



# Cooperative Connections

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DIRT on  
Underground  
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with a  
Lineworker

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

# Lacreek Electric Annual Meeting to Be Held

Lacreek Electric's 70th annual meeting of members is scheduled for Thursday, April 26, 2018, at the old American Legion Auditorium in Martin, S.D.

The evening will begin with a meal served from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. at the New American Legion dining room. After members are finished eating, they will need to go to the old American Legion Auditorium for the meeting.

Several items from Basin Electric's Electro Technologies will be on display. The business meeting will be at 7 p.m. Capital credit checks will be handed out to those members who were in service in 1992 and 1999.

Directors will be elected from the following zones: Zone 2, East Bennett; Zone 4, East Oglala Lakota; Zone 7, Cherry County, Neb.; and Zone 9, West Shannon. The directors currently serving these zones are: Brent Ireland, Zone 2; Marion Schultz, Zone 4, Tom Schlack, Zone 7; and Donovan Young Man, Zone 9.

All positions are for three-year terms.

Candidates must live in the zone they plan to represent.

The petitions must be signed by at least 15 members living in the zone the candidate is running in.

Petitions can be picked up starting Feb. 26 and must be filed with the board secretary no later than March 26, 2018.

Lacreek's board of directors currently consists of 13 members representing nine zones.

If you choose to run for a board of director at a non-profit organization such as Lacreek Electric, you have inherently accepted fundamental responsibilities in addition to a commitment of time and accountability to the cooperative on behalf of the members it serves. Keep in mind, the board has ultimate legal responsibility for the cooperative.

A director must act in good faith, in the best interest of Lacreek Electric. A director possesses a fiduciary duty to Lacreek Electric and its members. A director has accountability for the assets and resources of the cooperative. They should never use their position on the board to advance their own private interests. A director should concentrate on the goals and vision of Lacreek Electric.

## Article IV - Director Bylaws

**SECTION 1. General Powers.** The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by a Board of thirteen (13) directors which shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative, except such as are by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws conferred upon or reserved to the members.

**SECTION 2. Zones and General Qualifications of Directors.** For the purpose of election and qualification of directors, the service area of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc., shall be divided into nine (9) Zones each to have the number of directors indicated:

- Zone 2 shall consist of territory designated as East Bennett and shall consist of all that portion of Bennett County east of the Range Line between Range 37 and 38 west of the Sixth Principal Meridian with such line extended north and south to the north and south boundaries of Bennett County, respectively, and shall be entitled to one director.
- Zone 4 shall consist of territory designated as East Oglala Lakota and shall include all of that portion of Oglala Lakota County east of the Range Line between Range 42 and 43, and shall be entitled to two directors.
- Zone 7 shall consist of all the Lacreek area in Cherry County, Nebraska, and shall be entitled to one director.
- Zone 9 shall consist of territory designated as West Oglala Lakota and shall include all of that portion of Oglala Lakota County, west of the Range Line between Range 42 and 43, and shall be entitled to two directors.

In the event the territory of the Lacreek Electric Association, Inc., should be enlarged in the future, the enlarged portion shall become a part of the Zone numbered from one to nine, excluding eight as above described with the exterior boundary of which it has the greatest distance of its own exterior boundary contiguous.

### SECTION 3. Tenure of Office.

- (a) Director shall be elected to serve a three-year term, with director terms staggered in such a manner that no more than five (5) directors are up for election in any one year
- (b) All directors shall serve until the close of the annual meeting in the year in which their successors have been elected and qualified. If an election of directors is or cannot be held, a special meeting shall be held for the purpose within a reasonable time thereafter. Failure of an election for a given year shall allow the incumbents whose directorships would have been voted on to hold over only until the next meeting at which an election shall be conducted.
- (c) In the event that the election results in a tie between two candidates, the winner shall be decided by the flip of a coin. In the event that there is a tie between three candidates, three coins shall be flipped, one by each of the candidates or their representatives, until an odd man shall have been established, and said odd man shall be declared the winner. In the event that more than three candidates are tied, the winner shall be determined by drawing lots in the form of slips of paper to be drawn from a hat, one of which shall be marked to designate a winner.

**SECTION 4. Qualifications.** No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director or hold any position in the Association who is not a member and bona fide resident of the area served or to be served by the Association, and in the case of a director, a resident of the zone from which elected. No person who is a close relative of an existing director, as the term "close relative" is defined in Section 9, may be elected to serve on the board of directors during the term of such close relative then serving. No person is eligible to become or remain a director who has been convicted of a felony criminal violation under Federal or State law within the 24 months before their election as a director or during their term(s) as a director. No person is eligible to become a director who is or has been an employee of the Association within the prior three years.

**SECTION 5. Nominations.** Directors of the Cooperative shall be nominated by petition, signed by at least fifteen (15) members of the Cooperative, residing in the zone from which the candidate is to be elected, and stating the candidate's name, post office address, and zone which said candidate is to represent. Such petition shall be filed with the Secretary, not more than sixty (60) days no less than thirty (30) days before the day of the annual meeting. Not less than twenty (20) days before the annual meeting, the Secretary shall post at the front door of the principal office of the Cooperative, a list containing the name, post office address and zone of each person so nominated. A true copy of such list shall be posted by the Secretary prior to the commencement of the annual meeting at the site thereof. The Secretary shall mail with the Notice of Meeting, or separately, but at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names, post office addresses, and zone of the candidates.

In the election of directors, each member shall be entitled to cast the number of votes but no cumulatively which correspond to the total number of directors to be elected, but no member may vote for more nominees than the number of director that are to be elected from or with respect to any particular Zone. Ballots marked in violation of the foregoing restriction with respect to one or more Zones shall be invalid and shall not be counted with respect to such Zone or Zones. Notwithstanding the provisions contained in the Section, failure to comply with any of such provisions shall not affect in any manner whosoever the validity of any action taken by the Board of Directors after the election.

# Lacreek Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-912)

## Board of Directors

Tom Schlack – President  
Jerry Sharp – Vice President  
Troy Kuxhaus – Secretary  
Clarence Allen – Treasurer  
Melvin Cummings – Ellis Rae Hicks –  
Brent Ireland – Neal Livermont –  
Dean O'Neill – Wade Risse – Marion  
Schultz – Connie Whirlwind Horse –  
Donovon Young Man

## Management Staff

Derek Sorley – General Manager  
Sherry Bakley – Executive Assistant  
Josh Fanning – Member Services  
and Procurement Manager  
Anna Haynes – Finance and  
Administration Manager  
Mike Pisha – Operations Manager

## Office Personnel

Tracie Hahn – Accountant II  
Stacey Robinson – Administration  
Assistant and Editor  
Amy Pisha – Right of Way Specialist  
Kasi Harris – Benefits Specialist  
Terri Gregg – Billing Specialist  
Jessica Cook – Billing Specialist  
Lisa Jensen –  
Member Service Representative  
Ashley Turgeon –  
Member Service Representative

## Operations Personnel

Line Foreman: Jesse Byerley  
Journeyman Linemen:  
Dane Claussen – Ryan Pettit – Aaron  
Risse  
Apprentice Linemen:  
Aarin Ainsworth – Jordon Bakley –  
Tyler Brown – Alex Christensen –  
Lonny Lesmeister – Garrett  
Metzinger  
Glenn Smith – Maintenance Man  
Cody Larson – Warehouse Man

**This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer.**

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Lacreek Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 220, Martin, SD 57551; telephone (605) 685-6581; fax (605) 685-6957

## Your Electric Bill

# Level Out Monthly Payments with Budget Billing

Winter months can stretch many a pocketbook when it comes to paying utility bills. If the winter months find you strapped for cash, Lacreek Electric's budget billing program might help.

Budget billing helps level out the dollars without adjusting the kilowatt hour usage.

We can set up a plan for you that will make paying for those kilowatt hours a little less painful. It also helps in your household budget. You know exactly how much your electric bill will be each month. No surprises.

If you enter into a budget billing payment plan, Lacreek Electric will average your kilowatt hours for a 12-month period, along with the dollars to pay for those kilowatt hours.

An average payment amount is established and that is the payment you make every month, no matter how many kilowatt hours you use.

To get started in the budget billing program, your bill must be paid in full and you need to begin making level payments between the months of April and June. The idea is to get enough dollars credited to your account to cover the higher bills.

If you are interested in our budget billing plan, please call Lacreek Electric at 605-685-6581 or long distance callers can call 1-800-655-9324.

## EMPLOYEE NEWS: ADAIR RETIRES



Earl Adair is now enjoying the life of retirement. We want to wish Earl a happy retirement and to let him know he will be missed.



# Power Tools and Equipment Safety

Many do-it-yourself projects involve the use of power tools. Working with power tools requires skilled instruction and training. They can be deadly if not properly used or maintained.

The most common scenario for power tool-related electrocutions is when the equipment comes in contact with live electrical wires while it is being used.

### Facts and Statistics:

- According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there are nearly 400 electrocutions in the United States each year.
- Approximately 15 percent of electrocutions are related to consumer products.
- 8 percent of consumer product-related electrocutions each year are attributed to electrical accidents with power drills, saws, sanders, hedge trimmers and other electric power tools.
- 9 percent of consumer product-related electrocutions each year are caused by accidents involving the use of lawn and garden equipment and ladders, which come into contact with overhead power lines.

### Power Tool Safety Tips:

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electric shocks.
- Do not use power tools with an extension cord that exceeds 100 feet in length.
- Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
- Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
- If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
- When working with electricity, use tools with insulated grips.
- Appropriate personal protective gear should be worn when using power tools.
- Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
- When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electric shock.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Safeguards on outdoor electric tools are there for a reason. Make sure that they are always in place before operating.
- Invest in the safety goggles, hearing protection, dust masks, gloves and other safety gear as recommended for each tool. A few dollars now are well worth the lifetime of good sight and hearing that they are protecting.
- Wear the appropriate clothes for the job. Wearing sandals while mowing the lawn is just asking for trouble.

Source: safeelectricity.org

## Five Easy Ways to

# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Every Day

1. Conserve water by taking showers instead of baths.
2. Turn off all lights when you leave a room.
3. Bring your reusable bags to the market and other stores when shopping.
4. Go paperless. Pay as many bills as possible online.
5. Ditch the car and walk when possible.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Spring is coming! Don't fly kites near power lines."**

**Taylor Brooks, 7 years old**

Taylor is the daughter of Tyson Brooks, Lake Andes, S.D. He receives his internet service through Charles Mix Electric Association, Lake Andes.

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.

# Appetizers and Beverages

## Jalapeno Poppers

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 18 fresh jalapenos cut in half (stems intact if possible), seeds and membrane cleaned out (wear gloves) | 18 slices thin bacon, cut in halves                          |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese   | Bottled barbecue sauce                                       |
| 2/3 cup grated Cheddar cheese   | Toothpicks   |
| 2 green onions, chopped   | Rubber gloves or plastic bags for working with the jalapenos |

In a bowl, combine cream cheese, cheddar cheese and chopped green onion mixing gently. Stuff the pepper halves with the cheese mixture. Wrap bacon slices around each pepper half, covering as much of the surface as possible and do not stretch the bacon. Secure the bacon with a toothpick and then brush the surface of the bacon with barbecue sauce. Place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 275°F. for 1 hour or until bacon is done. Serve hot or room temperature.

***Note:** These can be assembled a day in advance, kept refrigerated and then baked or baked, frozen and reheated prior to serving. Experiment with different cheeses or jellies instead of barbecue sauce.*

**Judy Mendel, Doland**

## Southwest Chili Cups

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1/2 lb. lean ground beef                                  | 1 tsp. McCormick® Garlic Powder      |
| 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed            | 2 (8 oz. each) pkgs. corn muffin mix |
| 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce                                | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese        |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Chili Powder                            | 3/4 cup sour cream                   |
| 2 tsp. McCormick® Oregano Leaves, finely crushed, divided | 1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions   |

Brown beef in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Add beans, tomato sauce, chili powder, 1 tsp. oregano and garlic powder; mix well. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Prepare corn muffin mix as directed on package, adding remaining 1 tsp. oregano. Spoon batter into 12 greased and floured or paper-lined muffin cups, filling each cup 2/3 full. Spoon beef mixture into each cup, gently pressing into batter. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 400°F. for 12 minutes or until edges of muffin cups are golden. Cool 5 minutes in pan on wire rack. Top each cup with sour cream and green onions. Makes 12 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 317, Total Fat 13g, Sodium 659mg, Cholesterol 67mg, Carbohydrates 38g, Protein 12g, Dietary Fiber 3g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Mocha Freeze

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 cups vanilla ice cream, softened | 1 T. chocolate syrup |
| 1/4 cup cold strong coffee         | 1/2 cup crushed ice  |

Combine ingredients in blender; blend well. Makes 4 servings.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp**

## Orange Julius

- |                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1/2 cup water               | 1 T. sugar       |
| 1/2 cup milk                | 1/4 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/3 cup frozen orange juice | 6 ice cubes      |

Combine ingredients in blender; blend well.

**Fay Swenson, Rapid City**

## Triple Berry Special

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 cup frozen strawberries | 1/2 cup buttermilk           |
| 1 cup raspberries         | 1-1/2 cups strawberry yogurt |
| 1 cup blueberries         | 2 T. honey                   |
| 1 cup milk                | 2 T. flax meal               |

Combine ingredients in blender; blend well.

**Hannah Schoenfelder, Cavour**

Please send your favorite casserole, dairy and dessert recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2018. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Maintain an Efficient, Comfortable, Healthy Indoor Humidity Level Year-Round



James Dulley

[www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com)

**Dear Jim:  
I have lived in  
hot and cold  
areas and had  
indoor humidity  
problems in  
both. What is  
an efficient,  
comfortable  
humidity level  
and how can  
I maintain it  
year-round?  
– Steve W.**

**Dear Steve:** Humidity-related problems are generally worse during winter in the north and during summer in the south, but there can be year-round problems everywhere. Indoor humidity levels can be controlled by just opening windows or running the furnace or air conditioner more, but these options increase your utility bills and waste energy.

There is not just one ideal indoor humidity level. When referring to personal comfort, a target of 40 percent to 45 percent relative humidity is good. Most people are comfortable with a relative humidity ranging from 30 percent to 50 percent and can tolerate 20 percent to 60 percent. With relative humidity in the proper range, your furnace or central air conditioner thermostat can be set down or up respectively to save energy.

When the relative humidity level is too high, there can be serious health problems related to allergies, dust mites, mold, mildew, and other harmful microbes. Being at the other extreme with relative humidity too low, a person's mucous membranes may dry out which increase the susceptibility to cold and respiratory illness. Also some nasty microbes prefer excessively dry air.

To understand how to control indoor humidity year-round, it is important to understand the term "relative humidity" or RH. Warmer air can hold more water vapor (moisture) than can colder air. If the air at 75 degrees has a RH of 50 percent, it means the air is holding 50 percent of the maximum amount of water vapor it can hold at that temperature.

If that air drops to 50 degrees, that same amount of water vapor may now be 70 percent RH. When the air gets cool enough, next to window glass during winter or the refrigerator door seal during summer, it reaches a point where the air can no longer hold that much water vapor. This is called the dew point. This is when your windows or refrigerator door sweat.

You can purchase an inexpensive hygrometer at most hardware stores to measure indoor relative humidity. Since you are having humidity-related problems, your best gauge of the proper relative humidity is when the problems are alleviated or, at least, tolerable.

For example, if you have old single-pane windows in the north, you would have to get the relative humidity level to an uncomfortably low level to avoid all window condensation on cold winter nights. In the south, it may not be possible to stop all mold and mildew in the bathroom even if you run the vent fan and your central air conditioner almost continuously.

The keys to maintaining a comfortable and efficient indoor humidity level are controlling the sources of moisture and ventilating them efficiently. The average person gives off one-quarter cup of moisture per hour just breathing. Cooking for a family of four produces five cups of moisture per day. A shower contributes one-half pint and a bath contributes one-eighth pint.

Exterior moisture sources are leaky roofs, plumbing, windows, doors, etc. Once you have taken care of these problem areas, check the slope of the ground around your home. It should slope slightly downward away from the house walls. Even with the best new windows, soggy soil around your home allows excess moisture to migrate indoors year-round.

Installing new efficient replacement windows or exterior storm windows is the best method to control a window condensation problem efficiently. This also saves energy during the summer cooling season. With more efficient glass, you should be able to close insulating window shades at night to save energy. With old windows, closing shades exacerbates condensation problems.

Install new bathroom vent fans with humidity sensors. These come on automatically and run until the humidity level drops. With a manual switch, you have to either turn it off prematurely when you leave for work or let it run all day. Check the seal around the clothes dryer duct leading the outdoor vent.

Install a new furnace/heat pump with a variable-speed blower and compatible thermostat to allow it to run in an efficient dehumidification mode during summer. Make sure the damper handle on the central humidifier is set for the proper season. Use electric countertop cookers and vegetable steamers in the garage instead of in the kitchen during summer.

Send inquiries to:

James Dulley,

Cooperative Connections,

6906 Royalgreen Dr.,

Cincinnati, OH 45244

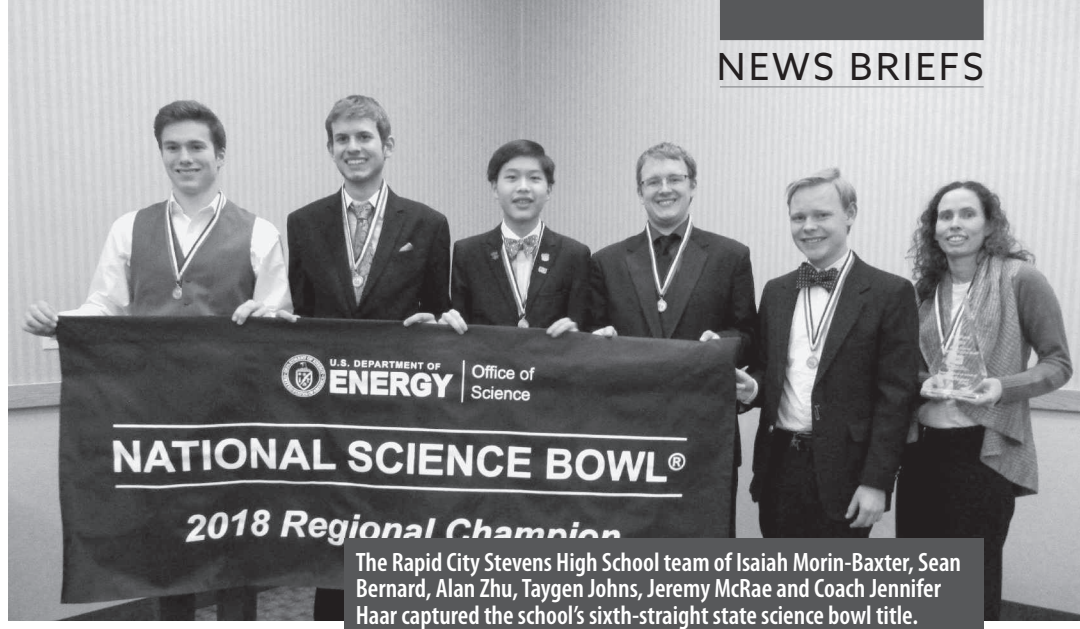
or visit [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).



# S.D. Science Bowl Champs Since 1995

- 2018:** Rapid City Stevens High School
- 2017:** Rapid City Stevens High School
- 2016:** Rapid City Stevens High School
- 2015:** Rapid City Stevens High School – Team No. 1
- 2014:** Rapid City Central High School – Team No. 1
- 2013:** Rapid City Central High School – Team No. 1
- 2012:** Aberdeen Central High School – Team No. 2
- 2011:** Vermillion High School
- 2010:** Greater Sioux Falls Home School Association
- 2009:** Aberdeen Central High School
- 2008:** Aberdeen Central High School
- 2007:** Greater Sioux Falls Home School Association
- 2006:** Rapid City Central High School
- 2005:** Rapid City Central High School
- 2004:** Rapid City Stevens High School
- 2003:** Rapid City Stevens High School
- 2002:** Vermillion High School
- 2001:** Huron High School
- 2000:** Huron High School
- 1999:** Huron High School
- 1998:** Vermillion High School
- 1997:** Alcester-Hudson High School
- 1996:** Philip High School
- 1995:** Aberdeen Central High School
- 1994:** Brookings High School

**Source:** <https://www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/ScienceBowl/Pages/south-dakota-winners.aspx> and <https://science.energy.gov/wdts/nsb/about/historical-information/past-national-science-bowl-winners/past-hs-winners/other-participants-1994/>



The Rapid City Stevens High School team of Isaiah Morin-Baxter, Sean Bernard, Alan Zhu, Taygen Johns, Jeremy McRae and Coach Jennifer Haar captured the school's sixth-straight state science bowl title.

## Science Bowl Six Pack Stevens Captures State Science Bowl Title

Students from Stevens High School in Rapid City, S.D., secured that school's sixth-straight South Dakota Science Bowl Championship title. In fact, a Stevens team has won the competition eight of the 25 times the competition has been held.

The Raiders won the Feb. 17 regional competition for the 2018 National Science Bowl® (NSB) in Huron and advance to compete in the NSB National Finals in April in Washington, D.C. The South Dakota event was coordinated by the Western Area Power Administration.

"The National Science Bowl® continues to be one of the premier academic competitions across the country and prepares America's students for future successes in some of the world's fastest growing fields in science, technology, and engineering," said U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry. "I am proud to oversee a Department that provides such a unique and empowering opportunity for our nation's students, and I am honored to congratulate Stevens High School in advancing to the National Finals, where they will continue to showcase their talents as the top minds in math and science."

The NSB brings together thousands of middle and high school students from across the country to compete in a fast-paced question-and-answer format where they solve technical problems and answer questions on a range of science disciplines

including biology, chemistry, Earth and space science, physics and math.

A series of 113 regional middle school and high school tournaments are being held across the country from January through March. Winners will advance to represent their areas at the National Science Bowl® held from April 26 to April 30 in Washington, D.C., for the final middle school and high school competitions.

Minnesota will be represented in the national competition by a team from Wayzata High School. This will be the school's third appearance at the national competition since 2011.

The top 16 high school teams and the top 16 middle school teams in the National Finals will win \$1,000 for their schools' science departments.

Prizes for the top two high school teams for the 2018 NSB will be announced at a later date. (The first and second place high school teams from the 2017 NSB received all-expenses-paid science trips to Alaska, where they learned more about glaciology, marine and avian biology, geology, and plate tectonics.)

More than 275,000 students have participated in the National Science Bowl® in its 27-year history, and it is one of the nation's largest science competitions. More than 14,000 students compete in the NSB each year.

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



April is set aside as National Safe Digging Month, designed to raise awareness of safe digging practices and the need to call 8-1-1 before any digging projects.

## Underground Excavation Damages Cost **\$1.5 BILLION**

### Common Ground Alliance

[www.cga-dirt.com](http://www.cga-dirt.com)

Damage to underground utilities from digging activities carries a hefty price tag.

Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the stakeholder-run organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines, people who dig near them, and their communities, released its comprehensive 2016 Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report in 2017.

The report, which is the sum of all 2016 data submitted anonymously and voluntarily by facility operators, utility locating companies, one call centers, contractors, regulators, and others, estimates that the total number of underground excavation damages in the U.S. last year rose 20 percent from the year prior, to approximately 379,000, and conservatively cost direct stakeholders at least \$1.5 billion. The 2016 DIRT Report benefitted from a record-high number of event record submissions as well as a record-high Data Quality Index score (a measurement of the completeness of data submissions), yielding the most comprehensive analysis of damages to buried facilities ever compiled.

Data from 2016 informed CGA's first-ever estimate of the societal costs associated with underground



One easy call gets your utility lines marked and helps protect you from injury and expense.

**Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



facility damages in the U.S. As estimated by a very conservative model accounting only for stakeholders' direct costs related to a damage, 2016 damages alone cost approximately \$1.5 billion in the U.S. This estimate does not include property damage to excavating equipment or the surrounding area, evacuations of residences and businesses, road closures and/or traffic delays, environmental impacts, legal costs, injuries or deaths. Customers and users of underground facilities were most impacted, shouldering just over 30 percent of the total societal costs, and emergency responders absorbed more than 23 percent.

While the 2016 damage ratio, which measures damages per 1,000 one call transmissions, increased 14 percent from 2015, construction spending has risen such that the ratio of damages to construction spending has dramatically declined since 2004 (the first year the DIRT Report was issued), and estimated damages have stabilized into the 300,000-400,000 range since 2010 despite increased construction activity in the interim.

"The substantial estimated economic impacts of damages to underground facilities across the U.S. likely do not come as a big surprise to damage prevention advocates who are dedicated to reducing that figure – along with the very human impacts these damages can have – on a daily basis. Nevertheless, we hope that the 2016 DIRT Report's analysis of the \$1.5 billion in societal impact is eye-opening to both the industry and the public at large, and provides clear evidence that reducing damages is solidly in the public interest," said Sarah K. Magruder Lyle, president

and CEO of CGA. "The latest DIRT Report also examines damage prevention paradigms in other countries for the first time, which is an opportunity to consider how this information can help us can work toward our goal of zero damages."

Other significant findings from the 2016 DIRT Report include that damages caused by a failure to call 811 prior to digging have fallen to a record-low 16 percent, part of an encouraging long-term trend.

## 2016 damages alone cost \$1.5 billion in the United States.

Once again, CGA has made an interactive DIRT Dashboard accessible to the public through its website, allowing users to view and manipulate the data through the lens of a specific element, e.g., damages by state, root cause analysis, etc. It contains a series of dashboard visualizations that allow users to sort information through additional filters, giving damage prevention stakeholders a powerful tool for drilling down into the areas where they feel they can have the biggest positive impact. Added this year are the capabilities to filter several dashboards by state or year (inclusive of 2015 and 2016 data), as well as a new dashboard that centers around the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) determinations on the adequacy of state damage prevention programs.

"CGA's Data Reporting and Evaluation

Committee has worked tirelessly to recruit quality data submissions and explore new areas of analysis to inform the 2016 DIRT Report as part of its pursuit to provide damage prevention advocates and the public with comprehensive, relevant information," said Bob Terjesen, Data Committee co-chair from National Grid. "DIRT data is more accessible than ever with the interactive DIRT Dashboard hosted on the CGA website, making it possible for any stakeholder to explore the unique ways each of us can have an impact on the staggering \$1.5 billion in societal costs caused by damages to buried utilities, and on protecting the people who work near them."

The complete DIRT Annual Report for 2016 is available for download at [www.commongroundalliance.com](http://www.commongroundalliance.com), and stakeholders interested in submitting data to the 2017 report or establishing a Virtual Private Dirt account should visit the DIRT site at [www.cga-dirt.com](http://www.cga-dirt.com).

## About CGA

CGA is a member-driven association of nearly 1,700 individuals, organizations and sponsors in every facet of the underground utility industry. Established in 2000, CGA is committed to saving lives and preventing damage to North American underground infrastructure by promoting effective damage prevention practices. CGA has established itself as the leading organization in an effort to reduce damages to underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. For more information, visit CGA on the web at <http://www.commongroundalliance.com>.

# Key Takeaways

This year's DIRT Report highlights several key takeaways that demonstrate that despite the increase in damages submitted to DIRT, the industry continues to make progress in several key areas:

- Estimated total U.S. damages increased 20 percent, from 317,000 to 379,000.
- Since 2010, damages have stabilized into the 300,000-400,000 range despite there being a rebound in construction spending.
- Damages per 1000 transmissions increased 14 percent, from 1.54 in 2015 to 1.76.
- However, the rate is lower than the 2013 and 2014 rates of 2.07 and 1.84 respectively, indicating a long-term trend of

improvement.

- The ratio of damages to construction spending has declined dramatically from 0.63 damages per million dollars of construction spending in 2004 to 0.41 in 2016.
- Call before you dig awareness remains consistent with historical findings at 45 percent (survey taken June 2017).
- The societal costs associated with underground facility damages in the U.S. in 2016 are estimated at \$1.5 billion. This is a minimum estimate based on routine costs for stakeholders directly connected to a damaged facility. It does not include costs such as property damage, evacuations, road closures, environmental impacts, lawsuits, injuries, and fatalities



## Where is Your Account Number?

A member's account number has been hidden somewhere in this newsletter. If you find your number, call the office before March 30 and you will receive a \$40 credit on your next month's billing. If no one finds the account number, the credit will be \$50 in the next issue. Happy searching!

## Read Your Heat Meter

Please read your heat meter to receive your heat credit during the heat season which is October through April. If you would like to have an office-read heat meter, please contact our office at 605-685-6581. A \$25 charge is required to install this type of meter.



# Please Return Your Payment Stub

Please return your stub with your payment so that we may be sure the proper account is credited. If you do not have your payment stub, *please make sure to include the name and the account number with the payment.*

Also, if you are taking your payment to one of our drop box locations, **PLEASE HAVE THE CLERK CALL OUR OFFICE TO CONFIRM YOUR PAYMENT**, whether it is a monthly payment, to pay on your delinquent account or if your account has been disconnected. This will ensure we have been notified in a timely fashion to make sure we meet all our member's needs.



## MEMBER NEWS



These two members – Pat Henry, left, and Lyle Swimmer, right, – came in and paid their bill in full on Feb. 1. They received Lacreek Electric apparel for their efforts. Thanks!

## Lineworker Appreciation Day April 9, 2018



Remember to #ThankALineworker

# January Board Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the board of directors was held on Jan. 16, 2018.

Also present were General Manager Derek Sorley, Operations Manager Mike Pisha, Finance and Administration Manager Anna Haynes, Member Services and Procurement Manager Josh Fanning, Staff Assistant Sherry Bakley and Administration Assistant Stacey Robinson.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes as mailed.

Additions to the agenda were asked for by President Schlack.

The following additions were made:

## ■ Executive Session

The Operating Report for November and the List of Disbursements and Investments for December were presented by Office Manager Anna Haynes and reviewed by the board.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the Check Audit Committee's review of the list of December checks and disbursements. The February Check Audit Committee will be (Marion "chairman", Wade and Dean).

Anna presented the Analysis of Investments. The investments were reviewed by the board.

Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the list of new members, attached hereto.

Anna reported that Eide Bailly will be in the office the week of Feb. 12; that we gave back Earned Credit to all members based off their 2017 revenue; we have not received the estimated allocation of Capital Credits for December 2017; that we have begun to utilize the entire IVUE system in the office; there will be an online training she will be attending with Kasi, Tracie and Sherry for the 2018 Tax, Finance, Accounting and RUS Mid-Year Update; that the Running Strong program is offering a heat match along with several Districts of \$100; on the possibility of reporting uncollectable accounts to the credit bureaus and about payment assistance promises.

Derek asked the board if auditors Eide Bailly could be video conferenced rather than have them make a trip to the office. The board was in agreement to have Eide Bailly give their report via video conference. 252000202

President Schlack asked for a motion to re-address the December 2017 board minutes because a change in verbiage was needed. A motion was made, seconded and approved to re-open discussion on the December 2017 board minutes. President Schlack then asked for a motion to update the December 2017 board minutes.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to update and approve the revised December 2017 board minutes.



**Lacreek Electric Association**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Mike reported power was installed to the control house and Besler will start on Jan. 22 at the Wanblee Tap; on construction in Merriman and Vetal; on work in progress; that truck No. 6 has been delivered and working on getting the flatbed installed; on a Duralift and Altec demonstration; he has hired Brad Hahn as a 1,000-hour employee and went over two near misses the line crew had.

The safety report was presented by Mike.

Josh reported that Earl Adair will be retiring March 2 and Cody Larson has accepted the full-time warehouse position; that Blanket PO's are being utilized as of Jan. 1; on the reorganization of the warehouse shop; he attended a meeting with Rushmore on ad campaigning; that Rushmore discussed loan control and possible problems with the Trans Canada pump sites in the Rushmore service territory; he will be attending the stock show on Jan. 29-30; has been able to utilize the line crew to help install heat meters and the video shoot for the annual meeting with be Feb. 28.

Donovan reported on the SDREA meeting he attended.

Marion reported on the SDREA annual meeting he attended.

Derek reported that the Martin Substation/WAPA contract with Rushmore has been finalized; on the tax reform package; about the DGC UREA start up update; on the Stake Out Engineering program with Rushmore, which came in under budget; that he attended the SDREA annual meeting in Pierre; the Policy and By-Law Committee met before the board meeting and reviewed Policy #24 and the new Procurement Policy which are being finalized; about the upcoming NRECA annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn., and on upcoming events and meetings.

Discussion was held on the 2018 Action Committee for Rural Electrification® (ACRE®) membership dues.

Anna reviewed the 990 form.

The board excused the staff and administration assistant and went into an executive meeting from 3:30 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.

Next Board Meeting – Feb. 20, 2018 at 1 p.m.





# A DAY WITH A LINEWORKER

## Cooperatives' Dependable Problem Solvers

**Paul Wesslund**

NRECA Contributing Writer

Larry's typical day as an electric co-op lineworker actually started the night before. He was getting ready for bed when a woman reported her power was out. It was Larry's weekly overnight to be on call, so the co-op truck was already in his driveway. He drove it to the woman's house, ID'd a problem in the base of the meter, installed a temporary fix until an electrician could get out the next day and returned home two hours later. He would report for work at the co-op office by 7:30 the next morning.

"I like hunting down problems," said Larry. "I know I'm doing something the members can't do themselves. They depend on us."

Larry's like a lot of electric utility lineworkers, said Mark Patterson, director of safety and loss control for the South Dakota Rural Electric Association.

"There are more people who can't do this work than can do it," said Patterson. "It takes specific skills and intestinal fortitude. They're a 'get it done' type of personality."

Larry isn't like a lot of lineworkers, he is a lot of lineworkers. He's actually not a real person, but a combination of the real people interviewed for this story about a typical day for a lineworker.



## Following procedure

Larry started his day in a room with the rest of the lineworkers, leafing through stacks of paper – checklists, maps, work orders – planning the day's work. They compared notes, asked who was familiar with the area they were headed to and analyzed last night's college ball game.

In addition to taking time to coordinate the plans and paperwork, these guys (there are a few women among the more than 15,000 co-op lineworkers around the country) need to keep track of a lot of equipment. Neatly organized shelves in the warehouse hold saws, drills, climbing hooks, insulated work poles, trash cans and binoculars. They need to be wearing safety gear or have it close at hand – hard hat, safety glasses, fire-retardant uniforms, steel-toed shoes, regular work gloves, hot-line safety gloves.

One more delay kept the crews from driving off to their first jobs, and it was probably the most important reason of all – the weekly safety meeting.

The co-op's safety coordinator opened the meeting. He said that while catastrophic contact with electric current is always top concern, today's meeting would focus on avoiding "slips, trips and falls that can cause very big issues." A safety specialist from the state co-op association told the group that he disagreed with the common idea that a lineworker's job is dangerous: "It's hazardous and unforgiving, but it doesn't have to be dangerous if you follow

the right procedures. We have the tools, the rules and the knowledge that can keep it from being dangerous."

By mid-morning, the convoy was ready. Three lineworkers drove three trucks: a service truck, a bucket truck pulling a trailer with a large spool of wire and a digger truck with a huge auger on top and pulling a trailer carrying a backhoe. They headed across the county for the day's job – moving a ground-mounted transformer 500 feet up a hill, closer to an underground connection to a new barn.

"It's going to be muddy out there after the rain we've had," said Larry. "When you're working on underground connections, mud is not your friend."

## They're a 'get 'er done' type of personality.

We neared the site by late morning. To avoid interrupting the field work, the team stopped for an early lunch. Over burgers, I asked Larry about his training and his typical day.

## We don't say 'hurry up'

"There's nothing routine," he said. A work plan might get changed because someone crashed their car into a utility pole. Tomorrow he would be presenting a safety demonstration to a group of elementary school students. He told about the satisfac-

tion of traveling out of state to help repair hurricane damage.

When the caravan arrived at the work site, the trucks drove up the packed, crushed-rock driveway, avoiding the soft ground on either side.

The three lineworkers gathered near the front of one of the trucks for what a lot of co-ops call a "tailgate meeting" and this co-op calls a "job briefing." They read through forms, noting the address, cross street, job and account number. All three men signed the form.

They broke their huddle and de-energized the lines they would be working on, calling to let the office know the power had been cut. The next step was to use the backhoe to dig around the new connection pipes sticking out of the ground, making room for a ground-mounted transformer.

When the backhoe finished digging around the new transformer location, it drove down to the old transformer site. The crew unhooked the electric connections then chained the transformer to the backhoe's loader bucket to be carried up the hill. But to keep the backhoe from getting stuck in the mud on the trip up the hill, the trucks had to be backed down the driveway to clear the way for the backhoe to drive up on firmer ground.

Two of the crew pulled new wire underground, then cut and spliced the two-inch diameter wires into the transformer box. They secured the connections before cleaning up the work site.

On the return trip, the convoy visited the truck stop to top off the gas tanks. Back at the co-op, they checked the paperwork for the next day's jobs, then stocked the trucks with the equipment they would need for an early start.

Before we said goodbye, I asked Larry what thought of the time it took to follow all the procedures of their work day.

"We don't think, 'this is taking a long time,'" he said. "We just think, 'this is how you do it.' We don't say, 'hurry up.' We look out for each other."

Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

## National Lineworker Appreciation Day April 9, 2018

**M**ore than 15,000 electric cooperative lineworkers serve on the front lines of our nation's energy needs, maintaining 42 percent of electric distribution lines.

Lineworkers perform intricate work, often in dangerous conditions, to ensure we receive the safe, reliable power we depend on.







West River Electric Association board secretary Jamie Lewis shares his story.

# YOUNG, PROFESSIONAL AND RURAL:

## South Dakota Leaders Talk of How to Connect

**Brenda Kleinjan**

[brenda.kleinjan@sdrea.coop](mailto:brenda.kleinjan@sdrea.coop)

Two South Dakotans – one an electric cooperative employee and the other a co-op director – took to the national stage to discuss what it takes to attract and keep young professionals in rural America.

Courtney Deinert, Communications Manager at Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell, S.D., and Jamie Lewis, secretary of the board of directors at West River Electric Association in Wall, S.D., were two of four speakers on a panel entitled, “Attracting and Retaining Young Professionals to Rural America.” The panel was moderated by Adam Schwartz of the Cooperative Way and was one of the sessions held at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 25-28. Other panelists included a college student from Wisconsin and a Kentucky dairy farmer/lobbyist/trial lawyer.

Deinert had a unique story to tell.

As a high school senior, she received a scholarship from her local electric cooperative, Charles Mix Electric Association in Lake Andes. She used the



Jamie Lewis speaks with cooperative leaders from Wisconsin.



scholarship money to pursue an undergraduate degree in English at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion and her master's degree in adult and higher education.

"I like to think that scholarship has come full circle for my hometown co-op. I work at a neighboring co-op and I get to collaborate between my hometown co-op and my current cooperative on projects," Deinert said.

She said the investment made by her cooperative was important but the co-op's follow up left an impression.

"Just because a high school student isn't interested in becoming a lineman or an accountant doesn't mean they won't play a role in your cooperative someday," she told those gathered.

She stressed the follow up with area youth is important.

"They do want to help. They do want to be involved and they WILL come back to rural America if we help them with that follow up," she said.

In 2013, at 23 years old, Jamie Lewis was elected to the board of directors of West River Electric Association in Wall, S.D.

He is arguably one of the youngest electric cooperative directors in the nation.

"I had just come out of college and an older director approached me and said, 'I have a job for you if you're interested. Run

**Just because a high school student isn't interested in becoming a lineman or an accountant doesn't mean they won't play a role in your cooperative someday.**

for the West River Electric board," Lewis recounted. Lewis graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in animal science and minors in agribusiness, ag marketing and business. He returned home to work in the family's family ranch and help with the family's insurance business.

"It was a contested election and I was lucky enough to be elected. I was then selected to be board secretary," said Lewis.

He then set his sights on running for a national cooperative board.

"I was later elected to the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange board of directors," Lewis said. Federated is the insurer of many of America's electric cooperatives.

Lewis noted that his fellow directors are not typically in his age demographic.

"Most of them have kids or grandkids older than me," Lewis said. The age difference can be a benefit, he said. "Sometimes I look at the issues a little different from the others."

"Being part of the co-op allowed me to come back to rural America and be part of that," he said.

The panelists all agreed that being able to be connected via Internet is essential in keeping people in rural America.

"The internet for this generation is what electricity was 80 years ago," Schwartz noted during the panel.



Courtney Deinert, communications manager at Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell, S.D., spoke of getting youth involved in cooperatives.

## March 24

Spring Craft Fair/Flea Market,  
American Legion Hall,  
Wagner, SD, 605-384-3543

## March 24

Milltones Spring Show, 7 p.m.,  
High School Theatre, Milbank,  
SD

## April 5

McCrossan's Wildest Banquet  
Auction in the Midwest  
featuring A Night Out with  
the PBR, 5:30 p.m., Arena,  
Sioux Falls, SD, Tickets:  
\$75 each, 605-339-1203,  
www.mccrossan.org

## April 6

SPURS Spring Dance, Dakota  
Events Center, Aberdeen, SD,  
Tickets available at the Hitch  
'N Post or by calling  
605-226-1099

## April 6-7

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food,  
Wine and Beer Festival,  
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

## April 6-8

Professional Bull Riders Built  
Ford Tough Series, Sioux Falls,  
SD, 605-367-7288

## April 7-8

Spring Zonta Vendor and  
Craft Show, Northridge Plaza,  
Pierre, SD, 605-222-1403,  
bkstand@pie.midco.net

## April 7-8

Hats Off to the Artists Art  
Show, Faulkton, SD,  
605-598-4160

## April 25-29

Black Hills Film Festival, Hill  
City, SD, 605-574-9454

## April 28-29

Bike Show, Ramkota  
Convention Center,  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-290-0908



**April 28-29:** Quilters Guild 2018 Quilt Show, Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,  
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, 605-690-8281 or mcfarlas@brookings.net

Photo courtesy: Brookings Quilters Guild

## May 5

Consignment Auction,  
Prairie Village, Madison,  
SD, 800-693-3644,  
www.prairievillage.org

## May 6

Opening Day, Prairie Village,  
Madison, SD, 800-693-3644,  
www.prairievillage.org

## May 13

1880 Train Mother's Day  
Express, Hill City, SD,  
605-574-2222

## May 18

Turkey Races, Huron, SD,  
605-352-0000

## May 18-19

Sioux Empire Film Festival,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

## May 18-20

State Parks Open House and  
Free Fishing Weekend, Pierre,  
SD, 605-773-3391

## May 18-20

Tesla Road Trip Rally, Custer,  
SD, 605-673-2244

## June 3

Prairie Village Pageant,  
Prairie Village, Madison,  
SD, 800-693-3644,  
www.prairievillage.org

## June 7-9

Senior Games, Sioux Falls,  
SD, Contact Nicole Tietgen at  
605-665-8222

## June 8

Northern Bull Riding Tour,  
Prairie Village, Madison,  
SD, 800-693-3644,  
www.prairievillage.org

## June 8-9

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD,  
Contact Brett Rauterhaus at  
605-772-1430

## June 15-16

Czech Days, Tabor, SD,  
www.taborczechdays.com,  
taborczechdays@yahoo.com

## June 16

Holy Rocka Rollaz concert,  
Prairie Village, Madison,  
SD, 800-693-3644,  
www.prairievillage.org

## June 21-23

Senior Games, Mitchell, SD,  
Contact Howard Bich at  
605-491-0635

## June 24

Variety Show, Prairie Village,  
Madison, SD, 800-693-3644,

## July 7

Hedahls Auto Value Car Show,  
Hav-A-Rest Campground,  
Redfield, SD, 605-380-9985

## July 10-15

4th Annual 3 Wheeler Rally,  
Deadwood, SD, 605-717-7174,  
www.d3wr.com

**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.**