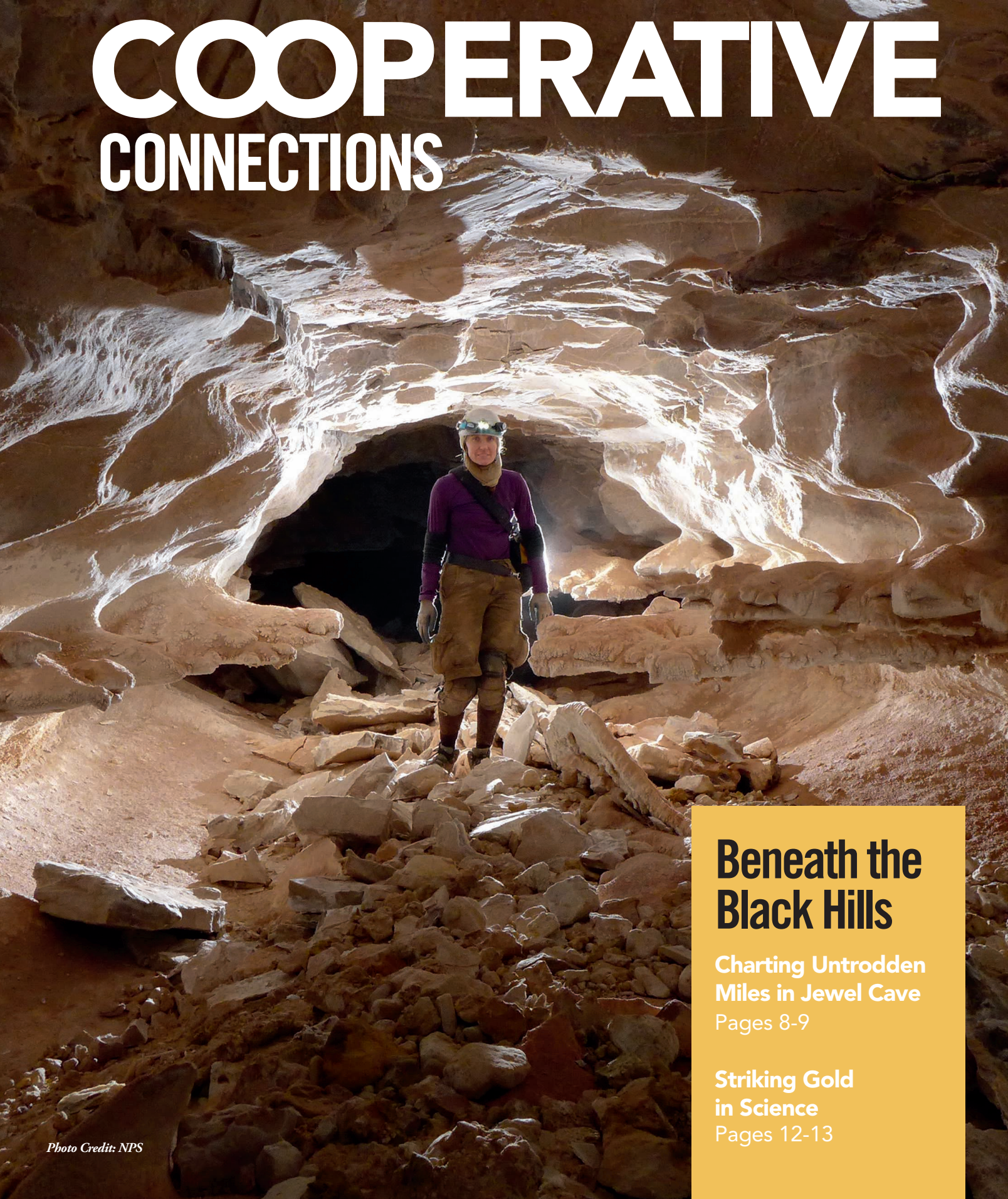


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



**Beneath the
Black Hills**

Charting Untrodden
Miles in Jewel Cave
Pages 8-9

Striking Gold
in Science
Pages 12-13

Holiday Greeting



Dick Johnson
dick.johnson@
westriver.coop

It was the day before the deadline,
When Amanda rang the ol' phone line
"Drop everything, DJ, I need your December column instead,
I fretted and fretted and scratched my bald head.
"Where do I start" and "where do I end,"
There has been so much activity since 2022 year-end.

We had a difficult December on the line east of Rapid City proper,
But there were no outages that were a show stopper.
Our guys worked in a difficult condition,
To make sure our members lights were in a good position.
Ninety Nine percent reliability on our system is a goal we shoot to maintain,
What happens on the SPP grid makes reliability a bigger strain.
Regulators and some citizens don't see the value of electricity,
I am hopeful that attitude will change when the rolling blackouts hit their big city.

Our spring broke loose with new housing developments that did abound,
Our crews were scrambling to make sure everything was put in the ground.
Besides new services we must keep the existing system in top shape,
Maintenance, line patrol, and tree trimming we cannot escape.
The new Eglin substation in 2023 we did get to energize,
Beginning to start the Ashland substation will be the next one to rise.

Material shortages and inflation put us in a bind,
But our guys and gals worked exceptionally hard to make sure we had material of every kind.
Amazing how things in business have more than doubled in five years or less,
On our financial picture it really puts stress.
We knew we need to keep WREA a coop that is financially viable,
A rate increase in 2024 is undeniable.
What will that increase be is yet to be decided,
But 4-7% is what our estimates have provided.

We have applied for Federal infrastructure dollars to alleviate some financial stress,
A few winners and losers have come from the paperwork mess.
Lots of requirements our employees their heads they do scratch,
But know it is our fiduciary duty for any help with additional funding we can snatch.

Our employees worked hard and safely for another year, safety not far from their mind,
No major injuries helped all sleep more sound as humankind.
AI, EV's, solar, battery, cybersecurity, energy audits, new technology, not to mention the electric bill,
Keep this committed bunch from sitting very still.
Many employees took time from their jobs and family to do additional education and training,
Helping to make WREA a better place for our members, always without complaining.
Two long time employees, Cheryl and Wayne decided to retire,
We missed them dearly but gave younger employees the chance to get their feet in the fire.

A longtime director decided it was time to retire as he had taught us a lot,
A good, young engineer the members elected to fill Jerry's slot.
Our member elected board has a lot on their plate,
I can't thank them enough for all the work to keep things straight.

We hope this Christmas season finds you and your family in great cheer,
And the reason for the season you hold in your heart dear.
A merry Christmas and Happy New Year we shout with glee,
And that 2024 happiness and good cheer you too will agree!

**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
 Chuck Sloan – Treasurer
 Larry Eisenbraun
 Peter Blake
 Marcia Arneson
 Howard Knuppe
 Sue Peters

CEO and General Manager:

Dick Johnson –
 dick.johnson@westriver.coop

Editor

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WEST RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of West River Electric Association. Members subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership for \$6 a year. West River Electric Cooperative Connections purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better living. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 per year. Periodicals Postage paid at Wall, S.D., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to West River Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 412, Wall, SD 57790-0412.

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.

New Faces at West River Electric

Nicole Parker

Nicole Parker started work for West River Electric on Nov. 1, as a Member Service Representative in the Rapid City office. She has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and prior to coming to West River Electric, she spent 16.5 combined years at the State of South Dakota, Custer County Sherrif Office and Black Hills Energy. 11215300

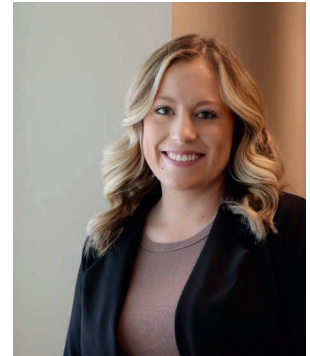
Nicole loves to spend time with her family while not working and spends a lot of time on the road with her two kids for Rodeo. She has an 18-year-old son who attends SDSU and a 16-year-old daughter who is a Junior at Custer High School.

**Callie Gabriel**

Callie Gabriel started work for West River Electric on Nov. 6, as a Member Service Representative in the Rapid City office. Callie graduated from Sturgis Brown High School in 2015 where she was active in volleyball, basketball, softball, and National Honor Society.

She attended Sheridan College in Sheridan, W.Y., where she graduated with an associate degree in health science in May 2018. While attending Sheridan College, she played volleyball, was a part of the Sheridan College Foundation, a student ambassador, and president of the Newman club.

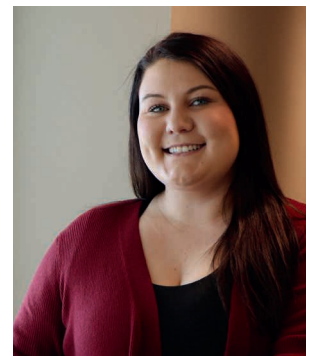
Callie enjoys spending time with her family and friends, camping, hiking, golfing, playing co-ed softball and volleyball, and refing high school volleyball.

**Christina Cassidy**

Christina Cassidy started work for West River Electric on Nov. 1, as a Member Service Representative in the Rapid City office. Christina graduated from Sturgis Brown High School in 2021 where she was active in fastpitch softball and high school Rodeo. She also participated in basketball in her younger years.

After high school, she stayed active in playing softball with her cousins on a slow pitch team out of Sturgis, and she continued to attend local rodeos, barrel racing on her horse Rio.

When Christina is not working, you can find her spending time outside, hunting, fishing, and at the lake with friends. She is very grateful for this opportunity to be part of the West River Electric Family! 11176100



January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a Natural Danger

About one in 15 homes in the U.S. has radon levels at or above the the EPA action level, according to the National Cancer Institute. You can't see or smell radon, and scientists estimate 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year are attributed to it.

Radon is produced from a natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It enters homes, offices, schools and other buildings through cracks in floors and walls, construction joints or gaps around service pipes, electrical wires and sump pits. The Environmental Protection Agency reports elevated levels of radon gas have been measured in every state and estimates nearly one out of every 15 homes in America has elevated radon levels.

People who breathe in these radioactive particles, swallow water with high radon levels or are exposed to radon for a long period of time are susceptible to lung damage and lung cancer. Smokers who are exposed to elevated levels of radon gas have a 10 times higher risk of developing lung cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control.

It may take years before health problems appear. Your chances of getting lung cancer from radon depend mostly on:

- How much radon is in your home
- Where you spend most of your time (the main living and sleeping areas)
- The amount of time you spend in your home
- Whether you are a smoker or have ever smoked

Test Your Home

Old homes, new homes, homes with basements and homes without basements can have radon problems. Testing is the only way to determine how much radon is present.

Consider hiring a professional tester. Short-term (2-90 day) and long-term (more than 90-day) test kits are available, with the long-term kit producing more accurate results. The EPA website can help you find a radon test kit or measurement and mitigation professional near you. Do-it-yourself test kits also are available at many local hardware stores.

No level of radon exposure is considered completely safe, however the EPA only recommends reducing radon levels in your home if your long-term exposure averages four picocuries

per liter (pCi/L) or higher. A pCi is a measure of the rate of radioactive decay of radon gas. This decay causes radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe.

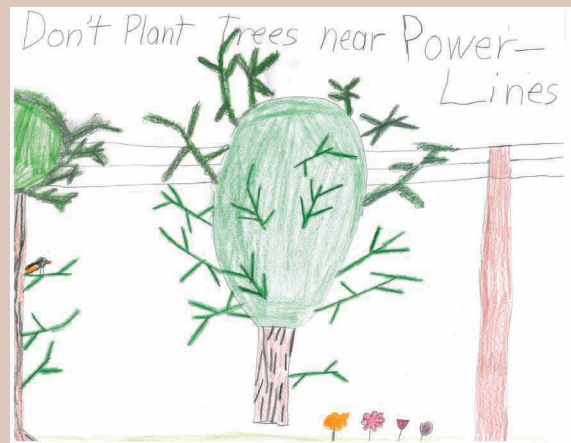
Reduce Radon Gas in Your Home

The American Cancer Society says a variety of methods can be used to reduce radon gas levels in your home, including sealing cracks in floors and walls and increasing ventilation though sub-slab depressurization using pipes and fans.

The EPA recommends using a state or nationally certified contractor, because lowering high radon levels often requires technical expertise and special skills. Two agencies have set the standard for participants seeking certification:

- The American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists
- National Radon Safety Board

Always test again after the work is finished and then every two years. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated January as National Radon Action Month, a time when health agencies across the country urge all Americans to have their homes tested for radon.



Don't Plant Trees Near Power Lines

Annette Tschetter, Age 9

Annette Tschetter instructs readers to not plant trees near power lines. Annette is the daughter of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter from Revillo, S.D., members of Whetstone Valley Electric.

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.

SOUPS & STEWS

PUMPKIN APPLE SOUP

Ingredients:

3 tbsps. butter
1 cup finely chopped onion
2 tps. pumpkin pie spice
1 tsp. ground ginger
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
1 cup chunky applesauce
3 1/2 cups chicken broth
3/4 cup heavy cream

Method

Melt butter in large saucepan on medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in pumpkin pie spice and ginger.

Stir in pumpkin, applesauce and broth until well blended and smooth. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat. (If a smoother soup is desired, place mixture in batches in blender container; cover and blend until smooth.) Stir in cream. Heat gently before serving, if necessary.

McCormick.com

CREAMY CHICKEN NOODLE STEW

Ingredients:

1/3 cup butter, cubed
1 med. carrot, shredded
1 celery rib, finely chopped
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 carton (32 oz) chicken broth
1 cup whole milk
1 cup uncooked kluski noodles or other egg noodles
2 cups cubed cooked chicken
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Method

In a large saucepan, heat butter over medium high heat; saute carrot and celery until tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add the broth and milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until thickened, 1-2 minutes. Stir in the noodles. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered, until noodles are al dente, 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the chicken, salt and pepper. Cook and stir until the chicken is heated through. Stir in the cheese until melted. Serve.

Susan Mitzner
Balaton, Minn.

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP WITH ROTISSERIE CHICKEN

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups chopped carrots, (about 1/2-inch)
1 1/2 cups chopped celery, (about 1/2-inch)
1 cup chopped white onion, (about 1/2-inch)
1 tbsp. rotisserie chicken seasoning
4 cups chicken stock
4 cups medium egg noodles
2 cups chopped rotisserie chicken
1 tbsp. parsley flakes

Method

Heat vegetable oil in large saucepan on medium-high heat. Add carrots, celery and onion; cook and stir 8 to 10 minutes until softened and lightly browned. Stir in Seasoning. Cook 1 minute.

Add stock and egg noodles. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 8 to 10 minutes until noodles are just tender.

Gently stir in chicken and salt. Simmer 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat. Stir in parsley to serve.

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.



Partnering with SDSMT on a Senior Design Project



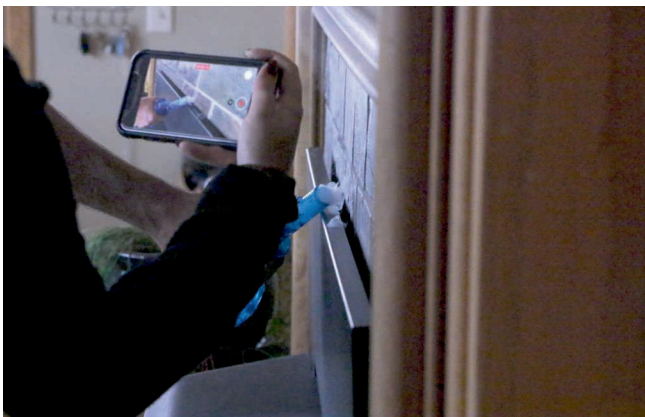
Amanda Haugen
Communications Specialist

In an ever-changing effort to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability to uphold our seventh cooperative principle, Commitment to Community, West River Electric was overjoyed when asked to partner on a Senior Design Project. When approached by two South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSMT) seniors whose project was on Sustainability and energy efficiency, we knew we could help them in some way.

“When Emma and Annika contacted me and explained a little bit about what they were hoping to accomplish with their

project, I knew exactly how I could help reach their goals; a Blower Door Test,” says Energy Advisor Adam Daigle. Adam’s expertise in energy audits was a driving force in helping make Emma Thompson and Annika Schooler’s Senior Design Project a success. 1984700

The Blower Door Test is a diagnostic tool used to measure airtightness and point out heating/cooling loss and infiltration in the conditioned space that isn’t visible to the naked eye. “We went to the home that Emma and Annika had selected for the project and set up the equipment for the energy audit, I then let them collect all the information they needed,” says Daigle. “I



showed them how to read the monitors, explained what all the numbers meant, and how to use the thermal camera.”

Adam, Emma, and Annika went through the entire home checking air leaks and thermal readings around window seals, door seals, light switches and fixtures, and the fireplace. After they collected the data they needed, Adam walked Emma and Annika through importing their findings into a software program specifically used for energy audits. 2704401

The final presentation and outcome of Emma and Annika’s Sustainable Senior Design project findings was held on Dec. 11. West River Electric is extremely proud of the two seniors and wishes them all the best in their future endeavors. We are committed to community and look forward to future opportunities in partnering with SDSMT.

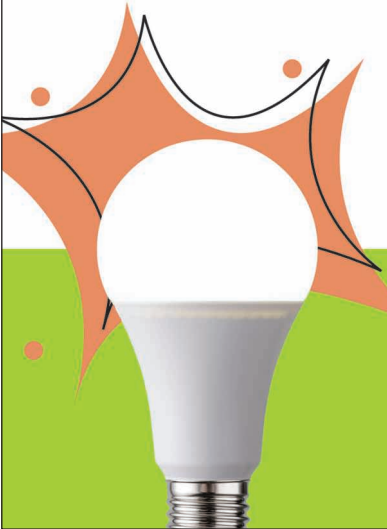


ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: energystar.gov





Jewel Cave's walls glisten with a coating of calcite crystals coating that give this cave its unique name. *Image credit: NPS*

BENEATH THE BLACK HILLS

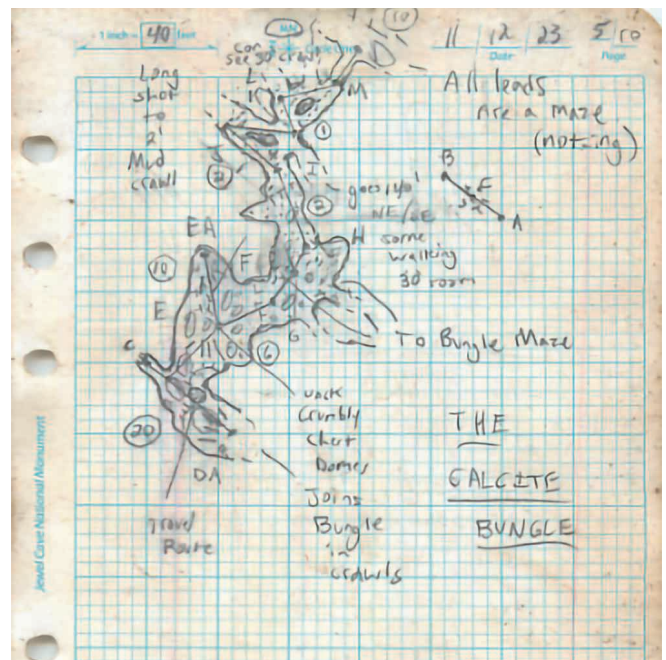
Charting Untrodden Miles in Jewel Cave

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

In the depths of the Black Hills lies an immense domain of underground caves renowned for their untouched beauty, enticing tourists with the opportunity for stunning photography and expert-led tours. Digging a little deeper, however, reveals that many of these unsuspecting attractions are actually home to a vast network of rooms and passages where no human has ever set foot before. Jewel Cave National Monument, located west of Custer and celebrated for its unique, crystal calcite coating, is one such subterranean cavern that continues to be a frontier of exploration.

Jewel Cave has thousands of miles of unexplored passages, crawlways and chasms that await discovery, making it one of the largest cave systems in the world. The immensity of Jewel Cave and others like it in the Black Hills has inspired multiple



A field sketch from the four-day Veterans Day weekend expedition. *Image credit: NPS*

generations of ambitious cave explorers who have devoted years of their lives to mapping out new areas of these underground expanses.

Despite their efforts, only a small fraction of Jewel Cave has

been navigated and mapped, leading to new cave discoveries being recorded even now.

Recently, a group of National Park Service volunteer cave explorers, led by volunteer Chris Pelczarski, expanded the known limits of Jewel Cave in an expedition over Veterans Day weekend of this year.

In total, their journey lasted four days. Bringing only what they could carry, the small group of cavers wriggled through miles of passages without natural sunlight or ready supplies to ultimately be the first to step into what was previously untrodden terrain.

To achieve their goal, the volunteers tackled the 3-D maze that defines the Jewel Cave network, hiking and climbing steep underground terrain. Despite the challenge, Pelczarski said the ending discovery made the whole journey worthwhile. When discovering something new, the challenge pales in comparison.

“The experience of pushing the edge of something is very unique,” said Pelczarski. “When entering a new space, it weighs on you that it’s the first time that a human has ever interacted with that space. As explorers, we have an incredible amount of responsibility because we are the ones who share that story with others and set the tone of that space.”

In total, the explorers discovered and charted just over one mile of new passages during their Veterans Day expedition, uncovering new passages and even a distinctive split in the rock their group named ‘Fruit by the Foot,’ due to the volunteer group garnering a “fruitful yield” of discovery from the rock formation.

The broader work of these cavers has led to several breakthroughs over the years, including the discovery of Jewel Cave’s first cave lake, Hourglass Lake.

“In 2015, our explorers got to a point where the lowest part of the cave dipped into the Madison Aquifer. It was Jewel Cave’s first cave lake,” said Michael Wiles, Chief of Resource Management at Jewel Cave National Monument. “Since that initial discovery, 12 more lakes have been

found within Jewel Cave.”

With the possibility of discovery around every corner, Wiles regards volunteer explorers like Pelczarski as torchbearers in a continuing legacy created by the many cave explorers that came before them, including South Dakota caving legends Herb and Jan Conn and Wiles himself.

“Herb and Jan are icons in the Black Hills area and throughout the world because they were the first to document and map the cave back in 1959,” said Wiles. “They fell in love with the cave and it really captured their imagination.”

Together, Herb and Jan discovered the first 70 miles of Jewel Cave. Building from Herb and Jan’s initial discoveries, Wiles, with the help of volunteers like Pelczarski,

has been involved in the mapping of an additional 150 miles of cave since the Conns retired.

To date, 218.8 miles of Jewel Cave have been discovered. However, Wiles explained that barometric airflow studies indicate that the cave could be up to 14,000 miles long, and only 3% of the cave’s estimated total length has been mapped and discovered.

“Jewel Cave, for practical purposes, isn’t going to end,” said Wiles. “We know that the cave is hundreds if not thousands of miles long and that, alone, is exciting.”

With only a fraction of the total cave discovered, it’s evident that several years of cave discoveries lie ahead.



Volunteer cave explorer Dan Austin sketching a passage of Jewel Cave. Using coordinates to draw a survey line in the book, Austin draws the cave walls around the line to represent the cave walls around him, adding additional notes as needed. *Image credit: NPS*

Construction Update



Matt Schmahl
Construction
Project Manager

As we approach the end of another construction season, West River Electric takes great pride in reflecting upon a year filled with significant accomplishments of construction and upgrade projects, all aimed at fortifying and enhancing our electrical infrastructure. This dedication to excellence and service reliability is the cornerstone of our commitment to our members and communities. Key highlights from this year include:

Ashland Transmission/Distribution Line: The successful completion of the Ashland Substation signifies a significant achievement, not only preparing our transmission system for the impending addition of the Ashland Substation, currently under construction, but also aiding in servicing loads in the surrounding area. This is crucial as energy demands have steadily increased in recent years.

Eglin Substation Construction: The ongoing Eglin Substation project symbolizes our relentless pursuit of an uninterrupted power supply. While the substation itself has been completed, final work remains on the distribution lines leaving the substation. The addition of the Eglin Substation will significantly support the growth in and around the Exit 61 area upon the completion of these lines.

Highway 34- and Nine-Mile Road Single Phase Rebuild: The reconstruction of the Highway 34- and Nine-Mile Road single-phase infrastructure underscores our dedication to the stability and reliability of our electrical system. These strategic upgrades empower us to meet the ever-evolving energy demands of our service area reliably.

Union Center West Three Phase Rebuild: The successful completion of the Union Center West three-phase rebuild project highlights our commitment to optimizing electrical systems for peak efficiency. This project not only strengthens our network but also equips us to seamlessly adapt to changing energy requirements, ensuring a robust and adaptable infrastructure.

Bonita Road Single Phase Rebuild: The Bonita Road Single Phase Rebuild project is another significant accomplishment, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring safe, secure, and reliable electricity delivery. Enhancing the single-phase infrastructure plays a pivotal role in maintaining the overall stability of the electrical system within this area.

Enning East Single Phase Rebuild: West River Electric proactively identified the single-phase line heading north and east of Enning as a facility that required attention due to its age. To prioritize the safety and reliability of electricity for our members, we took proactive measures and conducted a preemptive rebuild of the line, showcasing our commitment to ensuring uninterrupted and secure electrical service.

In addition to these major projects, West River Electric has actively engaged in numerous subdivision initiatives across our service area, reaffirming our dedication to supporting community growth and well-being. Our team's efforts resulted in the construction of over 850 new services throughout 2023, reflecting our commitment to service expansion and enhancement. 10065100

In conclusion, West River Electric's unwavering commitment to excellence, safety, and reliability has been the driving force behind our accomplishments over the past year. The completion of these significant projects underscores our dedication to providing steadfast electrical services, exemplifying our enduring commitment to infrastructure upgrades and community development.

West River Electric remains resolute in our commitment to enhancing services, ensuring electrical infrastructure reliability, and consistently delivering reliable power. The achievements of the past year stand as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team, reaffirming our pledge to provide our members with a brighter future.



SAFETY TIP

Keep space heaters on a flat, level surface. Avoid placing them on rugs or carpet.



SAFETY TIP

Never leave a space heater unattended while it's running. Turn it off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

NOW ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS!

High School Seniors and Current College Students

7, \$500 scholarships up for grabs!

Deadline to apply: Feb. 5th, 2024



West River Electric Association, Inc.
Your Tomorrow Energy Cooperative
"Powering You For A Brighter Future"



More Information

605-393-1500
www.westriver.coop

Operation Round-up Application deadline April 1, 2024 by 5pm



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



Wall Office
1200 W Fourth Ave
PO Box 412
Wall, SD 57790



Do you have a non-profit organization that you would like to see apply for Operation Round-up funds? You can visit westriver.coop to submit an application online or download and drop it off at either office.

Office hours: Mon-Fri | 7am-5pm



The Sanford Underground Research Facility partners with more than 2,000 scientists from more than 200 global institutions and universities, enabling groundbreaking research across multiple disciplines.

STRIKING GOLD IN SCIENCE

Unearthing Research at the Sanford Underground Research Facility

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Years ago, the Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota, lured prospectors with the promise of riches during the gold rush era. Yet today, the site where miners once delved for gold now hosts scientists pursuing their own discoveries, not for gold, but for discoveries in particle physics and dark matter at the Sanford Underground Research Facility.

The mine's transformation into a

state-of-the-art research facility really began in 1970 when Raymond Davis Jr. began what is now known today as the Homestake experiment, a research project that would forever change the entire landscape of western South Dakota. Seeing beyond the precious metal, Davis envisioned the Homestake Mine as the perfect location to conduct research on the illusive neutrino particle. Conducting neutrino research underground was a crucial component of the project because the deep

environment of the mine shielded his experiments from cosmic rays, allowing for more accurate detection of neutrinos. While the Homestake Mine was still in operation, Davis worked among the bustle of mining activities to conduct research, which led to groundbreaking discovery in neutrino research and ultimately to a Nobel Prize in 2002.

As Davis concluded his groundbreaking neutrino research, a chapter was closing for the Homestake Mine. According to the facility's website, Homestake was North America's largest and deepest gold mine at the time of its closing, producing approximately 41 million ounces of gold in its 126-year lifetime. When the mine was decommissioned in 2002, it threatened to not only leave a vast cavern in the earth but also a significant void in the local economy. Davis's success, however, prompted South Dakota's leadership to step in at a critical moment and

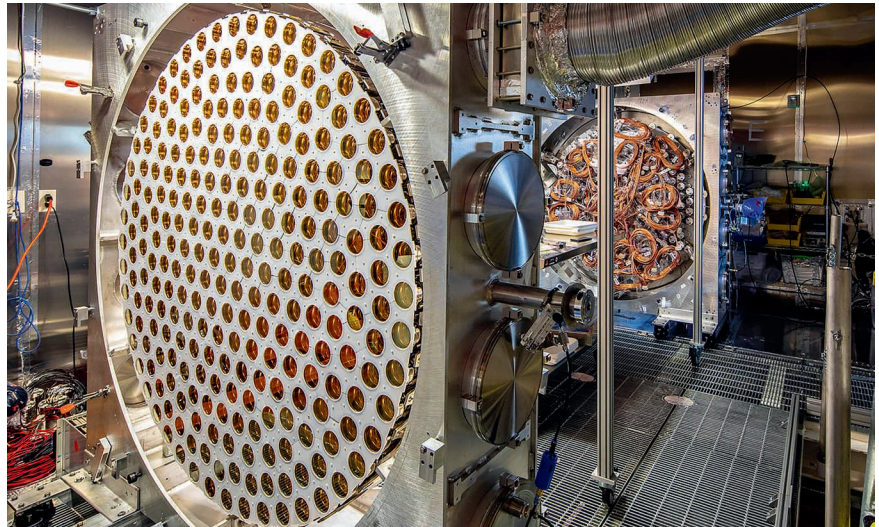
repurpose the mine into a bastion of scientific research.

Mike Ray, Media Relations Manager at Sanford Underground Research Facility, reflected on the state's response to the mine's closure. "Those in leadership at the time saw that this mine was closing and the terrible economic impact that the closure was going to have on the northern hills and this community, but they saw a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

The light at the end of the tunnel became the Sanford Underground Research Facility. To advance one of South Dakota's most ambitious projects, the state secured a \$70 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford and a land donation from Barrick Gold Corporation, the mine's owner. The state then established the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority, which contributed an additional \$40 million to realize the project. These donations paved the way forward to begin construction on a space for some of the most advanced science projects ever made.

The herculean effort, Ray explained, was not only to mitigate the negative economic impact of the mine's closure but to create something even more impactful for South Dakota and its residents. Today, the Sanford Underground Research Facility collaborators include over 2,000 scientists from over 200 institutions and universities worldwide. It is expected to garner an estimated \$2 billion net economic impact in South Dakota by 2029.

Beyond its economic contributions, the lab holds potential for groundbreaking discoveries across various disciplines, including projects researching biology, geology, engineering or particle physics. Notably, the lab is currently home to LUX-ZEPLIN, the world's most sensitive dark matter detector and DUNE, the Deep



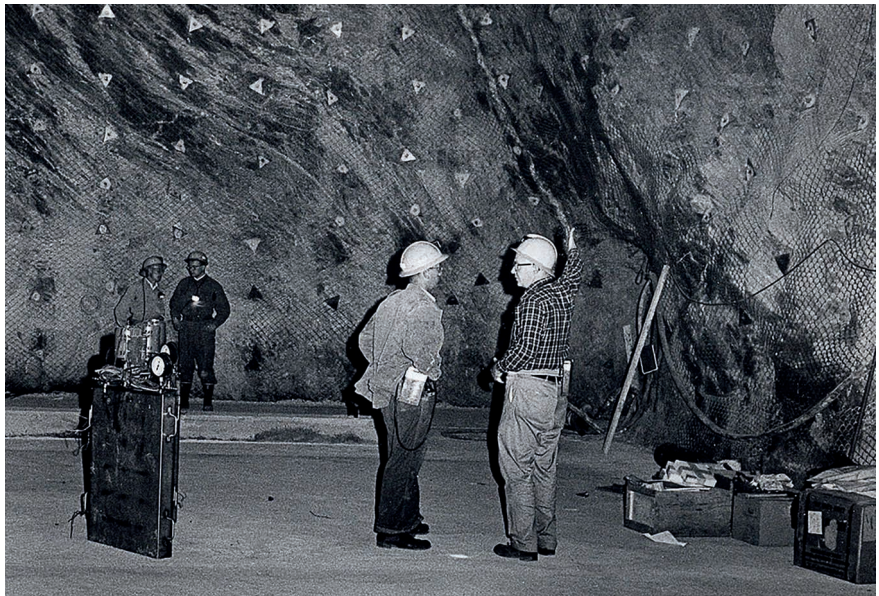
An array of the LUX-ZEPLIN, the world's most sensitive dark matter detector.
Photo Credit: Matthew Kapust, Sanford Underground Research Facility.

Underground Neutrino Experiment, among several other significant projects. While LUX-ZEPLIN and DUNE are distinct projects, both seek to provide fundamental insights into our current understanding of the laws of physics.

"There are so many examples of how fundamental research can take decades to lead to innovation," Ray said. "The beauty of this is that we don't always know where this research will

take us, but if we don't do this kind of exploration, we will never know the applications of these far-reaching projects."

Regardless of the outcome, the Sanford Underground Research Facility will continue to not only preserve the historic legacy of South Dakota's Homestake Mine, but also place South Dakota at the forefront of discovery and innovation for years to come.



A historic view of the Davis Cavern that hosted Ray Davis's Nobel Prize-winning solar neutrino experiment. The cavern has since been expanded and its walls have been coated with shotcrete, a type of spray-on concrete, to accommodate research on dark matter.
Photo Credit: Anna Davis, Sanford Underground Research Facility.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SHINING THE LIGHT ON WEST RIVER ELECTRICS DEDICATED EMPLOYEES



TURNER DONAHUE
MAINTENANCE &
CONSTRUCTION
FOREMAN

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I have been with WREA for 10 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

Currently I'm on the maintenance crew. Which means we line patrol our lines and look for issues in the field. After we are done with that we will start tree trimming and then go into fixing the issues that we have found from line patrol.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

The people I work with. It is a great place to work.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY SINCE STARTING WORK AT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

There are too many to pick from.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Safety, Committed, Family

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GET UP AND GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

Knowing I'm going to work with people I enjoy being around. I also like that you are always up against a new challenge that you may have never faced before.



AIMEE PAULSEN
BILLING SPECIALIST

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I have been with WREA for almost 7 years in April.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

I am a Billing Specialist. I run processes for PreBill and Billing, key reports up for processes every other month, Consumption for one cycle a month and make calls for high usage or problems. I also do Auto Pay (EFT), Administer Energy Assistance for all members approved, submit claims to the state and keep records of all for the Coop, take care of all NSF payments, answer phones and handle member issues. I set up planned outages, notify members and assist the lineman if they need meter reads or a service order keyed up. That is me in a nutshell. I am sure I forgot something but all three of us in Billing work so well together and can all tackle each others chores if needed. I love it!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I absolutely love my job!!! I am so blessed to be able to have the opportunity to be part of this team at WREA and work with the best members!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY SINCE STARTING WORK AT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

My witty on point co-workers who seem to always get me one way or another!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Caring – Reliable - Efficient

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GET UP AND GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

My Family & Coffee! I love my job so it is pretty easy to come in and do what I enjoy! Thank you all for making it enjoyable!



FROM ALL OF US AT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC

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 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.



Jan. 26-27
Pro Snocross Races
 18 Seventy Six Dr.
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

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.

JAN. 5
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 6
Live on Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 10
45th Annual Ranchers Workshop
 9 a.m.
 Sinte Gleska University Multi-Purpose Center
 Mission, SD

JAN. 12
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 13
Knights of Columbus Bowling Tournament
 1 p.m.
 Meadowood Lanes
 Rapid City, SD

JAN. 20
Live on Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 23
A Trip to Chile (Reservations Required)
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 25
A Trip to Chile (Reservations Required)
 5:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 26
Granite Sports Fantastic Friday
 3 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JAN. 26-27
Reliance Area Community Development 29th Annual Dinner Theater
 6 p.m.
 Reliance Legion Hall
 Reliance, SD

FEB. 3
Live On Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 3
Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby
 11 a.m.
 City Boat Landing
 Hendricks, MN

FEB. 10
Polar Bear Chili Cook-Off
 11 a.m.
 Main Street
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 10
Tour de Chocolate
 Main Street
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 17
Live On Stage
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 18-20
MASC presents Disaster! the Musical
 Vesta Community Center
 Vesta, MN

FEB. 20
A Trip to Portugal
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 22
A Trip to Portugal
 6:30 p.m.
 Mangiamo
 Hill City, SD

FEB. 23-24
Women in Blue Jeans Conference
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD

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