

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## Hot Air Balloons

**Festival Gains  
Popularity**  
Pages 8-9

**Go-Kart Racing**  
Pages 12-13

*Photo provided by  
Petra Wilson, owner  
of Western Horizons  
Hot Air Balloons.*



# The Strongest Link



**Dick Johnson**  
dick.johnson@  
westriver.coop

A game show currently on TV is called the “Weakest Link”. The hostess, Jane Lynch, does rapid fire questions to contestants. A team of contestants try to reach and bank money within the time limit by completing a chain of correct answers. After the two-minute set, the other contestants vote who they want off the set as the “weakest link”. That weakest link gets sent home. What does this have to do with my column this month? Let me try to explain.

Elsewhere in this edition, Amanda talks about the 7th cooperative principle: “Concern for Community.” As your local member owned electric cooperative, we want to be the strongest link to our community and the members we serve. We don’t want to be voted off the set early. We want to be the last contestant standing with money in the bank.

## Why are we the strongest link?

### Local focus:

Unlike large corporate entities, our cooperative operates locally with deep roots in the communities we serve. We have been here since June 12, 1939.

### Community Outreach and Education:

We firmly believe that an informed community is an empowered community. We have educational opportunities we offer for students in the schools. We do high voltage demonstrations and safety displays for members, schools, and local first responders to be certain they are acting safely.

### Supporting Local Initiatives:

We actively support local initiatives that promote economic growth and opportunities for our members. Whether it is sponsoring community events such as rodeos or celebrations, sports teams, contributing to local charities, or partnering with our educational institutions and schools, we are committed to the betterment of the communities we serve. We are invested in area Chamber’s, economic development organizations, and charitable foundations. Many of our employees are actively involved in our communities as well giving many hours to the betterment of our communities.

### Emergency Response and Resilience:

We place a high priority on emergency response and disaster preparedness. We work closely with the local first responders and emergency management teams to ensure a swift coordinated response. Our commitment to community extends to restoring power quickly and efficiently minimizing the impact on our members’ lives. Not only do we do this for our community, but we are a part of a statewide mutual aid program where we send people to help other communities that might be impacted. In return we know they have our backs if something happens. I remember well the help we had from other cooperatives when Atlas hit in 2013.

### Member Engagement and Empowerment:

At the core of our cooperative mission is the principle of member ownership and democratic control. We regularly hold events to try and tie to the communities we serve. You have the opportunity to vote at our annual meeting on who you wish to represent you on the board. This will even be more evident on October 7 when you will be voting on at least 1 new director from District 1.

Now you know why I say we aren’t the weakest link in the community. There are many more answers we could give to show why we are the strongest link and bank more money. We don’t want to be the weakest link and sent down the road. We are here to serve you.

Have a great summer and please stay safe.

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### WEST RIVER ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 675-840)

#### Our Mission:

We are safety conscious, community oriented, and the trusted energy expert for our member owners.

#### Our Vision:

We will achieve an ACSI score of 90 by 2024.

#### Our Values:

1. Safety
2. Accountability
3. Integrity
4. Innovation
5. Commitment to Community

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Board President:** Andy Moon

#### Board of Directors

Stan Anders – Vice President  
 Jamie Lewis – Secretary  
 Larry Eisenbraun – Treasurer  
 Jerry Hammerquist  
 Howard Knuppe  
 Marcia Arneson  
 Chuck Sloan  
 Sue Peters

#### CEO and General Manager:

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Other correspondence to: West River Electric Cooperative Connections, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703; telephone (605)393-1500, Exts. 6519, 6531 or 6522; fax (605)393-0275; e-mail [robert.raker@westriver.coop](mailto:robert.raker@westriver.coop).

# 7th Co-op Principle: Concern for Community



**Amanda Haugen**  
 Communications  
 Specialist

The 7th and final Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community highlights the commitment West River Electric has in serving the communities in our service territory. From sponsoring events to putting on safety demos to just being present in the community, West River Electric knows what it means to go beyond just being an electric utility.

The 7 Cooperative principles serve as guiding principles for the successful functioning of cooperative businesses worldwide. West River Electric understands that the cooperative's success is tied to the well-being of the communities we operate in. By prioritizing the needs of our members and the community at large, we have built a strong foundation of trust and collaboration.

Concern for Community is West River Electric's north star, if you will. We use that 7th Cooperative Principle to drive our focus in sustaining continuous development in the communities we serve through the policies supported by the membership. Our mission statement, "We are safety conscious, community oriented, and the trusted energy expert for our member-owners," demonstrates how community focused we are. We recognize that our members are not just customers but active participants in the decision-making process for the cooperative. West River Electric ensures that members' voices are heard, allowing for inclusive and community-driven decisions. 1205800

Knowledge is a powerful tool for empowering communities. One way we pass knowledge on is by putting on high voltage safety demonstrations to the local first responders. You can read more about that in Brendan Nelson's article, "Training Reaches Local First Responders." We strive to teach the public whenever and wherever we can about electrical safety. By sharing valuable information and resources, West River Electric equips community members with the tools to make informed decisions regarding their energy usage and overall well-being.

Some may have heard of our Operation Round Up program, some may have not. And that's okay. What it is, is members and employees of West River Electric opt in to round up their electric bill to the nearest whole dollar each month. The change is then put into a trust fund where a board of five individuals, separate from West River Electric Board of Directors, will meet once a year to go over applications and disperse the funds back into the community. These funds support projects that will better the communities within West River Electric's service territory.

In conclusion, our commitment to the 7th Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community, highlights the commitment West River Electric has in serving the communities in our service territory. By adopting this principle in our day-to-day operations, we go beyond just providing energy services. Through safety demonstrations, sponsoring events, community education, and Operation Round Up, West River Electric showcases its dedication to powering our members and the wider community for a brighter future.

# Working Out in the Heat

Exercising outdoors is a great way to enjoy the sunshine and warmer weather of summer. But you'll need to take some extra precautions to stay safe. Here are some do's and don'ts for working out when temperatures climb.

### **DO: Stay hydrated**

Drink plenty of water before, during and after your workout to prevent dehydration and help regulate body temperature. Nicole Thompson of the American Council on Exercise recommends slowly drinking water or sports drinks about four hours before exercising. Aim for 1 ounce for every 11 pounds of body weight – so 10 ounces for a 110-pound person or 20 ounces for a 220-pound person.

Weigh yourself before and after working out to determine how much fluid you need to replace. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends drinking 2-3 cups of water for every pound lost.

### **DON'T: Drink products containing alcohol**

Alcohol is a diuretic, so it contributes to dehydration.

### **DO: Wear lightweight and breathable clothing**

Choose light-colored and loose-fitting clothes made of moisture-wicking materials. This'll help keep you cool and dry.

### **DON'T: Wear dark colors or heavy fabrics**

Dark-colored clothing can absorb heat and trap it against your body.

### **DO: Wear sunscreen**

The key number to look for on your sunscreen is the sun protection factor. An SPF of 15 filters out about 93% of UVB rays, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, while an SPF of 30 will filter out around 97%. Look for "broad spectrum" on the label to protect against UVA and UVB rays.

Apply sunscreen 15 or 20 minutes before going out (check the instructions on the label). Reapply every two hours – or more frequently if you're sweating a lot. Don't forget about your ears, lips and any bald spots on your scalp – they need protection, too.

### **DON'T: Work out during the hottest times of the day**

The sun is at its strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., so try to schedule workouts for earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Remember, you can always work out inside and in an air-conditioned area if needed.

### **DO: Know the signs of heat-related illness**

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Nausea and dizziness
- Headaches
- Feeling weak

A weak or rapid pulse

Cold, clammy skin

If you experience any sign of heat exhaustion, move to a cool place, loosen your clothing, put cool and wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath, and sip water, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. Get medical help if your symptoms don't go away after an hour, if your symptoms worsen or if you're throwing up.

Symptoms of heatstroke include:

A body temperature of 103° F or higher

Hot, dry, bright red or damp skin

Labored breathing

A fast, strong pulse

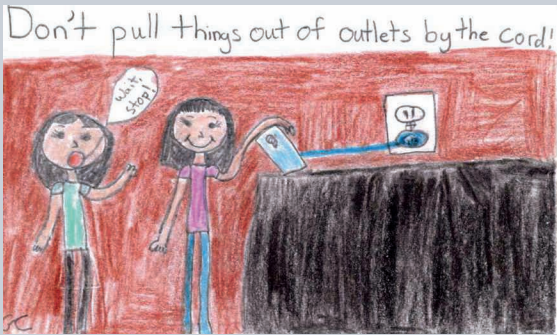
Headache, dizziness, nausea or confusion

Loss of consciousness

Heatstroke is an emergency. If you suspect it, call 911 immediately.

### **DON'T: Overdo it**

Adjust your workout intensity to account for the heat and listen to your body's cues. Shorter workouts are good when temperatures rise. Allow your body to get used to the heat. Then you can gradually increase your time outdoors and exercise intensity.



**Don't pull the cord!**

**Gabrielle Clement, Age 10**

Gabrielle Clement advises people it's not safe to pull the cord when disconnecting appliances from an outlet. Gabrielle is the daughter of Dustin and Michelle Clement from Box Elder, S.D., members of West River Electric Association.

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.

# Savory Summer SALADS

## GRAPE SALAD

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. red seedless grapes
- 2 lbs. green seedless grapes
- 1-8 oz. cream cheese (softened)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans

### METHOD

Wash and dry grapes. Mix cream cheese and sour cream. Add sugar and vanilla. Mix well. Fold in grapes. Place in 9x13 pan. Sprinkle with brown sugar and pecans.

**Angie Ruiters**  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

## CHICKEN SALAD

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plain lowfat yogurt
- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. parsley flakes
- 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/4 tsp. pure ground black pepper
- 1/2 rotisserie chicken, cut into bite-size chunks (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion

### METHOD

Mix yogurt, mayonnaise, parsley, seasoned salt and pepper in large bowl. Add chicken, celery and onion; toss to coat well. Cover. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes or until ready to serve. Serve in sandwiches or on salad greens.

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

## CORN CUCUMBER SALAD

Ingredients:

- 2 cans whole kernel corn (drained)
- 1 cup diced, unpeeled and seeded cucumbers
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin

### METHOD

Mix corn, cucumber and onion in large bowl. Set aside. Mix remaining ingredients in small bowl until well blended. Add to corn mixture; toss lightly to coat. Cover. Refrigerate 2 hours or until ready to serve.

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Spot the Shining Addition at Our Rapid City Office



**Adam Daigle**  
Energy Advisor

Have you noticed the new, gleaming structure near our Rapid City office? It's an 8.3 kW ground-mounted solar array that we've recently installed. Our goal with this solar array is to collect real-world data and provide factual information to our members who are considering going solar. So, if you're thinking about installing a solar system, don't hesitate to drop by. Our trusted energy advisors are here to guide you in making a safe and economical decision. Next, in order to interconnect a solar system, we require an interconnection agreement to be submitted to us prior to installation. This will help ensure that the equipment chosen for your project and the installation process meets West River Electric's guidelines and procedures. To see the real time output of the solar array, visit [westriver.coop](http://westriver.coop). There you can see a live feed displaying the solar's output. 1218100



## West River Electric Takes a Giant Leap in Leadership with Board Chairman Appointment



In a significant step forward to develop and install the next generation of strong leadership, West River Electric's insurance provider, Federated Insurance, recently appointed West River Electric's District 1 Board Director, Jamie Lewis, as the organization's Board Chairman. This will be an added responsibility to his current role as

Secretary of the West River Electric Board.

"This is a big deal," said West River Electric CEO Dick Johnson. "Jamie's role on the Federated board gives West River members, employees, and the region, for that matter, an opportunity to have a voice in how their Electric Cooperative is insured."

Like West River Electric, Federated Insurance is also a Cooperative. However, its purpose is to offer affordable insurance to more than 90% of the Electric Cooperatives.

Congratulations, Jamie, and thank you for representing West River Electric's members.

## Manager of Member Services Amy Thompson Graduates MIP

Amy Thompson, Manager of Member Services for West River Electric, recently graduated from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Management Internship Program (MIP). MIP is a



comprehensive, six-week program that provides in-depth analysis of the functions and processes of co-op management. More importantly, it emphasizes the practical applications of these key competencies. This executive training offers cooperative leaders dynamic learning experience and networking in a world-class environment.

Congratulations, Amy, on your recent accomplishment.

**Energy Efficiency**  
Tip of the Month

**Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler?**

To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room.

Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: Dept. of Energy



# For Sale

West River Electric has the following items for sale by sealed bid. Bids will be accepted until 4 p.m., Friday, Aug. 18, 2023. Sealed bids can be sent to any WREA office. All items are sold “as is” and WREA reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Bids will be opened at the Aug. 21, 2023, board meeting.

The following vehicles/equipment can be seen at our Rapid City office at 3250 E. Hwy 44. Ask for Mo or Brendan.

**Item #210**



2018 Ram 1/2 ton 4 dr. 4x4 5.7L 96,500mi

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item #292**



2018 Ram 1/2 ton 4 dr. 4x4 5.7L 98,200mi

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item #0**



Bobcat Backhoe Attachment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item #709**



Bobcat Backhoe Attachment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item #1**



Heat Pump Water Heater

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bid: \$** \_\_\_\_\_



## TAKING TO THE SKY

Balloons light up the night during the night glow event of the festival.

### Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival Gains Popularity

**Jocelyn Johnson**

[jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop](mailto:jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop)

It's a picturesque and dramatic spectacle that's awed most people for several hundred years. Yet, spectators and pilots alike have not tired of the image. Hot air balloons have that quality of enchantment. And what better way to be enchanted than to see dozens of these balloons floating up into the sunrise of a South Dakota sky?

The annual Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival is attracting nearly 30 balloons and thousands of spectators on Aug. 25-27, 2023. The event is taking place at the airport outside of Hot Springs, S.D., where it will celebrate its 8th year of growing popularity. Festival sightseers can pack all-day-fun into their festivities by visiting the vendors, obstacle courses,

bouncy houses, and performances in Hot Springs by Magician Jared Furnau and the Wild Blue Band.

Petra Wilson, a local commercial pilot, founded the festival in 2016 before opening her own flying business – Western Horizons Hot Air Balloons.

“The way I got introduced to ballooning is a tale of serendipity,” said Wilson. “Almost 20 years ago, my husband and I attended a hot air balloon festival in Peoria, Ill., where we are asked to become crew members for a weekend. On the last flight of the weekend, he asked us if we wanted to go for a ride. The ride was absolutely stunning and from that point on we were hooked.”

Wilson became a private pilot in 2014 and a commercial pilot in 2017. In 2015, Wilson and her husband moved to Hot Springs, where she discovered she was the

only hot air balloon pilot flying in the area.

I introduced many different people to ballooning by inviting them out to watch and even crew,” Wilson said. “Some of those people became my students and eventually became hot air balloon pilots in the Hot Springs area.”

When asked how she started the festival, Wilson replied, “I decided this area was such a beautiful place to fly that I wanted to share it with all my ballooning friends and their friends, as well as locals who might appreciate the beauty of the balloons in the sky, so what better way to do this than having a balloon festival.”

The festival started with the partnership between Wilson and Olivia Mears, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce in Hot Springs.

Mears said, “Folks from South Dakota, California, Nebraska, Colorado, and more attend this festival. We attract private pilots who fly for their own enjoyment and commercial pilots who are licensed to carry passengers.”

Tamie Shrum, current balloon-meister for Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival, is a commercial pilot overseeing the safety and regulation of the participating balloons. She travels the world to fly, including six countries and 37 states. Shrum owns three of her own balloons and earns her living flying passengers and training students how to fly.

“I like to do long jump flying, which is long distance flying,” said Shrum. “My longest distance is 137 miles in a three-hour flight with a top speed of 78 mph.”

Shrum explained that a considerable amount of studying goes into the preparation for a long jump flight. Everything matters – the time of year, time of day, location, and weather patterns.

“We work off of a microscopic level,” Shrum said. “A regular person might say, ‘It’s not that windy today,’ but a balloon pilot might say, ‘It’s too windy to fly today.’”

Describing how balloons fly, Shrum said, “In layman’s terms, hot air rises and cold air sinks. You put heat in the

envelope, making it hotter than ambient temperatures which allows it to lift the massive weight it’s carrying.”

“We use a burner with regular propane,” Shrum continued. “The amount of propane needed changes based upon ambient temperature, altitude of flight, and how much passenger weight is being carried.”

Balloons are simplistic in design but can be challenging to fly.

“You don’t steer a balloon... while airplanes fly against the wind, balloons fly with the wind, which can be unpredictable,” Shrum explained. “Sometimes you land in a park and sometimes you land in main street.”

“I’ve flown over Pikes Peak in Colorado



Commercial Pilot Tamie Shrum looks below on other balloons while flying.

and in Japan along with many other places,” Shrum said. “I’ve been fortunate to sightsee all over the world from 1,000 feet in the air while others are sightseeing from the surface...but South Dakota is one of the most gorgeous places to fly in.”



Commercial Pilot Petra Wilson inspects her balloon.

# Local Teens Attend Youth Tour

Forty teens representing 20 South Dakota electric cooperatives headed to the Washington, D.C., area June 17-23 for the 2023 Rural Electric Youth Tour.

The program, which can trace its existence back to a 1957 speech by Lyndon B. Johnson where he encouraged electric cooperatives to send youth to the nation's capital so they "can actually see what the flag stands for and represents," encourages teens to engage in their communities and learn about the importance of political involvement. More than 1,300 teens have represented the Rushmore State since South Dakota sent its first group in 1963. 107400

The 2023 group visited many of the historic sites the region has to offer, including a Flag Day stop at Baltimore's Fort McHenry. The fort's bombardment in the War of 1812 was captured in Francis Scott Key's poem, which would eventually become the national anthem. Old Glory would play a recurring theme in the trip as students could see it at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and also hear an inspirational message centered on the flag from Youth Day keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist in U.S.A. men's wheelchair basketball.

Students also met with the state's congressional delegation and with Youth Tour participants from across the country while touring the many of our nation's historical sites – including the National Archives, Library of Congress, Mount Vernon, U.S.

Supreme Court, and many more.

"The Library of Congress really left an impression. I think it's something that will stick with me," said Sawyer Sandal, who represented West River Electric Association on the trip.



## FOR THE KIDS SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

**August  
1st-31st.**

Access to school supplies has a direct impact on a student's ability to learn. Students who have access to the right supplies are more likely to have higher self-esteem and feel more confident in their abilities.

### DROP OFF LOCATIONS

**Wall Office**  
1200 W Fourth Ave Wall, SD 57790

**Rapid Office**  
3250 E Hwy 44 Rapid City, SD 57703

**QUESTIONS?**

605-791-6502

sallie.traver@westriver.coop



## Save the Dates!

**WALL/NEW UNDERWOOD FOOTBALL GAME TAILGATING**

SEPT. 1, 2023

NEW UNDERWOOD FOOTBALL FIELD 5:30-7PM

**MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY**

SEPT. 22, 2023

RAPID CITY OFFICE, 11AM-7PM

**YOUR 84TH ANNUAL MEETING**

OCT. 7, 2023

WALL COMMUNITY CENTER, REGISTRATION STARTS AT 9AM  
WITH BUSINESS MEETING AT 10AM



"Powering You For A Brighter Future"

# Construction Update



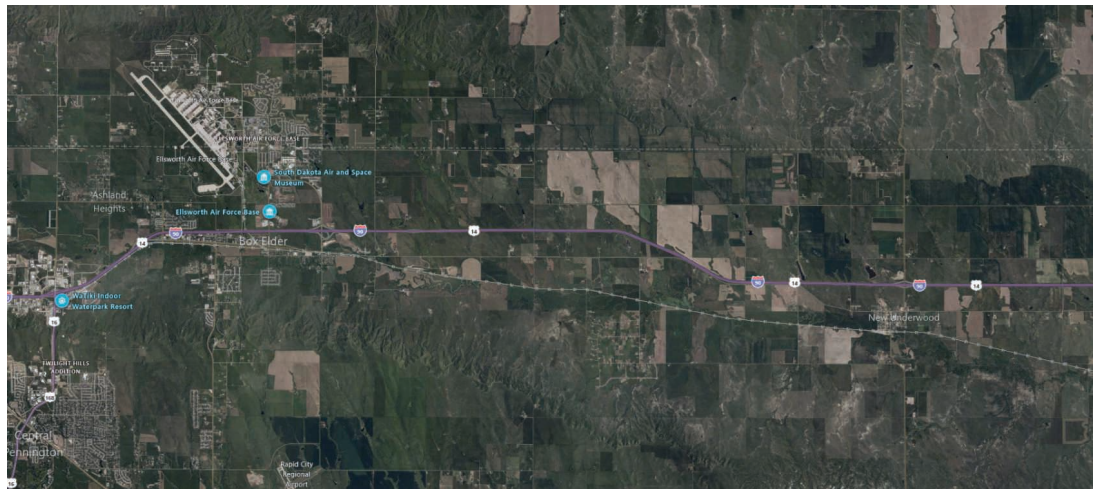
**Matt Schmahl**  
Construction  
Project Manager

West River Electric has been planning to undertake a rather sizable underground venture that will begin at the intersection of Box Elder and Liberty Boulevard, then continue east to New Underwood along Highway 14/16. This project will replace the aging overhead powerline currently in use by burying it and will be completed in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) and SD Department of Emergency Management. West River Electric applied for the burial mitigation grant and was awarded this project last year.

The growth in the Box Elder and New Underwood regions, and the expected growth in years to come, were all considered when developing this project. We analyzed all the current data and expected future growth information to design the infrastructure for anticipated loading needs well into the future. The design we have chosen is a 4/0 three-phase underground line. This line will be operated at 25kv or 14,400 volts. Operating the underground feeder at 25kv is not unusual as this is our standard voltage in our rural areas. This voltage provides some added benefits, such as the additional capacity for future load growth and additional switching scenarios, allowing our line crews more options for quicker outage restoration timelines. 114900

We plan to install the new underground feeder along the Highway 14/16 corridor, generally within the same route as the existing overhead powerline. The current plan is to install all the underground wire, and then once the installation is completed, go back through and tie or connect all the “taps” off the main line to the new underground. Additional switchgear will be placed periodically along this route to assist in isolating the lines should an outage occur. These devices aim to minimize the number of members impacted by outages to the greatest extent possible by rerouting power to avoid the affected line.

We plan for this project to begin in late July and continue through the fall and winter months. There will be some rather large equipment used to complete this work. This equipment will range from trenching and backhoe equipment to directional boring machines and cable trailers. There will also be a need for digger trucks, bucket trucks, and pole trailers. Some locations along the route will consist of extremely tight corridors; therefore, there will be limited room for all the equipment needed to install this project. If you are in the area and come across the line crews working, please be mindful and slow down through the construction area, both for their safety and yours.





# RACING FAMILY FUN

Go-kart racers in Aberdeen are placed in divisions by age and skill to keep the races competitive. The track usually hosts races twice a month during the summer months. *Photo by Scott Waltman*

## Go-kart Racing at Aberdeen Track is a Family Affair

**Scott Waltman**

Kevin Horn didn't set out to drive to Aberdeen several times a summer so he could race.

Instead, after seeing races on TV, the Waubay mechanic bought a go-kart for his then-9-year-old daughter. But while she was driving, the kart skidded on some wet grass and she hit the kart trailer. After that, she turned the keys over to Dad.

That was about 11 years ago. Horn took his daughter's number 9 and flipped it to make a 6, and he's been racing ever since.

Like others who race at the Aberdeen Karting Club track at the Brown County Fairgrounds, his story has a tie to family, even if it didn't work out exactly as he thought it would.

Karting, racers and organizers say, is a family affair.

Brody Griffin of Watertown is 10 and started karting three years ago.

He makes the rounds, mostly to the closest tracks in Aberdeen, Brookings and Miller. He races just about every weekend during summer, and the allure is simple. Griffin said he just likes driving.

He was named rookie of the year his first season and finished second in his division his second season in Aberdeen.

But it's not all zipping around the track and trying to pass other drivers. Griffin said he helps work on his kart with his father.

That makes sense to Landon Schott, a 24-year-old racer from Aberdeen who is one of the track's most successful drivers. Now that he's a little older, helps with public relations and social media for the track.

When Schott started racing, he said his father made it clear to him that he would be helping work on the kart and had to keep it clean. Karting can be a big financial investment, and his dad wasn't going to spend heaps of money if his son wasn't going to pitch in and be engaged.

Schott, too, said he appreciates the friendly and family atmosphere of karting.

Sponsorships are critical to both the Aberdeen track and its racers, he said. He wouldn't have been able to travel across the country racing without



Josiah Combellick serves as the event's flagman. *Photo by Scott Waltman*

having sponsors since he started driving in 2006, he said.

The Aberdeen track doesn't have any employees, and the Aberdeen Karting Club is a nonprofit group, so contributions are important, Schott said.

Rick Cartney is the vice president of the Aberdeen Karting Club and has been involved with the track since it was founded in 1996. His first race was in Aberdeen that first year, and now he gets to the track to start prep work around 9 a.m. on race days. Races usually start around 4 p.m. and last into the night.

For Cartney, the payback comes from the smiles on the faces of young racers.

"Mainly, it's for the kids," he said.

They do their best racing when they don't win, but they learn, grow and mature, Cartney said.

The Aberdeen track is between an eighth and a 10th of a mile long and is great for young racers who are just

starting out, he said.

There are races in Aberdeen a couple of times a month during summer, with the schedules of other tracks in the region taken into consideration so drivers can make it to as many races as possible. Generally, there are 30 or 40 drivers in Aberdeen, most of them young people, Cartney said.

Starting at the Aberdeen track has served Schott well. He has advanced to grand national events with both the International Karting Federation and Maxxis Kart Racing, finishing as in the top five, but never quite nabbing a championship. Last December, Schott said, he traveled to Daytona, Fla., and raced with about 70 other drivers, never finishing outside of the top 14.

"I guess maybe I'm just an adrenaline junkie," Schott said.

In 2013, as a junior driver, he won a Maxxis regional championship. The event drew drivers from across the nation and is called the Maxx Daddy, he said.

Schott said that and winning an end-of-season state championship in 2021 on his home track in Aberdeen are, at least to date, two of the highlights of his career.

He also won the state championship in 2015 in Brookings.

The state karting championships used to be in Brookings, but have been in Aberdeen in recent years. They return again this year on Aug. 12.

That event will likely draw about 200 drivers from South Dakota and surrounding states, Cartney said. A heavy bronze trophy in the shape of Mount Rushmore goes to the winner.

It will be yet another chance for the karting community to gather. Both Schott and Horn said they have made friends traveling the karting circuit. It's one of the most enjoyable parts of racing, they said, and Cartney agrees.

"These people are like a second family," he said.



Landon Schott helps prepare a go-kart before the races begin in Aberdeen on Saturday, June 17. Schott is one of the most successful racers from the Aberdeen Karting Klub. *Photo by Scott Waltman*


# Ag Appreciation Day at the Central States Fair

**When:** August 22nd | 4pm-6pm

**Where:** Kjerstad Event Center  
-915 Centre St.

**What:** -Free Meal  
-Discounted Rodeo Tickets\*  
-RSVP required  
\*visit RSVP site for more details



RSVP Here: 



Please come show your support in honoring these individuals for their dedication to the agriculture community. Ag Appreciation Meal will be August 22nd from 4-6pm at the Kjerstad Event Center. You must RSVP by scanning the QR code or by visiting the following link: <https://bit.ly/3CzCRNP>



**Jerry Hammerquist**  
2023 Rural Neighbor Award  
Sponsored by: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives



**Bashful Bison**  
Agribusiness Award  
Sponsored by: Elevate Rapid City



**Rick Wulf**  
2023 Rural Neighbor Award  
Sponsored by: Central States Fair

## Director Petitions Deadline

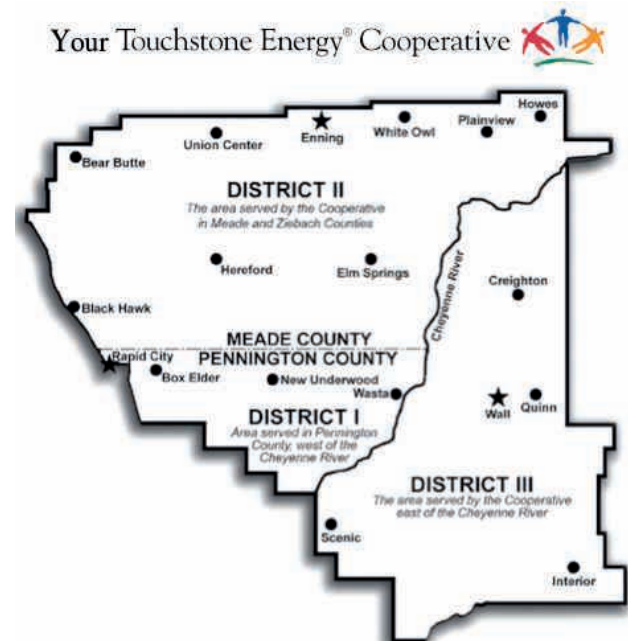
The deadline for petitions is **Aug. 8, 2023**. No nominations are taken from the floor at the annual meeting. Candidates must be members of the cooperative and reside in the district they are seeking election from, be in good standing with the cooperative and not be employed or financially interested in a competing enterprise or major supplier to the cooperative. Petitions may be picked up at any of the West River Electric office locations.

## Cyber Security

Creating a culture of security where every co-op has a set of achievable cybersecurity goals is important-but knowing where to start on your efforts can be confusing. West River Electric's IT department is 1 of 20 cooperatives nationwide that recently joined and completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Co-op Cyber Security Goals Program.

It is a voluntary program comprised of 10 cybersecurity goals aimed at helping co-ops achieve high priority security measures and creating a benchmark for basic cybersecurity fundamentals. Setting cybersecurity goals not only protects our infrastructure but it also supports reliability of service for our member-owners. 104200

Congratulations, Gerri and Carolyn, on this great achievement and for ensuring West River Electric is Co-op Cyber Security Strong.



## LOCATE YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER

If you locate your account number anywhere in this issue of West River Electric's *Cooperative Connections*, you will be a winner. There will be five account numbers placed randomly throughout the publication. If you spot your account number and notify our office before the 10th of the next month, you will receive a \$10 credit on your next bill.

## WEST RIVER ELECTRIC OFFICE HOURS

### RAPID CITY OFFICE

3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD  
Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
605-393-1500

### WALL OFFICE

1200 W 4th Ave, Wall, SD  
Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
605-279-2135

A night depository is available at both offices for your convenience.

## SERVICE AND BILLING QUESTIONS?

Contact 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500 during office hours. E-mail us at [info@westriver.coop](mailto:info@westriver.coop) for questions on your account.

## OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY?

Contact 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500 in the event of an outage or other emergency. Our calls are answered 24/7.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



August 14-17  
Turner County Fair  
680 E 2nd St,  
Parker, SD  
605-297-4428

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.

**JULY 21-23**  
**Winner Elks 54th Annual Rodeo**  
Winner, SD  
605-842-5830

**JULY 28-29**  
**Farley Fest**  
Lake Farley Park  
Milbank, SD  
www.farleyfest.com

**JULY 28-30**  
**Clear Lake Days**  
Clear Lake, SD  
clearlakedays.com

**JULY 29**  
**BBQ Pit Row and Car Show**  
Winner, SD  
605-842-1533

**JULY 30**  
**Bergen Threshing Bee**  
9 a.m.  
Bristol, SD  
605-237-0310

**AUG 7-10**  
**Food Truck Party-Vacation Bible School**  
Rapid Valley UMC  
5:30 p.m.  
Rapid Valley, SD

**AUG 10-13**  
**Custer County Fair**  
Hermosa, SD

**AUG 11**  
**Northern Bull Riding Tour Finals Bull-a-Rama**  
Geddes, SD  
605-680-2763

**AUG 13-14**  
**Twin Brooks Threshing Show**  
Featuring Allis Chalmers  
Twin Brooks, SD  
605-880-2884

**AUG 19**  
**Yankton Extreme Bull Riding**  
7:30 a.m.  
Yankton Rodeo Arena  
Yankton, SD  
605-760-2153

**AUG 27**  
**SGT. Colton Levi Derr Foundation Fundraiser**  
Barrels, Poles, Breakaway, Team Roping  
New Underwood, SD  
605-391-8733

**SEPT 4**  
**Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show**  
Steam Whistle Blows  
1 p.m.  
47236 183rd St  
Clear Lake, SD

**SEPT 8-10**  
**James Valley Threshing & Tractor Show**  
World's Largest Steam Traction Engine  
Andover, SD  
605-868-3242

**SEPT 16**  
**SD Coin & Stamp Convention**  
Scherr-Howe Area  
Mobridge, SD

**SEPT 22-24**  
**Coal Springs Threshing Bee**  
Meadow, SD

**SEPT 23**  
**Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival**  
9 a.m.  
Springfield Community Building  
Springfield, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**2nd Annual Suicide Fundraiser**  
Robinsdale Lounge  
805 E St. Patrick St.  
Rapid City, SD  
605-787-2290

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