

# South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

SEPTEMBER 2014 VOL. 66 NO. 9



### TECH AND APPS CAN HELP CUT ENERGY COSTS



**WE ALL HAVE A JOB TO DO.** When it comes to using energy wisely, no job is too small. But some are pretty high up. Yet when every co-op member works together, it's a job that comes with countless benefits. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



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POWER COOPERATIVE**

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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.  
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Dakota Energy, Huron, S.D.  
Douglas Electric, Armour, S.D.  
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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.  
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# Not Letting You Get Lost in the Shuffle



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

**Six hundred pages** plus another 1,000 of supporting documents. That's the length of the latest proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It would amend the Clean Air Act (only 465 pages) to limit carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the power plants on which we rely today.

Besides reading the actual rule, a lot also has been written about its legality, feasibility and complexity. Lost in the shuffle of thousands of pages is the impact on people. How much will electric bills increase? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs will be lost? Which power plants will be forced to shut down?

These are difficult questions. But they're important questions.

South Dakota's electric cooperatives work hard to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions.

**That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact in the real world – where we live.**

We don't want you to get lost in the shuffle.

We put our members first. We advocate for you. We see you every

month paying your bill at the office. We work with you. We know when times are tough. We often live next door.

After all, you govern us. Our board members and community leaders are one in the same. We're as local as any organization and we like it that way.

That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact in the real world – where we live. That's why we've encouraged everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop) and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

Please raise your voice. Don't get lost in the shuffle.

Together, we can tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true all-of-the-above energy policy are not mutually exclusive. Together, we can talk about our energy efficiency programs. We can talk about our renewable energy programs, including the large wind projects that your cooperative owns. We can talk about how we did this without any mandates. We can talk about how we did this because it's the right thing to do.

Together we'll remind regulators and lawmakers that the impact new rules and laws have on people should be their first thought, not their last.

And we have a big family, with more than 900 electric cooperatives in the country backing us up.

We have a great and positive story to tell. We can tell the story together. And it won't even take 1,600 pages.

And affordable, reliable electricity is the linchpin to these vital assets.

## Back-to-School Safety Tips

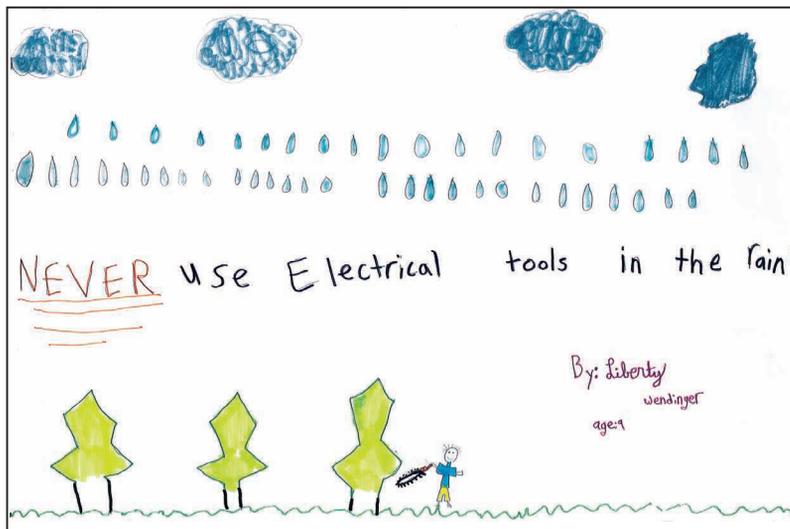
**You can protect** your children from the most frequent kinds of school-related injuries by following these practical, proven tips.

- Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers
  - Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend or neighbor.
  - Teach your kids – whether walking, biking or riding the bus to school – to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers.
  - When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building
    - If your child bikes to school, make sure he wears a helmet that meets one of the safety. Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
    - If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads.
  - Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.
  - Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
  - Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.
  - Be sure that your child knows his or her home phone number and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

Source: [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov)

### Kids' Corner Safety Poster

**"Never use electrical tools in the rain!"**



**Liberty Wendinger, 9 years old**

*Liberty is the daughter of Gene and Katie Wendinger, Hendricks, Minn. They are members of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Tyler, Minn.*

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.



Can you afford to  
**pay more**  
for your electricity bill?

THE **EPA** THINKS YOU CAN.

>>>> **ACTION.COOP** <<<<

# Garden Delights



## Chicken Zucchini Casserole

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 (6 oz.) pkg. stuffing mix | 1/2 cup chopped onion               |
| 3/4 cup melted butter       | 1/2 cup sour cream                  |
| 3 cups diced zucchini       | 2 cups cooked, cubed chicken breast |
| 1 can cream of chicken soup |                                     |
| 1 medium carrot, shredded   |                                     |

In a large bowl, combine stuffing mix and butter, setting aside 1/2 cup for topping. Add remaining ingredients to stuffing mixture. Transfer to greased 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining stuffing mixture. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

**Deloris Bachman, Rapid City**

## Aunt Nellie's Whole Onion and Fresh Tomato Sauce

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 (15 oz.) jar Aunt Nellie's Whole Holland-Style Onions | 1 cup chopped fresh tomatoes                                       |
| 1 T. olive or vegetable oil                             | 1/2 cup chopped roasted red bell peppers or sweet piquante peppers |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced                                 | Chopped fresh herbs (such as basil, thyme, oregano, chives)        |
| 1/2 cup white wine, chicken broth or vegetable broth    |  |

Drain onions; discard liquid. Heat oil in medium skillet over medium heat until hot. Add garlic; cook and stir 1 minute. Add onions and wine; cook 2-3 minutes or until most of liquid has evaporated. Stir in tomatoes and peppers; heat through. Stir in herbs, as desired.

Note: To serve, toss sauce with cooked pasta. Or, serve over grilled or sauteed chicken breast or fish, such as cod, tilapia or halibut. Servings: 4 (1/2-cup) servings

*Nutritional information per serving: 100 calories; less than 1 g protein; 9 g carbohydrate; 4 g fat; 260 mg sodium; 0 mg cholesterol; 1 g dietary fiber; 0.62 mg iron; 1539.78 IU vitamin A; 11.10 mg vitamin C.*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Cucumbers Deluxe

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 cup mayonnaise or Miracle Whip  | 1/2 tsp. salt                                     |
| 1/4 cup sugar                     | 4 medium cucumbers, peeled and thinly sliced      |
| 4 tsp. white vinegar              | 3 green onions, sliced thin (use green part also) |
| 1/2 tsp. fresh dill weed, chopped |   |

In a large bowl, combine first 5 ingredients; mix well. Add cucumbers and onions. Cover and chill at least 1 hour.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird**

## Frito Corn Salad

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 cans whole kernel corn, drained | 1 cup Miracle Whip   |
| 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped      | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese                              |
| 1/2 green bell pepper, chopped    | 1 (5 oz.) pkg. Fritos honey BBQ twists or chili corn chips |
| 1/4 onion, chopped                |  |
| 1 cup chopped celery              |  |

Combine all ingredients except chips. Add chips just before serving.

**Pam Hofer, Carpenter**

## New Potatoes and Peas

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 lb. whole tiny new potatoes                     | 2 T. all-purpose flour |
| 1-1/2 cups shelled peas or loose-pack frozen peas | 1/2 tsp. salt          |
| 1/4 cup chopped onion                             | Dash of pepper         |
| 2 T. butter                                       | 2 cups milk            |

Scrub potatoes; cut any large potatoes in half. If desired, remove a narrow strip of peel from around the center of each potato. In a medium saucepan, cook potatoes in a small amount of boiling salted water for 10 minutes. Add peas and cook an additional 5 to 10 minutes or until tender. Drain. In a medium saucepan, sauté onion in butter until tender but not brown. Stir in flour, salt and pepper. Add milk all at once. Cook and stir until thick and bubbly. Cook and stir 1 minute more. Stir in potatoes and peas; heat through. Season to taste. Serves 4.

**Lola Nelson, Henry**

## Creamy Broccoli Cabbage

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 cups shredded cabbage        | 4 oz. cream cheese, cubed |
| 1/2 lb. fresh broccoli florets | Salt to taste             |
| 2 T. butter                    |                           |

Place cabbage and broccoli in a saucepan; add 1 inch of water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 to 8 minutes or until crisp tender. Meanwhile, in another saucepan, melt butter. Stir in cream cheese until melted. Drain vegetables; top with cream sauce. Add salt and toss to coat.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson**

*Please send your favorite pasta and wild game 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 2014. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*

# When Do Upgrades Make Sense?



**Jim Dulley**  
www.dulley.com

**Dear Jim:** I wonder if I should buy new appliances (kitchen, laundry, TV, etc.)? Other than just comparing EnergyGuide labels, how can I determine the savings? How can I calculate the cost to use an appliance? – Megan H.

**Dear Megan:** For major appliances, comparing the EnergyGuide label is the best method to determine the cost to use each new one. Based upon the purchase price, you

can then calculate which appliance provides the best return.

The most efficient appliance is not always the best buy from a payback standpoint. However, there are other factors to consider. Some people are very concerned about the environmental impact of using appliances, so they are willing to spend extra for the most efficient models. Selecting an ENERGY STAR®-qualified model is a good choice. Visit TogetherWeSave.com and take the “Home Tour” to learn about potential energy savings on ENERGY STAR appliances.

To do a proper payback analysis of the decision to replace your existing appliances, you have to determine the cost to operate your existing appliance. You may have kept the old EnergyGuide label with your paperwork from the old appliance or you may be able to do an Internet search to find it.

Keep in mind that even if you have the EnergyGuide labels showing annual operating costs, these figures are only averages. If you already are energy conscious, your current operating costs are likely on the low side and your savings from installing a new appliance will be lower than the average annual cost figures indicate.

There are a couple of ways to calculate the cost to use an electric appliance. The simplest and quickest way is to download the “Save Energy, Save Money” app from TogetherWeSave.com (<http://www.togetherwesave.com/power-of-using-energy-wisely/saving-at-home>). This easy-to-use app provides several calculators for appliances found throughout your home.

Another way to calculate the cost of appliance use is to use an actual formula. First, find the wattage rating on the nameplate. Divide this by 1,000 and multiply the result by your \$/kwh electric rate to get the operating cost per hour. If the nameplate lists amperage, multiply it by 120 to get watts. For appliances with a thermostat, reduce the operating cost by about 50 percent.

The rate of efficiency improvements and meaningful new features in major appliances is slowing, so there is no need to wait if you really need a new one. One exception is televisions

because their prices are constantly dropping and features and quality improving.

In general though, it makes economic sense to keep your older, major appliances about 10 years or until they need expensive repairs. If you make a concerted effort to use your older appliances as seldom and as efficiently as possible, they will not cost a lot more to use than a newer one. Even for the refrigerator, which has to keep cool continuously, usage habits can really influence the electricity consumption.

If you have a large family and do much laundry, the cost to use the clothes washer also includes the cost of the water and the cost to heat the water. Upgrading your water heater, to perhaps a heat pump water heater, will also reduce your dishwashing and bathing costs in addition to laundry costs.

New front-loading clothes washers are typically more energy efficient than top-loading ones because front-loaders require less heated water. The actual electricity use by the motor is about the same for both types. Also, since a front-loader washer uses less water, less detergent needs to be used.

A secondary, but significant, savings with a front-loader is their faster spin cycle. The horizontal axis tub design can spin very fast. By spinning faster, more water is extracted from the rinsed clothes. This greatly reduces the drying time, so the dryer needs to run less and uses less electricity.

When selecting a new dishwasher, make sure it has a built-in water preheater. This allows you to set your water heater temperature lower without sacrificing the cleaning effectiveness of hotter water. Spend a little extra and select a model with many cycles. With more cycles, you can more accurately target the cycle length to the requirements of each load.

Just like a house, a smaller refrigerator has less interior space to keep cool and uses less electricity. Also, with a smaller model, there is less insulated outside surface area to absorb heat, which the compressor must remove to stay cold inside.

Don't go to extremes on the small size though. Adequate space inside the refrigerator for convenient access to items is important. If you have to keep the door open while you move things around to find what you want, more energy will be wasted than the amount you saved with a small one. Modern refrigerators, such as ENERGY STAR models, use about half of the energy that a 10-year-old model uses. The “Save Energy, Save Money” app includes a calculator to help you compare the cost of different sizes, styles and ages of refrigerators and freezers.

There is not a major difference in the energy efficiency of the various types of new ranges. Convection ovens bake faster, so they use less electricity for some foods. Induction elements lose less heat to the room air, so overall electricity use is somewhat less. The best way to save when cooking is to use the microwave or other smaller countertop appliances whenever possible.

**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).**

## Trio To Enter Cooperative Hall of Fame

**Three men who** have dedicated much of their adult lives to cooperatives will be inducted into the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame Sept. 10 at the Crossroads Hotel in Huron, S.D.

Induction into the cooperative hall of fame recognizes co-op leaders who have contributed in significant ways to the enhancement of the cooperative idea.

**Harvey Wollman** of Sioux Falls, S.D., has long been recognized as “Mr. AMPI,” having spent 43 years working for the dairy farmer-owners of a leading milk-marketing cooperative in the state before retiring in 2006. He grew up on a dairy farm near Bridgewater, S.D., and began his dairy co-op career in 1962 as a can milk and bulk milk hauler and later as a field representative for Farmers Dairy and Produce Association in Freeman, S.D. The co-op merged with AMPI in 1969 and continued on with AMPI, spending more than 40 years in the industry.

**John Van Beek** of Glenham, S.D., has been a director for Selby, S.D.-based Cam Wal Electric Cooperative since 1976. During his nearly 40 years on the board, he has spent much of his time representing Cam Wal on the Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative board of directors. He in turn has represented the Rapid City, S.D.-based Rushmore Electric on the statewide South Dakota Rural Electric Association board of directors since 1995.

**Gene Kroell** of Pierre spent 50 years in the telecommunications industry, including 33 at Sanborn Telephone Cooperative in Woonsocket, S.D. During his tenure at the co-op, he saw it expand its service area, expand into television cable and form a subsidiary to address business telephone system needs.

For more information about the S.D. Cooperative Hall of Fame or for tickets to the induction banquet, contact the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives at 605-945-2548 or by e-mail at office@sdac.coop.



**John Van Beek**

## S.D. Attorney General Joins Lawsuit Against EPA

**South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley** is one of 12 state attorneys general to file a lawsuit Aug. 1 against the Environmental Protection Agency over the agency’s proposed rules on coal-based power plants.

Other states involved in the suit, which was filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia include Alabama, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, West Virginia and Wyoming.

The suit claims that the EPA entered into a settlement agreement with environmental groups and allied states to regulate existing coal-fired power plants under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act. The plaintiffs argue that the settlement and subsequent regulations are illegal because they regulated under a different part of the Clean Air Act.



**Marty Jackley**

## Slack Receives \$1,000 National Scholarship

**Lexi Slack, a student** at South Dakota State University in Brookings, and originally from Viborg, has received a \$1,000 Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation scholarship. The Foundation, a 501c3 charitable organization, was formed in 2013 to commemorate the many years of public service of NRECA’s former CEO Glenn English, a tireless advocate for the consumer and for the cooperative business model. The awards go to students who have shown a commitment to one or more of the seven cooperative principles.

In order to be considered, applicants had to meet the following criteria: they participated in NRECA’s Youth Tour and had completed at least one semester at an accredited institution. Full eligibility details are available on NRECA.coop. NRECA evaluated applicants on their GPA, internships, extra-curricular activities, leadership and involvement in the cooperative program.

Cooperatives around the world operate according to a core set of principles. The following seven principles, along with the cooperative purpose of improving quality of life for their members, make electric cooperatives different from other electric utilities: Voluntary and open membership; Democratic member control; Members’ economic participation; Autonomy and independence; Education, training and information; Cooperation among cooperatives; and Concern for community

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.



**Lexi Slack**

# Thermostats Get Smart, Can Program Themselves

**T**ECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS ARE CREATING NEW energy-saving opportunities for some electric cooperative members. The same equipment and software that co-ops use to monitor their electrical system can also generate detailed energy-use reports that homeowners can monitor to trim electric consumption.

A programmable thermostat is one of the easiest energy savers you can buy. Unfortunately most people don't program their thermostat to automatically adjust the temperature when the home is empty or full.

The problem may have been solved by one of the coolest, albeit relatively expensive, new home energy gadgets. Nest Labs has created the Nest Learning Thermostat™. This thermostat is “smart” and learns from your behaviors, preferences and surroundings to create a custom heating and cool-

ing schedule, keeping you comfortable when you're home and conserving energy when you're away.

“It was unacceptable to me that the device controlling 10 percent of all energy consumed in the U.S. hadn't kept up with advancements in technology and design,” said Tony Fadell, co-founder and CEO of Nest Labs. “Together with the team, Co-Founder Matt Rogers and I set out to reinvent the thermostat using advanced technologies, high-quality manufacturing processes and the thoughtful design elements the iPhone generation expects. We hope it will not only save money and energy, but that it will teach and inspire people to think more about how they can reduce home-energy consumption.”

According to the U.S. Department of Energy and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, the annual energy bill for a typical single-family home is ap-

By Les O'Dell  
and Industry  
Press Releases





proximately \$2,200, with heating and cooling (HVAC) accounting for approximately half of the bill. The programmable thermostat, developed in the 1970s, promised to help people conserve energy, but 89 percent of owners rarely or never set a program.

The Nest Learning Thermostat addresses the programming problem through a combination of sensors, algorithms, machine learning and cloud computing. The Nest thermostat programs itself based on the temperatures you set. It then learns your personal schedule in a week and starts automatically turning down heating or cooling when you're away to save energy.

You can even connect the Nest thermostat to your home's Wi-Fi network to control it from your laptop, smartphone or tablet. Change the temperature, adjust your schedule and check your energy usage.

For more information visit [www.nest.com](http://www.nest.com).

Other smart thermostats are also on the market and offering consumers choices.

In April, ecobee announced it has received OpenADR 2.0b certification from the OpenADR Alliance, a non-profit corporation created to foster the development, adoption, and compliance of the OpenADR smart grid standard. ecobee is the first company to have a 2.0b certified thermostat which provides standard-based communication between utilities and its customers to help improve energy savings and ease of participation in demand response (DR) programs.

The market for smart thermostats is experiencing widespread adoption. According to Navigant Research, nearly 32 million smart thermostats will be installed worldwide by the year 2020. As dramatic growth occurs, standardization is crucial to simplify DR programs and increase participation so homeowners and businesses can easily save energy during high peak times.

"ecobee's mission is to empower homeowners to achieve meaningful energy savings without sacrificing

comfort," said Stuart Lombard, CEO, ecobee. "OpenADR provides standards to simplify communication between the utility and the customer delivering peak load reduction for utilities, savings and reliability for homeowners, and sustainability for the community."

Designed for more sophisticated devices, OpenADR 2.0b supports most DR services and markets including commercial, industrial and residential environments which enables broad-based and completely automated participation in DR events. It includes flexible reporting capabilities for past, current and future data reports.

"There is growing demand among utilities for OpenADR certified thermostats to support automated demand response programs for both residential and commercial customers," said Barry Haaser, managing director, OpenADR Alliance. "It is exciting to see the innovative smart thermostat from ecobee enable new utility programs and a better customer experience through open standards."

ecobee delivers intelligent energy management solutions to homeowners, commercial, HVAC, and Utility markets. With hundreds of thousands of installs across North America, ecobee's award-winning smart thermostats and Open Energy Management Platform are the easiest way for customers to understand, manage, and reduce their energy consumption. ecobee's pioneering work with Open APIs is accelerating the adoption of the Internet of Things and leading to a more connected home.

ecobee's line of Wi-Fi enabled smart thermostats, online web portals and mobile apps are the products of choice for ease of use, energy efficiency and demand response programs. [www.ecobee.com](http://www.ecobee.com)

# Powerful Excursion

**W**HERE DOES OUR POWER COME FROM?"

Many people often have this question and this past July, teens from across South Dakota had the opportunity to see firsthand what powers the electricity used every day and how that power is made. On July 22, a group of 57 teens traveled to North Dakota for three days of learning, fun, sightseeing and an insight of the marvels that are the modern practices for producing power.

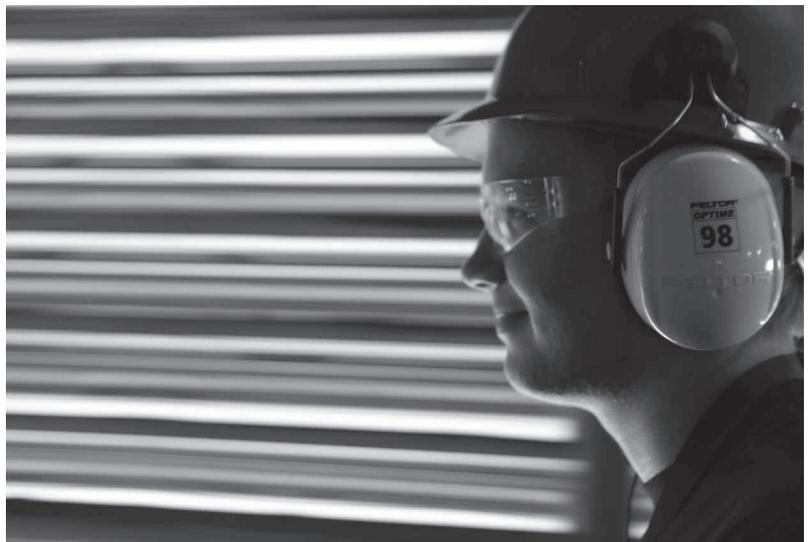
Before embarking on their trip, students gathered in the Pierre to meet all other participants, meet their respective teams and do a quick tour of the both the Oahe Dam and the South Dakota State Capitol building. Along with being able to see the building where the state's laws are created, some of the teens were able to watch a bit of an advisory task force meeting that was underway.

The Youth Excursion is a yearly event that takes the teens to the epicenter of Basin Electric Power Cooperative located in Bismarck, N.D., and the surrounding area. While there, the youth got the opportunity to take guided tours of The Northern American Coal Corporation's Freedom Coal Mine, the Antelope Valley Station, the Dakota Gasification Company, the Wilton Wind Project and National Information Solutions Cooperative. Some of the highlights from the tours included getting to see a dragline in action, riding to the top story of a power plant overlooking the entire operation and getting to look in on a boiler in action. Getting a firsthand account of the current undertakings of Basin Electric is invaluable to these young students as it not only educates them, but also gives them the tools to take that information home and become

By  
**Elizabeth  
Mayrose**



**Below:** Members of the orange team take a photo in the elevator before embarking on a tour of Antelope Valley Station. **Right:** Participants head in to Antelope Valley Station for their tour. The station's switchyard is in the background. Power generated from the station near Beulah, S.D., enters a transmission system that sends electricity down to a larger substation near Broadland, S.D. **Below middle:** Participants listen to a presentation during a tour. **Below right:** A hard hat, hearing protection and eye protection are standard equipment for the tour.



advocates for the power Basin Electric provides.

Along with touring, the students spent time growing in their co-op knowledge and laughing with interactive team games that tested knowledge about co-ops on a state, national and international level, as well as learning more about the sites they visited. Most students were surprised to learn that there are co-ops of all sorts surrounding them in their home communities. The teens were also able to spend time getting to know one another through down-time spent swimming, playing cards, showing off dance skills, pick-up hacky sac games and learning more about one another on long bus rides.

As the trip concluded on Thursday July 24, the Youth Excursion participants headed home with new friends, exposure to a vast assortment of career opportunities and the knowledge necessary to answer the question of "Where does our power come from?"

**Opposite Page:** Fifty-seven teens participated in the 2014 Youth Excursion. **Right:** Students representing Cam Wal Electric in Selby and Oahe Electric in Blunt strike pose for a photo with the Antelope Valley Station in the background.



# Cooperative Careers

*There's a place for you in the electric co-op network*

**T**HE MEN AND WOMEN WHO DON HARD HATS AND climb poles to work on power lines might be the most visible employees of electric utilities, but it takes a host of other professions to keep power flowing.

From accounting to communications, engineering to human resources, customer/member service to line work, the job opportunities at electric cooperatives are numerous and will become more so as Baby Boomers retire in waves.

By 2017, 55 percent of electric co-op CEOs will be eligible for retirement, and the number jumps to 75 percent in 10 years. That's just the top job

bracket – other categories of workers are on the way out, too, in the next five years:

- 37 percent, senior managers
- 31 percent, supervisors
- 26 percent, system operations employees
- 24 percent, engineers
- 16 percent, “skilled trades,” which includes line workers equipment operators
- 14 percent, information technology

This means lots of new positions are opening up at co-ops near you. Cooperatives are generally considered to be great places to work, no matter the type of cooperative, because people are put over

By Magen Howard



profits. Electric co-ops, specifically, are not-for-profit businesses, which means they have to generate money in order to operate and meet financial lending requirements, but any extra revenue over and above operating expenses are returned to their member-owners in the form of patronage capital credits.

Martin Lowery has worked with electric cooperatives for more than 30 years, a length of time that's common in the industry because of its stability and generous benefits offerings. He's executive vice president for member and association relations at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the trade group that provides support and services for about 900 electric cooperatives across the country.

But Lowery's service hasn't been limited to NRECA. In fact, he was recently inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame for his dedication to co-ops worldwide.

"Cooperative employees enjoy a benefit that many other workers do not," Lowery said. "They have a great deal of autonomy in their jobs; we call it 'wearing many hats.' They have a real opportunity to build relationships within the cooperative and within the cooperative network – relationships that often last a lifetime. They have the opportunity to do what they do best every day."

### Preparing for the tide to turn

Retirements have already begun in earnest, and electric cooperatives are in the thick of planning to ensure new employees are equipped to offer top-notch service. Decades of institutional knowledge can't be replaced, but training can provide a solid foundation.

Electric cooperatives aren't just any old electric utility and wouldn't exist if not for their members, so co-op employees understand that the members come first. That means cooperatives won't hire just anybody. Employees need to understand the cooperative business model and the philosophy behind it.

To that end, training programs for linemen sponsored by or partnered with electric co-ops have popped up all across the country.

Locally, aspiring linemen can attend line worker programs in South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota or programs in other states, too.

Programs like these are wins for the co-op, the worker and the local economy. South Dakota's electric cooperatives have a partnership with the power line

maintenance and construction program at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D.

Training provided at the technical schools allow workers to be properly trained and start their new careers on the right foot. Co-ops get employees with a head start. And it's one more venue for technical job training.

Some co-ops even recruit from colleges and universities; it's not uncommon to see new employees who spent at least one summer as an intern at their local electric cooperatives.

As co-op veterans step away from 30- and 40-year co-op careers, newer, younger employees are added, often times bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas.

### Electric co-ops by the numbers

The unique aspect about electric cooperatives in the U.S. is that each one is an independent business, but they're all connected in a vast network that serves 42 million people across 47 states. They serve 19 million businesses, homes, schools, churches, farms and other establishments in 2,500 of America's 3,141 counties.

To accomplish that feat, about 900 electric co-ops nationwide employ nearly 70,000 workers, and it's no wonder. Much more goes on at each one of these cooperatives than keeping the system running.

Member services employees take care of phone calls, bill payments and offer programs and services, such as home energy audits and scholarships for high school graduates. Staking technicians and engineers plot where new lines will be built, while purchasing employees maintain an inventory of equipment and negotiate contracts. And IT professionals are increasingly part of the operations landscape, in addition to traditional IT work, as more and more digital technologies are integrated into the day-in and day-out of running an electric system.

"Anyone from recent a college grad to a more seasoned professional looking for a great career can find a place at an electric co-op," [statewide official] says.

### How to find co-op jobs

Interested in joining the co-op family? National electric cooperative career opportunities are available at [TouchstoneEnergy.jobs](http://TouchstoneEnergy.jobs), the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' career center, where applicants can search for openings and submit resumes.

*Sources: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*

*Magen Howard writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service organization for the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

**Bath, S.D.-based Northern Electric Cooperative general manager Jim Moore, right, and Lake Andes, S.D.-based Charles Mix Electric Association general manager Mark Mengershauser both began their co-op careers as linemen. Both are retiring this year after decades of service between them. Their careers have taken them from the top of poles with prairie views to the halls of Congress where they advocate for their co-op members.**

# Powerful Apps

*Electric co-ops tap new technology to boost member service, reliability*

By Megan  
McKoy-Noe, CCC

**L**EARN FIRST AID. GET THE LATEST NEWS, THEN RELAX by catapulting birds. Stream music, share pictures, and pay your electric bill. Whatever your fast-paced life may need, odds are there's an 'app' for that.

Apps – a nickname for software applications downloaded onto mobile devices to perform specific tasks – have and grown and evolved along with smartphones and tablet devices. In fact, since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 and the iPad in 2010, apps have emerged as a way to enlighten, entertain, and – for electric cooperatives – connect to members on the go.

## Apps to Save Energy, Money

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the branding program of the nation's electric cooperatives, offers mobile apps complementing the national Together We Save.com energy efficiency campaign and the Co-op Connections® Card program. About 300 consumers download and update Touchstone Energy-branded apps every week.

The TogetherWeSave.com – Save Energy, Save Money app lets members see how much they can save monthly by switching from traditional incan-



Several co-ops are using SmartHub, above, which allows co-op members to pay bills, review energy use and other services. Lyon-Lincoln Electric has worked with GridFirst to develop an app dedicated to its cooperative.

descent lightbulbs to compact fluorescent lamps or light-emitting diodes. Another calculator focused on appliances helps users evaluate energy guzzlers at home – for example, what does it cost to run a dishwasher for an hour? By entering a local ZIP code, members see personalized kilowatt-hour rates.

Serving as a direct connection between members and power providers, the app shares alerts from a user's local Touchstone Energy Cooperative based on three settings: Urgent, News and Other.

“Expect handy updates with outage and restoration information, peak alerts when members can work together to cut energy costs, annual meeting details, and more,” explains Jim Bausell, former chief operating officer for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and now head of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's communications division.

The app also delivers pop-up “Tip of the Day” reminders with ways to make a home more energy efficient. Almost 3,000 electric co-op members across the country have downloaded and updated the app to date from the iTunes store and Google Play.

The Co-op Connections Card, provided by dozens of the cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota, connects members to savings on prescriptions, restaurants, hotels, groceries and other services from national and local retailers. The free Co-op Connections Card app uses GPS technology to help members quickly locate nearby stores and businesses offering discounts and share favorite deals. More than 7,000 co-op members have downloaded and updated the app to date; Android and iOS smartphone and tablet versions of the app are available at [www.Connections.Coop](http://www.Connections.Coop).

Electric cooperatives with billing and operation systems powered by the National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) offer the SmartHub app. NISC, the Lake Saint Louis, Mo.-based information technology cooperative that develops and supports advanced software

applications primarily for electric cooperatives and rural telecommunications carriers, developed a mobile app allowing members of participating utilities to pay bills, review recent energy use, report problems, get outage updates, and manage multiple accounts.

“Our native app incorporates a lot of your phone's features like swipe technology, GPS and the camera,” notes Nate Boettcher, NISC product line manager. “If a user sees a problem like a tree on the line, they can report it through the app. By using GPS coordinates in the phone, the utility quickly finds – and can fix! – the problem.”

SmartHub helps members communicate with a co-op through instant messaging, and co-ops can potentially use the dynamic app for surveys, newsletter content, load control alerts and more.

Several co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota offer the SmartHub app or will be deploying it in the future.

More than 400 utilities are supported by NISC; Android and iOS smartphones and tablet versions of the app are available at [www.SmartHubApp.Coop](http://www.SmartHubApp.Coop) as well as through the Apple Store and Google Play.

Additionally, Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative in Tyler, Minn., offers its members the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Mobile App which allows its members to monitor their energy usage via their mobile phone, iPads or tablets. It can be download from the AppStore or Android Marketplace by searching for Lyon-Lincoln.

### Tapped In

Want to know about more cooperative apps and other benefits of co-op membership? Contact your local cooperative. Their information is on Page 3 of this magazine.

## Mobile Trends

**More than 84 million consumers** connect with mobile devices driven by either Android or Apple's iOS platform in 2012 (up from 38 million in 2011). The Pew Internet and American Life Project found 32 percent of U.S. adults have downloaded apps to a smartphone, but only a quarter of adults use the software.

With more than a million apps to choose from – Mobilewalla estimates an average of 15,000 apps debut every week – the typical mobile device holds 41 apps. Crowd favorites are Facebook, YouTube, Android Market, Google Search, and Gmail, according to Nielsen. How do electric co-ops fit into this changing landscape?

Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperatives, the branding program of the nation's electric cooperatives, conducts research to gauge member needs. Its 2011 National Survey on the Cooperative Difference discovered almost half of co-op members were very interested in apps

that provide power restoration updates after a storm. Another two areas of member interest were apps offering discounts at local businesses and tips on managing electricity consumption.

“More of our members – especially younger members – are embracing smartphones,” notes Jim Bausell, former chief operating officer for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and now head of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's communications programs.

The study found 27 percent of co-op members use smartphones – not as high as the national average of 46 percent, but a rising trend. As the number of wired members mounts, electric cooperatives are producing powerful solutions to meet member needs.



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## Regional Dateline

### August 28-September 1

South Dakota State Fair  
 Huron, SD, 605-353-7340  
[www.sdstatefair.com](http://www.sdstatefair.com)

### August 29-31

LifeLight, Worthing, SD  
 605-338-2847  
[www.lifelight.org](http://www.lifelight.org)

### August 30

Rockin' RibFest  
 Yankton, SD, 605-665-2263  
[historicdowntownyankton.com](http://historicdowntownyankton.com)

### September 6-7

Quilt Show and Sale  
 Hill City, SD, 605-574-2368  
[www.hillcitysd.com](http://www.hillcitysd.com)

### September 11

Martina McBride in Concert  
 Deadwood, SD, 605-559-1188

### September 12

Foothills Bud Light Bull Bash  
 Wessington Springs, SD  
 605-539-0014

### September 12-13

Deadwood Jam  
 Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

### September 13

Car Show, Menno, SD  
 605-387-2427

### September 13-14

Kuchen Festival, Delmont, SD  
 605-779-2211  
[www.delmontsd.org](http://www.delmontsd.org)

### September 13-14

Beef n Fun Days  
 Mobridge, SD, 605-845-2387



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT HOWARD

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

### August 22-24

52nd Annual Steam  
 Threshing Jamboree  
 Madison, SD, 800-693-3644  
[www.prairievillage.org](http://www.prairievillage.org)

### September 13-14

Twin Rivers Old Iron  
 Harvest Festival  
 Delmont, SD, 605-779-5291  
[www.twinriversoldiron.org](http://www.twinriversoldiron.org)

### September 14

Fire & Rescue 4th Annual  
 Car Show, Irene, SD  
 605-660-4857

### September 19-21

North Country Fiber Fair  
 Watertown, SD  
 605-254-8434  
[www.northcountryfiberfair.org](http://www.northcountryfiberfair.org)

### September 19-21

Schmeckfest  
 Eureka, SD, 605-284-2370  
[www.eurekasd.com/Unique/schmeckfest.htm](http://www.eurekasd.com/Unique/schmeckfest.htm)

### September 19-21

42nd South Dakota Fiddle  
 Contest, 4-H Grounds  
 Yankton, SD, 605-880-0436  
[fiddlersofsouthdakota.com](http://fiddlersofsouthdakota.com)

### September 20

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

### September 20

27th Annual National Pedal  
 Pull, Mitchell, SD  
 605-995-8430  
[www.cornpalace.com](http://www.cornpalace.com)

### September 20-21

Pioneer Power Show  
 Menno, SD, 605-387-5161  
[www.pioneeracres.com](http://www.pioneeracres.com)

### September 20-21

Northeast South Dakota Celtic  
 Faire & Games, Aberdeen, SD  
 605-216-3403  
[www.nesdcelticfaire.com](http://www.nesdcelticfaire.com)

### September 25-28

South Dakota Film Festival  
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3481  
[www.southdakotafilmfest.org](http://www.southdakotafilmfest.org)

### September 26

Custer State Park Buffalo  
 Roundup, Custer, SD  
 605-255-4515  
[www.gfp.sd.gov](http://www.gfp.sd.gov)

### September 26-27

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

### September 27

South Dakota Women's Expo  
 Huron, SD, 605-353-7340  
[www.sdwomensexpo.com](http://www.sdwomensexpo.com)

### September 27

Living History Fall Festival  
 Groton, SD, 605-626-7117  
[www.granaryfinearts.org](http://www.granaryfinearts.org)

### September 27

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

### September 27-28

Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival  
 Custer, SD, 605-255-4515  
[www.gfp.sd.gov](http://www.gfp.sd.gov)

### October 3-4

Oktoberfest, Deadwood, SD  
 800-344-8826