

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



This year's sunflower crop is expected to be bountiful as market forces have driven up demand and prices

## Sensational Sunflowers

**Sunflower market blooms**

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**Everyone's welcome in the Chislic Circle**

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# WORKING HARD TO STAY AHEAD



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

The middle to end of July really nailed us for heat. We set another all-time peak record for demand, eclipsing the demand record from January of 2022. It shows the increased use of electrical items such as air conditioning, along with the growth we have experienced that is driving the demand. The good news is we have had adequate generation available to keep the lights on.

We are finalizing our four-year work plan. We will be applying for a new loan in the next few months. Our total loan will be nearly \$45 million. That is a new record for us. Besides our growth, there is also an increase in the cost of materials and labor. We have several major projects in this plan for new substations and transmission lines. Even if only part of the expected load growth happens, we will still need this new infrastructure for future growth. We are working hard to stay ahead of the curve. Demand, as I mentioned earlier, makes it imperative that we are ready to serve our members' needs.

Something I do not talk much about in my columns but keeps us up at night is cybersecurity/computer hackers and the safety of our members' information. About every major meeting I attend, cyber is front and center as a discussion topic. The first question asked is normally what are we doing to mitigate the risk of getting hacked. We have so many interconnections with the outside world, it is difficult to make sure all our systems are safe and secure. However, we need these connections to do our business effectively and efficiently. I have heard of co-ops that have been down for weeks because the bad guys got in months ahead of time, and unbeknownst to the coop, had been infecting their backup copies as well. When they hit the co-op with ransomware (basically holding a company's information hostage for ransom), the co-op figured they had a good backup. They didn't. They had to do everything by paper and pencil until they could completely rebuild their system. 115102

Could we end up with the same issue? I certainly hope not. We have many systems in place to try and protect your data. We also have had outside testing firms do a test

to see if they can get into our system. One of those tests did show an area that we needed to strengthen, which was an outside vendor's software that we had to utilize. We took care of that vulnerability. We continually train employees on clicking on websites and strange emails. Some of those tests will show a red flag to our IT staff that the employee clicked on a trick/test email. They may get a note from our IT people, and may be required to do more training. I know our IT people say that they hope we are never attacked, but I have told them that it isn't a matter of IF we will get hacked, but WHEN we will get hacked.

Now, on a more positive note, several co-ops we know have had issues but also had enough protection in place that no member data was compromised, no ransom was paid to the bad guys and they had good backups to go back to immediately. We have procedures in place to monitor and make sure everything is running smoothly. We also have cyber insurance to help mitigate and cover any losses we might incur. I feel confident our IT personnel have worked extremely hard to make sure our/your information is safe and secure. A brand-new world!

I hope you all stay safe the rest of the summer.

## Save the Dates!

**WALL/NEW UNDERWOOD FOOTBALL  
GAME TAILGATING**

**SEPT. 2, 2022**

Wall Football Field, 5:30 - 7 p.m.

**RAPID CITY APPRECIATION DAY**

**SEPT. 30, 2022**

Rapid City Office, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**YOUR 83RD ANNUAL MEETING**

**OCT. 8, 2022**

Wall Community Center, registration starts at 9 a.m. with business meeting at 10 a.m.

## 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.

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

# Construction Manager Matt Schmahl Graduates MIP

Matt Schmahl, construction manager for West River Electric, recently graduated from the National Management Internship Program (MIP). 3710500 MIP is a comprehensive, six-week program that provides in-depth analysis of the functions and processes of co-op management. More importantly, it emphasizes the practical applications of these key competencies. This executive training offers cooperative leaders a dynamic learning experience and networking in a world-class environment. Congratulations Matt on your recent accomplishment.



## DID YOU CHANGE YOUR PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL?

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

## LOCATE YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER

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

## WEST RIVER ELECTRIC OFFICE HOURS

### RAPID CITY OFFICE

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

### WALL OFFICE

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

A night depository is available at both offices for your convenience. Office hours are subject to change in response to COVID-19.

## SERVICE AND BILLING QUESTIONS?

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

## OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY?

Contact 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500 in the event of an outage or other emergency. Our calls are answered 24/7. 11757600

# Take safety precautions during harvest season

Harvest season brings long, grueling hours in the field, which can make workers weary and prone to neglect safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks.

Farm operators, their family members and farm employees are urged to beware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allows operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from these lines. Maintain a minimum 10-foot radius around electric lines.

Portable augers are the No. 1 cause of electrocution on the farm. Augers being maneuvered by hand around bin sites have caused the deaths of many farmworkers who became the path to ground for electricity when the top of the auger touched overhead power lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Other equipment commonly involved in power line accidents includes oversized wagons, large combines and other tall equipment.

Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That's exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. He was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.

Follow these safety measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

## STUDENTS LEARN HOW POWER IS PRODUCED

A group of high school students recently gathered together to take a trip and learn how electricity is produced and how it is used to power their homes, farms, appliances and local businesses.

The students traveled to Bismarck, N.D., to tour the power generation facilities of Basin Electric, which supplies electricity across nine states and is one of the largest power producers in the country.

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.



Don't Mess With a Transformer Box



## Beware of the green box

### Cambrie Koistinen

Cambrie, age 11, advises electric cooperative members to use caution around pad-mounted transformers, also known as green boxes, because they contain high-voltage power equipment. Cambrie is the child of Lance and Holly Koistinen of Hayti.

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.

# FRESH FROM THE GARDEN

## ZUCCHINI SPINACH CASSEROLE

**Ingredients:**  
 2 lbs. zucchini  
 1 lbs. frozen spinach  
 1 chopped onion  
 4 cloves of garlic  
 5 beaten eggs  
 1/2 cup salad oil  
 1-1/2 cup cracker crumbs (save 1/2 cup for top)  
 1-1/2 cup cheddar cheese (save 1/2 for top)

### METHOD

Cook and drain first four ingredients. Add eggs, salad oil, cracker crumbs and cheddar cheese. Add salt, pepper and parsley to taste. Spread the remaining crumbs and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.  
**Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls**

## CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1 1/2 long English cucumbers cut in half moons  
 1 1/2 lb tomatoes on the vine sliced in segments  
 1/4 cup red onion thinly sliced (optional)  
 3 tbsp dill finely chopped  
 2 small garlic cloves grated  
 1/2 cup sour cream  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, dill, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir gently from the bottom in the center of the bowl until well combined. Serve salad within next six hours or so.  
**ifoodreal.com**

## CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

**Ingredients:**  
 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
 1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix (dry)  
 1 mini loaf of cocktail rye bread  
 1 cucumber, sliced  
 fresh dill weed, chopped

### METHOD

The night before serving the cucumber sandwiches, mix together the cream cheese and the Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix. Refrigerate overnight. Shortly before serving, spread some of the cream cheese mixture on a slice of the cocktail rye bread. Top with a slice of cucumber and sprinkle with dill weed.

**Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg**

## CHERI'S SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1-1 lb. pkg. veggie spiral noodles  
 2 1/2 c. diced ham  
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
 1 c. chopped celery  
 1 bag frozen peas, thawed

**Dressing:**  
 1/2 c. mayonnaise  
 1/2 c. sour cream  
 1 tbsp. mustard  
 1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice  
 3/4 tsp. onion powder  
 1/3 c. sugar

### METHOD

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse. Mix ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Mix until blended and pour over salad. Stir until well blended.

**Jan Antonen, Arlington**

**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.**

# Construction Notice



## Construction of the Box Elder to Ashland Transmission Line

By Matt Schmahl

The Box Elder area is developing and along with the development, the energy needs continue to increase. The population and community growth in and around Box Elder is driving the need for WREA to expand our transmission facilities to better serve the community and those that make it their home. My intent with this write-up is to loop in our members on some of WREA's projects and how we are committed to keeping up with the growth and offering safe, reliable and affordable electricity.11613300

### Box Elder to Ashland Transmission Line

The construction project will consist of 76 poles and approximately five miles of line along Country and Bennett Roads. Once on the south side of the interstate, the route will follow the existing line route to our Box Elder Substation located on



Matt Schmahl is West River Electric's construction manager. He has been with WREA for 23 years and in his current role manages and coordinates construction logistics, in addition to overseeing current and future projects.

# BOX ELDER TO ASHLAND TRANSMISSION LINE



**Anticipated Construction Schedule**  
**Start Date: July 1, 2022**  
**Completion Date: December 1, 2022**

*cont. from previous page*

Cheyenne Boulevard. The project runs primarily through the undeveloped areas with a small portion of the project involving developed properties along Bennett and Country Road.

## A Partnership Within A Thriving Community

We grow with our communities in mind. Careful consideration is taken to minimize the impact our members, partners, and the community may face before, during and after construction.

For the Box Elder to Ashland project, WREA focused on reducing the overall footprint of our new facilities by utilizing a narrow profile single pole design. Next, WREA decided to use a twisted conductor to alleviate icing issues and help ensure that the facility will continue to serve long into the future.

Before making any decision as your cooperative, we consider the following criteria to determine whether a project is of value to the membership: meeting population growth, providing member value and minimizing the impact on the community.





# Sunflower commodity prices are making farmers smile

**Billy Gibson**

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

It's hard to keep from smiling when you're driving past a field of golden sunflowers in full bloom during the late summer months.

Wall Drug billboards, old red barns and shiny grain bins are no match for the attention of motorists along I-90 when the sunflowers are bursting forth in all their spectacular yellow splendor stretching far into the horizon.

The subject of many aerial and terrestrial photographers across the region, sunflowers have a special appeal as they grow tall in the field and seem to greet the day leaning forward with a positive energy that exudes joy and optimism.

The current sunflower commodity market certainly has given farmers a reason to smile. South Dakota farmers raised nearly 600,000 acres and more than 1 billion pounds of sunflowers

last year, ranking second only to North Dakota for sunflower production. In fact, for the past decade the Dakotas and Minnesota have alternated the top three spots in their friendly competition depending largely on the vagaries of weather patterns. At least 75 percent of the U.S. commercial sunflower production has taken place in those three states.

About 1,000 of those South Dakota acres were grown by Brad Schecher, a fourth generation farmer who also rotates wheat, corn, flax and soybean crops on his 3,500-acre spread located near Bison in the northwestern part of the state, one of the hot-bed regions for sunflowers.

Schecher took over the family farm from his father nearly 10 years ago and said the military conflict in Ukraine and other economic factors have converged to form a "perfect storm" that has constricted international supplies and created a favorable environment for the

current global sunflower oil market. Commodity prices have broken all-time records by soaring 60 percent compared to a year ago.

"It's as good as any of the 10 years I've been involved in it," Schecher said. "Ukraine was the largest producer of sunflowers and the largest exporter of sunflower oil on the world market with about 50 percent of the overall market, but a lot of their crop has been destroyed or confiscated by the Russian military. That's one of the things that have driven prices up, and it's been good for the farmers."

High prices and high returns are keeping Schecher interested in raising sunflowers, but sometimes he has his doubts. Especially when he gets tired of fighting the fires, a battle that all sunflower farmers are bound to face at some point.

Schecher said that for all the eye appeal sunflowers hold, it's not always easy to bring in the crop. He explained that reaping the high-yield, high-oleic variety that he grows for the sunoil market can cause fires to break out during the combining process in the



Brad Schecher farms roughly 1,000 acres of sunflowers near Bison. *Photo by Brooke Schecher*

fall. The elevated oil content of the plant - ranging anywhere from 38 to 44 percent - along with the dust that's created during combining can result in a combustible mixture that is sometimes ignited by the presence of static electricity.

To make sure he's prepared, Schecher keeps a battery-operated leaf blower aboard the combine at all times.

"I have to keep blowing the combine off when I get to the end of the field to keep a fire from breaking out," he said. "You can see the accumulated piles of dust start glowing red-hot, and you can usually smell it and get it put out before it gets out of control. It's a hazard that you just have to contend with. Sometimes it can happen two or three times a day, especially when it's dry conditions."

Other farmers, such as Lance Hourigan of Lemmon, S.D., have addressed this common problem by investing in after-market solutions. Hourigan reached northward across the state border and recruited Stelter Repair out of New Leipzig, N.D., to manufacture an air tower to help

Estimated number  
of sunflower acres

**600,000**

planted in South  
Dakota in 2021

reduce the risk of fire during harvest time. Resembling a chimney, the device draws in air from above the combine where there is much less dust and debris billowing from the threshing process, and blows the air over the engine to help it stay cool and clean.

While Schecher focuses on the high-oleic variety that represents about 80 percent of the market, there are other varieties grown for silage, birdfeed and other uses. Confection sunflowers, grown mostly in the eastern part of the state, are those found bagged up on convenience store shelves, the kind loaded with an assortment of flavors and

seasonings and meant for chewing.

While sunflowers are native to the continent, their history in North America can be traced to American Indian tribes in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Archaeologists have found that these tribes domesticated the crop as early as 3000 B.C. The seed was ground or pounded into flour for cakes, mush or bread. Some tribes mixed the meal with vegetables such as beans and squash. The seed was cracked and eaten for snacking, while the oil was squeezed from the seed and used in making bread.

Non-food uses included purple dye for textiles, body painting and other decorations. Parts of the plant were used to treat snakebites. The oil was used on the skin and hair, and the dried stalk was used as a building material.

Today, agricultural scientists are exploring new uses for the plant while also figuring out how to provide protection from wireworms and other threats. Meanwhile, bullish farmers are keeping their eye on the global markets while exuding the same sense of sunny optimism associated with the sunflowers they work so hard to raise.



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

*Are you connected?*  
The likely answer is yes, in some way, if you are reading this. Connecting to West River Electric's grid requires a set of conditions that your co-op promises to provide and that you the member also agree to. Additionally,

there is a separate agreement with different conditions when West River Electric is not only supplying power but also receiving power. The conditions I'm talking about come from systems like "grid tie solar," and the separate agreement is called an interconnection agreement.

In the industry these systems are often called "cogeneration" or co-gen for short. We are seeing an uptick of co-gen come onto our grid. Currently, your co-op remains

neutral on these systems so we can be better advocates for the entire membership. However, your co-op's mission is to do what is best for the membership and safety is first. Interconnection agreements are required because it has conditions and terms that help ensure safety. If a member puts power back into the grid, we need to make sure it is meeting our standards. Also, we need to ensure it does not put power back onto the grid when our lineman would expect the lines to be deenergized.

The interconnection agreement has process and procedures to help mitigate the risk of any potential problems.

Are you or someone you know considering a co-gen system? If you are considering a system such as

solar, reach out to your co-op – your trusted energy advisors are here to help the process. By starting a dialogue in the project's early stages its likely we can help you avoid any unforeseen issues. 3430900

At first glance the interconnection agreement can be intimidating, but your co-op is available to help with the process. We have been heavily involved with these systems and we can remain a neutral third party in the process to better serve you, our member owners.



**83rd Annual Meeting**  
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8TH**  
**AT THE WALL COMMUNITY CENTER**

9 AM - REGISTRATION  
 10 AM - MEETING



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

**SUCCESS**

**Rapid City Member Appreciation Day**  
**September 30th**  
**FRIDAY 11:00 - 7:00**

EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS WILL BE HERE TO SERVE YOU,  
 THE MEMBER-OWNER,

**HAMBURGER, HOTDOGS, CHIPS, SODA, AND  
 A COOKIE.**




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

**Wall v. New Underwood Tailgating**  
**SEPTEMBER 2ND**

The football game is planned for the evening of September 2nd in Wall. This is always a great event, so stop in to see us and pick up some great tailgating food, and enjoy a football game!  
 We look forward to seeing you there.



**Looking to give back?**

Rounding your electric bill to the nearest whole dollar is just like rounding your gas to the nearest whole dollar. Easy.

**Know a charitable organization needing funds?**

Charitable organizations, groups, families or individual's on West River Electric service can request funds for assistance.

**Visit our webpage or call our office for more information on how to donate or request funds.**

**Wall: 605-279-2135**  
**Rapid: 605-393-1500**

# CHISLIC FESTIVAL



Roger and Lori Pietz claimed the New Age Nosh Award at last year's Chislic Festival in Freeman. Photos by SD Chislic Festival

## Step inside the Chislic Circle for unique food and lots of family fun

**Billy Gibson**

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

In a world already rife with scads of dander-raising hot-button issues, add chislic to the list. It seems that anytime more than a few cocksure chislic chefs gather around a grill, controversy can't be too far away.

The bickering typically begins with picking the proper protein. Opt for the traditional scrumptious cubes of mutton or lamb, or take a risk and go hog-wild with pork or maybe buffalo? How about swinging farther to the edge with venison, goat, beef or chicken? Dare we add emu to the list?

At least one restaurant is sending the chislic cosmos into spasms by serving up plates of (gasp) "fish-lic."

The plethora of opinions surrounding the preparation of chislic starts with the choice of meat and springboards from there into seasonings, cooking methods and even serving techniques. Grilled,

deep fried or air fried? Fork, toothpick or skewer? Don't get a chislic enthusiast started on the sauce selection.

Many people and various cultures have a strong attachment to their particular favorite types of food, but South Dakota's desire for chislic is unusually intense – especially for those who dwell within the Chislic Circle.

If the name Chislic Circle evokes images of a secret society that conducts mysterious midnight rituals around a raging bonfire deep in the forest, well, it's not quite that. It's more of a clever marketing concept, and an effective one for community leaders who take pride in their chislic lore. In fact, everyone is invited to come inside this circle.

At the center of the Chislic Circle lies Freeman, S.D., with the chislic realm falling inside a 100-mile radius and including communities such as Kaylor, Menno, Hurley, Marion, Bridgewater, Emery and others. The Circle was spun into creation in 2018 when a small

but passionate contingent of chislic connoisseurs decided to celebrate and demonstrate their pride in their unique culinary heritage.

Andrea Baer was part of that early chislic cadre. She said the catalyst came when chislic was officially declared the "state nosh" by the Legislature four years ago.

"Before then, when you mentioned chislic outside of the area, there was hardly anyone who knew what you were talking about," said Baer, who is a native of Turkey Ridge still living on the farm her forebears from Denmark settled several generations ago. "It's something that's very unique to the area and we



like to celebrate it.”

That celebration has taken the form of an annual event that’s been recognized by tourism officials as one of the state’s fastest-growing festivals with an estimated 10,000 attendees last year after a pandemic pause in 2020. Organizers were expecting up to a couple thousand for the inaugural event in 2018, but four times that many showed up. The following year, the party was moved from the Freeman softball field to the more spacious 40-acre Prairie Arboretum.

This year’s festival was held on July 30 with the usual food vendors touting their unique savory recipes, libations, live music, a family-friendly kid zone, bingo, dancing, a cornhole competition, 5K run/walk, helicopter rides and other forms of family-oriented fun.

Festival board member and chislic expert Ian Tuttle also presented, “From Russia with Love: The History of Chislic” at the nearby Heritage Hall Museum and Archives.

Tuttle enjoys telling the story of how chislic arrived in the late 1800s with a particular group of immigrants described as “Germans from Russia.” A group of German Mennonites and Hutterites originally fled religious persecution in the 16th century and migrated eastward through the Russian Empire where they raised crops and sheep.

They chopped the meat into small pieces, cooked it over a fire and called it “shashlik,” a word for “skewer” rooted in the Turkic languages of Central Asia. The word is a close cousin to the more widely known “shish kebab.”

Eventually, those migrants found their way to present-day southeastern South Dakota and made sure to bring their shashlik with them. Those residing



inside the Chislic Circle generally recognize Johann Hoellwarth as the individual who introduced chislic to the Dakota Territory. Born in 1849 to a German Lutheran family in the Crimea, Hoellwarth settled just outside of where Freeman is today and was laid to eternal rest in the town.

Each year a panel of seven fearless judges takes on the task of naming the festival’s “best chislic.” For the past two years the top Traditional Division Award has gone to Kyle Sturzenbecker and his squad of Sheep Flockers.

Sturzenbecker said he and his fellow chef Josh Goehring don’t characterize themselves as competitive, but he also isn’t about to give away any trade secrets.

“You don’t have to do a whole lot. I just let the flavor of the meat speak for itself,” he said. “Honestly, I never

thought I’d win. I just like to cook good food that people enjoy eating.”

In 2021, the non-traditional New Age Nosh Award was claimed by Roger Pietz, owner of the Pietz Kuchen Kitchen. The establishment is mostly known for its rich custard dessert, but for the festival Pietz decided to go in a different direction and put together a tangy chislic pizza.

Ultimately, the Chislic Festival is about celebrating family, honoring the past and preserving the rural lifestyle.

“The tradition of chislic comes not from cities, the wealthy, or the privileged,” Baer said, “but from the rural, hardworking farm tradition of the people who settled this area. We thrive on the rural, while building the region through vibrant community.”



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## Anglers get hooked on fly fishing for fun and sport

**Billy Gibson**

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

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Tall tales, small tales, long tales, short tales...Buddy Seiner is interested in hearing any fishing tale you'd like to tell.

While he's partial to fly fishing, Seiner is passionate about fishing in all of its forms. And he offers an open invitation to anglers of every ilk to share their stories of fishing adventures enjoyed with friends, family members or in the presence of one's own company.

Seiner started [www.fishstories.org](http://www.fishstories.org) after his grandfather passed away and he realized there were no audio or video recordings of the many outings they took together casting flies and chatting about whatever popped into their minds in the moment.

Several years ago, Seiner stood on the main stage during a TED X speech in Rapid City and explained his purpose in creating the website. Soon after, he began hauling in a mess of fish stories submitted by avid anglers from far and wide. Today, the archive holds more than 400 sagas of lunkers that were landed, the big ones that got away and precious time spent with loved ones in the great outdoors.

"I believe all fish stories need to be told," said Seiner, who works as a communications consultant based in Pierre. "I used to fish a lot with my grandpa and I realized I'd never hear his voice again after he passed away. He was full of wisdom and had a great sense of humor. I had some regrets about not recording him, so I started this project as a way for people to preserve those cherished voices and to preserve the memories."

Seiner observes that many people are in some way connected with fishing, whether they pursue it themselves or know someone who likes the feel of a rod and reel. He has found that the stories submitted to the site feature not only intriguing narratives of reaching the day's limits under clear cerulean skies but they also reveal relationships that run deeper than the deepest river channel. Some describe disastrous events.

One of those is the story of an outdoors escape that quickly turned tragic. A young woman tells how she lost her husband to an accident while the two were ice fishing on a frozen lake in Minnesota.

While there are stories of heartache and loss, Seiner said most tales tend to trend toward the positive. He has his own fond memories of how his uncle introduced him to fly fishing

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Part art and part skill, fly fishing is an increasingly popular pastime across the region. *Photo by Travel South Dakota*

26 years ago and how he started tying his own flies as a college student.

“My Uncle Dwaine gave me a rod and I went in the back yard and started practicing. He always told me I’d enjoy it and he was right,” Seiner said.

It was at Bear Butte Creek near Sturgis that Seiner landed his first trout. He was casting for a brown trout beneath a willow tree. The fish went for the dry fly – a blue wing olive – and both the fish and Seiner were hooked. The fish was landed and released but Seiner’s love of the sport has never waned.

Fly fishing is growing in popularity across the region as more anglers discover the adventure and what many describe as the therapeutic benefits of casting flies out across the water. Though fly fishing is often associated with the clear, cold, fast-running streams found in the Black Hills area, Seiner said there is a wide range of options available depending on an angler’s tastes and preferences.

“We have a lot of water that’s prime for fly fishing,” he said. “It’s a sport Buddy Seiner started fishstories.org to preserve fishing tales and memories like those he has of his late fishing pal, Lucy.

that’s new to a lot of people and it’s gaining momentum. You can catch anything on a fly rod. You can go for trout and fish the stock dams out west, you can sight-fish for walleye or channel catfish in the clear waters of the Missouri River, you can fish the glacial lakes in the northeast or fish for carp out near Yankton.”

Whether they go for carp or brown trout, many fly fishers take an interest in maintaining and preserving the habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Seiner serves on the board of a group called Black Hills Fishers and works

with folks like Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler and Outfitter in Rapid City to promote the sport of fly fishing, support conservation and educate the public on how to preserve the environment.

“Fly fishing is so much fun,” he said, “but if we don’t do what we can to protect our woods and waters, it will be a tragedy. We need to stay committed to preservation and conservation, and I’ve found that most people who enjoy the outdoors are very conscientious. We want people to have fishing stories to share for generations to come.”



## REGISTER TO WIN!

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**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
*Photo Credit: SD State Fair*

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.

**AUGUST 19-21**  
**54th Black Hills Threshing Bee**  
13380 Alkali Road, Sturgis, SD,  
605-490-2024

**AUGUST 19-27**  
**Central States Fair and Rodeo**  
800 San Francisco St., Rapid  
City, SD, [centralstatesfair.com](http://centralstatesfair.com)

**AUGUST 26-27**  
**Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ**  
Elm St., Hill City, SD, [hillcitywine  
brewandbbq.com](http://hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com)

**AUGUST 26-27**  
**Sizzlin' Summer Nights**  
Main St., Aberdeen, SD,  
605-226-3441

**AUGUST 26-28**  
**Hot Air Balloon Festival**  
Various Locations, Hot Springs,  
SD, [fallriverballoonfest.com](http://fallriverballoonfest.com)

**AUG. 30-SEPT. 4**  
**Sturgis Mustang Rally**  
Thunderdome, Sturgis, SD,  
[sturgismustangrally.com](http://sturgismustangrally.com)

**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD,  
[sdstatefair.com](http://sdstatefair.com)

**SEPTEMBER 3**  
**Sgt. Colton Levi Derr**  
**Foundation: Barrels, Poles,**  
**Breakaway & Team Roping**  
**Fundraiser**

New Underwood, SD,  
605-545-2505

**SEPTEMBER 8-11**  
**S.D. State Senior Games**  
Watertown, SD, 605-491-0635  
or 605-753-3668

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**605 Black Hills Classic**  
Lions Park, Spearfish, SD,  
605-274-1999

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Germanfest**  
Fawck Park, Sioux Falls, SD,  
[siouxfallsistercities.com/event](http://siouxfallsistercities.com/event)

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Insect Festival**  
McCrary Gardens, Brookings,  
SD, 605-688-6707

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Sidewalk Arts Festival**  
Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD,  
605-367-6000

**SEPTEMBER 11**  
**40th Annual Super Automatic**  
**Swap Meeting**  
Central States Fairgrounds,  
Rapid City, SD, 605-348-7373

**SEPTEMBER 17**  
**Freshman Impact: Family**  
**Fun Day**  
3005 Beale St., Rapid City, SD,  
[freshmanimpact.net](http://freshmanimpact.net)

**SEPTEMBER 23-24**  
**Hops and Hogs Festival**  
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**SEPTEMBER 23-25**  
**HNIRC Championship of**  
**Champions**  
Stanley County Fairgrounds,  
Fort Pierre, SD, [horsenations  
indianrelay.com](http://horsenationsindianrelay.com)

**SEPTEMBER 24**  
**Walk to End Alzheimer's**  
Founder's Park, Rapid City, SD,  
605-339-4543

**SEPTEMBER 24**  
**Great Downtown Pumpkin**  
**Festival**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City,  
SD, 605-716-7979

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo**  
**Roundup & Arts Festival**  
Custer, SD, [gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-  
roundup](http://gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-roundup)

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

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 2**  
**SiouxperCon**  
1201 N West Ave., Sioux Falls,  
SD, [siouxpercon.com](http://siouxpercon.com)

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