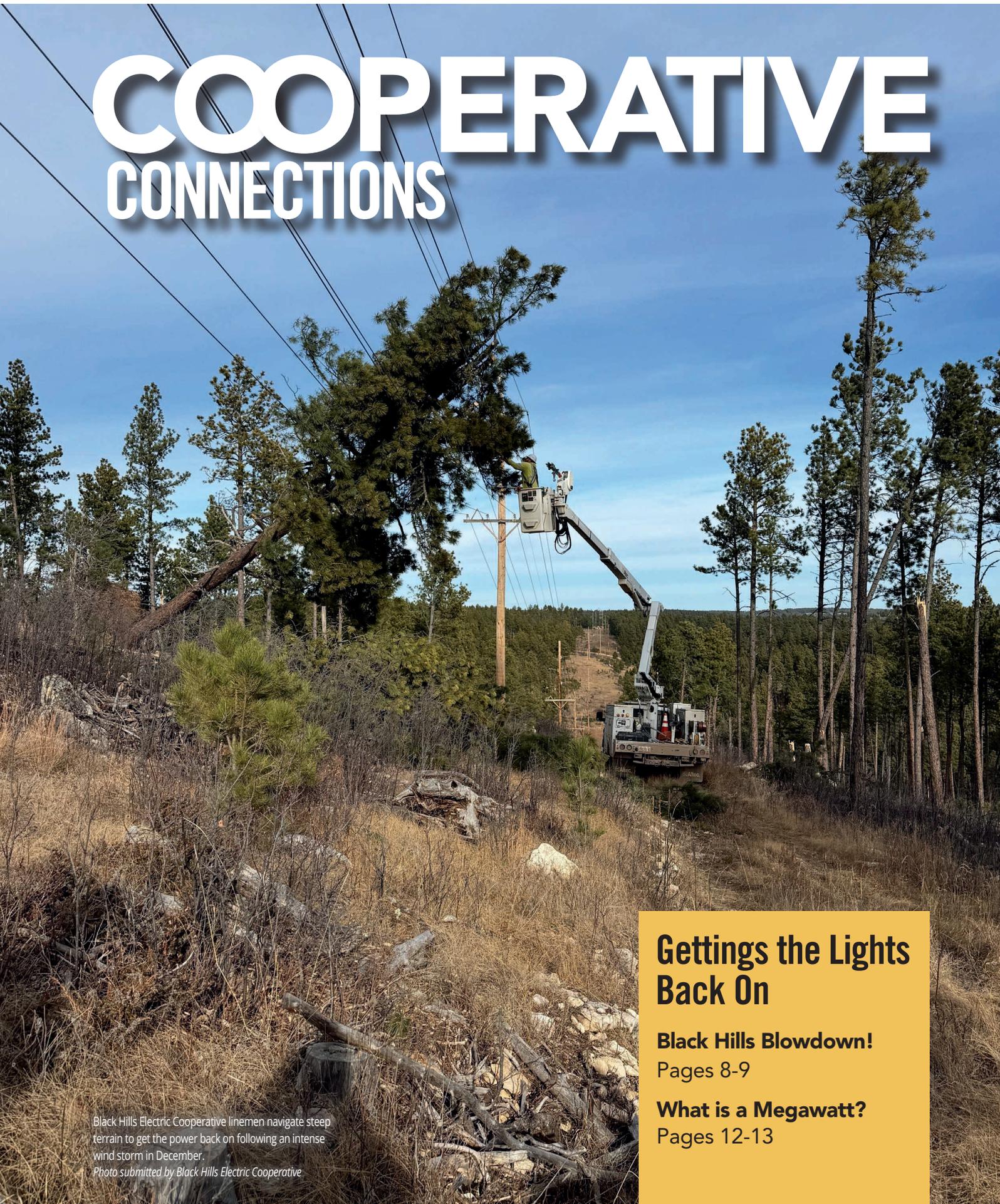


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Gettings the Lights Back On

Black Hills Blowdown!
Pages 8-9

What is a Megawatt?
Pages 12-13

Black Hills Electric Cooperative linemen navigate steep terrain to get the power back on following an intense wind storm in December.
Photo submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

A Personal Note as I Begin a New Chapter



Chris Larson,
General Manager

After 31 years in the electric cooperative family — including the past 10 years as General Manager of Clay-Union Electric — I want to share my sincere thanks to the members, employees, Board of Directors, and partners who have made this journey so meaningful. Serving this cooperative has truly been a privilege, and I will deeply miss the relationships and friendships built along the way.

While my time at Clay-Union Electric is coming to a close, I'm pleased to share that I have accepted a position with the Governor's Office of Economic Development as State Energy Development Director. In this role, I look forward to continuing to serve South Dakota by helping support future energy needs and economic development efforts across the state.

Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to work with the whole Cooperative Family including stops at East River Electric Power Cooperative, Northern Electric Cooperative, Spink Electric Cooperative, and most recently Clay-Union Electric. Together, we've focused on responsible planning, managing rising energy

costs, and maintaining reliable, affordable service for the members we serve. I'm proud of what we've accomplished and confident in the cooperative's continued strength.

Reliable, affordable energy is critical to South Dakota's long term growth. In my new role, I'll be working with utilities, state agencies, and local partners to advance energy infrastructure projects that support business expansion and community development statewide. I'm grateful for the trust placed in me and excited for the opportunity to collaborate with partners across South Dakota.

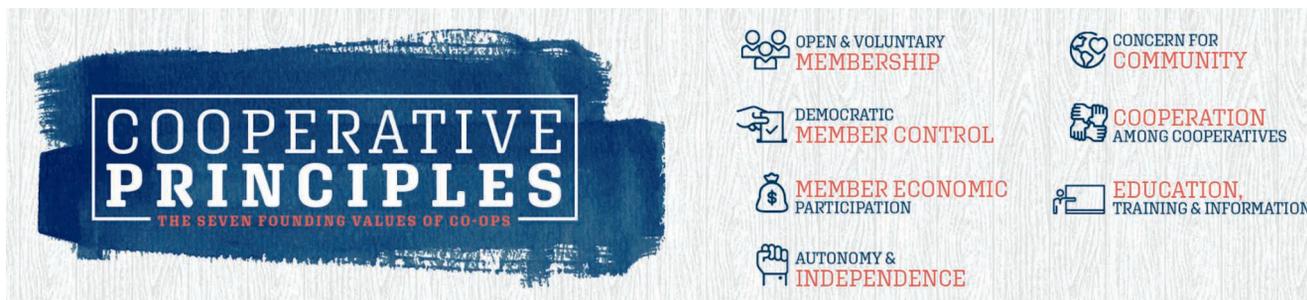
My last day at Clay-Union Electric will be April 15, with my new role beginning April 16. Thank you for the support, trust, and encouragement you've shown me throughout my career. It has been

an honor to serve you, and I look forward to continuing that service in this next chapter.

"Serving this cooperative and its members has truly been a privilege."

— Chris Larson
General Manager
clarson@clayunionelectric.coop

I want to share my sincere thanks to the members, employees, Board of Directors, and partners who have made this journey so meaningful.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS

(USPS 116-800)

Office Hours
Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
31321 SD Hwy. 19, Vermillion, S.D.
605-624-2673

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Nick Buckman, Lead Lineman
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**POWER FAILURE – 24-hour service
In case of Power Failure Call:
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Happy Work Anniversary

Thank you for your dedication to the cooperative and its members!

Beth Bottolfson
Manager of
Finance & Administration
41years



90th Annual Meeting

**April 14th, 2026
Wakonda School**

- Registration & Dinner begins at 5:00 p.m.
- Meeting will start at 6:30 p.m.
- Complete Annual Report and Agenda in the April Edition

**SAVE
the
DATE**

A Legacy of
SERVICE

Ensuring Drone Safety Near Power Lines

As drones continue to gain popularity for recreational and commercial use, their integration into our daily lives should not lessen the consideration of safety – particularly when it comes to flying near power lines. The intersection of drone technology and electrical infrastructure necessitates adherence to safety protocols, regulations, and best practices to protect both pilots and the integrity of electrical systems.

Power lines are essential components of our electrical grid, delivering energy to homes and businesses. However, they can pose serious hazards for drone operators. Collisions with power lines can cause significant equipment damage, leading to costly repairs or replacements. More critically, such incidents can disrupt service for hundreds of members, creating outages that could last for hours or even days.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has established regulations governing drone use, including restrictions on flying in proximity to power lines. According to FAA guidelines, drone pilots must always maintain a visual line of sight with their aircraft and avoid flying over people. When operating near electrical infrastructure, it is crucial to adhere to the regulations pertaining to altitude and no-fly zones.

Drone operators should also be familiar with state and local laws, as some municipalities have designated specific areas as no-fly zones, particularly near critical infrastructure like power facilities. Understanding these regulations is not only a legal requirement but also an essential step in ensuring the safety of all involved.

Best Practices for Safe Operations

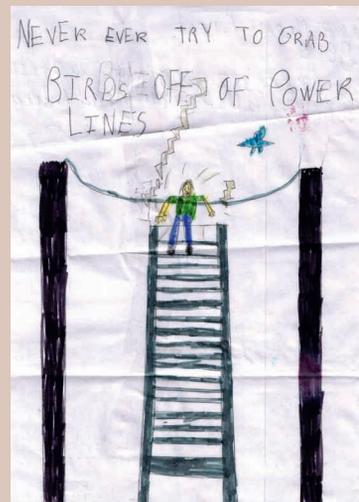
To minimize risks when flying drones near power lines, operators should adopt several best practices:

1. **Pre-Flight Planning:** Before taking off, thoroughly assess the flight area. Identify the location of power lines, potential obstacles, and any relevant no-fly zones. Consulting local maps and aerial photography can aid in understanding the landscape.
2. **Maintain Safe Distances:** When operating near power lines, always keep a safe distance. The FAA recommends a separation of at least 500 feet from energized power lines to avoid potential collisions. Keeping a safe buffer not only protects the drone but also mitigates risks to nearby electrical infrastructure.

3. **Use Technology Wisely:** Many modern drones come equipped with GPS and obstacle avoidance systems that can aid in safe navigation. Utilize these features and ensure that your drone's software is updated to reduce the likelihood of malfunction.
4. **Operating in Controlled Conditions:** Avoid flying drones in poor weather conditions such as high winds, rain, or reduced visibility. Harsh weather not only affects flight stability but can also lead to loss of control over the drone, increasing the risk of accidents.
5. **Emergency Procedures:** In case of a malfunction or loss of control, having an emergency plan in place is vital. Be prepared to communicate with local authorities if a drone becomes entangled in power lines or presents a safety concern.

As the popularity of drones continues to soar, awareness around safety protocols, especially near power lines, has become increasingly critical. By understanding the risks involved, adhering to regulations, and implementing best practices for safe drone operations, pilots can ensure the protection of themselves, others, and vital electrical infrastructure. Responsible drone use fosters innovation while ensuring safety remains paramount in our evolving technological landscape.

"Never ever try to grab birds off of power lines!"



**Naomi Krcil,
Age 8**

Naomi warns readers to never EVER grab birds off of a power line. Great picture, Naomi! Naomi's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, S.D.

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.

Scrumptious SALADS

MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups macaroni (cooked, drained, rinsed and cooled)
2 or more cups of carrots (chopped or shredded)
1 small chopped onion (optional)
1 cup chopped green pepper (optional)

Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise (Hellmans)
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
7 oz. sweetened condensed milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

R. Gregg Fritz
H-D Electric

KARI REDER'S POTATO SALAD

Ingredients:

7-8 lbs. potatoes, Yukon gold or red
1 dozen eggs
1 med. sweet onion
2 cups Mayo
1 tbsp. cream
1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup of sugar or splenda
1 1/2 tbsps. mustard
2 tbsps. celery seed
Celery salt, salt and pepper to taste

Method

Boil potatoes and eggs, peel and dice. Add the chopped onion. Mix together mayo, cream, apple cider vinegar, sugar, mustard, celery seed, celery salt, salt and pepper. Mix all together well and refrigerate.

Kari Reder
Northern Electric

SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

Ingredients:

1 lb. thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces
1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved
2 med. zucchini, peeled & diced
2 med. cucumbers, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1 red pepper, diced
1 - 16 oz. can sliced black olives, drained

Dressing:

1 - 16 oz. bottle Italian dressing
1/4 cup parmesan cheese
1 tbsp. sesame seeds
1 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. celery seed
1/2 tsp. garlic salt

Method

Cook pasta; drain. Drizzle with 1-2 tsps. olive oil. In large bowl, combine pasta, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, peppers and olives.

Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss to coat.

Cover and refrigerate for three hours.

Jane Ham
Cam Wal Electric

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

TAYLOR HOXENG NAMED SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Jackie Williams

jwilliams@clayunionelectric.coop

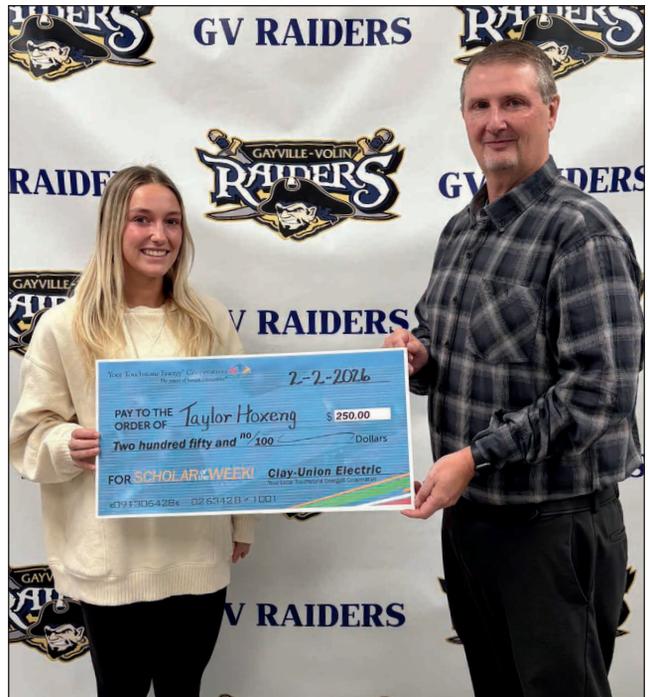
Gayville Volin High School student Taylor Hoxeng will be featured on Dakota News Now during the 6:00 PM newscast on Monday, February 23, and again on the morning newscast between 6:00 and 7:00 AM on Tuesday, February 24.

Hoxeng is recognized as this week's Scholar of the Week, honored for her academic excellence, leadership, and extensive involvement in school and community activities.

Activities and Achievements:

- Rodeo: National Junior High Finals Qualifier (2022); State High School Finals Qualifier (2023–2025); State 4 H Rodeo Qualifier (2016–2025)
- Volleyball: Varsity (7th–12th grade); All Conference (2021–2024); First Team All State (2024); Defensive MVP (2022–2024)
- Basketball: Varsity (7th–12th grade); All Conference (2022–2025); All State Team (2024); MVP (2023–2025)
- Track & Field: Varsity (7th–12th grade); State Qualifier (2021–2025); Track MVP (2023–2025)
- Leadership Roles: GV SADD, Student Council, Mentoring Program, Natural Leaders, Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Hoxeng has chosen Tarleton State University (Texas) to attend in the fall.



She is the daughter of Tyler and Sarah Hoxeng, Volin, members of Clay-Union Electric.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now Television, Clay-Union Electric, and other local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors accomplished high school students. As Scholar of the week Taylor was awarded with a \$250 check, presented by General Manager, Chris Larson, and will be eligible for a chance to win a scholarship to be given away in the spring at the annual Scholar of the Week banquet.

Congratulations Taylor!

Basin Tour - June 8-10, 2026

Registration is now open for members interested in learning more about where your electricity is generated. Basin Electric Power Cooperative is open for tours and we are taking advantage of their offer. This is a FREE opportunity for Clay-Union Electric members to travel with Union County Electric and Bon Homme Yankton Electric members to Beulah, ND by bus with a full schedule planned. Clay-Union will be accepting up to 14 members to attend. Don't wait, apply today.

Name(s) _____

(If registering as a couple include both names)

Address: _____ City: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Registration is due by April 1, 2026. Mail to Clay-Union Electric

PO Box 317, Vermillion, SD 57069

For complete details or to register online visit <https://clayunionelectric.coop/basin-bus-tour>





Jennifer Gross, East River Electric, demonstrates how natural electricity is made using a van de Graaff machine.

CO-OPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Jackie Williams

jwilliams@clayunionelectric.coop

During the first week of January, representatives from East River Electric and Clay-Union Electric visited three area schools to provide hands on instruction in electrical safety. Jennifer Gross of East River Electric and Jackie Williams of Clay-Union Electric met with fifth grade students at Vermillion Elementary School, St. Agnes Catholic School, and Gayville Volin School.

The presentation focused on the importance of understanding and respecting electricity, including the difference between static electricity and man-made electrical power. Students participated in demonstrations and asked questions as they learned how electricity is generated and used safely in everyday life.

One of the most popular activities allowed students to generate their own electricity by pedaling a stationary bicycle. The demonstration illustrated how much effort it takes to power different types of light bulbs—including four LED bulbs totaling 16 watts, four CFL bulbs totaling 48 watts, and four incandescent bulbs requiring 200 watts. While the LED and CFL bulbs were relatively easy to power, students quickly discovered the physical challenge of producing enough energy for the incandescent bulbs.

Additional photos from the classroom visits are available on Clay Union Electric's website at <https://clayunionelectric.coop/co-ops-classroom>

CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC ANNOUNCES 2026 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Clay-Union Electric will award two \$500 academic scholarships to graduating high school seniors pursuing an academic degree or certification at an accredited college, university, junior college, or technical school. An additional \$500 scholarship, donated by the Milo Gilbertson family, will also be awarded.

Scholarship funds will be paid directly to the recipient's educational institution and must be used for the 2026 school year. Funds may be applied toward tuition, books, room, or board.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicant must reside full-time in a home served by Clay-Union Electric.
- Applicant must be a graduating senior from a high school or accredited home extended-studies program within Clay-Union Electric's service counties.
- Applicant must attend the annual meeting with a parent or legal guardian who is a Clay-Union Electric member.

Scholarships will be awarded during the annual meeting on April 14, 2026, at the Wakonda School. If a selected student does not meet enrollment requirements, the award will be forfeited.

Students may apply when registering at the front desk on the night of the annual meeting. Registration closes at 6:30 p.m., and applicants must be present to win.



Intense wind left the crossarm of a broken three-phase pole hanging after a holiday storm.
Photos submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

GETTING THE LIGHTS BACK ON

Black Hills Electric Cooperative Works Tirelessly Following Holiday Storm

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

In the early morning hours of Dec. 18, powerful winds swept across western South Dakota, leaving much of the Black Hills without electricity. The outage included the home of Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

Through wild winds, Brisk set out for his office at the cooperative at 3 a.m., where he discovered that the windstorm was unlike anything he had seen in his 36 years with the cooperative.

“We get wind in the Hills,” Brisk said. “But nothing like that. In all of the time that I’ve been at the cooperative, I’ve never seen wind that strong.”

Wind gusts were later estimated at more than 100 mph, tearing through the Black

Hills with unprecedented force.

When Brisk arrived, the scope of the damage became clear. Nearly the entire system was down, and more than 11,000 of the co-op’s approximately 11,500 meters were without power. By daybreak, more than 96% of Black Hills Electric Cooperative’s system was dark, the largest outage event in the cooperative’s history.

Although an influx of outage calls from members came in around midnight, Brisk made an early and critical decision; crews would not be sent out while the storm was still raging.

“We began receiving calls around midnight, but I did not have our crews go out, just for the fact that it was just too dangerous,” Brisk said. “Trees were breaking off, conditions were hazardous, and I didn’t want to put our crews in any

dangerous situations.”

Instead, crews waited for daylight, when conditions allowed for safe assessment – the first step of getting the lights back on.

Assessment almost always begins with reporting from the community. Due to an overwhelming call volume during storm events, local reports of outages are forwarded to Basin Electric Power Cooperative’s Security and Response Services. These services relay important updates to electric cooperatives. Dispatchers communicate with linemen via push-to-talk radios and cell phones, tracking linemen from the time they leave the shop until the outage has been restored.

In addition to local reports, linemen also conduct their own assessments. That morning, linemen reported countless uprooted and snapped trees, downed poles and even wires lay broken across forest floors and roadways. In some areas, trees fell into other trees, creating dangerous conditions for anyone working below.

“I believe this was one of the worst storms in our cooperative’s history, including winter storm Atlas,” said Brisk.

As the assessment was underway, line

crews worked to bring downed substations back online first, then main three-phase feeders, followed by smaller distribution lines that bring power directly to homes and businesses. That order helps restore electricity to the greatest number of members as quickly as possible.

In the Black Hills, terrain adds another layer of complexity. Many lines run through dense forest, steep canyons and areas far from maintained roads.

“This isn’t square-mile territory,” Brisk said. “You might have to drive five or six miles just to get around a canyon.”

By midday Dec. 18, it was decided the damage was too widespread for Black Hills Electric to tackle alone. Brisk reached out to Mark Patterson, South Dakota Rural Electric Association’s manager of loss control, to request mutual aid from neighboring cooperatives – reinforcing a long-standing cooperative tradition built on neighbors helping neighbors.

Within hours, assistance began mobilizing. Crews, trucks and equipment arrived from across western South Dakota. Six electric cooperatives and a contractor ultimately sent help, bringing 55 additional linemen to the Black Hills. Those crews came from Butte Electric Cooperative, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative, Lacreek Electric Association, West Central Electric Cooperative, West River Electric Association, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Kainz Power Lines, a local contractor based out of Custer.

“I had each operations manager of the responding cooperatives call me and ask what we needed,” Brisk said. “We asked for bucket trucks, digger trucks, chainsaws, attachments for skid steers, and extra line crews, and they sent everything we asked for.”

Days began early and ended late with crews often working 12 to 16-hour shifts. Brisk emphasized safety repeatedly to the crews as they worked among unstable trees, high winds and rugged terrain.

Behind the scenes, the restoration effort extended beyond the field. Office staff coordinated logistics and prepared meals. Lunches were packed daily for crews heading out before dawn. Supplies

were tracked, equipment was staged and communication updates were shared with members.

“It wasn’t just the line crews,” Brisk said. “Everybody stepped up.”

As crews continued working and Christmas approached, it appeared unlikely that power would be fully restored in time for the holiday. The visiting crews made it clear they were willing to stay through the holiday.

“All the outside crews said they weren’t leaving,” Brisk said. “They stayed to help us finish.”

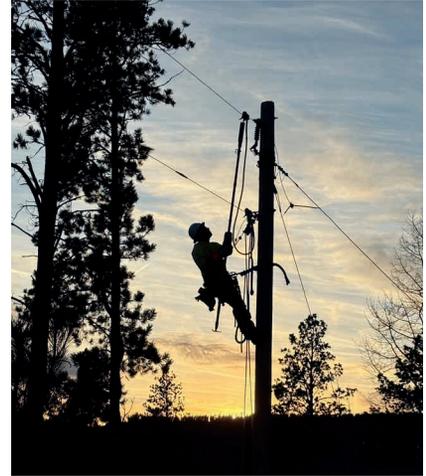
By Christmas Eve, most members had power for the holiday and visiting crews were able to return home. Even still, Black Hills Electric crews continued limited work through the holiday, work that continues today.

“To be truthful, we are still cutting trees, setting poles and repairing lines from this storm,” said Brisk.

The storm was later designated a FEMA-eligible event, requiring detailed tracking of labor, equipment and materials.

Looking back, Brisk said the restoration efforts relied heavily on cooperation and dedication among crews from the assisting cooperatives.

“It’s good to know you’ve got great neighbors,” he said. “When you need help, they come.”



An assisting lineman from West River Electric Cooperative installs a ground on the line to be further worked on.



Damage from the storm not only affected poles, but also uprooted trees.



Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative, gives a morning briefing, updating the cooperative and assisting crews with storm recovery assignments.



Important Co-op Legislative Issues

Photo by Freepik.com

Photo by Alan Guler

Chris Larson

clarson@clayunionelectric.coop

Wildfire Mitigation Bill Advances in Pierre

Wildfire risk is a growing concern in rural South Dakota, particularly in open rangeland and agricultural areas served by electric cooperatives. During the 2026 legislative session, Senate Bill 36 advanced through the South Dakota Senate and is now under consideration by the House.

The bill would allow electric utilities to develop formal wildfire mitigation plans focused on prevention, maintenance, and coordination with local fire agencies. For rural electric cooperatives, these plans would be reviewed and approved by each cooperative's local board of directors, preserving local control and community based decision making.

If approved by the Legislature, the bill would establish a clearer legal framework following a wildfire. The bill clarifies that utilities that adopt and substantially comply with an approved mitigation plan are not subject to automatic "strict liability" for wildfire damages. Instead, claims would need to show a failure to follow the plan and that the failure

directly caused the damage.

Because electric cooperatives are member owned and not for profit, major wildfire related costs ultimately impact the members they serve. Supporters say the legislation encourages proactive planning while helping protect rural systems from catastrophic financial exposure.

As the bill continues through the legislative process, cooperatives remain focused on safe, reliable, and affordable electric service while working to reduce wildfire risk across the communities they serve.

Eminent Domain Proposal Raises Long Term Planning Questions

During the 2026 legislative session, South Dakota lawmakers are considering House Joint Resolution 5001, a proposal that would ask voters to amend the South Dakota Constitution regarding the use of eminent domain.

The resolution would prohibit the transfer of private property to a non governmental entity for the primary purpose of economic development or increased tax revenue. It also would

require a declaration of necessity before eminent domain could be exercised. Because HJR 5001 proposes a constitutional amendment, it would only take effect if approved by voters at a future general election.

While the proposal does not specifically reference electric cooperatives, it raises important considerations for infrastructure planning. Electric cooperatives rely on access to land and rights of way to build and maintain electric lines, substations, and other facilities needed to provide reliable service.

Electric infrastructure projects are designed to serve the public and improve system reliability, but they can also support agricultural, commercial, and industrial growth. If adopted, courts may be asked to determine how projects that provide essential electric service—but also enable economic activity—fit within revised definitions of "public use" and "economic development."

Because constitutional language is interpreted through court rulings over time, legal review would likely shape how these terms apply to future utility projects. Cooperatives will continue monitoring the proposal as it moves through the legislative process.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.



District #3 Petition Received

Glen Gilbertson was nominated by petition as a candidate for Director representing District #3 of Clay-Union Electric Corporation. A lifelong Clay County resident, Glen has been a Clay-Union Electric member since 1988.



Glen Gilbertson

He is self employed in the rental property business in Vermillion and previously served 12 years on the Clay Rural Water board, including roles as vice president, state association director, and president of the association's Rural Water Center.

Glen currently serves as a Clay County Commissioner and as Treasurer for Norway Township. He and his wife, Michelle, have two children and two grandchildren. He looks forward to serving the members of Clay-Union Electric.

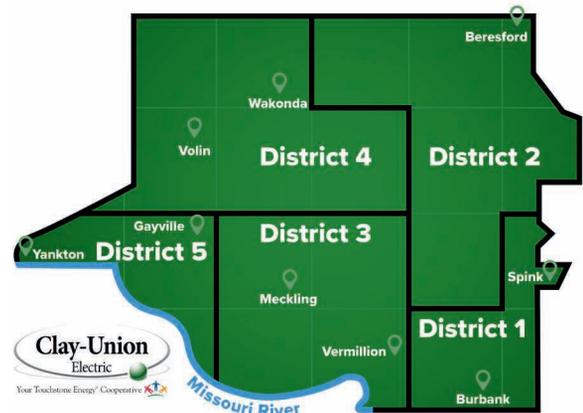
Director Nomination Petitions for District #3 were accepted until February 13, 2026, and Glen's petition was the only one received by the publication deadline.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

The Cooperative shall use reasonable diligence to provide a constant and uninterrupted supply of electric power and energy.

If the supply of electric power and energy shall fail, be interrupted, or become defective through an act of God, government authority, action of the elements, public enemy, accident, strikes, labor trouble, required maintenance work, premature obsolescence of equipment or any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the Cooperative, the Cooperative shall not be liable therefore or for damages caused thereby.

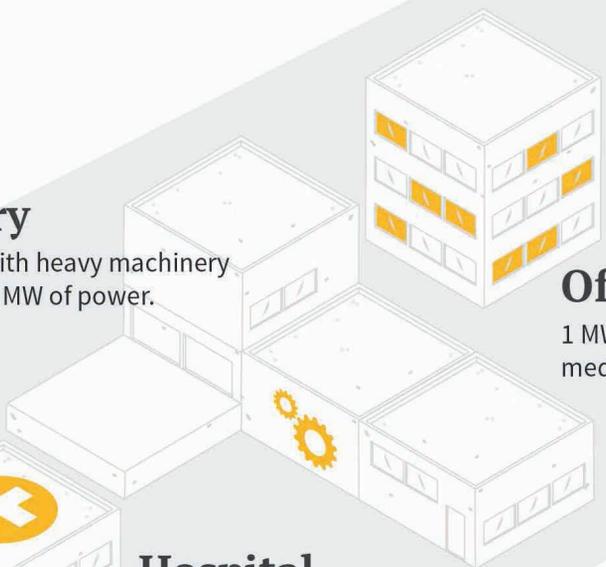
DISTRICT 3: The territory served by Clay-Union Electric beginning at a point on the Northeast corner of the territory at the junction of 464th Ave. and 309th St.; thence south on 464th Ave. to where a projection of 464th Ave. meets the Missouri River; thence west along the South Dakota boundary of the Missouri River to a point that would be a projection south of 452nd Ave.; thence north on 452nd Ave. to the intersection with 309th St.; thence east on 309th St. to the intersection with 464th Ave., the point of beginning.



What Can You Do With 1 Megawatt?

Factory

Facilities with heavy machinery can draw 1 MW of power.



Big Box Stores

1 MW will power a typical large retail store.



Office Building

1 MW can power several medium-sized office buildings.

Hospital

1 MW will power a small hospital.



Power Plant

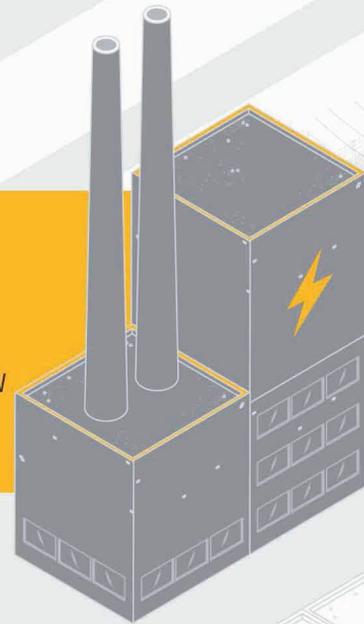
Typical outputs:

Coal: 500 MW to 1 GW

Gas: 50 MW to 1 GW

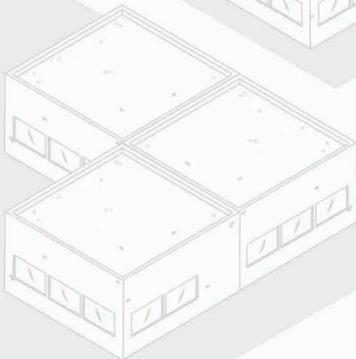
Nuclear: 500 MW to 1.5 GW

1 MW is 1 million watts of power.



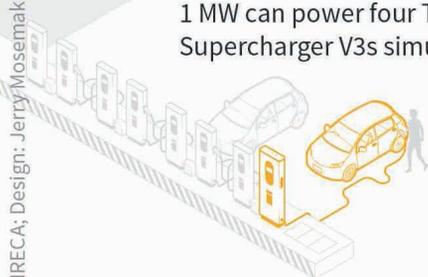
School

0.5 MW will power a medium-size public school.



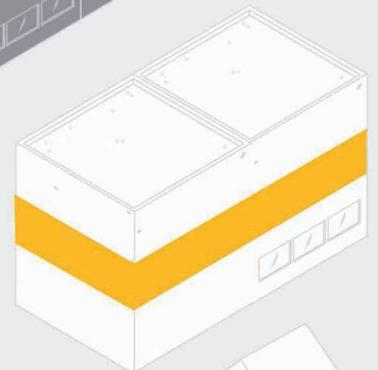
EV Charging

1 MW can power four Tesla Supercharger V3s simultaneously.



Data Center

1 MW will power one small data center.

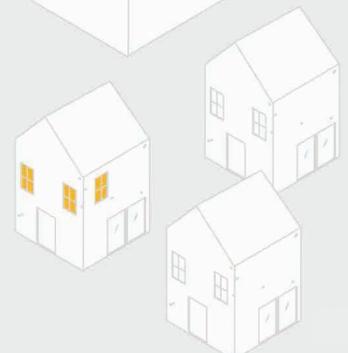


Other facilities that can draw up to 1 MW of power:

- High-speed rail
- Large farms
- Wastewater treatment
- Stadiums

Residential

1 MW can power 750 to 1,000 homes.



WHAT IS A MEGAWATT?

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

If you're a regular Cooperative Connections reader, you've probably seen the term "megawatt" countless times. From articles about new power generation facilities, energy-saving tips, major infrastructure projects or energy policy, megawatts come up again and again. But what does a megawatt actually mean?

Watts, Kilowatts, Megawatts & More

A megawatt is a unit of power that measures the speed at which energy is generated or used at a given time. A megawatt is 1,000 kilowatts (KW), or 1 million watts.

You may recognize watts from the labels on everyday household items like light bulbs and phone chargers. These numbers indicate the amount of power the device draws while operating.

Here are the wattages for some common household items:

- LED Light bulb – 5-20 Watts
- Refrigerator – 350-800 Watts
- Desktop PC – 100-800 Watts
- LED Television: 30-300 Watts
- Microwave – 700-1,200 Watts
- Hair Dryer – 1,500-2,000 Watts
- Clothes Dryer – 1,800-5,000 Watts

At East River Electric Power Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative that sells power to member co-ops in Eastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota, Jennifer Gross uses a modified bicycle to help put power into perspective.

The bike is stationary – the pedals power a small generator wired to several different kinds of light bulbs. Gross, who is East River's education and outreach coordinator, says the "pedal power bike" demonstrates energy use in a tangible way and highlights the difference of energy-efficient products.

"It's actually quite difficult for the person pedaling to generate electricity consistently for more than a few minutes," Gross said.



Jennifer Gross demonstrates energy generation and consumption. Submitted Photo

"When they're pedaling to power the inefficient, old-school incandescent light bulbs, they can pedal for about one minute and not even keep it at 200 watts the whole time."

The electric grid experiences the most strain during peak demand times – the hours before and after work and school when most people are home doing laundry, watching TV etc.

In communities with hundreds to thousands of homes and businesses, electricity demand grows large enough to be measured in megawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 KW.

Your electric co-op's electricity is generated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which was formed in the 1960s by electric co-ops in the upper Midwest to generate electricity for co-ops. Serving over 3 million consumers across nine states, Basin generates power from its owned and leased assets, which include coal, natural gas, solar and wind. Basin's generation capability is so massive that it's measured in gigawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 MW.

Basin reports a maximum generating capacity of about 8,427 MW – or 8.427 GW. That figure reflects every available generation resource running at full output, including the oil-fueled peaking units used during times of high demand, along with purchases from the Western Area Power Administration and the Southwest Power Pool energy market.

On an even larger scale, the total installed generation capacity in the U.S. reaches the terawatt level, totalling about 1.3 TW, which is equal to 1,300 GW, 1.3 million MW or 1.3 billion KW – enough to simultaneously run about 1 billion hair dryers!

$$\begin{aligned}
 &1 \text{ Million Watts} \\
 &= \\
 &1,000 \text{ Kilowatts} \\
 &= \\
 &1 \text{ Megawatt} \\
 &= \\
 &1/1,000 \text{ Gigawatt}
 \end{aligned}$$

Your Co-op's Megawatts

As a co-op member, you're a part-owner of Basin Electric's generation resources. Here's a look at several of those facilities.



Antelope Valley Station
Beulah, N.D. • 1984
900 MW • Coal



Bison Gen. Station
Epping, N.D. • 2030
1,490 MW • Nat. Gas



Pioneer Gen. Station
Williston, N.D. • 2013
822 MW • Nat. Gas



Crow Lake Wind
White Lake, S.D. • 2011
172 MW • Wind



Wild Springs Solar
New Underwood, S.D.
2024 • 114 MW • Solar

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

DECEMBER 19, 2025 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on December 19, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. by board President Tom Larsen. The meeting was held in the conference room at the Clay-Union Electric Headquarters.

In attendance were Tom Larsen, Chris Kinney, Mike Slattery and Sara Schulte. The board seat for District #5 is vacant. Attending staff members included Chris Larson, Beth Bottolfson, Alan Gauer and Jackie Williams.

Agenda (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the agenda.

Visitors to Be Heard – None

Approval of Minutes from the November Board Meeting (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the November board minutes held on 11/24/25.

Approval of Minutes from the November Executive Session (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the November executive session held on 11/24/25.

Check List & Electronic Funds Transfer – The board reviewed the EFT/ACH payments, and the monthly check list as presented.

New Members and Refunds (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve new members, refunds and credit deposits as presented.

Early Retirement of Capital Credits (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve Early Retirement of Capital Credits as presented.

Contracts (ACTION ITEM) – A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Electric Service Contract as presented.

Policy Review (ACTION ITEM) The following policy updates were presented to the board:

Policy # 815 – Co-Generation and Small Power Production

Policy # 320 – Distributed Energy Resource Policy

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the policies as presented.

Work Order and Special Equipment Summary – None

Budget – Manager Larson, Finance and Administration Manager Bottolfson, and Operations Manager Gauer presented the board with the following:

1. Manager Work Plan 2026
2. Administration Work Plan 2026
3. Operations Work Plan 2026
4. Capital Budget 2026
5. Operating Budget 2026

Capital Budget (Action) - A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the Capital Budget as presented.

Operating Budget (Action) - A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Operating Budget for 2026 with an addition of funds for replacing Manager Larson after his retirement.

Executive Session – The board went into Executive Session at 9:53 a.m., Executive Session was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. There was no action taken.

Management Reports:

A. Manager's Report - Manager Larson provided reports on the monthly activities:

January Board Meeting – The date of January 22, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.

East River REED/MAC - The REED Board met on December 1st for the monthly meeting via the Teams app. The MAC met on December 2nd in Madison.

Director Seat – Manager Larson gave an update for a potential board member for District #5.

Annual Meeting Date - The annual meeting will be on April 14th with a backup date of April 21st in Wakonda at the school.

Legislative Forum - The legislative forum was November 24th in Yankton at the Best Western Kelly Inn.

Rate Notices - Letters went out in December's billing for November usage to notify members of the upcoming rate increase.

NRECA Annual Meeting (Action) - The NRECA Annual meeting is March 9th to 11th in Nashville, TN. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve attendance and to elect Sara Schulte as the delegate.

SDREA Annual Meeting - Their Annual Meeting will be held January 15th and 16th in Pierre.

Christmas Party – The Clay-Union Electric Christmas Party will be January 9th at the Eagles starting at 6:00 pm.

Distributed Generation – Communications Specialist Williams gave notice to the 4 DER services that the PURPA rate (the rate we buy power from them at) will be increasing starting January 1st. It will go from .0161/kwh to .0193/kwh.

NRTC Delegate (Action) – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to elect Chris Larson as the delegate.

Dakota Farm Show - The Dakota Farm Show will be on January 6th, 7th and 8th at the Dakota Dome.

Energize Forum (Action) - The 2026 East River Electric Energize Forum will be held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on February 4th and 5th. A motion was made, seconded, and to approve attendance.

Touchstone Scholar of the Week - Lydian Mews, a student from Irene/Wakonda, was selected as the Touchstone Scholar of the week.

Mitchell Tech Foundation - The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives were recognized as the "Industry of the Year" at a recent banquet for our part in making the underground lab building a reality.

B. Administrative Report – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Billing Activities
- November Financials

• 2025 Bad Debt Write-Off Report (ACTION ITEM) - After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and

carried to approve the write-offs as presented and send them to collections. *All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.*

- C. Operations Report** – Operations Manager Gauer reviewed the following reports with the board:
- Monthly department work summary
 - New Services
 - Retired Services
 - November Outage Report
 - Damage to Clay-Union Electric
 - Service Upgrades
 - Wiring

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.

Financial Report – Manager of Finance and Administration Bottolfson reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Actual to Budget
- Balance Sheet
- Interest Income
- kWh Sales Report
- Large Power
- Line Loss
- Margin Stabilization History
- Operating Statement
- Power Bill
- Summary of Purchased Power
- Wiring Income & Expense

All reports were posted to the website earlier for board review.

Legal Report – None

Strategic Planning – None

Safety Meeting Minutes – The December Safety Meeting Minutes were posted to the website for the board to review and was discussed during the meeting.

Cyber Security – The November Cyber Security report from East River IT were posted to the website for the board to review and was discussed during the meeting.

Video and/or Meeting Reports –

- East River Report
- East River Financials
- Basin Reports
- SDREA Reports

Calendar – The board reviewed the January 2026 calendar.

Adjournment – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Thomas Larsen, President

Sara Schulte, Secretary

Outage Reports

Cause	Date	Time	Township	Members
Locating Contractor	12/5	11:00 a.m.	Norway	3
URD Fault	12/15	7:00 a.m.	Spirit Mound	6
Wind	12/19	2:00 p.m.	Marindahl/Volin	35
Trees	12/31	7:30 a.m.	Prairie Center	1

Office Hours and Due Dates

Our office hours are Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please remember your **PAYMENT DUE DATE is the 20th of EACH MONTH**. Your payment must ARRIVE in our office on the 20th to avoid any penalties. Please allow mailing time as we go by the received date, **NOT the postmark**. If the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due the following business day. If payment is still not received by the first of the following month, a \$30 collection fee will be applied and a disconnect notice will be mailed. If disconnection for nonpayment occurs, all past and current energy charges, a reconnect fee and sufficient credit deposit will be required before the meter can be reinstalled.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, WE ALSO ACCEPT THESE PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Online Billing:

www.clayunionelectric.coop
Set up your user profile to manage your account, pay your bill and receive billing notification emails.



Bank Draft: Have your payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on the due date.

Recurring Credit/Debit Card: Have your payment automatically deducted from your card on the due date.

By Phone: Call in your credit/debit card payment.

In Office: We accept cash, check, money order or credit/debit card.

By Mail: Send check or money order with your payment slip.

Drop Box: Located on the right side of our main entrance at 31321 SD Hwy 19.

There are no additional fees to use any of the above payment methods.

Collection Fee \$30

Trip Charge-Reconnect Fee

During Business Hours..... \$75

Dishonored Payment \$40

Delinquent Accounts (gross rate)

10 percent on the first \$200 plus 2 percent on the balance.



MARCH 7
Ag Day
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

Washington Pavilion Photo

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.

MARCH 5
SD Jazz Festival
 7:30 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

MARCH 7
Free Christian Men's Event
 The Barn at Aspen Acres
 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
 Spearfish, SD
 Register: RiseUpMen.com

MARCH 7
Southern Hills Holistic Fair
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Mueller Civic Center
 Hot Springs, SD

MARCH 7-8
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-6004

MARCH 14-15
Philip Area Annual Rod & Gun Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 American Legion Hall
 Philip, SD
 605-859-2135

MARCH 14
St. Uhro Finnish Festival
 11 a.m. Main Street Parade
 12 p.m. Community Ctr. Lunch
 Lake Norden, SD
 605-881-1758

MARCH 14
SNOLF (Snow Golf) Tournament
 Webster, SD
 Contact: Buster's Resort
 605-345-2787

MARCH 20-21
Badlands Quilters Getaway
 Fri. 5:30 p.m. Start
 Sat. 8 a.m. Start
 Wall Community Center
 Wall, SD
 605-279-2807

MARCH 20-22, 27-29
Mighty Corson Art Players
 March 20-21, 27-28: 7:30 p.m.
 March 22, 29: 2:30 p.m.
 Corson Playhouse
 Corson, SD
 www.mightycorson.com

MARCH 27
East Dakota Chapter NWF 33rd Annual Banquet
 Ramkota Expo Hall
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

MARCH 28
Coteau Prairie Masters Gardeners Ready, Set, Grow
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Codington Cty. Extension Cplx.
 Watertown, SD

MARCH 28
VFW Teener Baseball Benefit Vegas Night
 Social: 4:30 p.m., Meal: 6 p.m.
 Tyndall, SD

APRIL 3
Bachelors of Broadway: Gentlemen of the Theatre
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 5
Easter Sunrise Service
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore
 605-391-9156

APRIL 9
McCrossan Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest
 Jimmy Buffett Tribute
 Polynesian Paradise Dancers
 Sioux Falls, SD
 www.mccrossan.org

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 14
Clay-Union Electric 90th Annual Meeting
 Meal 5-6 p.m.
 Meeting 6:30 p.m.
 Wakonda School
 Wakonda, SD

APRIL 18
Tri-Valley Chorus 75th Annual Show
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD
 605-201-9398

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.