

Building for the Future



Robert Raker
CEO/GM

Last September, I shared information about rising wholesale power costs and the financial pressures affecting electric cooperatives throughout our region. At that time, I mentioned that

addressing these challenges would likely require a multi-year approach rather than a single adjustment.

As we look ahead, that outlook remains largely unchanged. However, I believe it's important to recognize that these investments are about much more than costs. They are about ensuring that the electric system our members depend on remains strong, reliable, and ready for the future.

One perspective worth remembering is that much of the infrastructure serving our members today was built and paid for by previous generations. In many cases, we are

still benefiting from investments our parents and grandparents made decades ago. Their foresight helped create the reliable electric system we often take for granted.

Today, our industry is entering another period of significant investment. Across the region, utilities are responding to growing electricity demand, replacing aging infrastructure, expanding transmission systems, and developing new power generation resources to maintain reliability. While these projects come at a cost, they are designed to provide value for decades to come, just as prior generations' investments have done for us.

Here at West River Electric, we are seeing firsthand how demand for electricity continues to grow. This summer, we recorded a new all-time system peak during an extended stretch of hot weather. While our system performed as designed, it serves as a reminder that today's investments help ensure we can continue meeting our members' needs tomorrow.

Our wholesale power provider, Basin

Electric, is making major investments in power generation and transmission infrastructure across the region. These projects are intended to strengthen reliability, create additional capacity, and position the cooperative network to serve future growth.

No final decisions have been made regarding future rate adjustments, but we believe it is important to continue communicating openly with our membership. While additional rate changes are likely necessary as part of a longer-term plan, they would support investments that are intended to serve members not only today, but well into the future.

The members who came before us built an electric system that has served our communities exceptionally well. Now it is our turn to make sure that system remains strong for our children, grandchildren, and the generations that follow.

Thank you for your continued trust, support, and membership.

Robert Raker
CEO & General Manager

A Little Cost. A Lot of Life.

For about \$150 a month, electricity powers hundreds of tasks that keep your home comfortable, connected and running smoothly—from brewing your morning coffee to keeping your family cool, safe and entertained.

- **720** hours of refrigeration
- **20+** loads of clean clothes
- **15+** home-cooked meals
- **90+** hours of lighting
- **Numerous** devices charged
- **Hundreds** of hours of cooling/heating
- **Countless** connections to work, school and entertainment

30 days of comfort



West River Electric Association sent five students to participate in Youth Excursion, a trip to tour energy infrastructure in Bismarck, North Dakota. From left are Walter Senger, Edward Senger, Brandon Treadwell, Gavyn Jones-Monington and Elena Teagle.

Youth Excursion 2026

What does it take to keep the lights on? Sixteen students representing six electric cooperatives from across South Dakota embarked on a three-day trip to Bismarck, N.D., in July to go behind the scenes and learn about electricity generation. Sponsored by their local electric cooperatives, students toured the energy infrastructure that generates and transmits electricity into residential homes and commercial buildings, learning firsthand from industry experts. 1025700

The group kicked off the tour by visiting the Coteau Properties Co. Freedom Mine, where they saw large equipment in action and coal being mined in real time. The group followed the coal to the one-of-a-kind Great Plains Synfuels Plant, where natural gas, liquid carbon dioxide, fertilizers and fuels are produced from coal. The group then toured Antelope Valley Station, a coal-fired power plant, to learn how coal is burned to generate energy. The group concluded their tour at Basin Electric Headquarters, where energy generation across the system is facilitated and managed.

Brodie Melichar of Tabor, a member of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, said the trip provided a new perspective on how power is generated. Melichar said he plans to be an electrician once he enters the workforce.

"It was a great experience," Melichar said. "What stuck with me was the impressively large scale of the mining operation and facilities. I went on this trip with a few of my friends, and by the end of it, I got to meet some more."

Youth Excursion is organized by the statewide South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D., and paid for by the students' electric cooperatives as part of the industry's ongoing support of the fifth cooperative principle: education, training and information. 3628900

As cooperatives, we value our communities and our youth. If you are interested in learning more about youth activities and opportunities, reach out to your local electric cooperative.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WEST RIVER ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 675-840)

Our Mission:

To serve our members' best interest.

Our Vision:

We will be a high performing co-op.

Our Values:

1. Safety
2. Accountability
3. Integrity
4. Innovation
5. Commitment to Community

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board President: Andy Moon

Board of Directors

Stan Anders – Vice President
 Jamie Lewis – Secretary
 Chuck Sloan – Treasurer
 Taran Eisenbraun
 Peter Blake
 Jason Habrock
 Steven Edoff
 Sue Peters

CEO and General Manager:

Robert Raker –
robert.raker@westriver.coop

Editor

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

Other correspondence to: West River Electric Cooperative Connections, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703; telephone (605)393-1500, Exts. 6564, 6531 or 6522; fax (605)393- 0275; e-mail amanda.haugen@westriver.coop.

87th Annual Meeting

 Saturday, October 10, 2026

 Registration: 9am | Meeting: 10am

 Wall Community Center

Together Towards Tomorrow



West River Electric Association, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

"Powering You For A Brighter Future"

Heat Season Begins October 1st



Justin Wermers
Metering Foreman

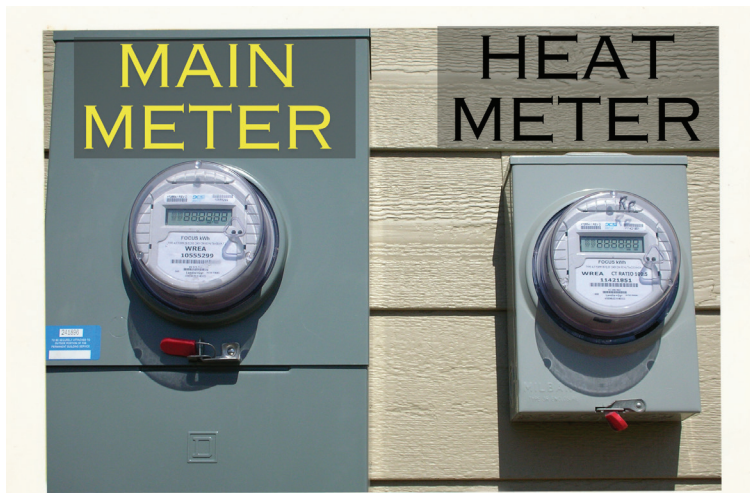
Please ensure your heat meter breaker is turned on before October 1st. The discounted heat rate will begin then and go until May 1, 2027. Any usage between those two dates on the heat meter will receive the heat rate discount. If you have any questions, please call our metering department at 605-393-1500.

How to Tell if your Heat Meter is Off?

First, locate your meter. This is the second meter with a smaller enclosure than your main meter. 3950000

Second, look at the digital display. If there is not a blinking display, it is off and the meter does not have power. You will need to locate your electrical panel and look for a 2-pole break that is labeled "heat meter." Once located, turn that breaker back on. 2963600

Finally, verify that your meter display is now on and rest assured knowing you will be getting a discount on your electric heat when the time comes. If you are not comfortable performing this process, consult with an electrician. You may also call our office and a member service representative can verify your heat meter is communicating.



West River Electric has the following vehicles for sale by sealed bid. **Bids will be accepted until 5pm, Friday, September 18, 2026.** Sealed bids can be sent to any WREA office. All items are sold “as is” and WREA reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Vehicles can be seen at our Rapid City Office by asking for Mo or Brendan. **Bids will be opened at the September 21, 2026 Board Meeting.**

Bids can also be submitted online by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://www.westriver.coop/vehicle-bids>



Item #303

2014 Toyota Tundra 5.7L V8 4x4 | 204,566 mi



Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Bid: \$ _____

Item #219

2013 Toyota Tundra 5.7L V8 4x4 | 181,406 mi



Name: _____

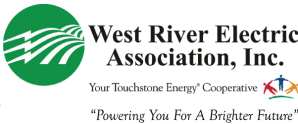
Phone: _____

Address: _____

Bid: \$ _____

Item #315

2015 Titan Flatbed 8' x 26'
6' stationary with 20' tilt | 82" inside wheel wells



Name: _____

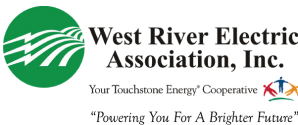
Phone: _____

Address: _____

Bid: \$ _____

Item #230

1994 Felling Pole Trailer



Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Bid: \$ _____

Electricity Brings Everyday Value



Amanda Haugen
Communications
Specialist

When it comes to electricity, we rarely think twice when we flip on a light switch, brew coffee in the morning, charge our phones or adjust the thermostat. We simply expect the power to be there—and that's how it should be because you are a member of West River Electric, and reliably powering your life is something we don't take lightly.

We know that many families across our local communities are feeling the impact of rising costs for everyday expenses. Groceries, gasoline, insurance and the list goes on, cost more than they did just a few years ago. And because of that, we understand that every household is carefully considering where each dollar goes.

That's why I think it's important to occasionally step back and consider the value electricity provides.

The average U.S. residential electric bill is about \$150 a month—roughly \$5 a day. I often think about what that \$5 provides. It's about the cost of a specialty coffee, yet electricity powers nearly every moment of our daily lives, often without us giving it a second thought. In fact, many typical purchases cost more than a day's worth of electricity. A fast-food combo meal averages about \$9, and a single movie ticket can cost around \$13.

For about \$5 a day, your refrigerator keeps food fresh around the clock. Your heating and cooling system helps keep your family comfortable through the seasons. Lights brighten your home after sunset. Appliances make cooking and cleaning easier. Devices stay charged so you can work, learn, communicate and stay connected with loved ones. When you think about everything electricity makes possible, it's one of the greatest values in the average household budget.

Even with electricity's exceptional value, we know every dollar matters. If you're looking for ways to lower your energy use, West River Electric is here to help. Whether you need efficiency advice from our energy advisors, information about air-source heat pump rebates or answers to questions about your monthly bill, our team is always one phone call away. We also have a list of financial assistance resources available on our website if you need help paying your bill. Visit www.westriver.coop and under "My Account" you will find the list of resources available to you.

West River Electric is proud to be more than your electric provider. Because we're a cooperative, we're locally owned by you, the members we serve. That means every decision we make is guided by what's best for our community—not by outside shareholders.

Thank you for trusting us to power your home and your life. We're committed to providing everyday value for you and your family, with reliable, affordable power—so you can make the most of every energy dollar.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Department of Energy



Explore Co-op Country

Looking for your next road trip adventure? West River Electric recently partnered with neighboring electric cooperatives to create the Western South Dakota Adventure Route, a guide featuring some of the region's favorite hidden gems and must-see destinations.

While iconic attractions like Mount Rushmore, Crazy

Horse, Spearfish Canyon and the Black Hills itself draw visitors from around the world, this route also shines a spotlight on the small towns, scenic stops and local treasures that make western South Dakota unique.

Whether you're planning a summer getaway, traveling west for the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally or simply looking for

a weekend drive, the Western South Dakota Adventure Route offers plenty of inspiration to explore Co-op Country.

See our regional map above to discover featured stops throughout western South Dakota or explore an expanded statewide map online at rushmore.coop/this-is-coop-country.

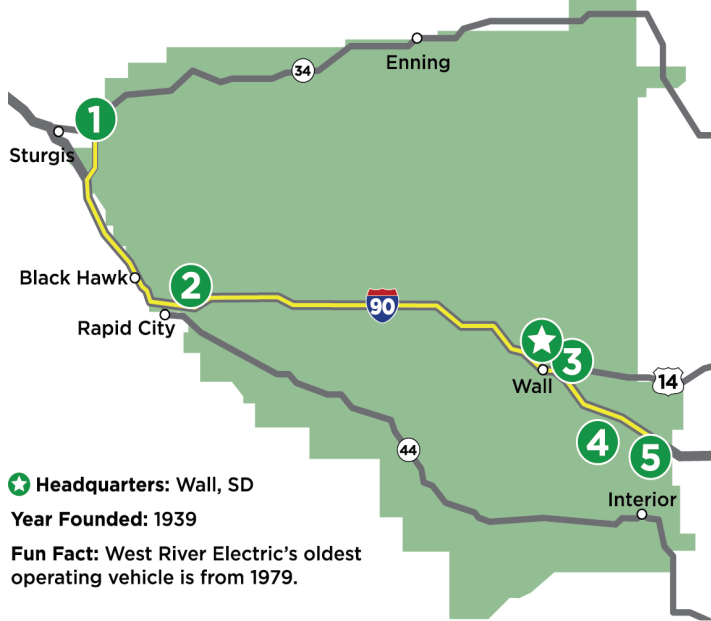


West River Electric Association, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Co-op Country

ROAD TRIP MAP

West River Electric powers communities across western South Dakota, supporting the places and experiences that make this region a memorable stop along the Co-op Country Road Trip.



Featured Road Trip Stops

- 1 Sturgis Buffalo Chip**
20622 Fort Meade Way, Sturgis
Category: Attraction
 Catch live music, explore vendor areas and soak in the high-energy atmosphere that defines the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Even outside of rally week, the Buffalo Chip offers a glimpse into one of the most iconic motorcycle destinations in the country.
- 2 Black Hills Visitor Information Center**
1851 Discovery Cir, Rapid City
Category: Attraction
 Plan your trip with maps, recommendations and insider tips from local experts. Browse displays, plan your route and get a better sense of what to see and do throughout the Black Hills region.
- 3 Wall Drug**
510 Main St, Wall
Category: Food/Shopping
 Stretch your legs, grab a bite to eat, buy a souvenir and explore a maze of shops, Western art and photo opportunities. Don't miss the famous free ice water that has drawn travelers in for generations.
- 4 Badlands National Park**
25216 Ben Reifel Rd, Interior
Category: Outdoors
 Drive scenic overlooks, hike through rugged formations, visit one of the world's largest fossil beds and watch for wildlife like bison and bighorn sheep. The dramatic landscapes and wide-open views make this one of the most unforgettable stops in South Dakota.
- 5 Minuteman Missile National Historic Site**
24545 Cottonwood Rd, Philip
Category: History/Attraction
 Step inside the visitor center to learn about the Cold War through authentic sites, exhibits, videos and personal stories.

★ **Headquarters: Wall, SD**
Year Founded: 1939
Fun Fact: West River Electric's oldest operating vehicle is from 1979.

Together Towards Tomorrow



West River Electric
Association, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



"Powering You For A Brighter Future"



MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Whether you're hoping to yell "BINGO!", experience a unique view of a lineman's perspective with a bucket truck ride, participate in our NEW safety course, or learn valuable energy efficiency tips, there will be fun all day long.



✓ FREE meal

✓ 4 rounds of BINGO

✓ Scholarships

✓ NEW kids safety course
*they could win a new bike!!

✓ FREE health screenings

✓ KIDS ZONE

✓ Energy Efficiency

✓ SO MUCH MORE!!

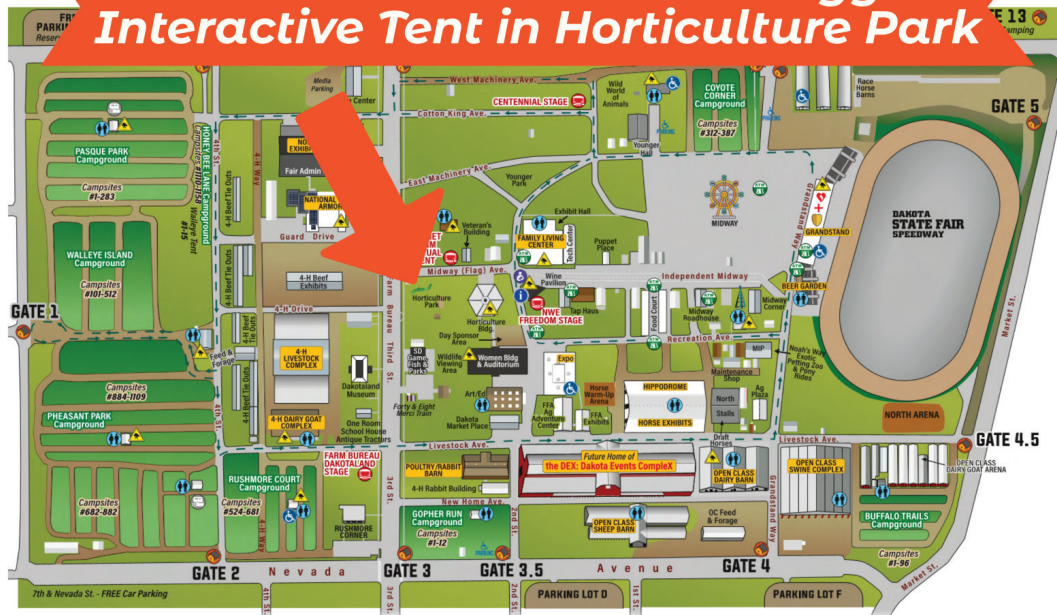
3250 E Hwy 44 Rapid City, SD 57703

SEPT. 25, 2026 | 11AM - 7PM



Electric co-ops at the State Fair

Visit The Touchstone Energy
Interactive Tent in Horticulture Park



Thursday, Sept. 3rd
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

LOCATE YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER

There are five (5) account numbers placed randomly throughout the publication. If you locate your account number anywhere in this issue of the Cooperative Connections, you will be credited \$10.00, towards your next bill. You must notify our office by the 10th of the following month to receive your credit.

WEST RIVER ELECTRIC OFFICE HOURS

RAPID CITY OFFICE

3250 E Hwy 44
Rapid City, SD 57703
Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.
605-393-1500
Info@westriver.coop

WALL OFFICE

1200 W 4th Ave
PO Box 412
Wall, SD 57790
Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.
605-279-2135
Info@westriver.coop

*This email is not monitored on nights or weekends and it is not for reporting outages. To report an outage please follow the instructions below.

OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY?

Our calls are answered 24/7. In the event of an outage, please report it via the SmartHub app, texting OUT to 855-939-3719, or by calling our office at 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500.