

“CAN WE BALANCE...”



“...our growing energy needs?”



“...my mom’s job?”



“...a blue sky?”



“...a cleaner world when I grow up?”



“YOU HAVE TO....FOR US.”

“...THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY?”

We need to find a balanced solution to ensuring our energy security – one that gives us both a healthy economy and a clean environment. The solution is NOT bureaucratic regulation. Congress, not the EPA, should be helping us define a balanced solution, one that includes a mix of all energy sources like renewables and cleaner traditional energy. Call Congress and tell them we need to find a balanced solution. For more information, go to findabalancedsolution.com.

FindABalancedSolution.com



**BASIN ELECTRIC
POWER COOPERATIVE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Produced by the following electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota:

Black Hills Electric, Custer, S.D.
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Butte Electric, Newell, S.D.
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West River Electric, Wall, S.D.
Whetstone Valley Electric, Milbank, S.D.
City of Elk Point, S.D.

South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly for \$6 annually for member cooperatives, \$12 annually for non-members by South Dakota Rural Electric Association, 222 W. Pleasant Drive, Pierre, S.D. 57501. Correspondence to: Editor, South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 1138, Pierre, SD 57501; telephone (605) 224-8823; fax (605) 224-4430; e-mail editor@sdrea.coop

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Live Wire: Metal Theft Threatens Safety, Lives



Ed Anderson
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Would you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

Thefts of copper, bronze, aluminum and bronze are on the rise, at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes, and – most dangerously – at power substations near neighborhoods. We need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages and save lives.

At an electric co-op in Oklahoma last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 worth of wire in a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches and a \$600,000

transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily left in the dark after the incident, although the co-op moved quickly to reroute power to affected areas.

It's hard to understand why folks would put their life on the line for a few dollars. Many law enforcement officials believe that methamphetamine users are responsible for much of the problem. And the damage done to an electric system packs a big punch, since equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide. There's also the potential for loss of life. In 2010, metal theft-related deaths occurred in North Carolina, West Virginia, Illinois and Ohio.

The cost for scrap copper goes up and down, but recently it's been on the rise – and so have robbery attempts. In January 2011, scrap copper sold for five times the amount it went for in 2001.

If you see anyone other than utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.

Co-ops use copper to ground their equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to ground. A lot of copper wire is used in substations, where high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants is stepped-down

before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home – either mounted on a utility pole or in a green box on the ground – lowers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

Electric linemen are highly trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions. To protect the public, substations are surrounded with secure fencing and post warning signs. But some thieves will not be deterred.

Please help prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, call your local electric cooperative or utility immediately. If you see anyone other than utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.