

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Wings of Valor

A Veteran's Hunting
Retreat
Pages 8-9

Celebrating American
Indian Heritage
Pages 12-13

THANK YOU



Dick Johnson
dick.johnson@
westriver.coop

A special thank you to all who have attended recent events hosted by West River Electric. We had a great turnout for our tailgating at New Underwood, our appreciation day at Rapid City, and our annual meeting in Wall. As of this writing, I don't know who the District 1 representative is to replace Jerry Hammerquist, but all three candidates were very capable board member candidates. I look forward to working with them, with the two incumbents re-elected, Larry Eisenbraun and Chuck Sloan, and the other remaining six seated directors. They are a very dedicated group of member owners who work hard on your behalf to make sure the cooperative continues to provide affordable, reliable electricity. It isn't a very easy task these days.

My last sentence really describes a current rule that has really caused much grief in our industry and around our board table. I have told you in the past of our struggles to have adequate generation due to the swift transition from base-load generation to intermittent resources such as wind and solar. The National Energy Reliability Corporation (NERC) gave their summer assessment of generation resources. Their finding was that our country was at great risk of energy shortfalls especially during times of peak demand. We saw this several times during the summer with resource advisories by SPP. At the same time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a new proposal focused on emissions from new and existing power plants. This proposal could disrupt domestic energy security, force critical always-available power plants into early retirement and make new natural gas plants exceedingly difficult to permit, site and build. A similar proposal was attempted in the Obama Administration but was shot down by the Supreme Court.

This proposal reduces key generating resources just as Americans are increasing their reliance on electricity, by forcing the use of new technologies like clean hydrogen along with

carbon capture, and storage, which are promising but not yet viable for widespread use. The proposal for the most part would shut down all coal plants and natural gas plants by 2040. They are going to require clean hydrogen to fire these plants or have carbon capture technology on them. These are not even commercially available options now. And even if they were so, at what price? I had also learned that they estimate if carbon capture technology was placed on a plant, it would reduce output by 25% just at a time when we need more. And, the administration wants to electrify everything. It makes no sense.

The EPA must recognize the disruptive impact these requirements will have on the future of reliable energy before it's too late. You can have your voice heard by contacting our Congressional delegation, who are by the way on board with our industry, or go to voicesforcooperativepower.com and post comments there. 2842501

Again, I am not against renewable options. We just need a national energy policy, an all of the above energy strategy, and a slower transition to intermittent renewable resources.

I will tell you another item that has come to light recently. Now the Department of Energy is saying that hydropower might be in the cross hairs for methane emissions. YES, HYDRO-POWER. They feel past studies are flawed and the rivers and dams are emitting more methane emissions than previously thought. I don't even know what to say!

I hate to rant in this column on political energy items, but this is such an important issue for ALL our members to have reliable electrical power.

Have a great fall, 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:

Dick Johnson –

dick.johnson@westriver.coop

Editor

Amanda Haugen–

amanda.haugen@westriver.coop

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.

West River Electric Celebrates Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month, and West River Electric is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric co-ops, including West River Electric, exist to serve their members. Our priority is to provide affordable, reliable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members we serve, we can evolve to meet your needs. One such need was developing our EV rate of unlimited charging for \$30/month on nights and weekends for our members with Electric Vehicles.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do. 3218600

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for



growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

Co-ops Grow for You: At West River Electric, your satisfaction is our number one goal. It's why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you!

Drowsy Driving

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (Nov. 5-11, 2023), held every year during the first full week of November, is a good time to remember that drowsy driving is impaired driving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 25 adult drivers report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days, and many more admit to driving when they were sleep-deprived.

These startling figures show how prevalent drowsy driving is. What drivers may not realize is how much drowsy driving puts themselves – and others – at risk. In fact, an estimated 6,400 people died annually in crashes involving drowsy driving, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Impact of Drowsiness on Driving

Driving while drowsy is similar to driving under influence of alcohol.

- Drivers' reaction times, awareness of hazards and ability to sustain attention all worsen the drowsier the driver.
- Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08% – the U.S. legal limit.
- You are three times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued.

A driver might not even know when he or she is fatigued because signs of fatigue are hard to identify. Some people may also experience micro-sleep – short, involuntary periods of inattention. In the 4 or 5 seconds a driver experiences micro-sleep, at highway speed, the vehicle will travel the length of a football field.

Prevalence of Drowsy Driving Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every year about 100,000 police-reported, drowsy-driving crashes result in nearly 800 fatalities and about 50,000 injuries. The real number may be much higher, however, as it is difficult to determine whether a driver was drowsy at the time of a crash.

A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety estimated that 328,000 drowsy driving crashes occur annually. That's more than three times the police-reported number. The same study found that 109,000 of those drowsy driving crashes resulted in an injury and about 6,400 were fatal. The researchers suggest the prevalence of drowsy driving fatalities is more than 350% greater than reported.

Beyond the human toll is the economic one. NHTSA estimates fatigue-related crashes resulting in injury or death cost society \$109 billion annually, not including property damage.

Interventions for Drowsy Driving

Drowsy driving affects everyone, including adolescents and teens, who are not getting enough sleep (according to the CDC, it is recommended that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep each night). That means interventions focusing on this age group can help reduce drowsy

driving. One such intervention is for parents to incorporate discussions and rules on drowsy driving while completing their parent-teen driving agreements.

Other ways to reduce drowsy driving include:

- **Crash avoidance technologies:** New and existing safety technologies, such as drowsiness alert and lane departure warnings, can detect common drowsy driving patterns and warn drivers to stay in their lane or take a break
- **University interventions:** College students receive less than average sleep, with some estimates at less than six hours a night; education programs aimed at college students may help curb drowsy driving and instill healthier behaviors that can last into adulthood
- **Getting more sleep:** According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, adults should get seven or more hours of sleep each night
- **Medication labels:** An article by Consumer Reports found that side-effect warnings are not always clear; new labeling guidelines may help drivers understand when to drive or not drive after taking these medications
- **Employers:** Workplaces with strong off-the-job safety and health programs can include key information on getting sufficient sleep and refraining from driving drowsy

Source: National Safety Council



Don't Fly Kites Near Power Lines!

Jason Willman, Age 9

Jason Willman advises people it's not safe to fly kites around power lines. Jason is the son of Dave and April Willman from Yankton, S.D., members of Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

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.

EASY CROCKPOT CREATIONS

MOM'S ROAST

Ingredients:

- 3-5 lbs. beef roast
- 1 can beefy mushroom soup
- 1 pkg. au jus (dry)

Method

Place roast in crock pot at bedtime. Mix au jus and soup together and pour over the roast. Cook on low. Roast will be ready to serve in its own gravy for dinner tomorrow.

Elaine Rieck
Harrisburg, S.D.

CREAMY GARDEN ROTINI

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. cooked and drained sausage or beef
- 1 large can (26 oz.) cream of chicken soup
- 1 soup can of milk
- 1 can (14.5 oz.) chicken broth soup
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms
- 6 cups fresh spinach
- 1 pkg. Garden Rotini

Method

Add ingredients in the order given to the instant pot. Pressure cook on high for 20 minutes. Allow pressure to reduce to normal for 10 minutes, then serve! You will need an instant pot for this recipe!

Jean Cave
Sioux Falls, S.D.

CROCKPOT CASHEW CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. slow cookers limited edition cashew chicken seasoning
- 2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs, cubed
- 1 cup frozen chopped onion and pepper blend
- 1/3 cup water
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 2 tbsps. ketchup
- 1 cup cashew pieces
- 2 green onions, finely chopped

Method

Place chicken and vegetables in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, water, soy sauce, and ketchup in bowl until well blended. Pour over chicken and vegetables; stir to coat. Cover. Cook eight hours on low or four hours on high. Stir in cashews. Sprinkle with green onions. Serve over cooked rice, if desired. If cooking on low, decrease water to 1/4 cup.

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.

Factor's that Impact Electricity Prices



Adam Daigle
Energy Advisor

I was recently asked by one of our newer employees about what impacts electricity prices. We talked about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's issue of the Cooperative Connections.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors West River Electric can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a \$25.25 base charge and an \$0.1167 kWh charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time. 9917100

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in West River Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment.

Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) has had a 57% increase since 2020 and wait times to receive this essential equipment are months if not years out. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note that the base charge per rate class is the same for everyone and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 66 degrees during the winter months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control



we're all feeling the squeeze

| Item | Percentage Increase Since 2020 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 01 Padmount Transformers | +141% |
| 02 Single-Phase Cable | +62% |
| 03 Overhead Transformers | +57% |
| 04 Fuel | +50% |
| 05 Treated Utility Pole | +43% |
| 06 3" Conduit | +286% |
| 07 Vehicle Maintenance | +15% |
| Engine Oil | +73% |
| Tires | +15% |

the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know West River Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. Wall: 605.279.2135
Rapid: 605.393.1500.

Power in your Hands



Amanda Haugen
Communications
Specialist

Recently, one of our newer employees asked me what makes electric co-ops different than other types of utilities. This month, I thought I'd tell you of few of the things we discussed.

Because we're a co-op, we operate a little differently than other utilities. West River Electric's decisions are made locally, by directors who also live right here in our community. Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here – to pay for the elec-

tricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away. We're a co-op, and we exist to provide a service to you, our local members. 10773400

You may notice that throughout the year, we schedule opportunities for you to attend co-op events, like our annual meeting, member appreciation day, and tailgating, so we can hear from you. We conduct new member surveys and an annual survey to gather your feedback on co-op programs and services so that we can plan and adjust for the future.

Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you

have to say.

Because you're part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our team to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity and first-class service, no matter what the economy—and supply chain issues—throw at us.

West River Electric is striving to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket. We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services and offerings. For example, we can help you save on energy bills through our free energy audit program and our heat pump rebate.

If you want to receive important information from West River Electric, such as power restoration updates and tree trimming crew alerts, sign up for our text message notifications via the Smart Hub app. With Smart Hub, you can also stay in the know about how much electricity you are using, when you're using it the most, and make payments on your bill. You can also stay in the know through our monthly Cooperative Connections and Social Media platforms.

Please know that you—the members of West River Electric—are at the heart of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, friendly service you expect and deserve. While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community.

We hope to see or hear from you soon. West River Electric was created for you, the members. The power is in your hands.

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

CLOSED NOV. 10TH

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THANK YOU VETERANS

Please call **605.279.2135** or **605.393.1500** to report an outage.



Veterans enjoying their stay at Wings of Valor.

WINGS OF VALOR

A Veteran's Retreat

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Wings of Valor Lodge isn't just a hunting retreat offering veterans a good time and a free pheasant hunt, it's a place for them to come home.

The non-profit organization offers all U.S. military veterans an all-expense paid hunt in the heart of pheasant country, about five miles south of Parker, South Dakota.

The organization runs almost entirely on volunteers, donations and sponsorships and has already served more than 500 veterans from over 40 states since it began operations in 2019.

Sean Adams, the organization's president and co-founder, said the idea to open a hunting lodge came after discussions with the organization's now-CEO Bruce Weller back in 2018.

Weller owned a private hunting lodge called Birds, Bucks and Berries, and was host to Adams and other veterans during his annual veterans' hunt.

"Bruce was saying how the veterans' hunt was always the best day of the year, so I said, we can make every day the best day of the year if you want," said Adams.

Adams, who was grievously injured while serving in Afghanistan resulting in a double amputation of his legs in 2012, said he was well-versed in the non-profit community by the time he and Weller began discussing opening a hunting lodge that served veterans.

"I know pretty much how it works. If you do what you say, do it on time, do it well, serve veterans with a level of professionalism, and have a little faith, people will come," Adams said.

"From that conversation to Nov. 1, 2019, we worked on build site plans that I designed with one of the volunteers. We took a pavilion area that (Weller) used for weddings and put chalk lines everywhere, which is how we mapped out a building plan."

Adams said he rolled his wheelchair around each room, and if he hit a chalk line, he'd remark the line to ensure it was handicap accessible. That was in



Above: CPL USMC (RET) Sean Adams

Right: Sean Adams recovers in a hospital after suffering serious injuries in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2011.



January of 2019. Eleven months later, the lodge had been built and a group of veterans came to hunt under the newly established Wings of Valor Lodge.

Adams said a premise of Wings of Valor Lodge is to welcome veterans' home to something that's not chaotic, a place where they can find purpose and peace.

There's no religious angle, nor any requirements other than having taken the oath to serve our country for a veteran to have their travel expenses and entire hunting trip paid for by the non-profit.

"My generation fought in a war that was religious based," Adams explained. "We do have a spiritual setting, but we don't press anything. We never want a veteran to feel that they are oppressed by any sort of a faith."

Whether a veteran is religious, Christian, Muslim, atheist, or simply spiritual, they will be amongst others who understand what they've been through.

"No veteran is broken, they just need to come home," Adams said.

"God did not call the qualified, he called the unqualified that were willing to do

whatever was asked. Don't think because you did something overseas that your any worse than the pastor in the pulpit. We're all sinners on this earth."

Nature is also a powerful tool that Adams believes helps mend the mind, body and spirit. It's peaceful, which he said is the type of environment veterans need.

"You need all those to regroup yourself back in society. It's really hard to come out of a war, or wars, and describe that to the average human being," Adams said.

The lodge has hosted veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam to veterans who have served in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Operation Desert Storm.

Many of the veterans that have come to the lodge have never had a chance to heal or "come home", Adams said.

Some of those men were Marines that Adams served with directly a decade ago.

"They saw me in an IED blast. They didn't have time to heal. They were able to see that I was okay and it was time for them to start healing. They had given enough to the country. It was time to start the healing process," Adams said.

"We also had a veteran talk about Vietnam. He hadn't talked about it since 1968," Adams said.

Combat veterans, regardless of where they served or experienced warfare, establish a connection with one another at the lodge.

Older veterans find purpose in helping their younger counterparts. Adams said the connection can be overwhelming at times for the Vietnam veterans because of the newfound sense of purpose they find in these interactions.

Adams said raising kids and having companionship with your wife or husband is meaningful to veterans, but they often go without the relationships they had with their fellow soldiers they had beside them in the heat of battle.

"Giving someone millions of dollars, houses, or trip – that's great. But that's only mending the problem. Giving someone a sense of purpose is something we have to do," Adams said.

"When the Vietnam veterans tell my generation 'I get it, and it won't last forever', it gives the Vietnam guys a sense of purpose. The longer you hold it in the deeper it gets. That's something we realized at Walter Reed. We started getting off our medications the more we talked about what happened."

Adams said any veteran who wants to come and hunt at the Wings of Valor Lodge need only apply.

Individual applications come to the lodge free of charge. That means the organization will cover the cost of travel and any other expenses incurred to ensure the veteran doesn't pay a dime out of their own pocket.

To apply for a hunt or learn more about Wings of Valor Lodge, go to www.wingsofvalordodge.org.



A handicap accessible bedroom at Wings of Valor lodge

Important Announcement: West River Electric Line Extension Fee and Development Fee Adjustments



Matt Schmahl
Construction
Project Manager

At West River Electric, our commitment to providing reliable electrical services to our community remains unwavering. However, we have encountered significant increases in material costs in recent years. To ensure the sustainability of our services and infrastructure, we found it necessary to adjust our line extension and development fees. These adjustments took effect on September 18th, 2023.

Line Extension Fee Adjustments:

We have updated our line extension fees to reflect the current economic climate and maintain the high standards of service you expect from us.

1. Residential Services: The line extension fee for residential services will now be set at \$7.00 per foot.
2. Non-Residential Services: For non-residential services, the line extension fee will be \$8.00 per foot.
3. Three-Phase Line Extensions: Three-phase line extensions, essential for various commercial and industrial needs, will be billed at \$18.00 per foot. Additionally, a \$1000.00 access charge will apply.

Development Fee Adjustments:

We understand the importance of supporting local development while maintaining the integrity of our electrical

infrastructure. As such, we've updated our development fees to better align with the scope of each project:

1. Lots Under 1 Acre: The development fee for lots under 1 acre in size will be \$600.00 per lot.
2. Lots 1 Acre to 5 Acres: For lots ranging from 1 acre to 5 acres in size, the development fee will be \$1200.00 per lot. 11215300
3. Lots Exceeding 5 Acres: Lots exceeding 5 acres in size will be subject to our line extension policy, ensuring that all projects receive the appropriate attention and consideration.

We believe that these adjustments are essential to maintaining the quality and reliability of our services while accommodating the rising costs of materials and infrastructure improvements.

West River Electric remains committed to delivering exceptional service to our valued members. If you have any questions regarding these fee adjustments, please do not hesitate to contact our Staking Department at (605)393-1500.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership with West River Electric. We look forward to serving you and our community for years to come.

**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**

Let's take time to appreciate the big and little blessings we have

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

CLOSED
NOVEMBER 23-24

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SHINING THE LIGHT ON WEST RIVER ELECTRICS DEDICATED EMPLOYEES



DEREK HAUG
JOURNEYMAN
LINEMAN

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I have been with WREA for 8 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

Lineman. Working on constructing and maintaining the power grid for west river electric

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I love the comradery of the line crew and how all of us are willing to jump in and get the job done

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

My favorite memory at west river electric is some of the storm work we have done to get the members back on.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Great work environment

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

To provide a great living for my family along with serving the community with hard work



GARRETT SHEARER
WORK ORDER
SPECIALIST

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I've been working for West River for 9 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

My job entails purchasing material for the coop and reviewing completed work orders to make sure everything is correct and accounted for.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I love that West River is so involved in all the communities in our service territory. Whether it's Appreciation day, sponsoring locals events, scholarships, big city, small town, urban, rural, doesn't matter, West River is there supporting it all.

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

A few years after starting at West River, Cheryl got a new printer in this huge box. I crawled in the box and jumped out when Wayne walked by. I think that was the first and only time I ever saw him jump.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Community-oriented, Reliable, Service-driven

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

My amazing wife and family are my motivators and everything I do is for them!



Dignity courtesy of Travel South Dakota

DIGNITY

Celebrating American Indian Heritage

Scott Waltman

Rising from the prairie land as it gives way to bluffs on the east side of the Missouri River is a spectacular sculpture commemorating both South Dakota's 125 anniversary and the state's original inhabitants.

Dignity of the Earth and Sky was built by Sturgis-based sculptor Dale Claude Lamphere, who used to be the state's poet laureate.

The sculpture was erected in 2016 after Norm and Eunabel McKie announced it as a gift to South Dakota upon the state's quasiquintennial in 2014.

Dignity towers 50 feet above the ground, beckoning motorists as they travel along Interstate 90. From the

east, it's the gateway to West River en route to the beautiful Black Hills. From the west, it's a sign to travelers that they are closer to the Minnesota border than the state's most popular playgrounds that range from Wall to Spearfish to Hot Springs.

Ashley Riehle of Sylvania, Ohio, which is on the northwestern outskirts of Toledo and just south of the Michigan

border, said the stretch of I-90 alone makes South Dakota one of the best road trip states in the nation.

She visited South Dakota in 2021, driving from Sioux Falls to the Black Hills and back and twice stopping at the Dignity monument. She planned to visit the sculpture during her drive but said the Chamberlain area also doubled as a logical place to take a break.

As a history buff, Riehle appreciates





Jeremy and Stacey Waltner of Freeman visit the Dignity of Earth and Sky sculpture in 2018.

both the beauty and the significance of Dignity.

“I thought it was great that South Dakota acknowledges the first people that occupied the state,” she said.

Many states don’t, she said, and she doesn’t know of any such significant recognitions in Ohio or Michigan.

Jeremy Waltner of Freeman, South Dakota, also appreciates the sculpture on multiple levels.

“It is as impressive as you can imagine just in terms of both size and impact,” he said.

Being a South Dakotan, he knew of Dignity and that he wanted to visit. But he also wanted to make sure his wife Stacey, daughter Ella and son Oliver could share the experience. They stopped during a trip west in summer 2018.

The sculpture pays homage to South Dakota’s Native American population, setting it apart from so many other tourist stops in the state, Waltner said.

“It’s education as much as it is art,” he said, adding that the context behind Dignity is critical.

Three Native American women from Rapid City served as models for the sculpture, which was created east of the town in an isolated area along the Cheyenne River.

Lamphere’s other creations include work in the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre and the Arch of Dreams in Sioux Falls. He’s done commissioned portraits of Bob and Dolores Hope, Burl Ives, Walter Annenberg, George and Eleanor McGovern and others, according to his website.

For Dignity, he had a specific goal.

“I wanted something that would really honor the indigenous people of the Great Plains, and I kept that in mind all the time. I made the work reflect the name that it has of Dignity, and I think that’s part of what makes it work so well,” Lamphere has said of his creation.

Riehle noted that the star quilt Dignity wears has meaning.

It’s comprised of more than 100 blue diamonds as Dignity holds it behind her back in her outstretched arms.

In Native American culture, star quilts are a sign of respect and are often given as gifts to honor somebody for a substantial achievement in their life.

Including the quilt was a nice touch that took some planning, Riehle said, because it’s a direct tie to the Lakota culture.

While there is a plaque at Dignity that briefly tells the story of the sculpture, Waltner said he’s not sure most people realize the history.

In fact, he said, he’s not sure if most people set out to visit Dignity or just happen across her as they zip through the heart of the state on the interstate.

“It’s South Dakota’s greatest conversational piece outside of two gigantic granite carvings in the Black Hills,” Waltner said, referring to Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

Either way, he said, people who take time to admire the grand piece of art wind up learning a little bit.

When he stopped with his family, he said there was a good crowd of people visiting about the sculpture, smiling as they looked on in awe and waiting in line so they could get their pictures taken

with Dignity.

Waltner said he has stopped to see the sculpture twice on his own.

Riehle met friends from Denver and Chicago in the Black Hills as part of her trip. She had been to South Dakota before but got to see and do much more in 2021. She visited Sioux Falls, Mitchell’s Corn Palace, Deadwood, the Badlands, Wall Drug, Spearfish Canyon, Custer State Park, the Chapel in the Hills, Pactola Lake, Palisades State Park and other popular places.

All were fun, but Dignity was special, she said, because it is a reflection of the true foundation of South Dakota’s history.

“So much history focuses on when the white settlers got there,” Riehle said.

Dignity is deeper.

The McKies donated \$1 million to the Dignity project. Less than a decade later, that investment helps the thousands upon thousands of people who stop just east of Chamberlain each year take a moment to remember and acknowledge the rich history of South Dakota’s first citizens.

Additional Facts:

- November is National American Indian Heritage Month. It’s a time to remember and celebrate the important contributions of Native people and their cultures, traditions, and histories.
- The first state to declare and celebrate an American Indian Day was New York on the second Saturday in May 1916.
- In 1990, the month of November was approved by a joint resolution and signed by President George H. W. Bush as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”
- Central Electric Cooperative proudly powers Dignity and the rest area where thousands of visitors stop each year to celebrate the beauty of the American Indian.

West River Electric's' For the Kids School Supply Drive Ends in Success

In the spirit of giving community support, West River Electric's Leadership program, called LEAD's, recently organized a School Supply Drive that has proven to be a resounding success. With unwavering dedication and a shared commitment to education, this initiative has not only filled classrooms in the Rural Schools of Mead County with essential supplies but also warmed hearts and strengthened bonds within our community.

A Spark of Generosity:

Recognizing the challenges faced by local schools and students, the LEAD's group felt compelled to make a meaningful contribution. This spark of generosity quickly transformed into a well-coordinated effort that would touch the lives of many.

Community Support:

The impact of West River Electric's School Supply Drive extends far beyond the organization itself. The community rallied behind this noble cause, demonstrating the interconnectedness and shared sense of responsibility that binds us all. Local businesses, families, and individuals offered their generous donations reaffirming the belief that when we come together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Exceeding Expectations:

As the School Supply Drive progressed, the outpouring of support exceeded all expectations. The initial goal of providing a few essentials to local schools quickly expanded into a substantial effort. West River Electric, along with their members, donated an impressive number of supplies, from pencils, pens, crayons, markers, writing materials to backpacks and much more.



The Impact of Giving:

Beyond the material contributions, the School Supply Drive has had a substantial impact on the community. It has instilled a sense of purpose and pride in West River Electric's employees and members, showcasing the seventh Cooperative Principle, Concern for Community. For the students who will benefit from these supplies, it represents an opportunity for a brighter future and a tangible demonstration of the community's belief in their ability.

A Future of Generosity:

West River Electric remains committed to giving back. The organization sees this initiative as just the beginning of a long journey of community support. Looking

ahead, we plan to continue these efforts and make this School Drive an annual event.

In conclusion, West River Electric's LEAD's program would like to thank the community and the employees of West River Electric for their desire to give and stand as a shining example of what can be achieved when a company and its community come together with a shared purpose. Your commitment and dedication to making a difference have left an indelible mark on our community. THANK YOU!

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title: West River Electric Cooperative Connections

2. Publication Number: 6 7 5 8 4 0

3. Filing Date: 10/01/2023

4. Issue Frequency: Monthly

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12

6. Annual Subscription Price: None

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®): P.O. Box 412, Wall, SD 57790

Contact Person: Amanda Haugen
Telephone (include area code): 605-393-1500

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): Amanda Haugen, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
 Publisher: Amanda Haugen, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703
 Editor: Amanda Haugen, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703
 Managing Editor: Amanda Haugen, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)
 Full Name: West River Electric Association, Inc.
 Complete Mailing Address: P.O. Box 412, Wall, SD 57790

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

Full Name: Rural Utilities Services (RUS)
 Complete Mailing Address: 1400 Independence Way, Washington, DC 20250-1566

Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC)
 Complete Mailing Address: 2101 Cooperative Way, Herndon, VA 20171-3025

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

13. Publication Title: West River Electric Cooperative Connections

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 10/01/2023

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

| | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
|---|--|--|---|
| a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) | | | |
| b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail) | (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) | 14310 | 14435 |
| | (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) | | |
| | (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® | | |
| | (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®) | | |
| c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)) | | 14310 | 14435 |
| d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail) | (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 | | |
| | (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 | | |
| | (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail) | 211 | 212 |
| | (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) | | |
| e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)) | | 211 | 212 |
| f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e) | | 14341 | 14647 |
| g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3)) | | 50 | 50 |
| h. Total (Sum of 15f and g) | | 14391 | 14697 |
| i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100) | | 99.8 | 98.5 |
| 16. Electronic Copy Circulation | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
| a. Paid Electronic Copies | | | |
| b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) | | 14310 | 0 |
| c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) | | 14341 | 14647 |
| d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 15c × 100) | | | |

I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 11/01/2023 issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: I Communications Specialist
 Date: 10/01/2023

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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.



Nov. 2-4
Huron Ringneck Festival and Bird Dog Challenge
 Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

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.

OCT. 24-28
Grey Goose Halloween Display
 6 p.m.
 19988 Grey Goose Rd.
 Pierre, SD

OCT. 28
Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival
 Hill City Visitor's Center
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2368

OCT. 28-29
Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-731-9155

NOV. 3
Plankinton Service Club Fun Night
 7 p.m.
 Aurora County Ag Building
 Plankinton, SD

NOV. 4-5
Benson's Flea Market
 W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 5
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
 8:30 a.m.
 S.D. Military Heritage Alliance Building
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 5
Turkey Dinner/ Silent Auction
 11:45 a.m.
 RVUMC
 Rapid City, SD

NOV. 10-12
Christmas at the Barn
 10 a.m.
 Groton, SD

NOV. 10-11
Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 11
Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza
 Sisseton, SD

NOV. 12
Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball
 4-7 p.m.
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-730-0553

NOV. 24
Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Dakota Avenue
 Huron, SD

NOV. 25
Mid-Winter Fair
 Gregory Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

NOV. 30-DEC. 3
Hatchery Holidays
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

DEC. 2
6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction
 4 p.m.
 Olive Grove Golf Course
 Groton, SD

DEC. 8-9
Alexandria's Winter Festival
 5 p.m.
 Alexandria, SD

DEC. 8-9
Junkin' Market Days
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Center
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

DEC. 17
Christmas Cantata
 3 p.m.
 Hermosa United Church of Christ
 Hermosa, SD

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