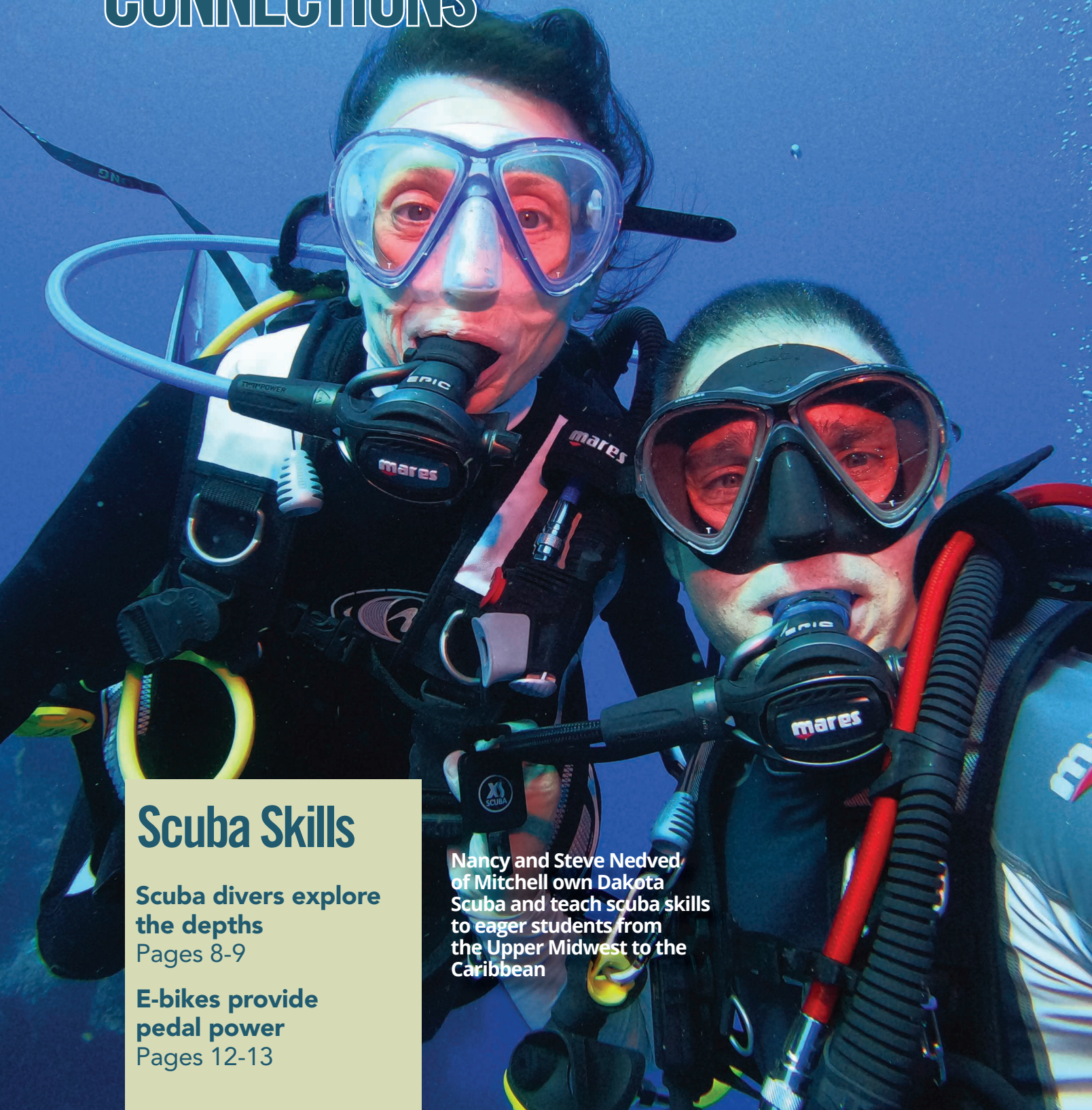


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Scuba Skills

Scuba divers explore  
the depths  
Pages 8-9

E-bikes provide  
pedal power  
Pages 12-13

Nancy and Steve Nedved  
of Mitchell own Dakota  
Scuba and teach scuba skills  
to eager students from  
the Upper Midwest to the  
Caribbean

# THE FUTURE OF ENERGY



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

I think our April sales will set a new record. It seemed much colder with several shots of snow. Oh, and the wind! Oh yes; a new record for wind for the entire month of April from what I have been reading.

I have mentioned this in past columns, but we can see a quiet transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular among members. We have noticed many homeowners switching to electric appliances and heating/cooling. More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. Some of these have been around for years, but they are now becoming much more efficient and have better storage; less “range anxiety.” Many of these tools offer the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools and equipment. We see the gamut of battery-powered tools, electric cars, buses, trucks, UTVs, backhoes - even airplanes and boats.

Last summer, my family gave me a battery-powered lawn mower, leaf blower and trimmer. Did I say how much I LOVE them? Just plug the battery in and go. I even used the blower this winter to blow off my driveway and sidewalk when there was light snow. I don't have gas cans laying around. I no longer worry about changing oil. I would be remiss if I failed to mention no more yanking on a rope praying the piece of equipment will start, and I haven't flooded it again! My wife has purchased a robotic vacuum (Roomba) and regular battery-powered vacuum for our house. We love both of them, although she would say I don't know very well how to run them! At West River, we experimented with the new robotic Husqvarna lawn mower. It is a hoot to see it working in the lawn as we work inside. Come by our Rapid City office

sometime this summer and watch it slowly mow the grass. An amazing piece of equipment. 11068900

Why do I bring this up? Not only to mention these handy gadgets, but partly because we get questions quite often that we must have increased our rates because the members see their bills are higher. “You had to have raised rates!” West River has not had a rate adjustment since 2018. That adjustment was only a minor tweak at the time. Members need to remember to look at their kWh usage on their bills, not the dollars. I can bet many of you have increased usage because of electric and battery powered appliances, tools, and equipment like I mentioned above.

**The last few months, I read many news items pronouncing increased energy and utility costs. Electricity hasn't increased for our members at all.**

Finally, some sad news. The West River Electric family lost a great friend the end of April. Janice Hammerquist, wife of Jerry Hammerquist, Director from District 1, passed away. Jerry has been a very large part of West River's success, not to mention the success of the entire national cooperative program. Janice was always at his side. In the obituary it said it well: “when she retired her full-time job was monitoring Jerry's jokes for political correctness and repetitiveness. She did not enjoy much success in this position.” Janice, you will be missed by us all. We wish Jerry and his family the best.

Please stay safe as we enter a very busy summer season.

## 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  
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#### CEO and General Manager:

Dick Johnson –  
[dick.johnson@westriver.coop](mailto:dick.johnson@westriver.coop)

#### Editor

Robert Raker –  
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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](mailto:robert.raker@westriver.coop).



## DID YOU CHANGE YOUR PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL?

It is important to keep your information updated with West River Electric. We would like to keep you updated on planned outages or other important information that may affect your service. Contact us at 279-2135 or 393-1500 to make changes to your information.

## 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. Office hours are subject to change in response to COVID-19.

## 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.

## June is National Safety Month

While your local electric cooperative often focuses on electric safety and provides information to keep you and your family free from harm, there are many other dangers lurking out there.

In recognition of National Safety Month, we're sharing the National Safety Council's list of the top causes of preventable injuries and death away from the workplace.

**POISONING.** In 2011, accidental poisonings overtook car crashes for the first time as the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for all age groups combined. Poisoning deaths are often caused by exposure to gases, chemicals and other toxic substances, but prescription drug overdose is by far the leading cause.

**VEHICLE CRASHES.** Crashes are the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death overall. Impaired driving, distracted driving, speeding and inexperience can cause a life to be cut short in the blink of an eye.

**FALLS.** Falling is the third-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death over all age groups, but it's the No. 1 cause of death for those aged 65 and older.

**CHOKING AND SUFFOCATION.** Choking on food or other objects is a primary cause of harm and death. Suffocation and choking rank higher among the elderly and infants.

**DROWNING.** It's the No. 1 cause of death for children from ages 1 to 4, mostly due to children falling into pools or being left alone and unsupervised in bathtubs.

**FIRES AND BURNS.** Fires often start at night, when families are asleep and most vulnerable. A working and well-maintained smoke alarm will cut in half the chances of dying in a fire.

**NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS.** Weather-related disasters claim hundreds of lives per year. You should learn all you can about emergency preparedness and always have an emergency kit on hand in your home.

## BOWLING FOR CHARITY IN MITCHELL



More than 80 cooperative employees showed up in Mitchell for the 7th Annual Line Patrol Charity Bowling Tournament sponsored by Central Electric. The Lacreek Electric Headhunters shown above (Tiff Pettit, Terri Gregg, Cody Allen, Ryan Pettit) took top honors. The event was organized to raise money for a fund used to help electric co-op employees and their families in times of need. Find out more about this event and South Dakota's electric cooperatives by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



## Call 811 before you dig

### Maddy Pannell

Maddy Pannell, age 10, reminds electric cooperative members to call 811 before digging into the ground when planting trees or pursuing other outdoor projects. Maddy is the daughter of Southeastern Electric members Scott and Kim Pannell of Sioux Falls.

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.

# DELICIOUS DAIRY

## SWEDISH CREME

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup, plus 2 tsps. sugar, divided
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1 tsp. clear imitation vanilla extract
- 2 cups (16 oz.) sour cream
- 1 cup fresh or frozen red raspberries

### METHOD

In a saucepan, combine cream and 1 cup sugar. Cook and stir constantly over low heat until candy thermometer reads 160 degrees, or steam rises from pan. (Do not boil). Stir in gelatin until dissolved; add extracts. Cool 10 minutes. Whisk in sour cream. Pour into eight dessert glasses or small bowls. Chill at least 1 hour. Before serving, combine raspberries and remaining sugar; spoon over each serving.

**Joanne Singrey-Johnson,  
Watertown**

## TUNA EGG SALAD

### Ingredients:

- 3 6 oz. cans tuna packed in water
- 3 eggs hard boiled, peeled and chopped
- 2 small dill pickles diced
- 1 large celery rib diced
- 1/4 cup red onion minced
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice or red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. garlic powder, optional
- 1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2% fat
- 2 tbsp. mayo

### METHOD

Drain cans with tuna well. Transfer to a large bowl and separate into flakes with a fork. Add chopped and peeled hard boiled eggs, pickles, celery, red onion, lemon juice, garlic powder (if using), salt, pepper, yogurt and mayo. Stir well with a fork and refrigerate. Serve cold in a sandwich or over salad greens. Make Ahead: Tuna egg salad tastes best cold. For best results, refrigerate 30 minutes before eating.

**ifoodreal.com**

## EASY SHERBET

### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. orange or lime jello
- 1 cup boiling water
- 3 cups milk
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1-1/4 cup sugar

### METHOD

Dissolve jello in boiling water. Add remaining ingredients. Freeze until 1/2 inch thick at edge of tray. Empty into mixing bowl and beat thoroughly. Return to freezer. This works well if put in a loaf pan.

**Joy Hagen, Webster**

## EXTRA GRILLED CHEESE

### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. butter, softened
- 2 tsp. Parmesan cheese, grated
- Dash of garlic powder
- 4 slices bread
- 2 slices sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 slices Swiss cheese

### METHOD

In a small bowl, combine butter, parmesan cheese, and garlic powder. Spread an even layer on one side of each slice of bread. Place 1 slice of cheddar cheese and 1 slice of Swiss between two bread slices, with the buttered side facing out. Cook in hot skillet for about 2 minutes, until the crust is golden. Flip sandwich and grill until crust is golden and the cheese is melted. Slice and serve. May add grilled onions if you choose. Just saute in the pan before cooking the sandwiches and add to the sandwiches between the cheese slices.

**Kristina Manecke, Midland**

**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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.**

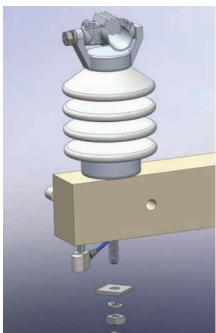


Pictured in no particular order are:  
**Mechanical Engineering** – Zac Hogan, Russell Phillips, Kelvin Sweetman, Shon Williamson  
**Electrical Engineering** – Spencer Gerdes, Jordan Reed, Abdollah Tavangar (not pictured)  
**Computer Engineering** – Avery Schroer, Andrew Nelson



**Robert Raker**  
 robert.raker@westriver.coop

This month I want to shift gears a little bit and talk about a collaboration between WREA and South Dakota School of Mines. This is timely because I am sure we all remember the recent winds in May. West River Electric made it through that storm relatively unscathed, unless you ask the after-hours line crew that was chasing outages over the weekend. Lance Steiger and Derek Haug stayed ahead of the outages and avoided calling in a second crew. However, they would no more than get back to the shop, if they were lucky, and another call would come in. 109800



Reliability is a major factor that helps your cooperative achieve our goal of reaching a 90 ACSI score by 2024. But this takes more than just a dedicated lineman. So, we are always

looking for ways to improve reliability and recently our engineer, Sean Bestgen, brought up the idea of presenting a problem to the School of Mines seniors for a senior design project. Sean's idea was to have them design a vibration monitoring system that would allow us to gather data on the impact of wind on our power lines and the hardware. Oddly enough, they are not worried about the high winds that you and I normally think of. They are looking at steady relatively low wind speeds (10-15 mph) because that causes a vibration frequency that loosens hardware over time. Then the high winds eventually cause the hardware to hit a tipping point that causes outages and blinks. Designing a vibration monitoring system involved multiple disciplines, including computer, electrical and mechanical engineers. There was some minor guidance from WREA, but for the most part these students took



the problem and ran with it. Finally, on May 19, after many hours of work, the students presented their final product to West River Electric's Operations Team. These students presented West River Electric with a data-gathering tool and more importantly, West River participated in advancing these future engineers' educations and exposed them to the electric cooperative world. In certain aspects, cooperatives have issues that are more prominent than other types of electric utilities because of the vast territory we serve in the rural areas. Hopefully, this was just the first of many collaborations with SDSM&T.



People • Power • Purpose



# South Dakota Rural Electric YOUTH EXCURSION JULY 25-28, 2022



The Youth Excursion Tour will be held **July 25-28, 2022**, and is headquartered in Bismarck, N.D.

**All area high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors whose parents or guardians are members of West River Electric are eligible to apply.**

Teens attending this event will:

- Have the opportunity to sightsee and to meet new friends from other participating cooperatives.
- Learn about "The Story Behind the Switch" and see where South Dakota's electricity generates.
- Tour the Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant.
- Spend their evenings swimming, shopping and cruising on the Lewis and Clark Riverboat.

West River Electric will provide transportation, lodging, meals, entertainment and sightseeing events. Students are required to supply their own personal/shopping money.

**For more information and to apply, go to [westriver.coop](http://westriver.coop)**

**Application Deadline:  
JUNE 9, 2022**

# DEEP DIVES

Dozens of scuba divers from South Dakota and Minnesota pursue their hobby not only in local lakes and rivers but also in the Caribbean. *Photos by Steve Nedved*

## Divers explore underwater habitats from the lakes of the Upper Midwest to the Caribbean

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

It's a sunny springtime Saturday morning and outdoors enthusiasts all across the state are buzzing with excitement to kick off another weekend adventure.

They're saddling up their horses, slinging their fishing gear into their boats, cranking their ATVs and lacing up their hiking boots.

In a small shop just south of Mitchell, there's a different kind of energy and amped-up anticipation filling the air. Steve Nedved is busy rigging up scuba tanks and inspecting air regulators for about 20 fledgling divers eager to learn a new skill and experience new thrills.

Nedved is owner of Dakota Scuba and he's finding that more and more adventurers are becoming interested in exploring the aquatic world through a fisheye view, whether that's in the chilly waters of the Missouri River or the crystal-clear surf of the Caribbean.

While the scuba diving season in

the Upper Midwest is relatively short, Nedved stays busy most months out of the year teaching scuba lessons in the Mitchell area and tending to vacationing clients from his Villa Dakota retreat in Cozumel.

It turns out that he and his student-clients can board a plane in Sioux Falls at 7 a.m., make a quick stop in Dallas-Ft. Worth, and be ready to hit the water in Cozumel just after lunch.

"It works out pretty well, and people love to take a fall and winter vacation and explore Cozumel, which is one of the best spots for diving because the visibility can be more than 100 feet and there's so much marine life to see," Nedved said.

The master diver's interest in scuba was sparked back when he was a firefighter and paramedic in Mitchell. After responding to too many emergency situations involving bodies of water, he and his colleagues decided they needed to be trained in diving as part of meeting their professional responsibilities and serving the public.

He received his certification in short order and later decided to venture down to Cozumel to earn his teaching certification through the Professional Association of Dive Instructors so that he could be qualified to train his colleagues back in Mitchell.

He and his wife Nancy, who together own the Nedved Media radio network, fell in love with the tropical paradise and after a dozen diving trips decided it made sense to purchase a home right on the water. Before he knew it, he found many others were beating the same path to Mexico to enjoy the sun, sand and scuba adventures.

"I didn't really start it with the intention of going public, I just didn't realize at the time how much interest there was," he said. "People around here in Mitchell started asking me to train them for recreational certification and then they'd dive here or they'd go to Florida or Cozumel on vacation with their families. We started renting out our place in Cozumel to accommodate people during the times we couldn't be there ourselves."

He also noticed an increasing interest in spearfishing in places like the Oahe



Downstream Recreational Area and Pactola Lake in the Black Hills, so he decided to open the shop to serve as a local and regional outfitter.

Nedved, who has logged more than 1,000 dives since he started in 2006, uses the Mitchell Recreation Center for local training and has played a role in certifying individuals from age 10 to 70.

“It’s not that physically laborious or difficult. Of course, you have to be in condition as with any kind of outdoor sport, but it’s not inherently dangerous in any way if you follow the guidelines,” he said.

Allen Hiller of Pierre is one of Nedved’s recent proteges. Though he had done some snorkeling and diving at sites like Sully Flats, Cow Creek and below the Oahe Dam, Hiller decided he wanted to kick his scuba game up a few notches. So he enlisted Nedved’s services and spent eight days at Villa Dakota last March earning his open water diving certificate.

At the age of 53, Hiller is a veteran of Desert Storm and Desert Shield, a former diesel and aircraft mechanic,



## SCUBA DIVING

Steve Nedved is shown at left with his catch after a day of spearfishing at Sully Flats. Above, Nedved (at right) works with student Allen Hiller on open water certification.

and spent nearly 20 years working for the Union Pacific Railroad in North Platte, NE. He describes himself as an avid hunter and fisherman who is always up for an adventure. Since his visit to the Caribbean, Hiller says he wants to expand his knowledge and experience under water.

“I really caught the diving bug being down there in a beautiful part of the world with the sun and the sand and the clear water where it seems like you can see forever. I want to continue on and get my PADI certification, my night diving certification, and become a master diver,” Hiller said. “I also want to do a lot of spearfishing and learn how to get better at it. Steve was really great to work with.”

Nedved said that once his students become accustomed to the awkward act of breathing through a mouthpiece, they begin to relax and enjoy the experience of discovering a new environment with different lights, colors and sounds.

“People like to hunt for fish and explore underwater quarries and see what’s on the bottom of the river bed,” he said. “When I take them out for the first

## SCUBA RULES

Here are four requirements for scuba diving in South Dakota:

- Divers are required to use a red and white Diver Down flag when diving
- Dive flags must be at least 8"x10"
- Divers must stay within 75 feet of their dive flag
- Boaters and vessel operators are required to stay at least 75 feet from dive flags

time, we can’t really speak when we’re underwater, but when we come up they start chatting away with excitement about the things they saw. It’s really addictive. You rarely see just one person in a family that’s a diver. Usually, after one person does it, the others have to follow. It’s a good sport for a lot of people.”

# NEW EMPLOYEES

Liliya Stone was born and raised in Russia where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Master of Arts in Russian Legal Studies in 2006, and Master of Business Administration in 2010.

She moved to Wall in 2010 as a participant of an international work program.

The next couple of years brought a lot of interesting changes into her life. She got married and had two children. Lilly built her career in a variety of roles and industries, including logistics, insurance, marketing, retail and service industry. She is not only used to wearing many hats, but she enjoys it. Lilly thrives in an environment where no two days are the same. In 2018, Lilly entered the field of economic development as the executive director of the Wall Economic Development Corporation. For over three years in this position, she demonstrated a record of consistent and reliable leadership. In April 2022 she joined the West River Electric Association team as an HR generalist. 125403



Ty Cooper began work for West River Electric on April 20 as a journeyman lineman in the Rapid City office. Ty graduated from Custer High School in 2011 where he participated in football and wrestling. He attended Mitchell Technical College where he graduated with a degree in Powerline Construction and Maintenance

in 2013. After graduation, he worked for Coal Creek Construction for two years before going to work at the City of Fort Morgan where he worked for the next six years, then worked at Kainz Powerlines for one year. Ty enjoys fishing, hiking, and golfing.

Trent Madsen began work for West River Electric on April 20 as a journeyman lineman

in the Rapid City office. Trent graduated from New Underwood High School in 2013 where he participated in football, track and basketball. He attended Mitchell Technical College where he graduated with a degree in

Powerline Construction and Maintenance in 2014. After graduation, he worked for West River Electric as summer help before accepting a full-time job for Grand Electric Cooperative in Buffalo, S.D. He worked there for eight years before accepting the job in Rapid City. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family and being outdoors.

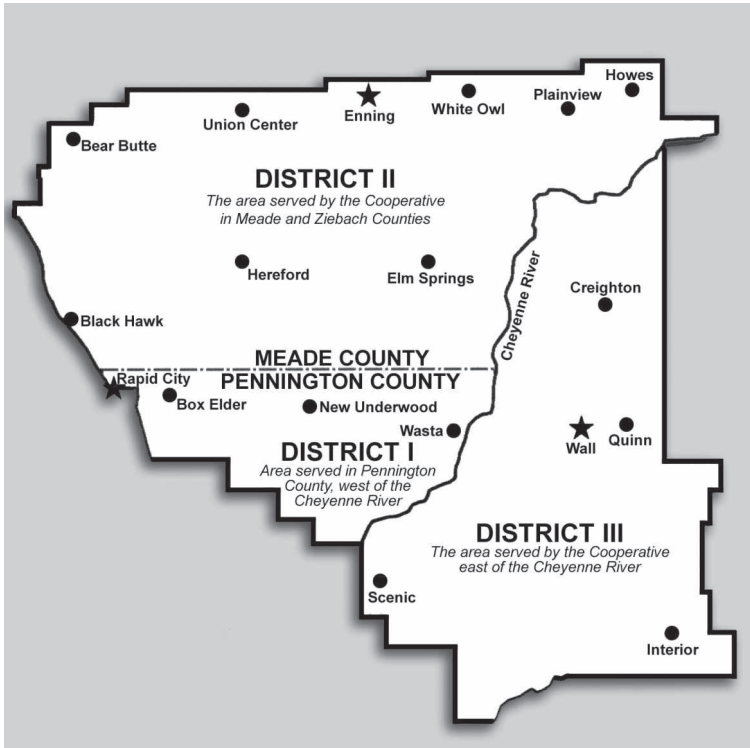


Camden Sawvell began working for West River Electric on April 20 as an apprentice lineman in the Enning Outpost. Camden Graduated from Wall High School in 2016 where he participated in most high school and community events. He attended Mitchell Technical College where he

graduated with a degree in Powerline Construction and Maintenance in 2020. After graduation, he worked for Moreau-Grand Electric for two years before going to work at West River Electric in Enning.

Welcome Lilya, Camden, Trent and Ty! 280601

# Directors Intend to Seek Re-Election to Board



At the April 2021 West River Electric Board of Directors meeting, three incumbent directors let us know of their intent to seek re-election to the Board of Directors of West River Electric Association. 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. Jamie Lewis of Rapid City for District 1, Marcia Arneson of Rapid City for District 2, and Sue Peters of Wall for District 3 have all chosen to seek re-election to the Board of Directors of West River Electric at the **Oct. 8, 2022**, Annual Meeting of the membership of West River Electric. 104500

Per Article V Section 4 of the bylaws of West River Electric a member may seek election to the Board of Directors of West River Electric by taking out a petition and have it signed by at least 15 members at least 120 days but not less than 60 days prior to the annual meeting. The deadline for petitions is **Aug. 9, 2022**. No nominations are taken from the floor at the annual meeting.

Jamie Lewis, District 1



Marcia Arneson, District 2



Sue Peters, District 3





Desmond Dean of Dakota Sports in Aberdeen says e-bikes are all the rage among outdoors enthusiasts. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Electric bicycles give riders the little extra push they need - or not

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Sometimes when you find yourself struggling to move ahead, all you need is a little boost to get where you need to go.

That's the idea behind the invention of the electric bicycle. For those who enjoy mountain biking, pedaling for fitness or just commuting back and forth to work in the open air, the electric bike is becoming the cycle of choice.

Desmond Dean is manager of Dakota Outdoors in Aberdeen and he reports that sales are brisk with his line of Trek e-bikes. The first misconception he typically has to address with his growing list of curious customers is that an e-bike isn't a motorcycle.

"It's a bicycle. There's no throttle and you're in complete control the whole time. The battery and small motor are just there to give you some assistance when and if you need it," he explained.

"They're getting so popular because you can get a wide range of exercise. If you're having trouble with the wind or going up a hill, or if you just want to increase your distance, you can get the extra push you need. You can get some assistance or no assistance."

A battery usually takes about 5-6 hours to fully charge and there are models built for navigating off-road trails, touring, cruising or just moving around town from one point to the next. Prices can range from a few hundred dollars for a youth model to several thousand bucks for adult versions. Some bikes can top out at nearly 30 mph in the highest gear settings and some sweat equity.

Dean highly encourages his customers to take his e-bikes out for a spin around Aldrich Park across from the store because once the shopper puts the Trek through its paces and gets accustomed to the experience, "the bikes tend to sell themselves."

Mary Duvall, a state senator from

Pierre representing District 24, is a life-long fitness buff and has done a lot of pedal pumping over the years. So when her husband Rob suggested they purchase a pair of e-bikes, she was admittedly skeptical. What would be the point of pedaling if you're not going for the burn?

"I looked at it like it would be cheating and we wouldn't get a quality workout," she said. "But I quickly learned I was wrong. I can work as hard as I want and get whatever workout I feel like, or take it as easy as I want, depending on the day."

The Duvalls invested in his-and-her Aventons with thick sturdy frames and wide tires for handling uneven surfaces like the Black Hills, the Badlands and the undulating terrain around Pierre. They also chipped in for safety helmets equipped with an intercom system so they can keep in constant audio contact.

The couple covered 80 miles in a single day on the Mickelson Trail, stopped overnight in Hill City to recharge their batteries and their weary quadriceps, then rode another 56



Shown at left, Mary and Rob Duvall of Pierre have enjoyed their investment in e-bicycles and can go for long distances to see new sights. *Photos provided by Mary Duvall*

miles the following day. They ended up encountering another couple who had hauled their e-bikes from Texas to tour the Mickelson Trail. Another couple they met from Minnesota were using their e-bikes to complete the entire trail from Edgemont to Deadwood.

“We ride them at least once a month and they’ve opened up lots of options that we couldn’t tackle with regular bikes,” Duvall said. “It’s a fun way for us to get outside and enjoy some exercise and fresh air.”

its own pedal-assist system. By the end of 2023, worldwide e-bike sales are expected to reach 40 million units, or more if gas prices continue to escalate.

Surveys consistently indicate most e-bike buyers make the purchase with the goal of replacing trips they’d otherwise take in their cars. But Ron Block of Webster bought his for another reason: he needed to keep up with his wife Nancy, a school teacher who also

happens to be a competitive marathon runner.

“She was leaving me behind, so I figured I needed some assistance to make it a little easier on me,” Ron said. “I rode a lot when I was a kid, but now I’m middle-aged and the bike gives me the ability to set the power to however much help I need.”

The Blocks enjoy biking together each week as part of a local cycling club, though occasionally they like to venture farther afield. Last summer, they biked among the giant redwoods in northern California and Oregon and also pedaled the Katy Trail in Missouri. This year they plan to take a trip to The Netherlands and rent bikes to see the sights.

Ron said he would encourage those who may be interested in purchasing an e-bike to find a nearby dealer, or find a friend who already has one and ask to take it for a test ride.

“That’s what I did before I bought one and I’ve been very satisfied,” he said. “I’ve talked to a lot of people who have them and they’re very happy they made the investment.”

Ron Block of Webster pedals his e-bike along a floating bridge on the Mesabi Trail in northern Minnesota. *Photo provided by Ron Block*



Approximate number of e-bikes expected to be sold worldwide in 2023

**40 million**

Of course, the idea of attaching a small battery-powered motor to a bicycle frame isn’t new. The first patent for an e-bike was issued in 1895. There was a global surge in sales of 35 percent between 1993 and 2004 after Yamaha invented, manufactured and marketed



# FUN AND FISHING ON PACTOLA LAKE

Pactola Lake near Rapid City holds different interests for different outdoor enthusiasts. *Photos by SD Tourism*

## Pactola Lake has something for everyone, from anglers to history buffs

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

Pactola Lake is a unique body of water nestled in the heart of the Black Hills that has come to mean many different things to many different people.

For outdoors adventurers, the 1.1 square mile lake offers a wide range of activities including boating, camping, canoeing, fishing, swimming, paddle boarding, beach combing, hiking and even scuba diving for those interested in capturing an up-close glimpse of the aquatic life that teems throughout the underwater habitat. Fly fishing is a popular pastime for anglers in the shallow waters of Rapid Creek.

Tourism promoters have dubbed

Pactola Lake as South Dakota's version of Atlantis because the lake bed was once the site of a small town that was submerged after Pactola Dam was constructed and the area was flooded in the mid-1950s.

However, explorers today will find very little left of the old town's structures as most were moved or auctioned off when plans for the dam were made public. The Bureau of Land Reclamation clear cut and cleaned off what would eventually become the lake bottom. One of the few buildings still standing in the deep water is the old Civilian Conservation Corps camp dynamite bunker. Scuba divers have reported finding construction equipment and portions of the train tracks in the depths.

Conservationists and biologists study the Pactola Reservoir Complex area for its abundant wildlife habitat and diverse landscapes, while civil engineers operate the reservoir as a means of flood control and as a source of water for the Rapid City metropolitan area - including Ellsworth Air Force Base - located about 15 miles to the east. Farmers also rely on the embankment dam to irrigate their crops.

For historians, Pactola Lake holds a special curiosity as a former hunting ground for Native American tribes and a site where miners went to seek their fortunes and pursue their quests for gold in violation of the Treaty of Fort Laramie. The small settlement that emerged was named for Gen. George Crook, a U.S. Cavalry leader in charge of keeping the ambitious miners away and upholding the terms of the treaty,



Paddlers catch some exercise while enjoying the serene surroundings of Pactola Lake.

although the hills were eventually opened up to prospecting activity in February of 1876. The village was later named Pactola after the legendary “golden sands” that were said to be found along the ancient Pactolus River located in modern-day Turkey.

History buffs also delve down into Pactola’s intriguing past as a thriving boom town in the 1870s where claims were being filed at a breakneck pace and more than 300 miners flooded the place decades before the waters did.

One of the first post office facilities in the Black Hills was established there, two stage lines served the town’s residents and the Black Hills and Western Railroad laid down train tracks to set up a main transportation line. The Sherman House hotel was the center of social activity and a popular gathering place for locals and travelers alike.

During the summer months, children would make the trip from nearby towns to take part in the Presbyterian and Methodist church camps.

To fishermen, in particular, Pactola Lake is prime spot for landing lunker rainbow trout, brown trout, crappie, largemouth bass, bluegill and Kokanee salmon. Below the surface, spearfishing scuba divers stalk bigmouth buffalo.

David Hollister, a CAD specialist at Rushmore Electric in Rapid City, enjoys taking his family out to the lake during the weekends and holidays when the weather cooperates. He and his wife, Jade, like to enjoy the scenery with son Bryce along the hiking trails and they occasionally launch a kayak to explore Jenny Gulch, a shallow, no-wake, area.

David also enjoys the thrill of fishing for trout and pike as he’s done for the past 10 years. He’s not too proud to admit that Jade often brings home the biggest catch.

“The natural beauty is a huge draw. Everywhere you look it’s gorgeous and the fishing is great. They get big and fight hard,” he said, noting that his personal record for trout is 32 inches. “It can be a challenge because the depth can change pretty drastically from the shoreline to 100 feet. It takes a little time and effort to learn the lake.”

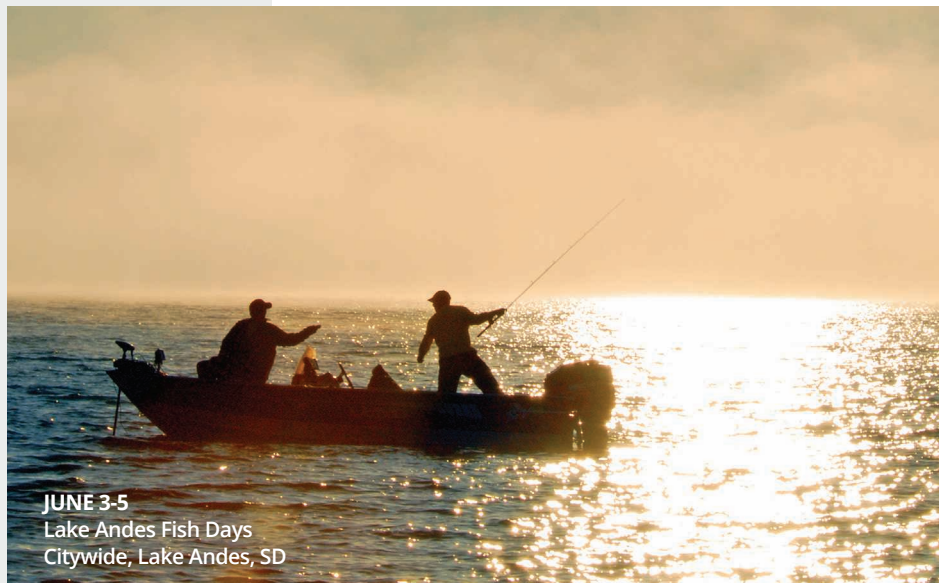
The Pactola Reservoir Complex is open year-round and costs \$6 per vehicle per day. The U.S. Forest Service operates the Pactola Visitor Center, which is located at the south end of the dam. The center provides interpretive exhibits, travel information and a scenic view of the water. There’s also a marina located at Custer Gulch on the south

shore. The privately owned facility has a capacity of 200 vessels and has fishing boats, canoes and paddle boards for rent to the public.

For more information on the area, visit the U.S. Forest Service’s website at [www.fs.usda.gov/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/). Boat ramp data can be found on the Bureau of Reclamation website for Pactola and Deerfield Reservoirs at [www.usbr.gov/gp/boat/](http://www.usbr.gov/gp/boat/).



David Hollister enjoys angling for lunker pike at Pactola Lake.



**JUNE 3-5**  
Lake Andes Fish Days  
Citywide, Lake Andes, SD

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**MAY 28**  
**Deadwood Live: Hank Williams Jr.**  
Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD,  
[www.deadwoodlive.com](http://www.deadwoodlive.com)

**MAY 28**  
**Memorial Weekend in Mitchell**  
Main Street, Mitchell, SD,  
605-292-4444

**MAY 28-29**  
**Black Hills Renaissance Faire**  
Manuel Brothers Park, Lead, SD,  
[www.blackhillsrenfest.com](http://www.blackhillsrenfest.com)

**MAY 29-30**  
**Back When They Bucked**  
Days of '76 Arena, Deadwood, SD,  
605-718-0810

**MAY 30**  
**Prairie Points Quilt Guild Show**  
204 Hodge St., Buffalo, SD,  
605-641-5591

**JUNE 2-4**  
**Annual Black Hills Quilt Show & Sale**  
The Monument, Rapid City, SD,  
[bhquilters.org/events](http://bhquilters.org/events)

**JUNE 2-5**  
**Wheel Jam**  
South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD,  
[www.wheeljam.com](http://www.wheeljam.com)

**JUNE 3-5**  
**Fort Sisseton Historical Festival**  
11907 434th Ave., Lake City, SD,  
605-448-5474

**JUNE 3-5**  
**Lake Andes Fish Days**  
Citywide, Lake Andes, SD,  
605-487-7694

**JUNE 10-12**  
**Annual Custer Off-Road Rally**  
Various Locations, Custer, SD,  
[custersd.com/Off-Road-Rally](http://custersd.com/Off-Road-Rally)

**JUNE 11**  
**Church Community Rummage & Bake Sale**  
5103 Longview Rd., Rapid City, SD,  
605-393-1526

**JUNE 11**  
**The Big Mick**  
George S. Mickelson Trail, Deadwood, SD,  
[mickelsontrailaffiliates.com](http://mickelsontrailaffiliates.com)

**JUNE 16-18**  
**Wild Bill Days**  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD,  
[deadwood.com/event/wild-bill-days/](http://deadwood.com/event/wild-bill-days/)

**JUNE 16-19**  
**South Dakota Shakespeare Festival**  
Prentis Park, Vermillion, SD,  
605-622-0423

**JUNE 17-18**  
**Oahe Days Arts & Music Festival**  
Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD,  
[oahedays.com](http://oahedays.com)

**JUNE 18**  
**605 Summer Classic Beer & Music Festival**  
Cherapa Place, Sioux Falls, SD,  
[605magazine.com/605-summer-classic/](http://605magazine.com/605-summer-classic/)

**JUNE 18-19**  
**Aberdeen Arts in the Park**  
Melgaard Park, Aberdeen, SD,  
605-226-1557

**JUNE 18-19**  
**Brookings Kite Festival**  
Fishback Soccer Complex, Brookings, SD, 605-695-9071

**JUNE 22-25**  
**Crystal Springs Rodeo**  
17803 479th Ave., Clear Lake, SD,  
[crystalspringsrodeo.com](http://crystalspringsrodeo.com)

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Black Hills Bluegrass Festival**  
Rush No More RV Resort & Campground, Sturgis, SD,  
[blackhillsbluegrass.com](http://blackhillsbluegrass.com)

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Main Street Arts & Crafts Festival**  
Centennial Park, Hot Springs, SD,  
[mainstreetartsandcrafts.com](http://mainstreetartsandcrafts.com)

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Quarry Days**  
Citywide, Dell Rapids, SD,  
605-428-4167

**JUNE 30-JULY 4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
300 Roundup St., Belle Fourche, SD,  
[blackhillsroundup.com](http://blackhillsroundup.com)

**JULY 22**  
**Wall Community Health Fair**  
Monument Health Wall Clinic, Wall, SD, 605-279-2149

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