

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Let's Go Fly a Kite

**Brookings Kite Festival  
Creates Excitement**

Pages 8-9

**Cooperative Metering**

Pages 12-13

*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*

# 10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration



**Chris Larson,**  
**General Manager**

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then suddenly, they snap their fingers, and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen.

As the general manager, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights

back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes.

**WE NEED YOU** - When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out.

**OUR EMPLOYEES MIGHT BE AFFECTED TOO** - Because Clay-Union Electric is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be too.

### **IT'S A TEAM EFFORT**

Every one of our employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, engineers and field staff are surveying damage, our vegetation management team is clearing hazards, dispatchers are organizing crews, and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

**WE ASSESS THE SITUATION FIRST** - Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

**RESTORATION IS NORMALLY PRIORITIZED** - We prioritize the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time. Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest of number of people first.

**OUR EMPLOYEES FACE MANY DANGERS** - Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)

**FLICKERING LIGHTS ARE A GOOD THING** - Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.

**YOU NEED A BACKUP PLAN** - We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan—remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you're unsure what to do, call us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.

**OUR EMPLOYEES HAVE TO PLAN, AND EAT** - If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews

work long hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals to re-energize and keep their strength.

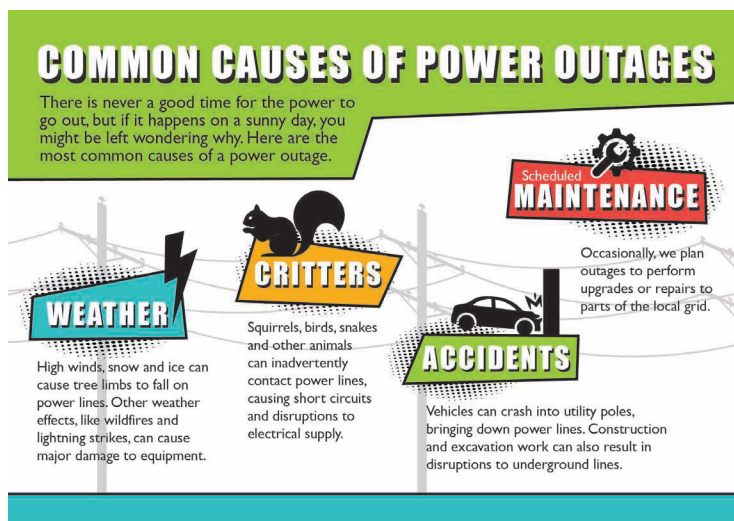
### **SOMETIMES IT'S A WAITING GAME**

Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it by calling 605-624-2673.

**Thank you again, for allowing us to provide your electric service needs.**

**Chris Larson, General Manager**  
[clarson@clayunionelectric.coop](mailto:clarson@clayunionelectric.coop)





## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### CLAY-UNION ELECTRIC SPARKS

(USPS 116-800)

Office Hours  
Monday through Friday  
7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
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Fax (605) 624-5526.

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## Outage Reports

Date	Time	Township	Members	Cause
5/1	3:00 a.m.	Volin	5	Unknown
5/2	3:00 p.m.	Norway	4	Animal
5/21	7:30 a.m.	Fairway	5	Tree/Storm
5/24	4:00 a.m.	Glenwood	6	Lightning

## YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

	April 2024	Year To Date
Number of Consumers.....	3,539	3,539 Avg.
Total Revenue .....	\$636,660	\$2,958,770
Total Cost of Service.....	\$796,336	\$3,426,909
Operating Margins .....	\$(159,676)	\$(458,139)
Other Margins .....	\$10,602	\$56,942
Total Net Margins.....	\$(149,074)	\$(411,197)
kWh Purchased.....	6,617,267	31,551,364
Cost of Power .....	\$394,331	\$1,850,896
kWh Sales.....	6,242,465	30,054,641
Residential Average Usage .....	1,028	1,438
Residential Average Monthly Bill.....	\$134	\$164



In observance of the holiday our office will be closed Thursday, July 4th and July 5th. Our 24/7 on call service will assisting with any emergency calls at 605-624-2673 or 1-800-696-2832.

*We hope you have a fun and safe holiday weekend.*

# Fireworks Safety

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals, and not to use any fireworks at home. They may be legal but they are not safe.

Every year, thousands of people are injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents, with many of the injuries to children and young adults. While the majority of these incidents are due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, home-made or other illegal fireworks or explosives, less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers can also cause significant injury.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 19,000 fires each year.

### Fireworks Safety Tips: If You Choose to Use Legal Fireworks

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the fireworks show.

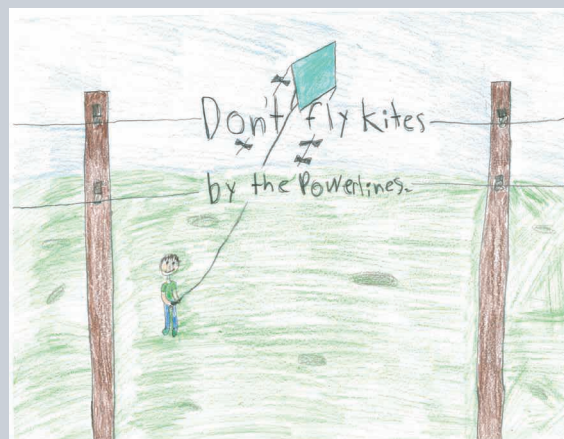
### Sparklers Are Dangerous

Every year, young children can be found along parade routes and at festivals with sparklers in hand, but sparklers are a lot more dangerous than most people think.

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the National Fire Protection Association, sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries. For children under five years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries.

Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### "Let's Go Fly a Kite Up to the Highest Heights."

#### Eldon Femrite, Age 12

Eldon Femrite warns readers to not fly kites by power lines this summer. Eldon's parents are Jody and Rosemary Femrite, members of Codington-Clark Electric.

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.



# DELICIOUS Desserts

## NO CHURN ICE CREAM

### Ingredients:

2 cups heavy cream  
14 oz. sweetened condensed milk  
Other mix-ins as desired

### Method

In a mixing bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form.

Mix in sweetened condensed milk and any flavors/mix-ins you like (strawberries, Oreos, lemon, vanilla extract, etc.).

Pour into loaf pan and freeze until solid (2+ hours).

Kayla Beaner  
Centerville, S.D.

## CINNAMON PECAN PIE

### Ingredients:

1 refrigerated pie crust, (from 14.1-oz. pkg.)  
3 eggs, lightly beaten  
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
1 cup light corn syrup  
2 tbsps. butter, melted  
1 tbsp. cinnamon extract  
1 1/2 cups pecan pieces

### Method

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare pie crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch pie plate.

Mix eggs, sugar, corn syrup, butter and cinnamon flavor in large bowl until well blended. Stir in pecans.

Pour into crust. Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until knife inserted halfway between center and edge comes out clean. Cool completely on wire rack.

McCormick.com

## RHUBARB PIE

### Ingredients:

#### Crust

1-2 cups flour  
1/2 stick butter or margarine  
1/4 cup water

#### Pie

3 tbsps. butter or margarine  
1 cup sugar  
3 eggs, separated  
2 tbsps. flour  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 1/2 cups cut rhubarb  
Smucker's caramel sundae syrup

### Method

**Crust:** Add ingredients and knead to complete pie crust. Amounts will vary due to humidity. Knead dough into pie pan and poke holes into the bottom as needed. You may make creative edges as you wish, however it is not necessary.

**Pie:** Soften butter or margarine and stir together with the sugar, egg yolks, flour, and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff. Add rhubarb and fold in the egg whites. Add the filling to the 8-inch, unbaked pie crust. You may add a drizzle of Smucker's sundae syrup for additional flavoring before baking. Bake in oven set at 400 until golden brown. You may also add more caramel syrup to pie after baking for ultimate effect.

Lisa Kummer Soukup  
Tea, S.D.

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Signs Your HVAC is in Trouble



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

**Q:** How do I know if my HVAC system is malfunctioning?

**A:** Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is one of the most important and expensive systems in your home. Detecting issues early can help you plan for repairs or equipment replacement.

Equipment functionality issues can affect your electricity use, which may result in higher energy bills. The age of your equipment can be a major factor in function. The lifespan of a heating and cooling system ranges from 15 to 20 years.

Proper maintenance and lower use can increase the life of the equipment. To find out the age of your system, look for the manufactured date printed on the unit's nameplate. If you can't find it, search online using the model number or call the manufacturer.

Being thrifty by nature, I typically subscribe to the notion of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That said, I also believe in being prepared for the inevitable. If your system is approaching or past the 20-year mark, start saving for a new system and get replacement estimates.

There are a few warning signs to watch out for if your heating and cooling system needs to be repaired or replaced:

- Air conditioning is not as cool as usual. If the air from your air conditioner is warm or not as cool as it usually feels, the equipment has an issue. It could be a problem with the compressor or a refrigerant leak. Contact a professional to get the issue checked. Many refrigerants, especially the ones used in older systems, are harmful to the environment. Fix leaks before adding more refrigerant. Special certifications are required for handling refrigerants, so hire a professional to ensure the work is done properly.
- Low airflow. If you aren't getting good airflow, it could be an easy fix, such as filter replacement or opening closed dampers. If you've made these fixes and airflow is not at normal levels, contact

a professional. There could be a bigger problem with a motor, fan or something else.

- Bad odors. Heating and cooling systems sometimes smell when you first start them up for the season. Those smells should be minor and dissipate quickly. Any serious smells – such as burning metal, melting plastic or noxious odors – are a sign that your system is in trouble. If you smell those odors, turn your system off immediately and contact a professional.
- Strange noises. There is typically noise associated with the fans and motors in heating and cooling systems. Take note of any excessive or new noises. If your system is making any clunking, clanging or whistling noises, turn it off and check the filter. If that doesn't solve it, reach out to a pro.
- Running frequently. Your system needs to run more to keep up on extreme weather days, but there might be an issue if it runs too often. Short cycling is when a system cycles on and off before completing the heating or cooling process. Contact a professional to diagnose this issue.

Several factors come into play when deciding to fix existing equipment or invest in new equipment. Consider the severity of the issue, repair costs, the likelihood of additional repairs, equipment lifespan and your budget.

The efficiency of your existing system is also a consideration. Heating and cooling technology improvements have come a long way in the last 20 years. Lower operation costs can offset the cost of a new system over time.

Consider your options before you are in desperate need. I recommend getting estimates from at least three contractors. Ask the contractor, "If this was your home, what type of system would you install and why?" The best solution for your home might be a different type of equipment.



# From East River to Missouri River

## Tom Boyko's 2,400-Mile Canoe Journey

Frank Turner

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What's a former CEO of East River Power Cooperative to do after they retire? For Tom Boyko, retirement after 37 years in the electric industry and serving nine years as East River's chief executive officer meant an opportunity to embark on a well-earned canoe odyssey from the headwaters of the Missouri River in Three Forks, Mont., to St. Louis, Mo., with his son, Jacob Boyko, who accompanied his father for a portion of the journey.

According to Boyko, the 2,400-mile trip had been brewing in his mind for a long time, so when he retired at the end of August 2023, he wasted no time planning and executing his adventure, jumping from his cozy office chair to his canoe in just six months.

"I grew up on the Missouri in Stanton, N.D., so I've been wanting to do this trip forever," said Boyko. "It's just something I've always wanted to do."

Boyko continued, "At first, my family didn't think I would follow through. But through the winter, I built a tank so I could sit and practice paddling, day after day. Then they realized I was going to do it. My wife and daughter actually drove Jacob and I out to Montana. They weren't sure I was going to make it all the way, and they thought we might call it quits, but we didn't."

Having read the journals of Lewis and Clark, Boyko wanted to follow in the pioneering duo's footsteps along the Missouri River. However, instead of relying on the historic travelers' accommodations, Boyko took a more modern approach to his journey with modern provisions, including a canoe packed to the brim with packets of chicken and tuna, boxes of mac and cheese, a valuable cache of instant coffee, a tent, two propane stoves, and many other supplies.

"I got ahold of David Miller's book, *The Complete Paddler*, and he really went through, step-by-step, what he experienced when he went down the Missouri River," said Boyko. "He logged the locations of the campgrounds and included a lot of great information, so it was a great book to have with."

Armed with the knowledge to navigate hordes of flies and mosquitos, unpredictable summer storms, and the channels of the Missouri River, Boyko launched his expedition on May 16 with his son, who had just graduated college with a degree in Journalism from South Dakota State University. Jacob had also just won a Pulitzer fellowship for a writing project about the Matanza Riachuelo River in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a result, Jacob left the Missouri River expedition in Williston, N.D., to explore his own river-centric journey in Argentina. The rest of the trip, Tom tackled solo.

"When you get to be a dad like me, you just so appreciate the



Tom Boyko stands with his son, Jacob, at Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina, a campground in McKenzie County, N.D. Photo submitted by Tom Boyko.

opportunity to do something like this with your son," said Boyko. "He enjoyed it, and he plans to finish the trip at some point in his life. And the cool thing is that every guy my age I met on the trip said the same thing, 'I wish I could have done that with my son.' I was very fortunate, and I very much appreciate that he came with me."

Although Boyko tackled most of the trip by himself, he did have help along the way. Boyko received help from family, friends, and co-workers from the co-op industry when portaging his canoe over the many dams along the way.

"My brother portaged me around Garrison Dam," said Boyko. "Jordan Lamb, the general manager of Oahe Electric, helped me portage Oahe Dam. Russell Gall with Charles-Mix Electric and Ervin Fink, a former director of East River, helped me through Fort Randall. Stephanie Horst with Bon Homme Yankton paddled Lewis and Clark Lake with me. Even my family came down and to help me portage Gavin's Point. It was great to see friends and family along the way."

Even bolstered by the help of friends, the trip wasn't always smooth sailing. Over the course of his 98-day journey, Boyko traversed strong winds and high waves on Lake Oahe, which forced him to ground his canoe and camp along the beaches of the reservoir. He drifted through oppressive 114-degree heat in Missouri and navigated past large barge traffic. There was even a rowdy raccoon who helped himself to some mac and cheese – all part of the adventure.

"I started packing the canoe when it became evident that a raccoon had been in my canoe during the night and ate through one of my food dry bags leaving mac and cheese noodles and orange cheese throughout the boat," wrote Boyko in his travel journal. "What a mess."

But it wasn't all bad. Boyko said he met some great people and found some real gems along the way.

"I worked for the Western Area Power Association for many years, so I was very familiar with the river and the dams... but when you are actually canoeing it, you get a different appreciation," said Boyko. "It's a beautiful river."

## KITE FESTIVAL



*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*

# Let's Go Fly a Kite

**Shannon Marvel**

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The sky becomes more of an art canvas during the Brookings Kite Festival. For the last 25 years, kite fliers from across the country gather to let their art take flight at the festival.

One of those artists is Mike Gee of North Dakota.

"We go down there to Brookings and really like the kite flying field there. It's just nice to come down and fly kites with friends who also enjoy flying kites," Gee said.

Gee flies what's called "show kites", which are big, inflatable kites that can span 20 feet across the sky.

There are other kites flown during the festival, including soft kites, stick kites and sport kites.

A sport kite is one that is attached to two or four lines. Often they'll be flown in teams and perform maneuvers in the sky.

"If you talk about crazy kites, there's a wide variety. There are so many different creative people building things in creative ways," Gee said. "It is definitely an art. It's what you put on the canvas that makes it special."

The kites are typically made with nylon, sail making cloth that doesn't stretch.

"You can't just go to the fabric store and buy tent fabric. We have a couple different weights of fabrics we use. And you need that tail on there to keep the kite stable," Gee said.



*Photo Credit: Brookings Kite Festival*





*Photo Credit: Brookings Register*

Sally Damm Norby, of the Brookings Optimists Club, said the festival got its start when Lynn Versher, former director of the South Dakota Art Museum, approached Optimist member Bill Flynn about creating a joint effort to bring big kites to Brookings.

“This volunteer organization aims to make a positive impact on the lives of youth and communities. The Brookings club’s primary focus is on advancing the opportunities and programs for youth events that are encouraging with exceptional supportive outcomes. The Brookings Optimist Kite Festival offers a comprehensive learning experience that incorporates expressions of culture, science, creativity, civic involvement, and is

environmentally friendly,” Norby said.

Youth are encouraged to come down and learn how to make a kite of their own, with professional guidance.

Gee said he encourages visitors to come up to kite fliers to ask questions or strike up a conversation.

“One thing I really like about kite flying is it seems like no matter who you talk to on the field, someone can relate to an experience of flying a kite,” Gee said. “When we start flying kites, it brings back memories of when other folks were kids flying kites. It’s kind of emotional for some people.”

This year’s event will take place on June 22-23 at the Fishback Soccer Park in Brookings.

Gee said this location is a safe spot to fly kites, and well away from any electrical line hazards.

“If you’ve flown kites long enough, you have a story about power lines. When you hit a line, you call the power company, and they advise you of what to do. The best thing to do is avoid those wires. I always think, ‘If my line breaks, which way is my kite going to go and what’s over there,’” Gee said.

Gee encourages visitors to come down to the Brookings Kite Festival with their lawn chairs and blankets and stay for more than just a half hour.

“The thing is when the wind changes direction or speed, the kites change. There’s just so much going on throughout the day. You’ve really got to sit back and pay attention,” Gee said.



*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*





# You can't **AVOID** what you **CAN'T SEE**

**Starting a job — big or small — without first getting utilities marked could result in serious injury, service disruptions for you and your neighbors, and a hefty fine.**

**Call 8-1-1 before you dig.**

Learn more at:

**Safe  
Electricity.org®**

## Improving your yard?

### Know what's above and below before you start

When the temperature warms to signal the arrival of spring, many of us begin planning improvements to our outdoor spaces. This could include adding or maintaining a swimming pool, building a deck, adding a patio or assembling play equipment for your family to enjoy. However, it is important to plan for safety prior to adding an outdoor structure or improving your yard.

#### **POWER LINE AWARENESS**

Being aware of power line locations near your home is vitally important for your and your family's safety. Even drop-down lines — the lines that bring power to a home — have voltages running through them and can be dangerous. Always look up and around

for power lines, recognizing too that electricity can jump or transfer even without direct contact, before starting any outdoor project. Also know what's below before starting any digging job.

Clay-Union Electric and Safe Electricity offer these tips to keep in mind while working in your yard:

- Assume that all power lines are always energized and keep at least 10 feet between a power line and you or any item you are holding.
- Perform a hazard assessment of the work area, noting all power line locations.
- Call 8-1-1 to mark underground utilities as part of planning and before any digging. The service is free.

• Utility locators do not mark private lines, however. Private underground lines—typically installed by the homeowner or a contractor—include, but are not limited to:

- o Irrigation or septic system lines.
- o Lines that service outbuildings (electric, gas, water, communication).
- o Lines between the meter and your home.
- o Lines to other outdoor items like grills or hot tubs.

#### **PRIVATE LINES NEED TO BE MARKED BY AN INDEPENDENT LOCATING SERVICE**

- Once underground utilities are marked, the 8-1-1 “Call Before You Dig” service recommends that the area



within 18 to 24 inches of either side of the marked lines be dug by hand with a fiberglass-handled shovel, not by machine.

- Do not install tree houses, playsets or swing sets, pools or decks and any associated structures within 25 feet of a power line. Consider the height and reach of play equipment (including the arc of a swing) and all deck and pool structures in relation to power lines.

- Educate your children about power line safety and how electricity can jump. Teach them to never touch a power line or get too close to one — either directly or with a toy or object — before sending them outside to play. This is especially important if they climb trees, fly kites or use remote-control (RC) devices, such as an RC airplane or drone.

- Use extreme caution when moving

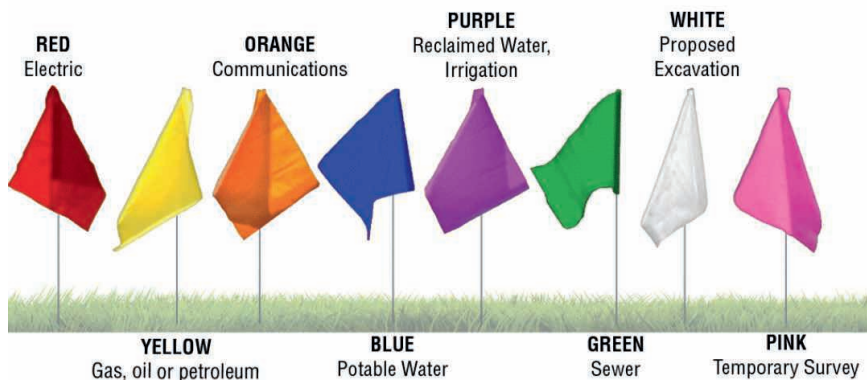
ladders and operating long-handled tools, such as pool skimmers, around trees and power lines.

- Also use extreme caution and look up and around for power lines when you are elevated, whether it be on a ladder, a boom lift, scaffolding or your roof.

- When planting and trimming trees, keep in mind that specialized tree trimming experts certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in utility clearance are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.

Please contact us with questions about specific power line clearance recommendations concerning decks, pools and play structures in your yard.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



**Know what's below.  
Call 811 before you dig.**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.

Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source:  
[homesandgardens.com](http://homesandgardens.com)



# COOPERATIVE METERING

Roger Lawien

More than 40 cooperative linemen and metering specialists gathered in Pierre for South Dakota Rural Electric's Meter School. This two-day gathering offers the opportunity to enhance skills, build a community of professionals, and learn the nuances of metering. As our need for more energy continues to grow, so does how we properly meter consumption.

Modern electric meters do much more than keep track of the electricity we consume. Correct electric metering is also essential for grid reliability and stability. Accurate measurements aid your cooperative in identifying and addressing issues such as voltage fluctuations or load imbalances promptly.

This proactive approach enhances the resilience of the electrical grid, reducing the likelihood of outages and ensuring a continuous and reliable power supply. At its core, accurate metering ensures fair and precise billing, preventing financial disputes and establishing trust between cooperatives and members.

From an economic standpoint, correct electric metering plays a pivotal role in resource allocation allowing member owned cooperatives to better understand consumption patterns, enabling them to optimize energy distribution and invest strategically in infrastructure development. This, in turn, leads to more efficient operations, cost savings, and improved overall service quality.

Precise metering supports energy conservation.

Members can sign into their account online, view consumption. Armed with accurate usage data they are empowered to make informed decisions about their energy consumption. This encourages responsible energy usage practices, reducing waste and lowering overall demand.

Metering guru and instructor John Pollard said it best. "These training schools are important. Metering is a craft handed down from generation to generation. With the advances of solid-state metering, these students are the supreme candidates to lead us into the future."

Your electric cooperative is your partner in getting it done!



2023 SDREA Meter School Instructors Photo by Roger Lawien



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# What is a Smart Meter?

A smart meter is a common term for Automated Metering Infrastructure, or AMI. These are connected devices that transmit information back to the electric utility's meter data management system and the information collected is used primarily for billing and outage response purposes. Smart meters started to be installed about 25 years ago. Individual utilities have different aged systems, but all electric cooperatives in South Dakota have two-way communication with every meter in the system.

## What advantages do Smart Meters bring?

Before smart meters were installed, customers were required to read their own analog meter and report their monthly usage for billing purposes, or a utility employee would physically travel to every home, farm or business in their large service territories to read usage data. Smart Meters take the burden off customers and employees, saving time and money for all consumers. In some cases, the aggregated energy usage information from their home can be visible to the customer via the Internet or a phone application.

- Smart Meters can be used to pinpoint exact locations of power outages more quickly by transmitting an “out of power” notification, meaning a faster response time to outages.
- Smart Meters allow information to be shared with individual consumers about their energy usage – allowing them to find energy efficiency opportunities or potential problems in their home.
- Smart Meters improve electric service reliability and power quality. Information obtained from the automated meters often identifies problems that can be repaired before they cause an outage.
- Information can be used by engineers to more effectively and appropriately size lines and transformers, saving the cooperative and members money.

## What information does a Smart Meter record?

Automated meters record an electronic kilowatt-hour (kWh) reading, the date and time of energy usage, the overall peak demand of the electric account, if the meter has been tampered with, and the number of times the meter has experienced a loss of power.

## Security of information

Electric cooperatives do not sell or share consumer data. Cooperatives abide by all laws regarding the privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information. The meters and associated communications systems are equipped with security features to prevent unauthorized access.

## Are there potential health impacts from a smart meter?

Research conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the Utilities Telecom Council (UTC) and other similar groups have shown no health impacts from automated meters. The radio frequencies emitted by digital meters are well below the maximum recommended in federal guidelines. A digital meter equipped to send and receive data has an RF density hundreds of times lower than the RF density of a cell phone, and the meters are installed on the outside of homes or buildings.

## Clay-Union Electric Corporation Board Meeting Summary

APRIL 26, 2024 • VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

The board meeting was called to order on April 26, 2024, 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, Jim Ryken, Chris Kinney, and Mike Slattery. District #1 seat vacant. Attending staff members included Chris Larson, Beth Bottolfson, Mike Kruse, 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 March Board Meeting (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 3/22/24 board minutes.

**Approval of Minutes from the March Executive Session (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 3/22/24 executive session.

**Approval of Minutes from the Reorganizational Meeting (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 4/2/24 reorganizational minutes.

**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** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the early retirement of capital credits as presented.

**Contracts (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the electric service contracts as presented.

**Policy Review** – Manager Larson led a discussion about future Distributed Generation Policies.

**Work Order and Special Equipment Summary** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve submitting the Headquarters project 1301 as presented to RUS for funding.

**Eide Bailly Audit Report (ACTION ITEM)** – After a detailed audit report was provided by Eide Bailly Partner, Derrick Larson resulting in a clean opinion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the audit report as presented.

**Margin Allocation (Action)** – A motion was made, seconded, and approved to declare total margins of \$756,603 to be allocated to members. \$257,110 is CUE margins and \$499,493 is from East River and Basin

**Corporate Debt Limit Resolution (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Corporate Debt Limit Resolution as presented.

**RUS Loan Application:** Tom Jones, Rural Utilities Service, presented the loan package and application that will finance the recently approved 2024-2027 work plan.

- **Loan Authorization:** A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the application submission requesting a \$13,333,000, Treasury Rate, 35 year maturity loan from the Rural Utilities Service.

- **Execution of balance of loan application documents:** A motion was made, seconded and carried to direct the Board President and Secretary to execute the balance of the loan documents to complete the loan application.

**Sale of Cherry Street Property – Resolution 1 (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Sale of Cherry Street Property Resolution 1 as presented.

**Sale of Cherry Street Property – Resolution 2 (ACTION ITEM)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Sale of Cherry Street Property Resolution 2 as presented.

**Management Reports:**

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

**May Board Meeting** – The date of May 24th, 2024, was set as the next regular board meeting to begin at 8:30 a.m.

**East River REED/MAC** – The REED/MAC meeting was held on April 2nd at East River in Madison. Manager Larson did not attend due to the Clay-Union Electric Annual Meeting.

**New Building** – Manager Larson reported on the various activities related to the new building.

**Cherry St. property (Action)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt two resolutions approving the sale of Tract 1 and Tract 2 of the Cherry Street location. A second motion was made, seconded, and carried to give the General Manager authority to sign any documents needed to close on the Cherry Street properties.

**2024 Annual Meeting** – Manager Larson led a discussion with the directors reviewing the open/house annual meeting event held on April 2nd.

**VCDC** – Clay-Union received a “Brick” award from the VCDC in recognition of the investment we made in our new facility in improving the community.

**CoBank Draw** – Manager Larson discussed with the board that a draw in the amount of \$1,000,000 was made per the CoBank agreement.

**Clay County Fair** – Manager Larson shared that we would be a sponsor of the day as we have in the past at the Clay County Fair along with doing our member/community appreciation event on August 9th.

**Santel** – Manager Larson reported that Santel management met with Clay-Union staff to discuss their build out of broadband services in the rural Vermillion and Yankton areas.



**Southeast Farmers, Meckling** – Manager Larson reported that a group of economic development people had met with the Southeast Farmers group about their development near Meckling.

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

- Billing, Collections and Customer Service
- 1st Quarter Activity – Water Heaters
- Water Heater Increase
- Financial Audit
- Financials for March
- CoBank Advance
- 2024-2027 Construction Work Plan Loan AM45
- Cost of Service Study

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

**C. Operations Report** – Operations Manager Kruse reviewed the following reports with the board:

- Monthly department work summary
- Wiring Crew
- New Services
- Service Upgrades
- No Outage Reports for March

*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:

- Balance Sheet
- Interest Income
- kWh Sales Report
- Large Power
- Line Loss
- 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 April Safety Meeting report was posted to the website for the board to review and was discussed during the meeting.

**Cyber Security** – The March Cyber Security report from East River IT was 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

**Executive Session** – The board went into Executive Session at 2:40 p.m., Executive Session was adjourned at 3:03 p.m. There was no action taken.

**Calendar** – The board reviewed the May 2024 calendar.

**Adjournment** – There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and carried, to adjourn the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

**Tom Larsen, President**

**Jim Ryken, Secretary**

## 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 within 10 days by 8 a.m., a \$25 collection fee will be applied and a final 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.



**Bank Draft** – Have your payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account. No fees apply for this service.



### Recurring Debit/Credit Card

– You may call in your credit/debit card payment and ask for recurring, it will then bill to that card every month on the 20th (or next business day) of each month until you call to cancel. No fees apply for this service.



**Pay by Phone** – You may call in your credit/debit card payment each month. No fees apply for this service.

**By Mail** – Send check or money order with your payment slip. Please be sure to mail early so we receive it by the 20th, we do not go by postage date.

**In Office** – We accept cash, check and money order or we can take your credit/debit card in our office. No fees apply for this service.

**On Line Billing** – Pay your bill on line at [www.clayunionelectric.coop](http://www.clayunionelectric.coop) No fees apply for this service.

Collection Fee .....	\$25
Standard Reconnect Fee .....	\$50
Reconnect Fee for Non-Payment.....	\$100
After Hours Reconnect Fee.....	\$150
Insufficient Funds Check Fee .....	\$30

**Delinquent Accounts (gross rate)**  
**10 percent on the first \$200 plus 2 percent on the balance.**

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Aug. 24**  
**2024 McCrossan Boys Ranch**  
**Xtreme Event Rodeo**  
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-339-1203

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.

**JULY 18-21**  
**Danish Days**  
Danville Heritage Museum  
Viborg, SD  
605-766-1312

**JULY 20-21**  
**Davis Flea Market**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Highway 18  
Davis, SD  
605-759-3883

**JULY 20-21**  
**Charles Mix Saddle Club**  
SDRA Rodeo  
Geddes, SD  
605-680-2763

**JULY 20**  
**5th Annual Wakonda Legion**  
**Truck & Tractor Pull/Peddle**  
**Pull**  
3 p.m.  
Girard Auction Lot  
Wakonda, SD

**JULY 19-20**  
**Farley Fest**  
All day  
Lake Farley Park  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656

**JULY 26-28**  
**Bruce Honey Days**  
5k walk/run, parade, cookouts, craft show, 3-on-3 basketball tournament, street dance and more.  
Jay Street  
Bruce, SD  
605-627-5671

**AUG. 8**  
**Raise-em Rank Bull Riding**  
7 p.m.  
Clay County Fairgrounds  
Vermillion, SD  
[www.claycountyfair.net/schedule](http://www.claycountyfair.net/schedule)

**AUG. 9**  
**Clay-Union Member/**  
**Community Appreciation**  
**Day**

Clay County Fair  
Sponsor of the Day  
Clay County Fairgrounds  
Vermillion, SD

**AUG. 9**  
**ATV Mud Drags**  
7 p.m.  
Clay County Fair  
Clay County Fairgrounds  
Vermillion, SD

**AUG. 10**  
**Dakota Classic Cruisers Car,**  
**Truck, and Tractor Show &**  
**Shine**  
11 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Clay County Fair  
Clay County Fairgrounds  
Vermillion, SD

**AUG. 10**  
**Demolition Derby**  
7 p.m.  
Clay County Fair  
Clay County Fairgrounds  
Vermillion, SD

**AUG. 10-11**  
**Fur Trader Days**  
Geddes, SD  
605-680-2160

**AUG. 17**  
**Yankton Extreme Bull**  
**Riding Tour**  
7 p.m.  
Yankton, SD  
605-760-2153

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