefeathers Lodge on the outskirts of Pierre, S.D. The lodge's home base is a converted barn that was moved in from host Bob Tinker's family land in north central South Dakota. The lodge features three levels: a main gathering level and two floors of sleeping rooms. Hunters spend four nights at the lodge and three days hunting from Tennessee Walking horses. (He believes his is the only guide service to offer the horseback hunts on the Tennessee Walkers.)

Tinker has guided for nearly three decades and he and his wife, Kayla, built the lodge in 1999.

Hunting wild birds on private land, Tinker said a long day for his hunters can include up to 30 miles on horseback, while a short day will only log 10 miles in the saddle.

"We're not a preserve that releases birds," said Tinker. "We hunt by state limits and licenses."

(Hunting preserves, were authorized in South Dakota in 1963. Preserve owners must release a set number of roosters each year and provide detailed records as part of their preserve license.)

Tinker boasts that no land is hunted twice.

"Most of my hunting takes place in areas that aren't highly sought after. They're harder to access, which makes them perfect for the horses and dogs," said Tinker.

The quarry sought is a full-day's limit of pheasant, sharp-tail grouse and prairie chicken slung across one's saddle.

Tinker said his dogs – full-bred English Setters – got him involved in the guided hunting on horseback.

"The dogs got me into it," said Tinker, who was training dogs and taking them to competitions. Soon, requests to line up hunts started coming in and the dream of a lodge was born.

For more information on hunting related tourism in South Dakota, visit <http://www.travelsd.com/Outdoors/Hunting/General-Information/Hunting-Businesses>



## PRIVATE SHOOTING PRESERVES BY SIZE

2013-14

| Acreage           | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| 160.....          | 12     |
| 161 - 320 .....   | 23     |
| 321 - 640 .....   | 51     |
| 641 - 960 .....   | 36     |
| 961 - 1279 .....  | 25     |
| 1280 - 1919 ..... | 34     |
| 1920 - 2559 ..... | 18     |
| 2560.....         | 7      |

There were 206 shooting preserves involving 175 operators in South Dakota licensed for the 2013-14 season.

Total Land in Shooting Preserves: 199,379 acres

Average Preserve Size: 968 Acres

Source: South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks <http://gfp.sd.gov/licenses/shooting-preserves/preserve-numbers.aspx>

**Left and above:** Horsefeathers Lodge east of Pierre, S.D., provides the home base for Bob Tinker's hunts. For more information, visit <http://tinkerkennels.com/default.htm>



## Regional Dateline

### September 20-22

German-Russian Schmeckfest  
Eureka, SD, 605-284-2332  
www.eurekasd.com

### September 20-22

North Country Fiber Fair  
Watertown, SD, 605-254-8434  
www.northcountryfiberfair.org

### September 21

Outcasts Cruise-in and  
Car Show  
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-7203

### September 21-22

Pioneer Power Show  
Menno, SD, 605-387-5161  
www.pioneeracres.com

### September 21-22

Northeastern Celtic Faire  
and Games, Aberdeen, SD  
605-216-3403  
www.nesdcelticfaire.com

### September 26-29

South Dakota Film Festival  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3481  
www.southdakotafilmfest.org

### September 27-28

9th Annual Custer Stampede  
Buffalo Art Auction  
Custer, SD, 605-673-2244  
www.custerstampede.com

### September 27-29

Black Hills Photo Shootout  
Spearfish, SD, 813-956-8702  
www.thephotoshootout.com

### September 28

1880 Train Oktoberfest Express  
Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE KLOSE

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

### September 27

Custer State Park Buffalo  
Roundup, Custer, SD  
605-255-4515  
www.gfp.sd.gov

### September 27-28

Badger Clark Cowboy  
Poetry and Music Gathering  
Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

### September 28

5th Annual Great Downtown  
Pumpkin Festival  
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

### September 28-29

Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival  
Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

### September 29

24th Annual Buffalo Wallow  
Chili Cook-off, Custer, SD  
605-673-2244

### October 4-5

Wilbur Ellis Championship  
Bull Riding, Mitchell, SD  
605-995-8430  
www.cornpalace.com

### October 4-5

Oktoberfest  
Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826

### October 5-6, 12-13

Country Apple Orchard  
Pumpkin Festival  
Harrisburg, SD, 605-366-6318

### October 6

Run Crazy Horse Marathon  
Hill City, SD, 605-584-3896

### October 10-13

Wild West Songwriter's Festival  
Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826  
www.wildwestsongwriters.com

### October 11-12

Pumpkin Fest and Night  
Parade Webster, SD, 605-345-4668  
www.webstersd.com

### October 11-13

He Sapa Wacipi Na Oskate  
Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925  
www.blackhillspowwow.com

### October 17-19

SoDak Animation Festival  
Brookings, SD, 605-688-6034  
www.sodakanimation.com

### October 18-20

SDRA Finals Rodeo  
James Kjerstad Events Center  
Rapid City, SD, 605-529-5107

### October 19

Arts and Crafts Festival  
Faulkton, SD, 605-598-6763

### October 25-26

Black Hills Grand Outdoors  
Sports and Recreation Show  
Deadwood, SD, 605-559-1187

### October 25-27

Autumn Festival  
An Arts and Crafts Affair  
Sioux Falls, SD, 402-331-2889  
www.hpifestivals.com

### October 26-27

Dakota Territory Gun  
Collectors Association  
Gun Show, Davison County  
4-H Grounds, Mitchell, SD  
605-268-0254

### November 9

16th Annual Holiday Open  
House Extravaganza  
Sisseton, SD, 605-698-7425