



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

LACREEK ELECTRIC
MAY 2026 VOL. 27 NO. 1

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Get Out & Vote!

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LACREEK ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION'S 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Josh Fanning
General Manager



Brent Ireland
Board President

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our members as we gather for the 78th Annual Meeting of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc. This is always a great opportunity to reflect on where we've been, look ahead to where we're going and reaffirm the commitment we share with you—our members.

As the energy landscape continues to evolve, including changes from our wholesale power providers, we remain focused on doing everything we can to deliver the most affordable and reliable power possible. At Lacreek Electric, our priority is serving our members with safe, dependable electricity while adapting to today's environmental and technology-driven world. We take seriously our responsibility to continuously strengthen our system and invest in new technologies that improve efficiency and ensure long-term reliability for the communities we serve.

Thanks to the continued vision and planning of your Board of Directors and management team, the hard work of our employees and the support of our members, Lacreek once again delivered solid financial results.

In 2025, Lacreek reported operating margins of \$245,391, non-operating margins of \$266,218, and G&T margins totaling \$485,270. We also remained committed to returning value to our membership. During the year, we retired \$617,448 in cooperative capital credits and \$223,512 in G&T capital credits, along with \$83,739 in estates.

Earlier this month, we retired 100% of the 2004 and 2005 G&T capital credits, returning \$545,241 directly back to our members—another strong reminder that when Lacreek succeeds, our members share in that success.

2025 Operating Report

The 2025 construction season included several significant projects completed across the Lacreek Electric system, along with continued planning for future improvements.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe began planning prior to 2024 to upgrade all service centers across the Lacreek Electric system. In 2025, multi-purpose buildings were constructed in all seven districts, with Lacreek Electric providing power to each location. These facilities offer much-needed office space, kitchens, gymnasiums for recreational activities and gathering areas for community use.

Another major project, developed by Oglala Lakota Sioux Housing, is the Sunrise Housing Addition located adjacent to the existing Sunrise Housing Development. This project includes 25 new homes and represents the first phase of future housing expansion. Infrastructure planning began in 2023, with power construction completed in 2025. In addition to providing quality housing for the community, the project allowed Lacreek Electric to

design and build new lines that enhance overall system reliability.

Two FEMA mitigation projects identified in our work plan were also completed during the year. These included the Wounded Knee-to-Manderson main feeder replacement and the Wanblee East feeder replacement, both partially funded by FEMA. These projects replaced high-voltage overhead three-phase main feeders with underground conductors, significantly reducing storm vulnerability and improving system resilience.

Additional projects that kept crews busy throughout the year included:

Allen Substation West Circuit: Replacement of approximately three miles of aging underground cable. This project will ultimately provide a significant three-phase tie between the Martin and Schwarting Substations.

Vetal Substation East Circuit: Replacement of old, heavily loaded underground cable on one of the system's most critical summer circuits. This circuit is scheduled for a future voltage upgrade.

Annual Pole Testing: Conducted in March, with 5,813 poles tested. A total of 178 poles were rejected, resulting in a reject rate of 2.75%.

Looking ahead, much of the upcoming work plan will be funded through grant and mitigation programs and includes the following major projects:

- Installation of three-phase underground (URD) to replace overhead transmission from the Martin Rural Substation to the Martin WAPA Substation, improving capacity and reliability.
- Construction of a new north underground feeder from the Wanblee 115 Substation to Wanblee Village.
- Replacement of the Vetal Substation North Circuit URD to the Long Valley Step Station, including a new three-source reliability tie line.
- Construction of a three-phase underground feeder from Manderson to the Gooseneck Express as a new reliability tie.
- Development of a new east circuit three-phase feeder tie from the Denby Substation to the Batesland West Circuit.
- Replacement of the Niobrara South circuit, addressing aging underground infrastructure serving an irrigation district in the Nebraska service area.

Lacreek Electric remains committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Utilizing grant and mitigation funding allows the cooperative to strengthen the system while keeping projects cost-effective for our members. Blessings to all!

Contributors: Lacreek Electric Operations, Work Order/Staff Assistant and Finance Manager

**Reprint of
Official Notice
of Lacreek Electric Associations 78th Annual Meeting
Thursday, April 23, 2026
Old American Legion Auditorium, Martin, SD**

Dear Valued Member,
Join us for an evening of community, prizes and important updates at Lacreek Electric's 78th Annual Meeting! Mark your calendar for **Thursday, April 23, 2026** and come be part of the action at the **Old American Legion Auditorium in Martin.**

What's in it for you?

- ~ \$20 Bill Credit – Just for showing up! (Voting members only)
- ~ Door prizes, eight winners will take home \$50 and one grand prize winner of \$300.
- ~ Meal Voucher – No need to rush dinner! We're giving every voting member a meal voucher, redeemable at select locations across our service area.

Schedule of Events:

- 5:00 p.m. – Member Registration (Old American Legion Auditorium)
- 6:00 p.m. – Business Meeting Begins
- End of Meeting – Prize Drawings! (Don't miss your chance to win!)

Board Elections – Your Vote Matters!

This year, members will elect four directors. Meet the candidates:

- Zone 1 – City of Martin – Clarence Allen - Angie Rascher
- Zone 5 – Jackson County – Jerry Sharp
- Zone 6 – Todd & Mellette County – No Petition Pulled - Vacant
- Zone 9 – West Oglala Lakota County – Cole Lange

Capital credit checks MAILED out on April 3rd!

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to stay informed, have fun and maybe even take home some extra cash. We can't wait to see you there!

Respectfully,
Cole Lange, Secretary

78th Annual Meeting Agenda	
5:00 p.m.	Registration Begins
6:00 p.m.	Drawing for Early Attendance Prize
PRESIDENT, BRENT IRELAND	Call to Order
	Invocation
	Determination of Quorum
	Introduction of Directors
REPORTS	
SECRETARY, COLE LANGE	<i>Secretary's Report</i>
	Proof of Mailing of Notice of Meeting
	Minutes of Previous Meeting
TREASURER, SCOTT LARSON	<i>Treasurer's Report</i>
GENERAL MANAGER, JOSH FANNING	<i>Introduction of Guest Speaker</i>
	Basin Update
	Andy Buntrock
	Washington, DC - Youth Tour
	Scholarship Presentation
ATTORNEY, ROBERT SCHAUB	Election of Directors
PRESIDENT, BRENT IRELAND	Old Business
	New Business
	Adjournment
Drawing for Prizes	
(All Prize Winners Must Be Present)	

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

LACREEK ELECTRIC

USPS No. 018-912)

Board of Directors

- Brent Ireland - President
- Troy Kuxhaus - Vice President
- Cole Lange - Secretary
- Scott Larson - Treasurer
- Clarence Allen . Clifford Lafferty
- Hadley Livermont . Michel Melvin
- Wade Risse . Tom Schlack . Marion Schultz
- Jerry Sharp . Connie Whirlwind Horse

Management Staff

- Josh Fanning - General Manager
- Mike Pisha - Operations Manager
- Sherry Bakley - Work Order/Staff Assistant
- Kasi Harris - Finance Manager
- Jessica Cook - Member Service/IT
- Ashley Turgeon - Administrative Assistant

Office Personnel

Member Service Representative:

Lisa Jensen . Tawnni Risse

Billing/Member Service Representative:

Terri Gregg . Katrina Fish

Right of Way Specialist:

Amy Pisha

Accountant:

Cody Larson

Operations Personnel

Jesse Byerley - Line Foreman

Journeyman Lineman:

Jordan Bakley . Les Cuny . Kody Hagen

Matthew Kruid . Lonny Lesmeister

Garrett Metzinger . Aaron Risse . Trace Scott

Damon Wangerin

Apprentice Lineman:

Tee Allen . Burke Beer . Riley Meis . Spencer

Morrison . Ryan Porch . Chayson Schofield

Ryan Pettit - Staking Specialist

Henry Johnson - Warehouseman

Justin Smokov - Maintenance Man

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Layout is at least three weeks prior to mailing.

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www.lacreek.com

ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH: TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING SAFETY

At your local cooperative, Electrical Safety Month is recognized every May, but the importance of practicing safety year-round is always emphasized. From co-op crews to the consumer-members served, everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity that powers daily life, but it can also be dangerous — something your local cooperative understands firsthand from working with it 365 days a year.

Safety is more than a catchphrase. Cooperative leadership recognizes the responsibility to keep employees safe while also helping protect members and the broader community. That's why your local cooperative hosts safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, highlighting the dangers of electricity. These demonstrations often include emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, along with discussions about the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the widespread use of electrical devices, tools and appliances, here are a few practical electrical safety tips:

Watch for frayed wires. Power cords can become damaged from age, heavy use or excessive current flow. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them to avoid shock hazards.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only handle a limited amount of electricity. Running too many devices on one circuit can lead to overheating and potential fire risk.

Label circuit breakers. Understanding your home's electrical system can help prevent overloads. If your home is more than 40 years old and you plan to install large appliances, contact a qualified electrician.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug one extension cord into another. "Daisy chaining" can cause overheating and fire hazards. Do not exceed the cord's wattage, and avoid using extension cords as permanent solutions. If additional outlets are needed, consult a licensed electrician.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with children

about playing it safe and smart around electricity, including staying aware of overhead power lines near outdoor play areas.

Providing a reliable energy supply 24/7, 365 days a year is a top priority. Equally important is keeping the community safe around electricity.

Contact your local cooperative for additional electrical safety tips or to request a safety demonstration at a school or upcoming community event.



"Do not fly kites by power lines!"

Casen Yuker

Casen cautions readers not to fly kites around power lines. Thank you for sharing your picture, Casen! Casen's parents are Lance and Tarah Yuker from Aberdeen 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.

Delicious DESSERTS

RHUBARB CAKE DESSERT

Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1 cup sugar
4 cups rhubarb, diced
2 cups half and half

Method

Prepare cake mix as directed on package and pour into a greased 9x13 pan. Mix sugar and rhubarb together. Spoon evenly over cake batter. Pour half and half over top of rhubarb mixture. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes. This is like an upside-down cake with custard on the bottom of the cake.

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

FUZZY NAVEL CAKE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1 instant vanilla pudding (large, 5.1 oz. size)
3/4 cup peach schnapps
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup orange juice
4 eggs

Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar
4 tbsps. orange juice
2 tbsps. peach schnapps

Method

Spray a 12-cup fluted baking pan with cooking spray, dust with flour. Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended, spread evenly in pan. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes until golden brown and cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool cake for 20 minutes. Run a long, sharp knife around the edges to loosen, and invert onto platter. Whisk glaze ingredients together until smooth. With wooden skewer, poke holes on top and around sides of cake. Spoon glaze over the warm cake, allowing to seep in holes, and drizzle down the sides and center. Cool completely before slicing.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. vanilla
Pinch salt
1 20 oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained (in natural juice, not heavy syrup)

Frosting

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 8 oz. cream cheese softened
1 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Method

Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended. Bake in greased 9x13 pan at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Beat until smooth and creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar. Spread frosting on cake while still warm. Garnish with some toasted coconut if desired.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix 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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture submitted by William Berry via Shutterstock.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

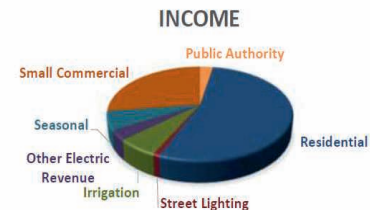
Balance Sheet (as of December 2025)

ASSETS:	2024	2025
ELECTRIC PLANT:		
In Service	\$ 79,392,486	\$ 82,225,528
Under Construction	\$ 4,120,636	\$ 3,931,021
Total Electric Plant	\$ 83,513,122	\$ 86,156,549
Less Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (32,483,928)	\$ (34,478,599)
Electric Plant - Net	\$ 51,029,194	\$ 51,677,950
OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS:		
Investments in Associated Organizations	\$ 8,889,152	\$ 9,034,855
Other Investments	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
Special Funds	\$ 151,201	\$ 163,045
Total Other Property and Investments	\$ 9,540,353	\$ 9,697,900
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 188,213	\$ 158,615
Temporary Cash Investments	\$ 1,556,800	\$ 3,110,692
Investment in Equity Securities	\$ -	\$ -
Accounts Receivable, Less Allowance for Uncollectible Accounts	\$ 1,547,298	\$ 1,785,338
Material and Supplies	\$ 3,531,092	\$ 2,611,695
Prepayments	\$ 225,019	\$ 197,189
Interest Receivable	\$ 7,271	\$ 13,741
Total Current Assets	\$ 7,055,693	\$ 7,877,270
Deferred Debits	\$ 608,710	\$ 507,054
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 68,233,950	\$ 69,760,174

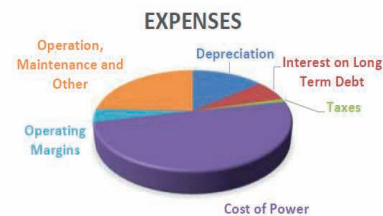
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	2024	2025
EQUITIES		
Patronage Capital	\$ 18,447,351	\$ 18,080,980
Other Equities	\$ 7,082,690	\$ 7,639,605
Total Equities	\$ 25,530,041	\$ 25,720,585
LONG-TERM DEBT, LESS CURRENT MATURITIES	\$ 37,547,055	\$ 38,890,779
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Current Maturities Long-Term Debt	\$ 2,397,974	\$ 2,462,182
Accounts Payable	\$ 866,384	\$ 974,682
Customer Deposits	\$ 461,655	\$ 460,945
Taxes Accrued	\$ 197,639	\$ 196,869
Other Current Liabilities	\$ 379,914	\$ 374,780
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 4,303,566	\$ 4,469,458
DEFERRED CREDITS		
Customers' Energy Payments	\$ 353,288	\$ 179,352
Electric Revenue Deferral	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
Total Deferred Credits	\$ 853,288	\$ 679,352
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$ 68,233,950	\$ 69,760,174

Statement of Operations (as of December 2025)

OPERATING REVENUES:	2024	2025
Electric	\$ 15,439,246	\$ 16,151,409
Other	\$ 532,547	\$ 570,041
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 15,971,793	\$ 16,721,450



OPERATING EXPENSES:	2024	2025
Cost of Power	\$ 7,840,983	\$ 8,511,241
Transmission	\$ 83,864	\$ 136,612
Distribution - Operations	\$ 629,344	\$ 732,894
Distributions - Maintenance	\$ 1,033,484	\$ 1,146,808
Customer Accounts	\$ 497,997	\$ 550,999
Customer Service and Information	\$ 131,400	\$ 139,146
Administrative and General	\$ 1,488,748	\$ 1,483,096
Depreciation	\$ 2,326,432	\$ 2,418,324
Taxes	\$ 197,931	\$ 197,618
Interest on Long-term Debt	\$ 1,066,948	\$ 1,151,986
Other Deductions	\$ 8,393	\$ 7,335
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 15,305,524	\$ 16,476,059



Operating Margin Before Capital Credits	\$ 666,269	\$ 245,391
Generation and Transmission and Other	\$ 530,450	\$ 485,270
NET OPERATING MARGIN	\$ 1,196,719	\$ 730,661
NON-OPERATING MARGIN		
Merchandising, Less Costs and Expenses	\$ 12,431	\$ 498
Gain on Disposal of Assets	\$ 94,419	\$ -
Other Patronage Dividends	\$ 98,553	\$ 81,057
Interest Income	\$ 233,148	\$ 184,663
Total Non-Operating Margin	\$ 438,551	\$ 266,218
NET MARGIN	\$ 1,635,270	\$ 996,879

2025 Year End Statistics

Year Energized..... 1948
 Plant..... \$86,156,549
 Equity..... 36.97%
 Service Area..... 5,174
 Total Miles of Line..... 3,189
 Miles Transmission..... 204
 Miles Distribution..... 2,662
 Miles Underground..... 324
 Meters per Miles..... 2.15

Avg Number of Active Meters..... 6,859
 Average Monthly usage, Residence..... 1,280
 # of Electric Heat Homes @ Year End..... 840
 Number of Irrigation Systems..... 133
 Number Of Directors..... 13
 Number of Members..... 4,313
 Number of Employees..... 31
 Number of Security Lights..... 4,054
 Kwh Sales..... 128,905,524

Revenue per Kwh Residential..... \$0.1236
 Winter Demand..... 31,921
 Summer Demand..... 22,110
 Power Supplier :
 Basin Electric..... 87.42%
 WAPA..... 12.58%

**Counties Served: Bennett, Jackson, Oglala
 Lakota, Todd and Mellette in South
 Dakota and Cherry in Nebraska**

Explanation of 2025 Dollars Spent

COST OF POWER: This is paid to Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative, our power supplier, who receives 87.42% from Basin Electric (which consists of a blend of coal, hydro, nuclear, natural gas, renewables (wind and waste heat) and 12.58% hydropower.

TAXES: This includes real estate taxes and two percent gross revenue taxes in South Dakota and personal property taxes in Nebraska.

INTEREST: Monies paid to Rural Utilities Service and Cooperative Finance Corporation for interest on our loans.

DEPRECIATION: The value of the property of the cooperative is set up to decrease annually over a set period of time.

MARGINS: Revenue over and above the cost of operation. Margins are assigned to the members in the form of patronage capital or capital credits.

OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE and OTHER: Includes the cost of maintaining 3,189 miles of line, 4,054 security lights, billing approximately 6,859 meters a month, plus insurance, transmission expense, sales expense, customer service expense and other costs required to operate the cooperative.

Four Members Seek Lacreek Electric Association Director Seats

Members attending the 2026 Lacreek Electric Association Annual Meeting will elect directors to represent Zones 1, 5, 6 and 9 for three-year terms. The following individuals have filed petitions to run for these positions. The following is a piece of brief biographical information on each of the candidates.

Zone 1 – City of Martin

Clarence Allen - Clarence was raised northeast of Long Valley, S.D. He came to Bennett County in 1972 and began farming and ranching.

Clarence worked for Mueller Feeds and Pride Grain for 23 years while still farming and ranching. He retired from Pride Grain in June of 2012. Clarence still runs cattle and helps others in the area. Clarence and his late wife Nancy, have four grown children. Clarence has served on Lacreek's board since 2014.



Angie Rascher - Angela "Angie" Rascher grew up in Allen, South Dakota, and now resides in Martin. She currently serves as a Program Analyst with the USDA Farm Service Agency, bringing a diverse professional background that includes roles ranging from CNA work to experience with the Bennett



County Auditor's Office, along with a strong foundation gained from growing up on her family's ranch. Throughout her career, Angie has developed well-rounded customer service and people-focused skills that have supported her success in each position. She is a graduate of Bennett County High School and has also completed college coursework. Angie previously served on the Martin City Council as a council member and is passionate about supporting and advocating for her community. Outside of work, she enjoys camping with her family, playing board games, spending time with horses, reading and watching movies.

Zone 5 - Jackson County

Jerry Sharp - Jerry graduated from Kadoka High School and continued his education at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, earning a B.S. degree in Education. He taught school for three years before returning to the ranch near Long Valley, SD, where he has been since 1972. Jerry also spent 10 years in the feed business and is self-employed as a rancher.

Jerry is a member of R-CALF and the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association. He has served on the Western Junior Livestock Show Board of Directors and has been on the Lacreek Electric Board since 1994, where he has held the roles of Secretary, Vice President,



and President. He has also completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director course.

Jerry and his wife, Stephanie, have two children and four grandsons. In his spare time, he enjoys rodeo, horse sales, working cattle horseback on the ranch, and spending time with his grandsons. He is passionate about delivering safe, reliable electric service at a reasonable price to the members of Lacreek Electric.

Zone 6 - Todd & Mellette County

No Petition Pulled - Vacant

Zone 9 - West Oglala Lakota County

Cole Lange - Cole has lived on his ranch in Oglala his whole life, which he has been running since the age of 18. He is also a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. He has served on the FSA Board in Martin and has been a Shannon County Representative on the Stock Growers Board. Cole has served on Lacreek's board since June of 2020.



There is NO "FIND MY ACCOUNT NUMBER" in this edition.
Come to our Annual Meeting for **CASH PRIZES!**

ONE VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Chuck Sloan • Piedmont, S.D.

Board Treasurer, West River Electric Association

U.S. Air Force 1983-2003

Chuck Sloan has spent much of his life serving his nation.

Sloan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and served 21 years on active duty before retiring as a master sergeant in 2004. In that time, he was stationed at bases all around the world, including Oman, South Korea, Turkey, and the Pacific. Since 2004, Sloan has worked as a civilian at Ellsworth Air Force Base, where today he is Chief of Operations Compliance.

Serving in the military, Sloan observed firsthand how seriously service members took absentee voting and civic participation, despite being thousands of miles from American soil. Their passion helped ignite Sloan's own admiration for America's democratic system of government.

"If I found somebody a little laissez-faire about voting, saying, 'my vote probably won't count,' I would give them a spiel," Sloan explained. "Yes, your vote does count, and you'll want to be able to say that you made that vote."

He continued, "If you don't choose to exercise that responsibility, then later on if you're displeased, you really can't

complain about it because you didn't make a choice – If anything, vote and give yourself the opportunity to legitimately complain!"

Sloan said people should never underestimate the importance of showing up and making their voices heard, because in close races, one vote can tip the scale.

"There are many instances when one vote may have been a determining factor," Sloan said. "It may not be a general election, but how about in a state or local election where one vote can be the deciding factor? That happens more often than one would think. Your vote matters, no matter what you do."

Sloan brought that civic-mindedness along with him to West River Electric Association, where he serves on the Board of Directors and helps make decisions in the interest of his neighbors and communities he represents.

Sloan said it all just comes back to civic responsibility and staying involved.

"From the time I turned 18, I've never missed a vote," Sloan said. "It's second nature. It's too important to not do."



VOTING STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES



Evan Buckmiller • De Smet, S.D.

General Manager, Kingsbury Electric Cooperative

De Smet School District Board

For Kingsbury Electric Cooperative General Manager Evan Buckmiller, his call to public service came after a mid-term resignation on the De Smet School District

Board left a vacancy that needed to be filled.

"The board had to appoint someone to fill the seat," Buckmiller said. "Initially when I was asked, I didn't know if I wanted to do it, but I also knew that my wife and I have two young kids in the school system, so I agreed to fill the spot until the next election."

Buckmiller wasn't expecting to develop a passion for civic-service, but six years and two election cycles later, he's still representing the De Smet community on the school board.

"It's for my kids, to make sure they have the best education opportunities possible to prepare them for their future," Buckmiller added.

He said that while serving on the school board has been a

rewarding endeavor, there are also moments that are discouraging; some people will sit out elections, but are also vocal about board decisions they disagree with.

"I receive phone calls about how we are doing everything wrong, but they don't want to step up to be a part of change," Buckmiller explained.

His advice is simple: show up.

"Public participation at the monthly school board meetings is always encouraged," Buckmiller said. "When a community is engaged, there is more diverse input and you get to see the needs of everyone. The needs for one person might not be the same as another, and when you are sitting on a board you want to hear the needs of everyone so you can make the best decision possible for everyone."

Buckmiller said when more people get involved and exercise their civic duties, the communities like his are better for it.

"Being active in the community makes the community stronger and allows different opinions to be heard," Buckmiller said.

"When you show up to meetings and vote, you are giving the board direction so they can make decisions that are in the best interest of everyone."

STICK UP FOR YOURSELF & VOTE



Don Schurdevin • Elk Point, S.D.
Board President, Union County Electric Cooperative
U.S. Navy 1962-1968

Serving on the Union County Electric Cooperative board for more than 25 years, Don Schurdevin has built a reputation for steady leadership and a strong commitment

to the cooperative and its members. But before serving his neighbors and community on the co-op board, Schurdevin first served in a different way. He served not just his Union County neighbors, but his entire country in the U.S. Navy. Schurdevin enrolled during his junior year of high school in 1962, serving active duty in Vietnam from 1963 to 1965, some of that time aboard the USS Midway. The experience helped shape his views on patriotism, civic duty and personal responsibility.

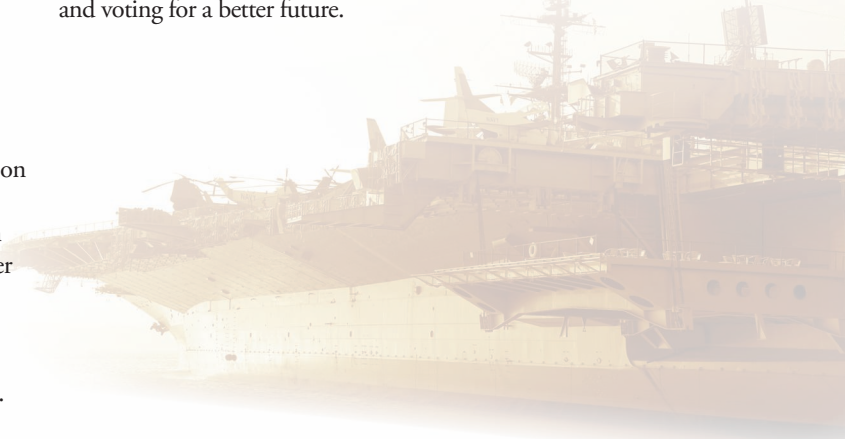
“In the navy, you learn to get along with people, but you learn to also stick up for yourself, because nobody else – is so you better take care of your own business,” he said.

That’s the attitude that Schurdevin brings to his civic participation. He said serving in the military gave him a deeper appreciation for the freedoms Americans enjoy, including voting.

Schurdevin believes participating in elections is one of the most important ways citizens can stay involved in their communities and help shape the future of their community, state and country.

“I think I voted in every election since I could,” Schurdevin recalled. “School board election, county, state – if I was able to vote I was voting.”

That sense of duty carried into his years of cooperative service. As a director, Schurdevin remains focused on serving members and ensuring the co-op continues to meet local needs. Schurdevin encourages others to “stick up for yourself” by staying informed and voting for a better future.



LEADERS DEPEND ON YOU SPEAKING UP



Chris Rahn • Mission, S.D.
Member Services Manager, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative
Todd County School District Board, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Chris Rahn was not always interested in his local government. In fact, up until just several years ago, he sat many elections out.

But through his work at Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative and the commitment to community that came with it, Rahn gained a new perspective on civic participation, realizing that change only happens when peoples’ voices are heard.

“I believe everybody who has an opinion should come out and vote,” Rahn said. “One vote matters. One vote can change an entire election.”

Rahn’s indifference to voting began to change as he was asked to take on more responsibilities with the co-op. Cherry-Todd Electric General Manager Tim Grablander nominated Rahn to the Rushmore Electric Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, where Rahn now serves as president.

Shortly after, he was encouraged by local community leaders to apply for a board seat with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. The tribal

council voted to seat Rahn on the judiciary committee, leading to his first real experience with public service. Like flipping a switch, Rahn’s enthusiasm led to his appointment to other tribal boards, including the Tribal Utilities Commission, Tribal Tax Commission, and the Rosebud Energy Services Company.

Rahn said serving in tribal government opened his mind to the impact he can have on his community. That realization inspired Rahn to run for his first publicly-elected position as a school board member for the Todd County School District.

“I wanted to be more involved in my daughter’s education and just listen to the community’s input,” Rahn said, restating the importance of community members actively engaging with elected officials and sharing feedback.

He continued: “I feel like I’ve been able to bridge the gap between the people I represent and the administration and other public leaders.”

As Rahn looks ahead to years of future public service to work for a better community, he encourages others to step up as well — and all it takes is a vote.

“If you speak up, your voice is heard,” he continued. “When everyone’s voice is heard, we can make better decisions for the community as a whole.”

Photos by Shutterstock

SEVENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

April 24th, 2025

The 77th Annual Meeting of the Members of Lacreek Electric Association, Incorporated, was held at the Old American Legion Auditorium on the evening of April 24, 2025, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Member Services/IT Jessica Cook drew for the Early Bird prize.

Member Services/IT Jessica Cook welcomed the members to the meeting and called upon President Wade Risse, who led off with a prayer and then asked the veterans to stand and be recognized. The members were then asked to stand as James Begeman, Cole O'Bryan, and Camden O'Bryan sang the National Anthem.

President Risse then called the meeting to order and reported the determination of a quorum had been met with 104 members registered.

President Risse introduced the Board of Directors and the following incumbent board candidates running unopposed: Zone 1 - City of Martin, Scott Larson; Zone 3 - West Bennett County, Troy Kuxhaus; Zone 4 - East Oglala Lakota County, Connie Whirlwind Horse; and Zone 8 - At Large, Wade Risse. He then announced a board candidate running unopposed for Zone 5 - Jackson County, Hadley Livermont. Next, President Risse called upon Secretary Scott Larson.

Secretary Larson read the Proof of Mailing of Notice of the 77th Annual Meeting.

Secretary Larson asked if we could dispense with the reading of the minutes from the April 25, 2024, Annual Meeting and referred to the minutes printed in the program. The members agreed, and upon motion duly made, seconded, and carried, the 2024 minutes were approved. Secretary Larson called on Treasurer Tom Schlack for the treasurer's report.

An employee video of Chayson Schofield was shown.

Treasurer Schlack provided an overview of the financial statement and informed the members that the full financial report is printed in the program. Treasurer Schlack asked for a motion from the members to approve the treasurer's

report. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the treasurer's report.

General Manager Josh Fanning welcomed members and guests, expressing appreciation to Lacreek Electric employees, management, board of directors, and members for their continued support. He reported strong financial performance for 2024, including operating margins of \$666,269, non-operating margins of \$438,551, and G&T margins of \$530,450. The cooperative returned \$840,960 in capital credits to members, highlighting its commitment to cooperative principles. He recognized the retirement of longtime employee Dane Claussen after 33 years of service and dedication to the organization. He honored the memory of Board Director Donovan Young Man, who passed away in March 2025 after 31 years of dedicated service, remembering him for his strong leadership, integrity, and commitment to cooperative values. General Manager Fanning also explained the cooperative's billing structure and reasons behind the recent rate adjustment, citing increased wholesale power costs. The rate change includes a \$5.50 increase in the General Services facility charge and a \$0.50 increase in demand charges for the first 25 kW. Looking ahead, the cooperative remains focused on reliability, innovation, and community investment. General Manager Fanning concluded by thanking the members and expressing optimism for the future.

A video from the SDREA CEO, Steve Barnett, with a special message, was played.

Next, Member Service/IT Jessica Cook introduced Camden O'Bryan, last year's Washington, D.C. Youth Tour winner. Camden shared a slideshow with highlights of his unforgettable experience.

Vice President Brent Ireland announced the 5 scholarships to be awarded. The Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Lacreek Electric scholarship winner was Levi Sharp. Levi is the

son of Dennis and Sara Sharp. The Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Lacreek Electric scholarship winner was Breezy Amiotte. Breezy is the daughter of Tucker and Corine Amiotte. The two Lacreek Electric scholarship winners are Wyatt Huber and Camden O'Bryan. Wyatt is the son of Scott and Sandy Huber, and Camden is the son of Chris and Mikaela O'Bryan. The second-year 2025 scholarship winner was Wyatt Mansfield. Wyatt is the son of Jeremy and Tashina Mansfield. The winner of the Lacreek Electric Employee Scholarship was Tristan Fish. Tristan is the son of Travis and Katrina Fish. Vice President Ireland congratulated all the winners, and President Risse presented them all with a certificate.

President Risse introduced Lacreek's Attorney Robert Schaub with the Law Firm of Schaub Law Office, P.C. who announced the election results of the following candidates who ran unopposed: Zone 1 - City of Martin, Scott Larson; Zone 3 - West Bennett County, Troy Kuxhaus; Zone 4 - East Oglala Lakota County, Connie Whirlwind Horse; Zone 5 - Jackson County, Hadley Livermont; and Zone 8 - At Large, Wade Risse. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the election results. They will all serve a 3-year term.

President Risse called for any old business. There was none.

President Risse then called upon Robert Schaub, Lacreek's Attorney, who asked for a motion to approve the actions taken by the Board of Directors of the Association since the last Annual Meeting of the Members; with a motion made, seconded, and carried to approve the Board's actions.

President Risse called for any new business. There was none.

President Risse thanked Stuart Livermont for the sound system, the Bennett County 8th Grade STEAM class for sharing their projects, and James, Cole, and Camden for singing the National Anthem.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made, seconded, and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

The winner of the \$300.00 grand prize was Mandy Scherer.

THANK YOU, FROM LACREEK ELECTRIC EMPLOYEES & STAFF

Thank you to our members for a great year in 2025. Your continued support and trust mean everything to us. We look forward to serving you in 2026 and remain committed to providing reliable service and doing our very best to meet your needs in the year ahead.



Lacreek Electric Scholarship Winners

Annually, Lacreek Electric awards scholarships to four first-year college or technical school students and one second-year college or technical school student. This year there were a total of nine qualifying applicants. Applicants must be members or dependents of members of LEA and citizens of the United States. In addition, the applicants must carry a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.5 or higher and demonstrate scholastic achievement and community involvement.

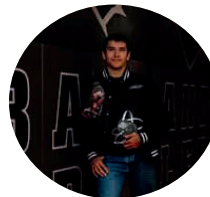
The Lacreek Electric/Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship in the amount of **\$2,500** was chosen by Basin Electric. This scholarship is awarded to one recipient who is entering their first year of continuing education. This year, the scholarship was awarded to **Shaylee Porch**.



The Rushmore/Lacreek Electric Board of Directors Scholarship in the amount of **\$2,000** was chosen by Basin Electric as well. This scholarship is awarded to one recipient who is entering their first year of continuing education. This year, the scholarship was awarded to **Kynzee McConaughy**.



Two Lacreek Electric Association Scholarships in the amount of **\$1,500** were drawn from the remaining applicant pool by the LEA board of directors. These scholarships are awarded to two recipients who are entering their first year of continuing education. These scholarships were awarded to **Kaylee Byrne** and **Ethan Harris**.



In 2021 the employees of Lacreek Electric got together and decided to have an Employee Scholarship as well. This scholarship fund is contributed to by the employees and is a \$1,000 scholarship. This year the fund only grew because there were no employees with seniors.

One additional **Lacreek Electric Association Scholarship** in the amount of **\$1,500** was drawn from the applicant pool from the previous year of non-scholarship recipients. This scholarship was awarded to **Sophia May**. On behalf of the Lacreek Electric Board of Directors, General Manager, Staff and Employees, we want to congratulate the recipients of these awards.



BUILDING FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Basin Electric's Pioneer Generation Station, located near Williston, N.D.
Photo Submitted by Basin Electric

Basin Electric Expands Generation Capacity to Meet Growing Demand

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Although the flick of a switch can seem close at hand, the electricity that powers our world is often generated many miles away.

For rural cooperative members, electricity often comes from North Dakota, where Basin Electric Power Cooperative operates a fleet of power plants to serve rural communities across nine states. As demand continues to build across that system, the infrastructure behind it is growing right alongside it.

This steady growth has shaped the work now underway across Basin Electric's service territory. In response, the cooperative has kept up with demand by expanding existing generation facilities, building a new power plant and supporting the system with additional transmission projects in just a few short years.

"We're seeing load growth across our system, and it's coming from a combination of residential, agricultural, commercial and energy development," said Gavin McCollam, Basin Electric's senior vice president and chief operating officer. "When you step back and look at it as a whole, it becomes clear that we need to continue building to keep pace with that growth."



New transmission lines in western North Dakota support Basin Electric's newest generation assets.
Photo Submitted by Basin Electric

Pioneer Generation Station

To maintain reliability and keep the lights on for their members, Basin Electric recently expanded its generation capacity through new development to Pioneer Generation Station near Williston, N.D.

Originally developed in the early 2010s, the facility grew in phases over time. Those additions turned Pioneer Generation Station into one of Basin Electric's most important generation assets, but within a decade, the pace of that growth had begun to change.

"Coming out of COVID, not just us but everybody

was seeing rapid increases in loads,” McCollam said. “At that point, we were asking what we could do the quickest to add capacity.”

To meet the need, Basin Electric moved forward with Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. The cooperative completed the project in 2025, adding about 580 megawatts of generation and bringing the site’s total capacity to 822 megawatts, enough to power roughly 400,000 homes.

The expansion moved quickly in part because Basin Electric built on what it already had.

“We had the site and the people that worked there, so we could add onto it a lot quicker than we could analyze and research new sites,” McCollam said.

Bison Generation Station

Still, Basin Electric continued building for traditional member load growth, beyond Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV, turning to a new project: Bison Generation Station.

Located near Epping, N.D., the natural gas-fueled generation project is being built from the ground up as a large-scale, natural gas facility designed to meet future demand. Once completed, the combined-cycle power plant will produce approximately 1,490

megawatts of electricity, making it the largest power plant solely owned by Basin Electric – almost double the capacity of Pioneer Generation Station. The plant is expected to come online in two phases, with the first unit operating in 2029 and the second in 2030.

Unlike Pioneer Generation Station, which expanded over time, Bison Generation Station is being built as a single, large project.

“We had a history of building small units, piecemealing them in as quickly as we could. That worked for a long time, but eventually we reached a point where we needed to think about building differently,” McCollam said. “There was a point where we recognized that continuing to add smaller pieces wasn’t going to be the most effective approach. We needed to build something at a scale that would allow us to stay ahead of that growth.”

Serendipitously, the transition from Pioneer Generation Station to Bison Generation Station happened on the same day. Basin Electric finished construction at Pioneer and turned the facility over to operations, then received the permits to begin construction on Bison.

“I’m kind of a nerd,” McCollam

said, laughing. “I’m nerdy enough to think this wasn’t a coincidence, and the power plant gods were smiling on us.”

Once complete, it will become a central part of Basin Electric’s generation portfolio.

“It’s going to be the flagship of our gas fleet,” McCollam said. “It’s being designed with the understanding that the system we’re serving today is going to continue to grow.”

Looking Ahead

According to McCollam, these new generation assets are a response to the organic growth Basin Electric is seeing across its traditional membership, including residential demand, agriculture, commercial activity and energy production.

“We support that growth where it happens, and we make sure the system can deliver power where it’s needed,” he said.

For Basin Electric, the work underway now is part of a longer process to ensure reliability in a time of growing energy demand.

“The entire purpose of Basin Electric is to provide reliable service to our membership,” McCollam said. “As that system grows, we have to continue building to keep up with it.”



FROM FIELD TO FUEL

A new multi-seed crush processing facility, served by Central Electric Cooperative, is now operational after two years of construction near Mitchell. Photo submitted by High Plains Processing

New High Plains Processing Seed-Crush Facility Opens Near Mitchell, S.D.

Frank Turner

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A new multi-seed crush processing facility is now operational after nearly two years of construction, and its impact is taking shape across the region.

Located two miles south of Mitchell, the High Plains Processing plant is a large-scale seed crush and refining facility, powered by Central Electric Cooperative in the heart of South Dakota's soybean country.

The facility is backed by South Dakota Soybean Processors, the majority owner and operator, which also operates soybean crush facilities in Volga and Miller, along with a large group of local investors.

"There's a lot of local influence in this plant," said Pat Gathman, general manager of the facility. "Many of the investors originally invested in South Dakota Soybean Processors in Volga, and others invested directly into this project here in Mitchell."

That local investment shows up not

just in ownership, but in how the facility fits into the broader agricultural system. For local producers, it means more of what they grow can be processed closer to the farm.

"Instead of having the soybeans go to an elevator to be processed someplace else, they're being processed right here in Mitchell," Gathman said. "It gives farmers a better opportunity from a market standpoint."

For Central Electric Cooperative members, the plant represents one of three industrial loads being served by the cooperative. In addition to strengthening the local economy, large industrial loads like the multi-seed crush facility provide a consistent demand for electricity and help justify new investments in local infrastructure.

"The soybean plant brings new revenues to Central Electric Cooperative, which helps minimize rates for the entire cooperative membership," said Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen.

As part of the proposal process and selection as the electric provider, East River Electric Power Cooperative built a new substation and made additional system upgrades to serve the facility. Central Electric Cooperative also completed system improvements to support the load.

"The work was completed over a two-year window," Schlimgen said. "The project was on time and under budget during the worst of the supply chain delays."

Inside the facility, energy from the electric cooperative is used to turn familiar crops into multiple usable products, with the primary goal of separating oil from soybeans, sunflowers and camelina and preparing it for a range of markets. Currently, the plant is only accepting soybeans.

"We go through the preparation area where we crack the beans, heat them up, separate the hulls from the soybean itself, flake it, and then send it over to the extraction area," Gathman said.

The process separates oil from the soybean. The oil is refined and prepared for a range of uses, including renewable

fuels and food products, while the remaining material becomes soybean meal, a high-protein livestock feed.

“We bring it into our oil refinery where we refine it, bleach it, deodorize it and send it to storage,” Gathman said. “From there, it can go out by truck or rail to be turned into renewable fuels.”

The Mitchell location was selected in part because it brings together several key pieces of infrastructure needed to support a facility of this scale. Rail access, utilities and proximity to soybean production all played a role in the decision.

“We’ve looked at Mitchell for many, many years,” said Tom Kersting, CEO of South Dakota Soybean Processors. “You’re on a mainline railroad, it’s good soybean ground, and there’s a strong production history in that area. As we look at other seeds like sunflowers or camelina, you don’t have to go very far west of Mitchell before that becomes even more suitable.”

He added that finding a location with the right infrastructure is becoming increasingly difficult.

“There’s just not a lot of good sites left if you want to be on rail, next to a natural gas line, have a good electrical source and access to wastewater,” Kersting said. “There are a lot of infrastructure needs for a large facility like this, and it’s tough to find all of that in one place.”

That infrastructure includes electric service, which was a key part of the project from the beginning.

“Central Electric has been great to work with,” Kersting said. “They built a large substation not just for this plant, but to expand service throughout the area. It’s been a great partnership, and they’ve been very accommodating and easy to work with.”

Since becoming operational, the plant has already made an impact on the local community. The facility employs about 80 people, with the majority coming from the surrounding area.

“We’ve got some outstanding employees here that are really a part of things,” Gathman added.

For Gathman, the experience of moving to Mitchell has stood out just as

much as the work itself.

“The community has been outstanding,” he said. “Not just from the neighbors that we live around, but the community as a whole. It’s been very welcoming and very inviting.”

After moving multiple times throughout his career, including time spent outside the country, the difference was noticeable.

“My wife and I have moved 12 times, mostly around the U.S., and we did a stint in Brazil,” Gathman said. “I grew up in Fargo, and I love Fargo, but it was nothing compared to the reception we got when we came here.”

That sense of connection is something he hopes to carry forward.

“I can’t say enough about it,” he said. “I really want to help pay that back in the long term.”

As High Plains Processing continues to ramp up, its presence is expected to grow alongside it. The facility adds new demand for infrastructure, new options for producers and a new step in how agricultural products move through the region.



High Plains Processing celebrates the groundbreaking of its seed-crush facility in 2023.
Photo submitted by High Plains Processing

MAY 18
**Voter Registration
Deadline for Primary
Election**

5 p.m.
(South Dakota)

JUNE 1
**Last Day to Request
Absentee Ballot.**

5 p.m.
(South Dakota)

JUNE 2
Primary Election
7 a.m.-7 p.m.
(South Dakota)

Photo by Shutterstock

MAY 2-10
**Rustic Designs & More Spring
Show, Flea Market**
41450 264th St.
Ethan, SD
605-770-2411

MAY 2
Consignment Auction
7 a.m. Gates Open
10 a.m. Auction
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

MAY 2
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
2-8 p.m.
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656

MAY 3
Prairie Village Opening Day
2 p.m. Train Ride
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

MAY 6-7
**Energize! Exploring Innovative
Rural Communities Conference**
Hosted by SDSU Extension
Community Vitality
Community Center
Wall, SD
extension.sdstate.edu/energize

MAY 9
1880 Train Opens
Hill City, SD

MAY 15-17
Open House Weekend
Free Entrance
Custer State Park
Custer, SD

MAY 16
2nd Annual Bird Bash
8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Bear Butte State Park
Sturgis, SD
605-390-2901
valleyhummingbird@yahoo.com

MAY 23
Free Christian Men's Event
8 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Barn at Aspen Acres
Spearfish, SD
Register: RiseUpMen.com

MAY 30
**Familyfest Fun Cruise
& SDSC Safety Fair**
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Bucket Trucks, Safety & More
Sioux Falls, SD
thehoodmagazine.com/ff-faqs/

MAY 30
Frühlingsfest
Spring Street Market
1-5 p.m.
Main Street Square
Rapid City, SD
605-718-8484

MAY 30
**Miss Prairie Village/Miss
Prairie Princess Pageant**
6:30 p.m.
Lawrence Welk Opera House
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JUNE 4-6
Black Hills Quilt Show
Thurs. 5-8 p.m.
Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Rushmore Hall
at the Monument
Rapid City, SD

JUNE 13
Journey Into Historic Pickstown
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Ft. Randall Town & Museum
Pickstown, SD
605-487-7299

JUNE 13
Luce Pioneer Day
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Rope & Candle Making, Butter
Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking
Lake Herman State Park
Madison, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 19-20
77th Annual Czech Days
Tabor, SD
www.taborczechdays.com

JUNE 24-27
Crystal Springs Rodeo
Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
Britton, SD
605-880-5077

**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.**

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.