

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Former co-op general manager Jim Moore is one of the original organizers of the Line Patrol Charity Ride and was the designated lead rider in 2021 as the group embarked on its adventure

Line Patrol Charity Ride

20 years of assisting
co-op families
Pages 8-9

Food co-ops meet
community needs
Pages 12-13

FOCUS ON SUCCESS



**Dick Johnson, CEO and General Manager
Andy Moon, Board President**

There is an age-old saying. “Why is the windshield bigger than the rearview mirror? The reason is that where you are going is more important than what you have behind you. We are looking out the windshield as we focus on the success of West River and look toward the future. We still have to look in the rearview mirror to learn from our successes and failures to create a brighter future. What do we, as a coop, do to make sure we continue to provide SAFE, RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE electricity? Our member owners can feel good that our Board, staff, and employees are engaged at all levels to keep abreast of the rapid changes happening in our industry.

We had a successful, albeit, hectic year at West River Electric. With the Covid issues still hanging on in 2021 and into 2022, our employees made this success happen. In the January employee newsletter, Dick warned them that 2022 would be a difficult year with many changes, so buckle up. We are here to say they did just that: they worked extremely hard every day to safely provide electricity to your door and make West River successful. We could not be prouder of their attitude to keep pushing forward through these challenges and the opportunities change brought with it.

Our year was a financial success especially given all of the roadblocks we faced. Our board focused each month on what we could do to help the membership considering everything they were going through. In 2021,

we had additional margins from a reduction in expenses due to the pandemic, revenue deferral funds from prior years we could no longer defer, and additional funds from our SBA PPP loan. All told we returned \$2.4 million in bill credits to our active members on their October, November, and December bills. These bill credits reduced the average members’ bill by approximately 20 percent for those three months. What a way to show our success to our member owners and

put real money into their hands. This year, we will not be able to offer a bill credit. Our margins are much slimmer in a large part due to increased operating expenses for material, supplies, fuel, and labor.

The Board put more money in our members’ pockets the last few weeks when we approved a capital credit retirement for 2022. We chose to retire \$2.1 million in capital credits which is the second year of retirement of over two million dollars. We returned the Basin and Rushmore capital credits we received; we paid off all of 1995-2000 of WREA’s capital credits, and spread \$250,000 to everyone who had been a member from 2001 to 2021. We feel it is particularly important to show the power of cooperative membership. In the last two years, we have retired 10 years of capital credits during a time when prices all around us continue rising. What way to show our members our past success.

Our new construction was crazy this past year. We added 630 new billed services which is a 3.3 percent increase. This was a new record for services since the coop began. We are close to that total for 2022 as well. Much of the construction has been new single-family and multifamily housing. Our staking department estimates over 2,100 meters will be needed for new apartments within the next 18 months. Our operations department has been working as well with several possible large commercial loads moving to our area. They provide many challenges but great opportunities for sales in the future. The supply chain issues we all hear about are

very real in our business. Transformers are experiencing delays of up to two years. Other items have long lead times as well. This shortage, if left unchecked, could easily cause a new housing and businesses development slow down. The vehicles and equipment we utilize are also in short supply. I am not wild about sending out linemen in vehicles that are old and have many miles on them. We are starting to see some orders trickle in and arrive. Some of those were ordered in 2020.

We have submitted a new loan application to the Rural Utilities Services (RUS) for over \$45 million. This is the largest loan in our history. Over 50 percent of the total is for new services and another 23 percent is for new high voltage transmission and additional substations. We will have the Eglin sub by the corner of Elk Vale and Eglin Street energized early this spring. We will rebuild the transmission line in that area along with the construction of a new transmission line from the Box Elder substation to the Haines substation. We are already starting to plan the construction of another substation near the corner of Elk Vale and Country Road. All of this plant is needed for growth, but we must remember all of these additions help spread those fixed costs to more members.

We have had many other projects and challenges on which we are working. We continue to work with Ellsworth Air Force Base on a battery storage project leveraging a grant from the Department of Energy in conjunction with NRECA. Our technology department works diligently to keep our members’ and employees’ information safe. A truly daunting task anymore. We have recently leased a Ford Mustang MachE all-electric car. We previously had leased a Nissan Leaf but when the lease ended, we decided to try the Ford. A fun vehicle to drive! The New Underwood solar project is now slated to start construction in October. Covid and supply issues drove the dates back. We will not be directly involved, but Basin, our power supplier, is purchasing the output from the 125-megawatt facility.

We hope you join us on our journey at the annual meeting of the membership on Oct. 8 with the meeting starting at 10 a.m. We want to show you the focus we have on our success and what the future holds. Watch on Facebook for a live feed if technology treats us well!

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

Robert Raker –
 robert.raker@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.

NOTICE

OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF WEST RIVER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC., WALL, SOUTH DAKOTA

The Annual Meeting of members of West River Electric Association, Inc. will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, the 8th of October 2022, at the Wall Community Center, in the town of Wall, County of Pennington, State of South Dakota, for the purpose of:

1. **Receiving reports** of officers, directors and committees;
2. **Electing one** director from each of the (3) districts for a term of three (3) years to replace those directors whose terms expire;
3. **Approving, ratifying** and confirming all the acts of the Directors of the Association and its officers taken prior to this annual meeting;
4. **Transacting any** and all business which may be necessary, convenient or desirable in connection with any of the foregoing at said meetings or at any properly scheduled adjournments hereto;

*Dated at Wall, South Dakota, this 15th day of August, 2022
 Jamie Lewis, Secretary, West River Electric Association, Inc.*

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 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. 11757600

Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignites. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

SMOKE DETECTORS. These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. Six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS. Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

INSTALL ARC-FAULT INTERRUPTERS. These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

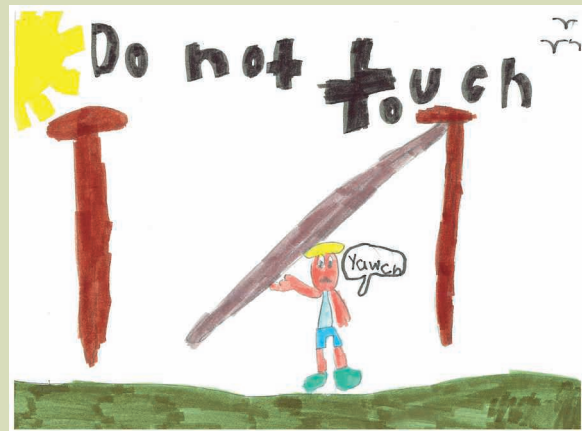
MAINTAIN IT ALL. Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES REPRESENT AT DAKOTAFEST



Electric cooperative representatives were on hand at the 2022 Dakotafest in Mitchell to share information about energy efficiency and electric-powered lawn implements and to showcase a 2022 Ford Lightning electric pickup truck provided by Vern Eide Ford. Shown left to right are Sheila Gross, Jared Rakness, Jennifer Gross, Patrick Soukup, Kristie Hauck, Brett Snyders and Tara Miller.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Do not touch power lines

Kendyl Gill

Kendyl knows that electricity always seeks a path to the ground and that all power lines should be treated as if they are energized. Kendyl is the child of Brent and Emily Gill, and they are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.

PRIMO PASTA!

PASTA WITH ZUCCHINI AND TOMATOES

Ingredients:

- 7 oz. short whole wheat pasta like penne fusilli or farfalle
- 2 lbs. zucchini, chopped
- 1 lb. grape or cherry tomatoes cut in halves
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves minced
- 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese grated
- 1 c. parsley or 1/2 cup basil finely chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

Cook pasta per package instructions undercooking by 2-3 minutes or until pasta is cooked but firm. While pasta is cooking, preheat large ceramic non-stick skillet on medium-high heat and swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat. Add zucchini and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Return skillet to stove, swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat, add tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring a few times. Turn off heat and add cooked pasta and zucchini, remaining 1 tbsp. of oil, salt, pepper, cheese and parsley or basil; stir and serve. Adjust seasonings to taste. ifoodreal.com

MEXI-CORN LASAGNA

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1 can Mexican corn
- 1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
- 1 c. Pace picante sauce
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 16 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

METHOD

Combine first six ingredients in large skillet. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Combine cottage cheese, eggs, parmesan cheese, oregano and garlic salt; mix well. Arrange 6 tortillas on bottom and sides of a lightly greased 13x9x2 baking dish, overlapping as necessary. Top with half the meat mixture. Spoon cheese mixture over meat. Arrange remaining tortillas over cheese. Top with remaining meat mixture. Bake 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Let stand 10 minutes, serve with additional picante sauce. Serves 8. **Carol and Rollie Smith, Brandon**

BAKED SPAGHETTI

Ingredients:

- 8 oz. package angel hair pasta
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasonings
- 2 c. tomato sauce
- 1 c. water
- 2 c. canned crushed tomatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 garlic cloves chopped
- 1/2 c. green peppers chopped
- 1/2 c. onion chopped
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

METHOD

Cook pasta and set aside. Add 1 tbsp. olive oil to pasta and stir in to keep it from sticking together. Precook beef and pork together with salt, garlic salt and black pepper. Drain grease off and set aside. In a large pan add parsley, Italian seasonings, tomato sauce and water, garlic, green peppers, onions and crushed tomatoes. Bring sauce to a boil then reduce to a simmer and continue to cook for 30 minutes. Add cooked meat to the sauce. Let set while preparing the baking pan. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Layer sauce with spaghetti noodles in the pan. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes. At 30 minutes pull spaghetti from the oven and mix cheeses together then pour on spaghetti evenly. Bake 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted **Jane Cave, Sioux Falls**

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.

2022 Annual Meeting

West River Electric Annual Meeting
Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022
Wall Community Center

AGENDA

1. Registration - 9 a.m.
2. Call to Order - 10 a.m.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. National Anthem
5. Report of Credentials
6. Notice of Annual Meeting
7. Affidavit of Mailing
8. Meeting Minutes, Oct. 9, 2021
9. Introduction of Guests
10. Directors' Election Report
11. Registration Closes
12. President's Report
13. Manager's Report
14. Drawing for Prizes
15. Old Business
16. New Business
17. Scholarship Drawing
18. Grand Prize Drawing
19. Adjournment



Dick Johnson
CEO/General
Manager



Andy Moon
Board President
District 3



Stan Anders
Vice President
District 2



Jamie Lewis
Secretary
District 1



Larry Eisenbraun
Treasurer
District 3



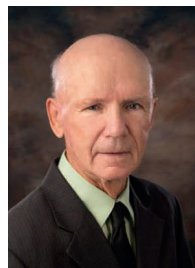
Marcia Arneson
District 2



Jerry Hammerquist
District 1



Sue Peters
District 3



Howard Knuppe
District 1



Chuck Sloan
District 2

Do You Need Special Accommodations to be a Part of the Annual Meeting?

Need for auxiliary aids or services: Facilities are accessible to people with mobility impairments. If you need auxiliary aids or services in order to participate in the meeting (e.g., sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, materials in alternative format), please submit a request to West River Electric at (605) 279-2135. To ensure auxiliary aids or services are available, please make the request(s) at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. 3430900

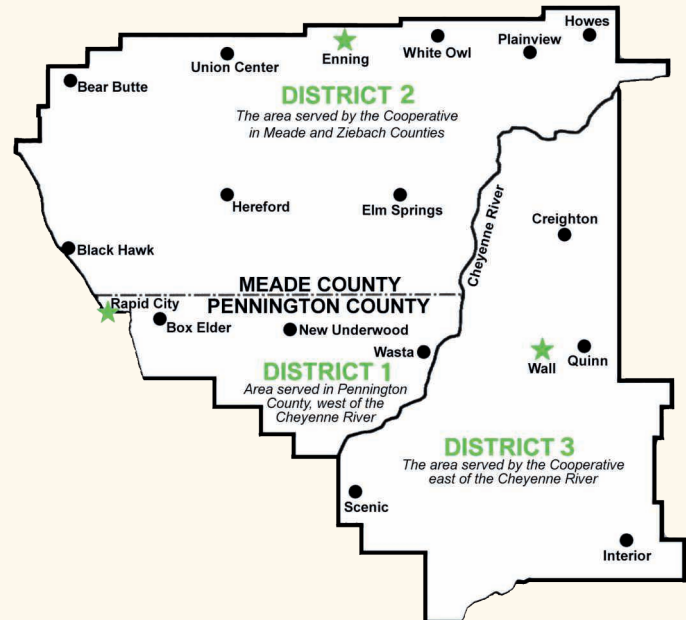
Notice of Incumbent Directors Seeking Re-Election

Notice is hereby given that the official list of incumbent Directors seeking re-election for the position of Director includes the following individuals pursuant to Section 4, Article V of the Bylaws of West River Electric Association, Inc.

- District No. 1:** Consisting of the area served by the cooperative in Pennington County, South Dakota, West of the Cheyenne River.
Jamie Lewis, 14866 Jackie Ln., Rapid City, SD 57703
- District No. 2:** Consisting of the area served by the Cooperative in Meade and Ziebach Counties, South Dakota.
Marcia Arneson, 815 Rosilee Ln., Rapid City, SD 57701
- District No. 3:** Consisting of the area served by the Cooperative East of the Cheyenne River.
Sue Peters, PO Box 211, Wall, SD 57790

You are further notified that the above nominations are made for the position of Director for a three year term to fill the term of the expiring Director, and that one individual from each district will be elected at the October 8, 2022 Annual Meeting of the Association. Dated this 18th day of April 2022.

By Jamie Lewis, Secretary



Jamie Lewis - District 1



Jamie Lewis is the incumbent director from District 1. He lives on a ranch outside of Rapid City called Grandview Angus. Lewis has been a director on the board since 2013. He served a three-year term on the Federated Rural Insurance Board representing West River Electric for our region and was just re-elected to serve another three-year term on Federated's board. Lewis is a member of Rapid City Elks Club, BH Angus Association and Southside Irrigation Ditch Company which he manages and maintains. It will be a great honor to serve another three years on the West River Electric board of directors.

Marcia Arneson - District 2



Marcia Arneson of Rapid City is the incumbent director from District 2. In the past 28 years, she has been with West River Electric and has served on various committees within WREA and NRECA. Arneson is a life-long resident of Meade County and has served various positions on different boards within the area. She is a credentialed director and also earned her certified board leadership certificate, along with her gold leadership. Arneson has four grown married children, three daughters and one son, and is a proud grandmother of 14 beautiful grandchildren.

Sue Peters - District 3



Sue Peters of Wall is the incumbent director from District 3. She lives north of Wall on a small farmstead and has a deep understanding of the cooperative business model as a retiree of Golden West Telecom where she worked for 28 years. In her four years on the board, Peters has taken the required courses to complete her NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and her Board Leadership Certificate. Wall has been home to her since 1980. Peters has two children and her favorite past time is being a grandma!



Roger Lawien and his wife, Kris, are regular participants in the Line Patrol Charity Ride. *Photos by Brad Letcher*

Line Patrol Charity Ride marks 20 years of serving those in need

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

When Roger Lawien encountered some unexpected health problems, his fear and anxiety were assuaged by the assurance that he had several key factors in his favor.

He knew he could rely on his faith. He knew he could rely on his family. And he knew he could rely on his fellow cooperative employees across the state.

Lawien, member services manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake, is a part-time volunteer and full-time advocate of Line Patrol, Inc., a charitable organization that exists to provide financial relief for South Dakota electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Since the program was launched in 2003, hundreds of co-op employees have contributed to the emergency response fund by staging golf tournaments, bowling tournaments, auctions, trap shoots, 5K runs, raffles,

bake sales and more. One of the most popular and highly anticipated events is the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride held each September.

This year's 20th annual event took place on Sept. 10 and was co-hosted by Rushmore Electric, Butte Electric and Grand Electric. More than 200 riders and other participants gathered in Whitewood at the Iron Horse Inn and spent the afternoon motoring through the picturesque northern Black Hills.

Lawien was there perched aboard his prized Indian Roadmaster, soaking in the experience with his co-op friends and feeling grateful to have a dependable network of support that can be counted on not only to help rebuild lines and poles after a storm but also render aid in a personal crisis situation.

"Having been a recipient of funds from this program, it means a lot to be among these fellow co-op employees who are all so eager and willing to demonstrate their kindness and sincerity by showing up every year to contribute

Estimated amount of Line Patrol funds

\$580,000

donated to electric co-op employees

to a worthy cause like this," Lawien said. "It's that same cooperative spirit that bonds us all together. It's the can-do attitude they bring to their jobs every day in service to their members and their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities. They are salt-of-the-earth people who care deeply for one another and the people around them."

Lawien said more than 240 families have received assistance through the fund totaling roughly \$580,000. He is one of three directors of the program along with Jessie Tucker (West Central Electric) and Tim Neises (Central Electric).

Jerry Swartz was one of the first



Jerry Swartz, pictured above-left, was the first recipient of Line Patrol funds after he was injured in 2004.

recipients of Line Patrol funds after he was involved in a workplace accident. He expressed what the charitable organization has meant to him and his family.

“Back in 2004, I had an extreme accident at work. I spent six months in recovery and this foundation gave us a check for \$500 to help us out. It may not seem like much money, but at the time it meant everything to me and my family. It’s amazing. God bless this fund and the people who donate to it and keep it running,” Swartz said.

One of the original organizers of the Charity Ride is former Northern Electric General Manager Jim Moore. Each year, as is the custom, Moore leads the cavalcade of dozens of motorcycles

away from the gathering site and along the chosen route.

“The ride has just gotten bigger and better over the years,” Moore said. “The money goes to help co-op employees in need. One person had a tornado damage their home, another lineman from Yankton was killed in Afghanistan and we set up a scholarship fund for his three children. I always tell my wife, Janice, this is the one thing I look forward to every year and truly love because we’re helping employees and their families get back on their feet.”

Laine Mitchell, communications director at Butte Electric, said helping to host the Charity Ride was an honor for the cooperative and something the organization was happy to support.

“Having many of our own employees benefit from the Line Patrol fund over the years, we are thrilled to co-host this year’s event and help raise money for other cooperative families across South Dakota. The ride is just one of the many ways the foundation bonds our cooperatives together and has touched countless lives in the last 20 years,” Mitchell said.

The weekend began with a social on Friday evening and concluded the following night with a buffet dinner and charity auction.

Sponsors for this year’s ride were Irby, Altec, RESCO, Dakota Supply Group, Border States Electric, WESCO and The Okonite Company.



Hundreds of riders from across the state participate in the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride each year. The program exists to provide financial support for electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Annual Meeting Minutes From October 9, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President Andy Moon at 10:00 a.m. at the Wall Community Center in Wall, South Dakota.

All Veterans in attendance were asked to stand and be recognized. The membership and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The National Anthem was sung by Ms. Regan Simons for the membership.

Secretary Jamie Lewis reported for Roger Scott, Chairperson of the Credentials and Election Committee, that 106 members of West River Electric Association, Inc. were registered and that a quorum was present at the meeting. At the present, we have a total of 14,566 members. 11757600

A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the Notice of Annual Meeting and the Affidavit of Mailing and filed in the Minute Book for September 20, 2021. Motion carried.

The minutes of the October 17, 2020 Annual Meeting were presented for approval. President Moon asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the minutes as mailed. Motion carried.

President Moon introduced the guests in attendance.

Greg Erlandson, Attorney for West River Electric, read the Notice of Incumbent Directors seeking re-election for the position of Director from April 16, 2021 based on Section 4 Article 5 of the Bylaws. The Directors seeking re-election; Howard Knuppe from District I, Stan Anders from District II and Andy Moon from District III.

Attorney Erlandson asked for a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Howard Knuppe from District I, for Stan Anders from District II and for Andy Moon for District III. A motion was made, seconded and carried to cast a unanimous ballot for each district.

Mr. Erlandson explained the bylaw amendments proposed before the membership.

Greg Erlandson announced that if any member had not yet registered, they should go and register at this time. He then announced registration is now closed and at this time we will proceed with the voting. Ballots were handed out at this time.

President Andy Moon welcomed the membership and stated it was great to see everyone in person this year with minimal restrictions. Our theme this year is All Roads Lead to Electrification. He introduced the Board of Directors who work alongside Moon and work so hard on your behalf. This job requires many hours travelling the winding road to electrification in Board meetings, training, education and visiting with you, our member owners about their needs. He stated that he appreciated all they have done this year to continue the tradition of meeting the needs of our members and the communities we serve, while providing a safe environment for our employees. Our employees worked another year safely with no major injuries. We are committed to a culture of safety and wellness for our employees. They have worked through a pandemic, supply issues for material, demand for new services, and several storms as well all done in such a timely manner. He thanked the employees for all their dedication to the member at the end of

the line. It is greatly appreciated by all the Board and especially our members. Moon highlighted the general capital credit retirement for 2021 and announced a bill credit over the next couple months with excess margins due to revenue referral funds, the forgiveness of our SBA Paycheck Protection Program loan and reduced expenses showing you the true power of cooperative member ownership twice this year. He mentioned Basin Electric's possible sale of DGC to a company with plans to make hydrogen. He thanked the members who endured the rolling blackout at Weston Heights substation in February. 11613300

Dick Johnson, CEO/General Manager, began with highlighting the theme of All Roads Lead to Electrification. Johnson wanted to mention safety and that our entire West River team from the Board down has adopted the "commitment to zero contacts" program. He continued with talk of electric vehicles and their charging stations as well as a new electric vehicle charging rate program for our residential members, capacity issues, demand and supply issues, rolling blackouts back in February, building new services, completion of the rebuild of the Wall Substation, design of new substation near Exit 61, technology to ensure our network safety, and a bill credit to our members. Johnson spoke of revenue from sales, total operating expenses, margins, assets, and member equity. Dick touched on the retirement of Willy Nohr with 34 years with WREA, the retirement of our corporate attorney, Allen Nelson and welcomed our new corporate attorney, Greg Erlandson. He thanked the employee team for putting in an astounding year and a special thanks to the Board for all of their support this past year and especially during these challenging times.

Drawings were held for door prizes.

Employee years of service were presented: 30 years – Lane Butler and Mike Letcher, 25 years – Dawn Hilgenkamp, 15 years – Lance Steiger and Mike Oyen, 10 years – Bonnie Almeida, Dakota Douglas, and Zach Hansen, 5 years – Clint Stangle and Aarin Ainsworth. Director milestones: 25 years – Larry Eisenbraun, 15 years – Andy Moon and Stan Anders and 5 years – Chuck Sloan.

President Moon called for old business. There was none.

President Moon called for new business. There was none.

President Moon announced the passing of the bylaw amendments by membership vote.

Operation Round up presentations to: Crescent Lodge #210, SD FFA Foundation and Meade County Rural Ambulance District.

A prize drawing was held for the kids drawing. The winners are Briggs Kjerstad and Brody Steiger.

The drawing was held for 6 - \$500 Scholarships for a high school senior or full time student currently attending college or technical school. The winners were Keaunna Poor Bear, Kellyn Shearer, Emmitt Richter, Breanna McConnell, Regan Simons, and Abby Moon. 3710500

The grand prize winner was Ronald Cordes.

The jackpot winner of \$500.00 was Clyde Elwood. Come back next year, the jackpot will be \$1,700. The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

-Jamie Lewis, Secretary



Board of Directors

Jerry Hammerquist	38
Howard Knuppe	34
Marcia Arneson	28
Larry Eisenbraun	26
Stan Anders	16
Andy Moon	17
Jamie Lewis	9
Chuck Sloan	6
Sue Peters	5

Management Staff

Wayne Shull	38
Mike Letcher	31
Dick Johnson	28
Dawn Hilgenkamp	26
Matt Schmahl	23
Brendan Nelson	22
Cheryl Walker	17
Jenny Patterson	15
Amy Thompson	15
Robert Raker	14

Linemen & Office Employees

Byron Frank	35
Lane Butler	31
Tracea Ladner	24
Sanden Simons	22
Jannette Thayer	20
Becky Chihak	20
Tyson Gunn	18
Lance Steiger	16
Mike Oyen	16
Christine Ritter	14
Alicia Fortune	14
Justin Wermers	13
Roberta Rancour	13

District 1
District 1
District 2
Treasurer, District 3
Vice President District 2
President, District 3
Secretary, District 1
District 2
District 3

Operations Supt.
Operations Manager
CEO/General Manager
Manager of Finance
Construction Project Supt.
Operations Supt.
IT Manager
Mgr of Office Services
Mgr. of Member Services
Mgr. of Comm. and PR

Metering Foreman
Enning Foreman
Operations Adm. Asst.
Wall Foreman
Metering Adm. Asst.
Member Services Rep.
Construction Foreman
Staking Technician
Warehouseman
Marketing Rep.
Billing Supervisor
Service Technician
Administrative Assistant

Sallie Traver	12
John Garrigan	12
Brandon Bisgaard	12
Bonnie Almeida	11
Zach Hansen	11
Stacey Cihak	9
Eric Emery	9
Adam Daigle	9
Colter Stout	8
Lindsay Reagle	8
Garrett Shearer	8
Turner Donahue	8
Gerri Johnston	8
Trent Madison	8
Matt Kruse	7
Jared Stalley	7
Derek Haug	7
Cody Bernstein	7
Clint Stangle	6
Aarin Ainsworth	6
Aimee Paulsen	5
Carolyn Schulz	4
Tucker Hohn	4
Keenen Caesar	3
Tucker O'Rourke	3
Cameron Price	3
Camden Sawvell	2
Sean Bestgen	2
Marissa Delaney	2
Amanda Haugen	1
Trevor Schryvers	1
Liliya Stone	6 mo.
Ty Cooper	6 mo.
Andria Williams	2 mo.
Selena Parce	2 mo.

Lead Member Services Rep.
Utility Maintenance
Operations Tech.
Member Services Rep.
Journeyman Lineman
Member Services Rep.
Maintenance Foreman
Energy Services Advisor
Journeyman Lineman
Accounting Support Spec.
Work Order Specialist
Construction Foreman
Network/Helpdesk Admin.
Journeyman Lineman
Journeyman Lineman
Marketing Rep.
Journeyman Lineman
Journeyman Lineman
Staking Technician
Billing Specialist
Billing Support Specialist
Journeyman Lineman
Journeyman Lineman
Journeyman Lineman
Journeyman Lineman
Apprentice Lineman
Electrical Engineer
Member Services Rep.
Communications Specialist
Apprentice Lineman
HR Generalist
Journeyman Lineman
Member Service Rep.
Member Service Rep.



The Sioux Falls Food Co-op has persevered for 50 years by adhering to the co-op model. *Photo by Sioux Falls Food Co-op*

Food co-ops meet the need for nutritious, healthy choices

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Back in the 1930s, rural community leaders all across the country began traveling from farm to farm knocking on doors and asking for \$5 as seed money to build out a network of electric distribution systems.

It was not an insignificant sum to solicit from many farmers and ranchers contending with substandard soil conditions, the vagaries of weather patterns and fairly primitive mechanization compared to today's operations.

But in exchange for that investment, those same community leaders turned the promise of rural power into a reality and presently there are more than 750 locally-owned electric cooperatives serving roughly 40 million Americans.

Bess Pallares keeps that electric co-op success story close to mind as she embarks on establishing a grocery store in Brookings County using the

cooperative business model as her template.

Pallares is president of the Dakota Community Market board of directors, whose members have been working since 2019 to bring a food cooperative to the Brookings area. She reports that the endeavor hasn't been a cake walk, but she continues to be inspired by the way like-minded electric co-op leaders back in the '30s managed to gain popular support for locally-owned, independent entities created to provide a valuable service.

The board's market analysis indicates that a "low food access zone" exists within Brookings County when it comes to full-service retail grocery stores with just two providers in a 50-mile radius.

"On average, there are typically 2.84 grocery stores per 10,000 population. We have .68 in this area," she said. "People keep saying they're sick of having to drive miles and miles to get to a full-service grocery store that stocks



Bess Pallares

what they want and need for their families."

To generate start-up capital, the board is offering memberships at \$150, a little more than a week's worth of groceries for many families. Meanwhile, Pallares and her board members are scouring the landscape for additional financing sources and federal grant opportunities with plans to have a retail store up and running as soon as possible.

She has had discussions with East River Electric in Madison about accessing available funds through the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund (REED). The REED program



Caselli's Garden is among a growing list of fresh food suppliers for Dakota Community Market. *Photo by Caselli's Garden*

is designed to provide financing to help build the economic base of rural communities within East River Electric's regional service area. Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

Pallares said she sometimes feels exactly like those early electric cooperative pioneers, attempting to pave the way for providing a reliable source of quality, low-cost food in the Brookings area. She has become active in the Billie Sutton Leadership Institute Rural POWER program to help tap into the regional business community with the goal of developing an optimum financial strategy and making connections with future suppliers and other partners.

"The Institute opens up a giant network across the state where you can meet a lot of people doing the same kinds of things you're doing, and they've

got great ideas and big goals and a fearless entrepreneurial spirit. One of our board members has gone through the class and I'm doing it now. It's been transformational," she said.

The Dakota Community Market is not the only fearless group striving to launch a locally-owned and locally-controlled food cooperative. The Coteau Community Co-op is also trying to establish a food co-op to serve the Watertown area. Both have plenty of successful models and supporters to help guide and inspire their efforts.

The National Food Co-op Startup Network and the National Co-op Grocers based in Minneapolis are both available to provide resources and expertise. Additionally, there are a few successful stores already operating in South Dakota, including Natural Abundance in Aberdeen, Breadroot Natural Food Co-op based in Rapid City and the Sioux Falls Food Co-op.

Patrick Saylor is general manager of the Sioux Falls Food Co-op on West 18th Street, an operation that has been going strong for the past 50 years through several relocations, growing competition and even a fire. Saylor sees food co-ops across the region as sharing the same common goals and working together to accomplish those goals.

"We tend to put a different twist on things, but in the end we all want the families we serve to have a better way of

accessing the food they eat to maintain good health and a healthy lifestyle," said Saylor, who used to frequent the store as a teen and replaced long-time manager Molly Langley in 2016. "It's always encouraging to see different leaders working hard to do what we've been able to do. It takes a lot of effort and it takes tireless visionaries to stay focused and committed to achieving what you want to accomplish together."

In meeting its commitment to improve the quality of life in the community, the co-op has a program called Big Change, where shoppers are invited to round up their expenditures to the next whole dollar amount. The difference is added to a fund that goes to support local charities such as the Teddy Bear Den, Mobile Pantry of Sioux Falls, Bishop Dudley Hospitality House, SD Voices for Peace and many more. The co-op even has a space available for public meetings and workshops.

The store recently celebrated an expansion and re-opening, and Saylor said he's optimistic about the future while keeping an eye on industry trends.

"We're growing. There's a lot of competition, but we've got a great location, great employees and a great product," he said. "The co-op model is alive and well. We have members who support us and are committed to our mission of providing a source of healthy, affordable good choices."

FINANCIAL REPORT

Our Revenue Came From:

	2020	2021
Farms and Ranches	\$3,564,407	\$3,507,642
Residential	\$20,455,707	\$20,123,514
Large Commercial	\$9,726,915	\$9,314,991
Small Commercial	\$3,072,284	\$3,022,890
Public, Irrigation, Other	\$616,860	\$1,803,861
TOTAL INCOME:	\$37,436,173	\$37,772,898

We Paid For:

	2020	2021
Power Purchased	\$20,399,364	\$20,275,544
Maintenance & Operations	\$3,402,399	\$2,236,982
Member Accounts	\$2,789,956	\$2,699,667
General & Administrative	\$2,751,859	\$2,784,724
Depreciation	\$3,730,492	\$3,997,031
Interest	\$2,566,716	\$2,443,660
Taxes & Other Deductions	\$689,358	\$798,549
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE:	\$36,330,144	\$35,236,157
Operating Margins	\$1,106,029	\$2,536,741
Non-Operating Margins	\$381,620	\$305,348
Capital Credits	\$1,127,195	\$843,047
TOTAL MARGINS:	\$2,614,844	\$3,685,136

What We Own as of Dec. 31:

	2020	2021
Electric Plant	\$101,278,898	\$107,639,330
Other Property & Investments	\$19,508,893	\$18,959,190
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$4,188,977	\$3,017,766
Accounts Receivable	\$2,374,875	\$1,718,449
Material & Supplies on Hand	\$2,997,514	\$3,820,936
Prepayments & Interest	\$1,630,001	\$1,302,695
Deferred Debits	\$551,672	\$68,856
TOTAL WE OWN:	\$132,530,830	\$136,527,222

What We Owe as of Dec. 31:

	2020	2021
Total Long-Term Debt	\$79,816,380	\$83,348,411
Other Noncurrent Liabilities	\$398,692	\$388,546
Notes Payable - Line of Credit	\$1,373,250	\$ -
Accounts Payable	\$2,247,320	\$2,419,153
Member Deposits	\$425,645	\$437,089
Taxes Accrued	\$1,049,708	\$1,046,014
Other Current Liabilities	\$570,186	\$623,334
Deferred Credits	\$1,826,295	\$1,543,826
TOTAL WE OWE:	\$87,707,476	\$89,806,373

OUR EQUITIES

Patronage Capital	\$44,823,354	\$46,720,849
TOTAL WE OWE PLUS EQUITY:	\$132,530,830	\$136,527,222

2020 Co-op Statistics

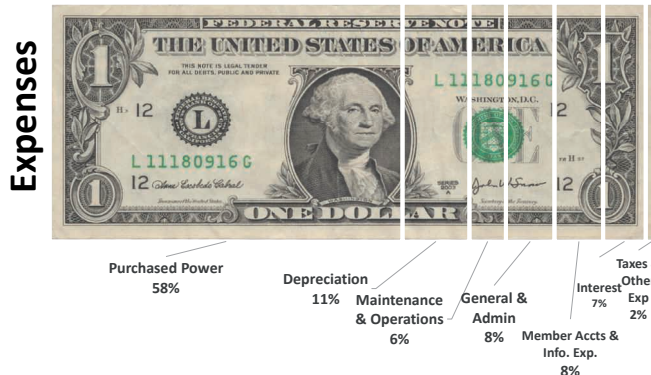
Members: 13,980
Meters: 18,159
Total # of Employees: 56
Service Area: 4,500 sq mi
Transmission Line: 37 mi
Overhead Line: 2,081 mi
Underground Line: 541 mi
Avg Residential Usage: 977 KWH

Avg Residential Bill: \$130
Avg Sm Commercial Usage: 1,345 KWH
Avg Sm Commercial Bill: \$201
Avg Lg Commercial Usage: 15,300 KWH
Avg Lg Commercial Bill: \$1,835
Meters Per Mile of Line: 6.83

2021 Co-op Statistics

Members: 14,566
Meters: 18,789
Total # of Employees: 56
Service Area: 4,500 sq mi
Transmission line: 37 mi
Overhead Line: 2,051 mi
Underground Line: 569 mi
Avg Residential Usage: 982 KWH

Avg Residential Bill: \$124
Avg Sm Commercial Usage: 1,382 KWH
Avg Sm Commercial Bill: \$193
Avg Lg Commercial Usage: 15,538 KWH
Avg Lg Commercial Bill: \$1,737
Meters Per Mile of Line: 7.07



YOUR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS VOTED TO RETURN

\$2,160,602

IN CAPITAL CREDITS

BACK TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Each year, the Board of Directors review West River Electric's financial condition to determine if a capital credit "retirement" (payment of capital credits) will be possible for the year. Because of the strong margins, the board voted to return this \$2,160,602 back to the membership. You will receive a credit on your bill unless you call and specifically request a check to be sent.





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.

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1
Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival
 Custer, SD
 605-255-4515

SEPT. 30
Rapid City Member Appreciation Day
 West River Electric
 605-393-1500

SEPT. 30-OCT. 1
Oktoberfest
 Citywide, Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

OCT. 1
Prairie Village Hobo Marlin Pumpkin Train
 Madison, SD
 605-256-3644

OCT. 1-2
Magic Needlers Quilt Festival
 Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
 605-881-3273

OCT. 7
The Pumpkin Patch
 Rapid Valley United Methodist Church, Rapid City, SD
 605-393-1526

OCT. 7-8
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vender Show
 Philip, SD
 605-441-1060

OCT. 7-9
Great Scarecrow Festival
 Campbell Park
 Huron, SD
 605-353-8530

OCT. 7-9
Black Hills Powwow
 The Monument
 444 Mt. Rushmore Road
 Rapid City, SD
 605-341-0925

OCT. 8
West River Electric 2022 Annual Meeting
 9 a.m. Registration
 10 a.m. Business Meeting
 Wall Community Center
 Wall, SD
 605-393-1500

OCT. 8
Fall Festival
 Fairburn United Methodist Church, Fairburn, SD
 605-255-4329

OCT. 8
TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) Open House
 18 E New York St., Rapid City, SD
 605-393-9784

OCT. 8-9
Crazy Horse Marathon and Races
 Crazy Horse Memorial
 12151 Avenue Of The Chiefs
 605-390-6137

OCT. 15
Fall Festival
 18473 US Hwy 83
 Onida, SD

OCT. 15
Fall Rummage Sale
 Minneluzahan Senior Center
 Rapid City, SD
 605-394-1887

OCT. 15
Community Rummage and Bake Sale
 8 a.m.-noon
 Rapid Vally United Methodist Church, Rapid City, SD

OCT. 28-30
ZooBoo
 Great Plains Zoo
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-7003

NOV. 3-5
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Downtown, Yankton, SD
 harvesthalloween.com

NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge
 100 4th Street SW
 Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

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