

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The success of the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally requires many megawatts of power provided by member-owned electric cooperatives, including lighting the main stage at the Buffalo Chip

Photo by Travel South Dakota

The Rally

Keeping the Sturgis Rally juiced up
Pages 8-9

High-flying fun at Catfish Bay
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Save a Life: Avoid Distractions While Driving



Matt Hotzler
Manager

Some temptations are hard to resist. While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception – just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous, and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, I thought it would be a good time to remind folks, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects, and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds.

At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, PLEASE move over if possible, slow down and give them extra space to perform their work safely. This is a real concern for our crews. By moving over, you can do your part to make sure they make it home at the end of the day. We use utility work ahead signs to warn you of the work ahead. Please use care when you see those signs.

At H-D Electric, safety is foremost in everything we do – for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait and waiting just might save a life.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

H-D ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 018-905)

General Manager: Matt Hotzler

Headquarters Employees:

Annie Aberle – Finance and

Administration Manager

Michelle Prins – Billing Clerk

Heidi Brewer-Grimlie – Accounting Clerk

Jami Bolden – Receptionist/Cashier

Roger Cutshaw – Engineer

Darren Matthies – Building Property
Worker

Operations:

Troy Kwasniewski – Operations Manager

Todd Sprang – Line Foreman

Line Crew:

Pat Kirby – Operations Support

Joe Raml – Lead Lineworker

Cody Scarrott – Lineworker

Derek Bille – Lineworker

Kevin Holida – Lead Lineworker

Matt Miller – Equipment Operator/
Mechanic

Joseph Jordan Jr. – Apprentice Lineworker

Eric Page – Apprentice Lineworker

Member Services:

Tom Lundberg – Member Services
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Noah Reichling – Electrician

Brady Krause – Journey Electrician

Amanda Reese – Apprentice Electrician

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BACK TO SCHOOL

August is #BackToSchoolSafetyMonth!

Whether you're taking the kiddos to school or driving through a school zone, let's all do our part to keep students safe.

August is
**BACK TO
SCHOOL
SAFETY
MONTH**

Stay alert!
Slow down and be alert in
residential areas and near schools.
Be especially watchful of kids in
rural areas without sidewalks.

Capital Credits

What are capital credits?

Capital credits are one of the many benefits of cooperative membership and represents each member's share of the H-D Electric's margins and ownership. Since H-D Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative, it does not earn profits in the sense that other businesses do.

Instead, any margins, or revenue remaining after all the expenses have been paid, are allocated to the members in proportion to their electricity purchases.

These margins represent an interest-free loan of operating capital by the membership to the cooperative. From these margins the cooperative builds equity with the intention of repaying the member's investment, which is done through the retirement of capital credits.

Electrical safety basics for children

The back-to-school season is a time when parents and school children fall back into the familiar routine of getting up early, getting dressed, grabbing breakfast, preparing lunch and shuffling out the door each day.

It's a time when students return to a learning mindset, ready to take on new ideas, knowledge and information.

Parents should seize the opportunity to teach school-age children a valuable and potentially lifesaving lesson: Respect electricity.

Here are several electrical safety basics every child should know:

- Mixing water and electricity can be deadly. Teach children not to use electric toys or other devices near water or in the rain.
- Plugging multiple devices into a single outlet or power strip can create sparks and even cause a fire if that outlet can't handle the load. Teach kids to plug into surge-protected power strips or to use one device at a time and unplug the rest.

When they unplug those devices, they should grab them by the plug, not the cord. Yanking a cord out of an electrical outlet can damage the appliance, the outlet or the plug.

- Electrical cords can be strangling hazards and might cause electrical burns if they are misused. Make sure youngsters keep cords away from their mouths and necks. It's best to hide cords so they aren't a temptation.

- Electrical outlets are receptacles for electrical plugs only. Children should know from an early age that it's a no-no to put foreign objects or fingers into power plugs. Sticking any other items into an electrical socket can lead to electric shock or death. Use childproofing outlet covers.

- Flying kites and climbing trees are never safe activities near power lines. If a tree has a power line running through it - or if it's even within reach of the line - it's not a safe place to play. If a kite gets caught in a power line, the child should not tug on it to get it loose. The string could conduct electricity and seriously hurt the child.

- Electrical substations are fenced off to keep children and animals out of the area. If a toy or small pet gets inside the fence, the child should inform a parent or teacher, who can call a trained worker to come and retrieve it.

COOPERATIVES HELP OUR MEMBERS SOLVE PROBLEMS



Electric co-op member services personnel focus their attention on making sure co-op members get the power they need when they need it. They help homeowners and businesses solve problems and find solutions to operate more efficiently. A group of co-op representatives recently took a guided tour of the Riverview Dairy near Watertown to learn how the dairy functions and how the local co-op can provide better service to the facility.

You can find out more about the many ways our electric cooperatives serve our members by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



Swim safely

Alayna Smith

Alayna, age 10, alerts both the young and old alike to refrain from swimming when any thunderstorms are around. Alayna is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith and they are members of H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake.

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.

TASTY SUMMER SALADS

SHELL MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

1 7-oz. box of shell macaroni, cooked, rinsed and cooled
2-3 fresh tomatoes, chopped
1/3 green pepper, chopped
3 celery ribs, sliced thinly
1/4 c. chopped onion
1 cucumber, seeded & chopped

Toss ingredients together; set aside.

Dressing

1/2 c. canola oil
3/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. vinegar
3/4 c. catsup
Dash of lemon juice

METHOD

Mix dressing ingredients well with wire whip and add to veggies and macaroni.

Joan Antonen, Arlington

TUNA AND EGG SALAD

Ingredients:

3 6-oz. cans tuna packed in water
3 eggs hard boiled, peeled and chopped
2 small dill pickles diced
1 large celery rib diced
1/4 cup red onion minced
1 tbsp. lemon juice or red wine vinegar
2 tsp. garlic powder, optional
1/4 tsp. salt, to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2%+ fat
2 tbsp. mayo

METHOD

Drain cans with tuna well by pressing hard on the lid while draining. Transfer to a large bowl and separate into flakes with a fork. Add chopped and peeled hard boiled eggs, pickles, celery, red onion, lemon juice, garlic powder (if using), salt, pepper, yogurt and mayo. Stir well with a fork and refrigerate. Serve cold in a sandwich or over salad greens.

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GARDEN VEGGIES 'N ROTINI

Ingredients:

3/4 c. oil
3/4 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. white sugar
1 tsp. garlic salt
2 tbsp. onion flakes
1 tbsp. mustard
Bring the above ingredients to a boil and remove from heat.
Cook 4 cups colored rotini noodles. Rinse and chill.
Cut up the following in chunky pieces:
1 tomato
1 cucumber
assorted peppers
1/2 red onion

METHOD

Stir veggies together with the rotini and dressing. Chill before serving.

Ginny Jensen, Volga

NANCY'S MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

Dice:

1 onion
1 green pepper
1-2 carrots
1 cup celery
2 cups Velveeta Cheese

Add:

1 can peas
1 - 16 oz. pkg. macaroni cooked and drained

Dressing:

1 cup sugar
1 pint mayo
1 cup white vinegar
1 - 14 oz. can evaporated milk

METHOD

Mix together gently and refrigerate, best overnight. Add any type of meat, boiled eggs etc., as desired.

Nancy Nelson, Mission Hill

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Q: How do I operate my thermostat to use less energy and still be comfortable?

A: Heating and cooling account for about half the energy used in a typical home, so it's a great place to use less energy. When used wisely, your thermostat can help reduce wasted energy.

Here's some information on thermostat types, common operational misconceptions and best practices you can start today.

TYPES OF THERMOSTATS

Mechanical thermostats are easy to control by adjusting a dial or sliding switch. The downfall is you must make temperature adjustments manually, which is easy to forget. They are inefficient because they typically heat or cool the home beyond the set point.

If your cooling is set to 72 degrees, a mechanical thermostat may actually cool your home to 70 degrees before it turns off, wasting energy. Then it might not come on again until the home reaches 74 degrees. That four-degree temperature change is noticeable and can lead people to adjust the thermostat setting down even more, which wastes more energy.

Also, some mechanical thermostats contain mercury. You can determine that by removing the front plate and looking for small glass bulbs. If your thermostat contains mercury, replace it and find a way to properly recycle it.

Digital thermostats are more accurate, efficient and some are programmable, which is a great option for people who don't have internet or don't want their thermostat data tracked.

Smart thermostats - which require an internet connection - are Wi-Fi-enabled and can be controlled using a smartphone app. Programming is easier, and you can track and manage use and temperature data. However, that data is shared with the manufacturer.

Smart thermostats can learn your preferences and set a schedule that automatically adjusts the temperature. Some have geofencing, which

adjusts the temperature based on the distance your smartphone is from home.

MISCONCEPTIONS

A common misconception is the higher you turn your thermostat up or down, the faster your home's temperature will change. Turning your thermostat down to 55 degrees to cool your home faster is like repeatedly pushing the elevator button and expecting it to come faster.

It's likely you will forget you adjusted it and waste energy by over heating or cooling the home. Set your desired temperature for heating and cooling or program your thermostat so you don't make extreme adjustments.

Many people believe it takes more energy to heat or cool a house instead of leaving it the same temperature. The larger the temperature variance between inside and outside, the more energy your system uses. Setting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day can save up to 10 percent a year on your energy bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

BEST PRACTICES

Use these heating and cooling tips from the DOE to add efficiency and savings to your home:

- Set it to 78 degrees in the summer when you are home and awake, and warmer at night or when away. Set your thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter when you are home and awake, and cooler at night or when you are away.
- Upgrade to a programmable or smart thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature throughout the day and when you leave the house.
- When on vacation, set your thermostat to 85 degrees in the summer and 55 degrees in the winter.
- In the summer, fans allow you to set your thermostat about 4 degrees warmer without feeling it. Remember, fans cool people not rooms, so turn them off when you leave a room.

Use your thermostat to optimize energy efficiency and find a balance between comfort and affordability.



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group



A mayday drill was conducted near New Underwood to train co-op employees and first responders. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Mock drill benefits cooperative employees and responders

Billy Gibson

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A tragic scene unfolded near New Underwood last month with several accident victims lying on the ground severely injured after making contact with an energized power line.

There was blood, bruises and burn marks. Sirens blared, engines revved and vehicles kicked up clouds of dust as more than a half-dozen agencies arrived to save lives, manage the crisis and reduce the risk of further harm. Paramedics, deputies and other first responders began CPR on the victims and hauled them into ambulances.

Fortunately, the scenario was fake news, all part of a mock mayday drill organized by West River Electric at the Brinks Training Facility east of Rapid City. The co-op staged the drill not only for the benefit of its linemen and other employees but also to educate first responders on how to work in the presence of electric utility infrastructure.

Participants were the Rapid City Fire Department, Box Elder Fire Department, Pennington County Sheriff's Office, Life Flight, Wall Ambulance, State Highway Patrol and Pennington County Dispatch.

"The goal was for everyone to get something out of it, from the paramedics to the dispatchers who accepted the mayday call," said Brendan Nelson, line superintendent at West River Electric. "Thanks to everyone involved. We hope we never actually have to go through something like this. All the co-ops in our system strive to develop a culture of safety and we're all working to achieve the same objective - delivering power to our members safely and economically, and getting everybody back home."

He said the exercise went smoothly and there were many lessons learned regarding managing an accident scene, coordinating communication and maneuvering around what are always assumed to be energized power lines. After the drill, a debriefing session was held at the co-op's office in Rapid City.

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, also attended the exercise. He said electric cooperatives place the highest priority on safety and invest considerable time and resources toward making sure line workers are prepared to respond to emergency situations as they arise.

"All of our co-ops take safety training

very seriously," Patterson said. "Part of that commitment means participating in these kinds of drills and other training programs to make sure we're prepared to respond to accidents and emergency situations as expeditiously as possible. To make sure our response is effective, it's important that we have a good idea about our roles and responsibilities well before an accident occurs."

Patterson and his team at the association conduct on-site safety programs throughout the year, including rubber-gloving, hot-sticking, grounds testing, pole-top rescues, equipment inspections, state and federal rules and regulations, First Aid and more.

He emphasized that intra-agency coordination and awareness of the presence of power lines are paramount in successfully managing an accident scene and saving lives.

"Sometimes an emergency responder might not be fully aware of power lines and transformers and other equipment because they're focusing on other things in an intense situation," Patterson said. "So we just want to have some conversations to make sure everyone knows that we need to assume all equipment is energized and to notify us as soon as possible so we can get to the scene and do what we need to do to lower the risk of danger."

To see a video of the drill, visit <https://youtu.be/H0S0LLIrLbk>.

CO-OPS KEEP THE RALLY ROLLING



Electric co-ops are committed to keeping The Rally energized

Billy Gibson

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The frenetic atmosphere that has come to be associated with the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally can be loud, chaotic and - well let's just say - very colorful.

But behind those vivid scenes are electric cooperative employees working hard to make sure the Rally has the juice required to keep the lights glaring, the amps blaring, the air conditioners humming and the blenders blending.

The three local co-ops that serve the Black Hills and surrounding area are Butte Electric, West River Electric and Black Hills Electric. In conjunction with wholesale supplier Rushmore Electric in Rapid City and power generator Basin Electric based in Bismarck, N.D., the co-ops deliver much of the electricity used by campgrounds, restaurants, shops, concert stages, biker bars and other entertainment venues.

The power providers are diligent about keeping pace with the increasing growth of The Rally, which is rebounding from a temporary drop in attendance brought on by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years.

Corey Trapp, chief engineering officer at Rushmore Electric, said power demand can increase significantly during The Rally. For instance, he indicated the area north of Sturgis served by Butte Electric that includes Full Throttle and other sites can jump from 1-2 MW to 8-9 MW during the event.

At the Buffalo Chip, West River Electric has nearly 40 meters located across the 600-acre spread serving scores of bars, campgrounds and cabins, as well as the main stage. Power use skyrockets from about 30 KW to more than 4.2 MW.

This year marks the 82nd installment of The Rally. Ten years ago, organizers were concerned about the potential future of the event if younger riders didn't start joining in on the fun. According to data gathered by local government agencies, Mount Rushmore National Park and other sources, attendance is back on the upswing.

An estimated 555,000 riders participated in the Rally last August, up nearly 14 percent from 2020 and an increase of 9.5 percent over the five-year average from 2016 to 2020.

Statistics show that nearly 30 percent of attendees were first-timers in 2021, which is welcomed news for promoters who work year-around to keep The Rally rolling, including



RALLY FACTS

- 🏍️ 555,000 – No. of 2021 participants
- 🏍️ 54 – avg. age in 2019
- 🏍️ 46.5 – avg. age in 2021
- 🏍️ 52% - campground attendees
- 🏍️ 18% - hotel attendees
- 🏍️ \$81,005 - avg. household income
- 🏍️ \$382 - spent per day
- 🏍️ 85% - motorcycle owners
- 🏍️ 81% - Harley owners
- 🏍️ \$1,090,398 - raised for charity

the city of Sturgis, the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the Black Hills and Badlands Tourism Association and scores of business owners who depend on the seasonal revenue to sustain their operations.

The increased buzz of activity keeps the V-twin economic engines purring throughout the Black Hills area, but delivering the power has its own set of challenges that may not be apparent to partiers. Electric cooperative officials report that global shortages in materials and supplies make it difficult to meet the increase in power demand, but they're committed to doing everything possible to meet that demand.

"We're seeing delays in equipment necessary for infrastructure upgrades, but we know how important electricity is for The Rally to run successfully," said Brett Fosheim, director of operations at Butte Electric based in Newell. "A lot of visitors and business owners are

An estimated 555,000 visitors enjoyed the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally last year. As attendance climbs, electric cooperatives are committed to delivering the power needed to keep the party going. *Photos by South Dakota Travel*

depending on us, so we're prepared every year to step up to the plate with power that's affordable, reliable and there when everybody needs it."

Fosheim said just as organizers work all year long to plan and promote the 10-day event, electric cooperatives also anticipate the rise in electricity demand and coordinate with their common power generator, Basin Electric, to fill the need and handle peak loads. Butte Electric serves Full Throttle, Days Inn Campground and the Sons of Silence Campground, among other venues.

Because electric cooperatives are created by their members to serve their members, they've been delivering electricity since the early days of The Rally. The annual event traces its roots back to 1938 when a group of Indian Motorcycle enthusiasts led by local franchise owner Clarence "Pappy" Hoel got together to race one another, pull off some riding stunts and party together around a common interest in the brand.

What started as a quaint occasion called the Black Hills Classic with just

nine racers and a sparse crowd has become an international attraction.

Except for the World War II years between 1939 and 1941, The Rally has been a much-anticipated mainstay attracting visitors from across the planet. During the war, organizers suspended the event due to gas restrictions in support of the war effort.



While the current supply shortages mentioned by Fosheim have kept power providers on their toes and doubly prepared for The Rally, he said cooperatives are committed to delivering quality service not only during the event but long after the riders have peeled out of town.

Welcome Amanda!



Please help us welcome Amanda Reese to the member service department! Amanda started working for H-D Electric as an electrician in June 2022.

She attended Minnesota West Community & Technical College, where she received her electrician diploma.

Brandt, S.D., is where she calls home with her daughter Riley, where she likes to garden, ride horses and fish. She originally from Oronoco, M.N. When Amanda is not at work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends.

H-D ELECTRIC WATER HEATER PROGRAM

H-D Electric sells three sizes (50, 85 and 100 gallons) of high-efficiency lifetime warranty Marathon water heaters. We have a rebate and discount program for our members.

REPLACING AN OLD WATER HEATER?

Call H-D Electric and see if you qualify for a new 50, 85 or 100 gallon lifetime water heater from H-D Electric, and after the rebate only pay \$600 for a 50 gallon and \$850 for an 85 or 100 gallon (tax included).

NEW CONSTRUCTION OR GAS WATER HEATER CONVERSION?

Check out what H-D Electric has to offer for the lifetime warranty water heaters for you. If you qualify, a new 50 gallon would only be \$400 and an 85 or 100 gallon would only be \$600 (tax included).

Call the H-D Electric office during normal business hours to find out the complete list of qualifications.

To receive the rebates noted above, a controller must be installed within 90 days of purchase. If a member chooses to not have a controller installed, they must pay the full amount with no rebates. The cost with no rebates is as follows:

- 50 gallon – \$1,300
- 85 gallon – \$1,600
- 185 gallon – \$1,800



Operating Statistics

	May 2021	May 2022
Customers	3,725	3,747
Amount Collected	\$897,062	\$897,413
Average Bill	\$240.82	\$239.50
Average Kilowatt-Hour	2,080	2,068
Kilowatt-Hours Purchased	8,092,752	8,245,061
Kilowatt-Hours Sold	7,746,573	7,748,371

Home Safe Home

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, faulty home electrical wiring causes 26,000 residential fires a year, hundreds of deaths, and thousands of injuries. Unfortunately, electrical hazards often go unaddressed until it is too late. Safe Electricity has the following tips to help you find and correct hazards that may be lurking around the home:



- Check electrical outlets for loose-fitting plugs that can cause shocks or start fires. Replace missing or broken wall plates, so the inner wiring components are not exposed.
- If you have young children, use safety covers on unused outlets. Consider installing tamper-resistant receptacles with a built-in shutter system that prevents hairpins and other small objects from being inserted into the outlet.
- Check the cords of the appliances in your home, as well as the plugs and connectors. Make sure they are not frayed, cracked or damaged, placed under rugs or carpets, resting on furniture, or in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple cords to walls, floors, or any other objects.
- Extension cords should be used on a temporary basis only. They are not a permanent wiring solution. Have additional outlets installed where you need them. If you are using extension cords, make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shocks or mouth burns.
- Never use an indoor extension cord for outdoor use. Use an extension cord specifically for outdoors; they are heavier and less likely to be damaged.
- Check your electric panel to make sure the breakers and fuses are properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. Have a qualified electrician identify and label the correct size to be used if you are unsure. When replacing a fuse, use the same size.
- Check light bulbs and appliances to make sure the wattage matches fixture requirements. Do not replace bulbs with higher wattage than recommended. The bulb should be securely screwed in to prevent overheating.

- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or gives you an electrical shock, immediately unplug, repair, or replace it.
- Check for or install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). A GFCI is an inexpensive electrical device that shuts off power instantly if there is a problem. GFCIs should be installed in all “wet” areas of the home, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.
- GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are working properly. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates GFCIs could prevent more than two-thirds of the roughly 300 electrocutions that happen each year in the home.
- Consider installing arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) on bedroom circuits, have smoke detectors in all bedrooms and in hallways within 15 feet of bedrooms, and at least one smoke detector on every level. Carbon monoxide detectors should also be within 15 feet of each bedroom. As always, check with your local electrical inspector if you have questions or concerns.
- Inspect all outdoor connections, appliances, and tools for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housings. Repair or replace damaged cords and appliances.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

Source: Dept. of Energy





FAMILY FUN AT CATFISH BAY

Summer fun for the entire family awaits at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park in Sioux Falls. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Pigs fly and family fun abounds at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park

Billy Gibson

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If you stop by Catfish Bay, you probably won't see a single catfish during your stay. But you will definitely see a pig flying, a chicken hurtling through the air and water skis sprouting up from a pocketful of magic seeds.

Catfish Bay Water Ski Park, located just off I-90 in Sioux Falls, is a family entertainment venue where a squad of highly skilled skiers leap and spin and build four-tier human pyramids as they skim across the water's surface.

Billed as "The Greatest Show on H₂O," the event attracts spectators from miles around who show up each Friday evening during the summer months to see the high-flying theatrics reminiscent of Florida's famed Cypress Gardens. The show features ski jumpers dressed as chickens, Hee Haw-inspired corn pone humor and a daredevil in a pig costume elevating 30 feet into the air astride a water-propelled fly board.

The show is the brainchild of Jim

Bruns, an idea that spawned from his mind as "a God thing." While he was a college student in the early '90s, Bruns joined the Sioux Falls Water Ski Club and honed his skills enough to turn pro.

It was during college that he hatched a plan to establish a show similar to those being staged at SeaWorld and other similar sites. First thing he needed was a lake. He found the perfect spot when a contractor dug out a 25-acre borrow pit adjacent to the interstate. He bought the pit and – voila! – one man-made lake...just add water.

Second thing he needed was a performing cast. Bruns gathered some of his fellow skiers of all ages and sizes, pulled together a program and then plowed forward for a few years determined to make the show a success. Just when he began wondering if he was going to be able to keep the labor-intensive venture alive, he experienced another epiphany. He needed to rededicate the program to building youth, strengthening families and developing leaders. He formed a

mission statement: "MV2 – Mission, Vision and Values."

"It was a simple plan from the start," Bruns said just before the start of the season-opening show on Memorial Day. "But in 2007 I hit a wall. I sat down and prayed about it and came up with MV2. Now I have so many stories of kids who have come out here and learned a skill and learned about teamwork and goal-setting. They learn how to overcome obstacles."

One of those youngsters is Beth Bruggeman, who serves as assistant show director. A recent college graduate, she has been involved in the program for 10 years. She was a 13-year-old gymnast and cheerleader when she decided to try out for the ski team and now she's a star in the show with boundless energy, a beaming smile and a scar on her eyebrow as her personal badge of courage and grit.

"One of the things I like about it is there are people who participate of all skill levels who are anywhere from 6 to 60 years old. You don't find groups with that kind of diversity. You get to form different kinds of connections and friendships," she said.

Brun's own children, James and Amara, are two other stars of the show. Amara, 13, professes to be the more gushingly dramatic. A student at O'Gorman Junior High, Amara has been part of the act since she was 2, riding on her dad's shoulders. Today she barefoots, swivels, climbs the pyramid and charms the crowd with her effervescent smile.

"I like entertaining people and making them feel like they've come to a special place," she said.

Beside Brun's, Jeremiah Newman is another example of the motto: the family that skis together stays together. He and his children, 14-year-old Marissa and 12-year-old Tyler, are involved in all aspects of the show. He's a member of the military and a former international professional skier who still competes around the region and specializes in performing flips and twists on an air chair hydrofoil.

"This is such a family-friendly environment. It's priceless. It keeps me active and it keeps our family close. Instead of sitting on the sidelines watching my kids, I get to be out there with them," he said. "We talk about the importance of making a life-long commitment to fitness and good nutrition and things that will serve them well along the way."

While the skiers are preparing for their next set, attention turns toward the stage area and a charming recurring character named Norman, who always comes up with some crackpot scheme that never fails to fail. Brun's explains that the Norman character stands as a metaphor for anyone who has had a dream and felt the frustration of failure.

"The thing about Norman that makes him different is that he never loses his enthusiasm and keeps on trying," Brun's said. "His motto is to dream big and never give up."

Brun's is living out the dream he had as a younger man. To this point, Norman has never revealed his last name. But it could very well be Brun's.

Below, Catfish Bay performers pull off a "four-stack" configuration. At right, the character known as "Norman" rides a flying pig.





TOUCHSTONE SUPPORTS H.S. RODEO

The Touchstone Energy flag has flown proudly at the last 20 State High School Rodeo Finals. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Electric co-ops support high school rodeo through popular Short Go Shirt program

Billy Gibson

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Folks who attended the State High School Rodeo Finals in Fort Pierre this summer could see Tobi Hintz coming from halfway across the arena.

Hintz is a student at Timber Lake High School and serves as the association's 2022 Rodeo Queen. She cut a dashing figure at the event with her decorative sash, bright red lipstick, fringed shoulder bag, buckle-shaped sterling silver earrings and baby blue cowgirl hat with a sparkling tiara wrapped above the brim.

Oh, and she can also ride pretty well, too. Over the past two years, she's earned Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirts at the state finals in recognition of her rodeo skills in barrel racing and pole bending.

This year marked the 20th celebration of the Touchstone Energy Short Go

Shirt program. Since 2002, Touchstone Energy cooperatives have donated more than \$140,000 towards the program that honors contestants who make it to the Short Go round of the state finals competition in their respective events.

This year in Fort Pierre, 145 student-athletes visited the Touchstone Energy booth to sign up for their shirts, which will be embroidered with the TSE logo and delivered to contestants this fall.

While Hintz has a bubbly personality and a flair for fashion, she takes pride in wearing her two Short Go Shirts that identify her as an accomplished competitor.

"It's so cool and it's such an honor to win a Short Go Shirt," she said. "It's so unique for us competitors because I don't know how many states actually get the opportunity to receive something like this. Every contestant appreciates it. The more shirts the merrier!"

Tobi, a national finalist in the rodeo

queen competition two years ago, has been involved in rodeo from a young age and said she likes the friendships that are forged with her peers.

"You meet so many people and make so many friends. Sometimes you wonder why you're doing it, but then you learn that there's a rhyme and reason for all the chaos and madness," she said.

Ann Sundermann has served as executive secretary for the High School Rodeo Association for the past 17 years. She describes the level of enthusiasm surrounding the TSE Short Go program that she's experienced over the years.

"Winning one of these shirts is the thing the kids anticipate the most," Sundermann said during a brief pause in the rodeo action. "We'll have 40 kids coming into the office asking where do they sign up for their Short Go Shirts. Then once they've been ordered they want to know when is their Short Go Shirt coming in. All the kids know about Touchstone because they've seen these shirts for the past 20 years."



Over the past 20 years, electric cooperatives have distributed more than 3,200 Short Go Shirts.

Sundermann said she's seen a lot of value from the program that demonstrates the electric cooperative system's ongoing involvement in youth development, education, sports activities and overall community support.

"It's been a privilege to work with the local electric cooperatives. They take pictures of the kids with their shirts and run them in their magazines and the kids send the pictures to us. They give the kids a lot of recognition for all their hard work and all they've achieved. With the commitment cooperatives have to their communities and their support for this outstanding program, I think it's a great long-term partnership and we look forward to continuing for many years to come," she said.

Marty Philips is public relations coordinator for the association. He noted that Short Go Shirts don't spend much time stashed away and gathering dust in the closet.

"The shirts get worn out because the kids wear them constantly. They're right at the front of their closets. It's such a great honor for them. They wear them to work, they wear them to school, they wear them to college and even when they're adults. I see them all over the state," Philips said. "They wear them

with pride because they know they earned it and they know they did the work to make it to the Short Go round. A lot of kids think it's better than a buckle. We appreciate what TSE has done for the kids because that's what this is all about, it's all about the kids. Everything we do is for the kids."

Todd Eliason, a recent retiree from Rushmore Electric in Rapid City who administered the program for Touchstone Energy since it began in 2002, said he looked forward to working with rodeo organizers and the student-athletes each year.

"These kids are our future, and to see how goal-oriented and determined they are and to see how hard they work, it really makes you feel positive about the future," he said.

Eliason cited Layni Stevens as a prime example. Not only did Layni earn a Short Go Shirt but she also punched her ticket to the national event in Gillette, W.Y., by finishing first in the girl's cutting competition.

"It's such an honor to receive a Short Go Shirt. The more shirts, the merrier!"

- Rodeo Queen Tobi Hintz

"I'm just grateful to be at the finals and it's an even greater blessing to get to wear a Short Go Shirt," Layni said. "It's one of your goals to get to the Short Go round. Sometimes it doesn't always go your way, but to know you get the reward of getting a shirt is just really cool. You can wear it all year long, to all kinds of events and to college."

To see a video of the event, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT-oZ1Oxn7o



REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____

AUGUST 16-18
Dakotafest

Photo Credit: AFBF photo/Philip Gerlach



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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

JULY 25-30
Days of '76 Rodeo and Parades

18 Seventy Six Dr., Deadwood, SD, daysof76.com

JULY 29-31
Badlands Astronomy Festival
Ben Reifel Visitor Center, Interior, SD, 605-433-5243

JULY 29-31
Bruce Honey Days
Various Locations, Bruce, SD, 605-627-5671

JULY 29-31
Paha Sapa Cowboys and Indians Art Festival
Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 30
South Dakota Chislic Festival
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, sdchislicfestival.com

AUGUST 5-6
Foothills Days and Rockin' Ribfest
Citywide, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-539-1929

AUGUST 5-7
Sioux River Folk Festival
Newton Hills State Park, Canton, SD, facebook.com/SDFOTM/

AUGUST 5-13
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, siouxempirefair.com

AUGUST 5-14
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally
Main St., Sturgis, SD, sturgismotorcyclerrally.com

AUGUST 11-13
Clay County Fair
515 High St., Vermillion, SD, claycountyfair.net

AUGUST 12-14
Fort Pierre Trader Days
Various Locations, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-412-8549

AUGUST 15-21
Brown County Fair
400 24th Ave. NW, Aberdeen, SD, browncountysdfair.com

AUGUST 19-21
Black Hills Threshing Bee
13380 Alkali Road, Sturgis, SD, 605-490-2024

AUGUST 19-21
Yankton Riverboat Days
Citywide, Yankton, SD, riverboatdays.com

AUGUST 19-27
Central States Fair and Rodeo
800 San Francisco St., Rapid City, SD, centralstatesfair.com

AUGUST 24-28
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 24-28
Kool Deadwood Nites
Citywide, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

AUGUST 25-28
Prairie Village Steam Threshing Jamboree
45205 SD Hwy. 34, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

AUGUST 26-27
Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com

AUGUST 26-27
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main St., Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

AUGUST 26-28
Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
Various Locations, Hot Springs, SD, fallriverballoonfest.com

AUG. 30-SEPT. 4
Sturgis Mustang Rally
Thunderdome, Sturgis, SD, sturgismustangrally.com

SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD, sdstatefair.com

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