



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



LACREEK ELECTRIC

MAY 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 1

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Gardening Greats

**Master Gardeners
Cultivating Community
Growth**

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Bridging History
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Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

LACREEK ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Josh Fanning
General Manager



Wade Risse
Board President

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to all our members as we come together for the 77th Annual Meeting of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc. It's always an exciting time to reflect on where we've been, where we're going, and the continued commitment we share with you—our members. As always, our goal at Lacreek Electric, is to serve our members as best we can in today's environmental/technology driven world, and to provide our members with safe, affordable and reliable electricity. We feel strongly that our responsibility to the membership is to continually improve our energy infrastructure and implement new technologies as we strive to maximize the efficiency of our operation.

Thanks to the vision and planning of your board of directors and management team, the dedication of our employees, and the trust of our members, Lacreek reported strong financial results: operating margins of \$666,269, non-operating margins of \$438,551, and G&T margins totaling \$530,450. In 2024, we retired \$617,448 in cooperative capital credits and \$223,512 in G&T capital credits, along with \$104,159 in estates. Earlier this month, we mailed out 100% of the 2004 Coop and 2003 G&T capital credit checks, returning \$840,960 directly back to the membership—a powerful reminder that when we succeed, our members share in that success.

2024 Operating Report

The 2024 construction season brought significant progress, with several major projects completed and others still underway but worthy of mention.

Pole Testing

This year, pole testing was conducted on the Kyle North Circuit and the Wanblee 115 West Circuit, covering a vast area. The Kyle North Circuit extends from the Kyle five-mile corner, encompassing the North Route, No Flesh, and eastward to Potato Creek. Meanwhile, the Wanblee 115 West Circuit—nearly as large—was partially tested before reaching our annual goal of 5,500 poles. This area included Hisle North, Interior, and Green Valley. EXO Inc. (formerly RAM Utilities), in its third year working with Lacreek, performed the testing. Impressively, out of the 5,500 poles tested, only 88 were deemed defective, resulting in a low 1.4% rejection rate.

Severe Weather Impact

On June 25, a severe thunderstorm swept through our service area, bringing large hail, damaging winds, and likely tornado activity. The storm caused widespread outages, particularly in the Potato Creek community and surrounding ranches. As

it moved south, it reached Martin, where it knocked down transmission poles near the City Substation, leaving the town without power. In total, the storm brought down 50 poles in the Potato Creek and North Allen communities and another five near Martin. Crews from Cherry-Todd Electric, West Central Electric, and West River Electric responded swiftly to assist in restoring power.

Highway Power Line Relocation

A major project this season was the relocation of power lines between the SD-73 and US-18 Junction—commonly known as “The Junction”—to the Harrington turn. This work was necessary to accommodate upcoming road construction and the expansion of the right-of-way along a 12-mile stretch of highway. Overhead power lines were removed, relocated, and replaced with underground lines. The project's cost is being shared with the South Dakota Department of Transportation, and similar negotiations are in progress for planned road construction west of Martin to Gordon Junction.

FEMA Mitigation Project

Following the completion of work east of Martin, crews moved to Wounded Knee and Manderson to begin a FEMA Mitigation project similar to the highway relocation efforts. This project replaces overhead power lines with underground cables to improve reliability. Currently, 80% of the work is complete and will resume once the ground thaws. Larson Digging of Huron, SD, was contracted to plow in the cable and complete road bores, while Lacreek Electric crews set cabinets and terminated all underground cables.

Additional Key Projects

Other notable projects include:

- Replacing five miles of aging underground cable near Allen and Tuthill.
- Replacing rejected poles from the 2023 and 2024 assessments.
- Coordinating and installing an upgraded transformer and generator for Bennett County Hospital.
- Constructing nearly 100 new services for homes, businesses, and school expansions across the service area.

Acknowledgments

We extend our gratitude to the entire Lacreek staff, employees, Rushmore Electric, and our numerous contractors for their dedication and hard work. A special thank you to the Lacreek Board and Members for their continued patience and support.

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

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS LACREEK ELECTRIC

USPS No. 018-912)

Board of Directors

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

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

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Terri Gregg - Member Service/Billing Specialist
Katrina Fish - Member Service/Billing Specialist
Lisa Jensen - Member Service Representative
Cody Larson - Accountant

Operations Personnel

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Journeyman Lineman:
Jordon Bakley . Kody Hagen . Lonny Lesmeister
Garrett Metzinger . Aaron Risse . Trace Scott
Damon Wangerin
Apprentice Lineman:
Tee Allen . Les Cuny . Matthew Kruid
Riley Meis . Chayson Schofield . Cameron York
Ryan Pettit - Staking Specialist
Henry Johnson - Warehouseman
Justin Smokov - Maintenance Man

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www.lacreek.com

Reprint of Official Notice of Lacreek Electric Associations 77th Annual Meeting Thursday, April 24, 2025 Old American Legion Auditorium, Martin, SD

Dear Valued Member,

Join us for an evening of community, prizes and important updates at Lacreek Electric's 77th Annual Meeting! Mark your calendar for **Thursday, April 24, 2025** and come be part of the action at the **Old American Legion Auditorium in Martin.**

What's in it for you?

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

Schedule of Events:

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

Board Elections – Your Vote Matters!

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

- Zone 2 – East Bennett County – Scott Larson
- Zone 3 – West Bennett County – Troy Kuxhaus
- Zone 4 – East Oglala County – Connie Whirlwind Horse
- Zone 5 – Jackson County – Hadley Livermont
- Zone 8 – At Large – Wade Risse

Capital credit checks MAILED out on April 1st!

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

Respectfully,

Scott Larson, Secretary

77th ANNUAL MEETING	
5:00 p.m.	Registration Begins
6:00 p.m.	Drawing for Early Attendance Prize
PRESIDENT, WADE RISSE	Call to Order
VICE PRESIDENT, BRENT IRELAND	Invocation
PRESIDENT, WADE RISSE	Determination of Quorum
	Introduction of Directors
REPORTS	
SECRETARY, SCOTT LARSON	Secretary's Report
	Proof of Mailing of Notice of Meeting
	Minutes of Previous Meeting
TREASURER, TOM SCHLACK	Treasurer's Report
GENERAL MANAGER, JOSH FANNING	Introduction of Guests
	Manager's Report
	SDREA
	Honor Donovan Young Man
	Washington, DC - Youth Tour
	Scholarship Presentation
ROBERT SCHAUB, ATTORNEY	Election of Directors
PRESIDENT, WADE RISSE	Old Business
	New Business
	Adjournment
Drawing for Prizes (All Prize Winners Must Be Present)	

Power Life Safely

May is Electrical Safety Month

Every May, Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.

Your electric cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May, but year-round.

By following key safety practices, you can reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected. Here are five essential tips for powering up safely at home.

1. **Be vigilant.** Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for any signs of damage or outdated components and replace any frayed electrical wires or cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're relying on extension cords as permanent power solutions, consider contacting a qualified electrician to install additional outlets where you need them.
2. **Use Surge Protectors.** Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances from surges with surge protectors. These handy devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not all power strips include surge protection, so read the product label carefully. Additionally, surge protectors can lose effectiveness over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated.
3. **Practice Safe Power Strip Use.** Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with a "busy" power strip can lead to overheating and create a fire hazard, so be sure to check the power strip's wattage rating before plugging in items.

4. **Water and Electricity Don't Mix.** It may seem obvious, but accidents involving water contact with electrical items happen. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances – never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed in areas where water and electricity are typically in close proximity, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.
5. **Educate Family Members.** One of the best ways to ensure the safety of everyone in your household is to talk about electrical safety. Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances and ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions in case of emergencies.

Practicing electrical safety at home is essential for protecting your family, property and peace of mind. Remember, electrical safety isn't just a one-time effort – it's a year-round responsibility. Taking these steps can help ensure a safer, more secure home for you and your loved ones.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Jeremiah Barlow

Jeremiah cautions readers not to plant trees near power lines. Thank you for your picture, Jeremiah! Jeremiah's parents are Mosiah and Cristine Barlow, members of West River Electric Association.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.



Delicious CHICKEN

CHICKEN BREAST SUPREME

Ingredients:

4 chicken breasts
(boned and halved)
8 strips bacon
2 pkgs. chipped beef
8 oz. sour cream
1 can cream of chicken soup
6 oz. evaporated milk

Method

Wrap each half of chicken breast in a piece of bacon. Place in a baking dish lined with two layers of chipped beef.

Blend sour cream, soup, and milk. Pour over chicken.

Bake uncovered at 300°F for three hours. Serve over rice.

*Makes 8 servings.

Sharon Houchin
Central Electric Member

CHICKEN ROLLUPS

Ingredients:

8 oz. tube crescent rolls
4 boneless chicken breasts
(cooked shredded and seasoned to taste)
8 oz. cheddar cheese
(finely shredded, divided)
10 1/2 oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 packet chicken gravy mix
1 cup water

Method

In a bowl, mix the shredded chicken and 1/3 of the cheese. Take a scoop of the mixture and roll it into a crescent roll then place in a greased 9" x 13" pan. Bake at 350°F until the crescent rolls look browned on top. Mix the soup, gravy mix, 1/3 of the cheese, and enough water to make the mixture pourable. Pour over the crescent rolls. Sprinkle the remaining 1/3 of the cheese on top and bake again until the cheese melts and starts to brown.

Nicole Einrem
B-Y Electric Member

SMOKY CHICKEN TACOS

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. oil
1 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
1/4 cup Flavor Maker Taco Night Topping Seasoning
1/2 cup water
12 (6-inch) flour or corn tortillas, warmed

Method

Heat oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir just until browned.

Stir in Flavor Maker Seasoning and water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened and chicken is cooked through, stirring occasionally.

Spoon chicken into warm tortillas. Serve with desired toppings, such as shredded lettuce, shredded cheese, sour cream, guac or salsa.

McCormick.com

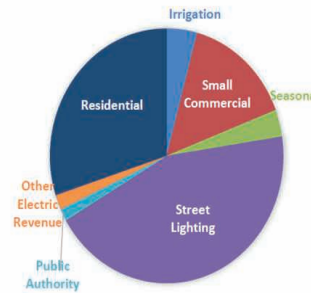
Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

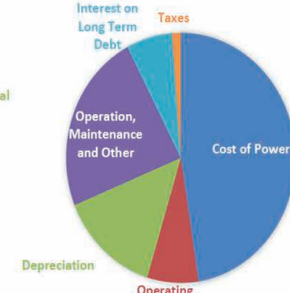
Balance Sheet (as of December 2024)			
ASSETS:	2023	2024	
ELECTRIC PLANT:			
In Service	\$ 77,886,637	\$ 79,392,486	
Under Construction	\$ 428,758	\$ 4,120,636	
Total electric plant	\$ 78,315,395	\$ 83,513,122	
Less Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (31,142,239)	\$ (32,483,928)	
Electric Plant - Net	\$ 47,173,156	\$ 51,029,194	
OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS:			
Investments in associated organizations	\$ 8,668,735	\$ 8,889,152	
Other Investments	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	
Special Funds	\$ 151,641	\$ 151,201	
Total Other Property and Investments	\$ 9,320,376	\$ 9,540,353	
CURRENT ASSETS:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,740,132	\$ 188,213	
Temporary Cash investments	\$ 4,307,172	\$ 1,556,800	
Investment in equity securities	\$ -	\$ -	
Account receivable, less allowance for uncollectible accounts	\$ 1,319,810	\$ 1,547,298	
Material and Supplies	\$ 5,143,866	\$ 3,531,092	
Prepayments	\$ 171,473	\$ 225,019	
Interest receivable	\$ 130,873	\$ 7,271	
Total current assets	\$ 12,813,326	\$ 7,055,693	
Deferred Debits	\$ 708,011	\$ 608,710	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 70,014,869	\$ 68,233,950	
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES			
EQUITIES			
Patronage capital	\$ 18,494,757	\$ 18,447,351	
Other Equities	\$ 6,453,199	\$ 7,082,690	
Total equities	\$ 24,947,956	\$ 25,530,041	
LONG-TERM DEBT, LESS			
CURRENT MATURITIES	\$ 39,613,509	\$ 37,547,055	
CURRENT LIABILITIES:			
Current maturities long-term debt	\$ 2,402,000	\$ 2,397,974	
Accounts payable	\$ 896,268	\$ 866,384	
Customer deposits	\$ 458,530	\$ 461,655	
Taxes accrued	\$ 195,899	\$ 197,639	
Other current liabilities	\$ 372,744	\$ 379,914	
Total Current liabilities	\$ 4,325,441	\$ 4,303,566	
DEFERRED CREDITS			
Customers' energy payments	\$ 627,963	\$ 353,288	
Electric revenue deferral	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	
Total deferred credits	\$ 1,127,963	\$ 853,288	
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$ 70,014,869	\$ 68,233,950	

Statement of Operations (as of December 2024)			
OPERATING REVENUES:	2023	2024	
Electric	\$ 14,750,215	\$ 15,439,246	
Other	\$ 495,599	\$ 532,547	
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 15,245,814	\$ 15,971,793	

INCOME



EXPENSES



OPERATING EXPENSES:	2023	2024	
Cost of Power	\$ 7,305,315	\$ 7,840,983	
Transmission	\$ (43,949)	\$ 83,864	
Distribution - Operations	\$ 680,128	\$ 629,344	
Distributions - Maintenance	\$ 1,018,135	\$ 1,033,484	
Customer Accounts	\$ 448,410	\$ 497,997	
Customer Service and Information	\$ 131,772	\$ 131,400	
Administrative and General	\$ 1,593,581	\$ 1,488,748	
Depreciation	\$ 2,262,551	\$ 2,326,432	
Taxes	\$ 195,897	\$ 197,931	
Interest on Long-term Debt	\$ 1,111,705	\$ 1,066,948	
Other Deductions	\$ 11,130	\$ 8,393	
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 14,714,675	\$ 15,305,524	
Operating Margin Before Capital Credits	\$ 531,139	\$ 666,269	
Generation and Transmission and Other	\$ 737,793	\$ 530,450	
NET OPERATING MARGIN	\$ 1,268,932	\$ 1,196,719	
NON-OPERATING MARGIN			
Merchandising, less costs and expenses	\$ 3,250	\$ 12,431	
Gain on disposal of assets	\$ 42,058	\$ 94,419	
Other Patronage Dividends	\$ 23,670	\$ 98,553	
Interest income	\$ 412,286	\$ 233,148	
Total Non-Operating Margin	\$ 481,264	\$ 438,551	
NET MARGIN	\$ 1,750,196	\$ 1,635,270	

2024 Year End Statistics

Year Energized.....	1948	Avg Number of Active Meters.....	6,850	Revenue per Kwh Residential.....	\$0.1187
Plant.....	\$83,513,122	Average Monthly usage, Residence.....	1,266	Winter Demand.....	33,862
Equity.....	37.42%	# of Electric Heat Homes @ Year End.....	848	Summer Demand.....	22,866
Service Area.....	5,174	Number of Irrigation Systems.....	132	Power Supplier :	
Total Miles of Line.....	3,186	Number Of Directors.....	13	Basin Electric.....	86.79%
Miles Transmission.....	204	Number of Members.....	4,270	WAPA.....	13.06%
Miles Distribution.....	2,659	Number of Employees.....	31	Counties Served: Bennett, Jackson, Oglala	
Miles Underground.....	323	Number of Security Lights.....	4,051	Lakota, Todd and Mellette in South Dakota	
Meters per Miles.....	2.15	Kwh Sales.....	130,930,061	and Cherry in Nebraska	

Explanation of 2024 Dollars Spent

COST OF POWER: This is paid to Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative, our power supplier, who receives 86.79% from Basin Electric (which consists of a blend of coal, hydro, nuclear, natural gas, renewables (wind and waste heat) and 13.06% hydropower.

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

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

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

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

OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE and OTHER: Includes the cost of maintaining 3,186 miles of line, 4,051 security lights, billing approximately 6,850 meters a month, plus insurance, transmission expense, sales expense, customer service expense and other costs required to operate the cooperative.

Five Members Seek Lacreek Director Seats

Members attending the 2025 Lacreek Electric Association Annual Meeting will elect directors to represent Zones 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8 for three-year terms. The following individuals have filed petitions to run for these positions. The following is a piece of brief biographical information on each of the candidates.

Zone 1 – City of Martin

Scott Larson - Scott was born in Pierre, S.D., and raised in Martin, S.D. He graduated from Bennett County High School in 1987, attended Mitchell Vo-Tech, and in 1989, joined the United States Army. That same year, he married Carrie, also a



Martin local, and they now have two grown sons. After serving in the Gulf War, Scott focused his profession in the building trades and owned his own residential construction company since 1995 until he changed careers in 2021 and became manager of Buche Hardware and Lumber where he is currently employed. Scott also continued his education at the University of South Dakota. He has served as Martin City Foreman, Martin Code Enforcement Officer, and spent five years as a city councilman. He also served as American Legion Post 240 Commander for four years. Over the years, Scott has coached American Legion Baseball, flag football, AAU wrestling and was an assistant coach for high school wrestling. He enjoys his job, hunting and fishing, friends and family and loves life enough

to smile infectious. Scott has served on Lacreek's board since 2019.

Zone 3 – West Bennett County

Troy Kuxhaus - Troy has been a lifelong resident of Bennett County. He was born in 1969, graduated high school at Bennett County in 1987, graduated from Western Dakota Tech in 1989 as a Certified Welder.



In 1990, he married Amie also a local resident and they have two children, (Keven and Colin). They reside on the family farm west of Martin that he owns and operates. He is the third generation Kuxhaus to run the family farm. He served on the FSA board for nine years. He is a member of the Batesland Volunteer Fire Department. Hobbies include friends, and family ventures of hunting, fishing and vacations. Troy has served on Lacreek's board since 2013.

Zone 4 – East Oglala Lakota Co.

Connie Whirlwind Horse - Connie attended school at Holy Rosary Mission (now Red Cloud) and then attended one year of college at Black Hills State. She and her late husband, Louis, ranched near Kyle for many years. She is the mother of nine children and continues to run the ranch. She has served on the Oglala Lakota County



Commission and is the treasurer for the Kyle

Elderly Meals Program. Connie has served on Lacreek's board since 1994.

Zone 5 - Jackson County

Hadley Livermont - Hadley is a small-town rancher who graduated from the University of Montana's vocational program for heavy equipment operating and surveying.



Livermont grew up on the family ranch in Wanblee, SD, raising quality black Angus. The ranch has been in the family for many generations, he hopes that it will stay in the family for many more years to come.

Livermont is passionate about his family, his wife Aspin and children Paisley, Jaxson and Joseph. Another passion is raising high-quality beef. Being a board member is something he is eager to be part of. Helping the community and doing what is best for the people is something he feels strongly about.

Zone 8 – At Large

Wade Risse - Wade graduated from Bennett County High School in 1986. In 1994, he married his wife Bonnie, and they have four children. He ranches and raises Angus cattle in the Risse Half Box V Family Ranch operation. He has served on the Bennett County Fair Board and St. Martin's Knights of Columbus Council for a number of years. Wade has served on Lacreek's board since 2013.



GARDENING GREATS

How Master Gardeners are Cultivating Community Growth

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdua.coop

After years of tending to her garden, Codington-Clark Electric member Dianne Rider of Hazel can confidently say she is an expert in horticulture. However, her extensive experience of working with the earth isn't the only reason she is considered a soil savant.

In 2016, Rider earned the prodigious title of Master Gardener through the South Dakota State University Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer Program. This program provides in-depth horticultural training – covering topics like plant science, soil management and sustainable gardening practices – so enthusiasts like Rider can share their extensive gardening knowledge with their communities.

Becoming an Extension Master Gardener volunteer is a commitment. Applicants must complete horticulture classes, pass the course test and contribute 40 hours of volunteer service

during the first year of involvement. Despite the challenges, Rider had aspired to this achievement for decades, but it wasn't until she retired from her teaching career that she was able to dedicate herself fully and earn her place as a Master Gardener.

Reflecting the adage, “once a teacher, always a teacher,” Rider continues to educate and influence those around her, even after retirement, through gardening.

“Becoming a Master Gardener has always been on my bucket list since they organized,” Rider said. “I’ve always been a teacher, so finding a way to help others through gardening is probably what’s most rewarding.”

As a Master Gardener, Rider plays a key role in organizing annual gardening events for SDSU Extension, including the Master Gardener Annual Update Conference at Joy Ranch near Watertown. This event, attended by more than 125 Master Gardeners, serves as a thriving forum for gardening clubs to exchange ideas on the latest and greatest

projects they are tackling.

“The event is a lot of fun, because when you get 125 Master Gardeners in one room – let me tell you, the conversations are riveting,” Rider laughed.

Master gardeners also help SDSU Extension achieve its broader goal: to make cutting-edge research easily accessible to the people who can benefit from the findings. Master Gardeners have regular continuing education opportunities with experts from the SDSU Horticulture team, such as Professor John Ball, a SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist and South Dakota Department of Agriculture Forest Health Specialist. Once equipped with this information, volunteers can share the most significant takeaways from research being conducted across the state through the university, providing a bridge between research and practical application.

“Dr. John Ball’s presentation on how to trim a tree after planting it is one of the best things that I’ve learned that I can now share with others,” said Rider. “He says that raising a tree is just like raising a kid: you have to shape your tree when

Missouri Valley Master Gardeners remove invasive bellflower and other non-desirable plants at the Dorothy Jenks Memorial Garden in Yankton.
Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

they are young, otherwise they turn into ugly adults.”

Master Gardener Field Specialist Prairey Walkling emphasizes that the connection between research-based information and enthusiasts is what the Master Gardener Volunteer Program thrives on. And the research goes far beyond just trees. SDSU’s horticulture research also extends into innovative mulching techniques, soil care and even studies on the growth and quality of four popular zinnia varieties.

“SDSU Extension wants to empower individuals to reach their gardening goals through providing science-based information. Each person has different pieces of land, resources and goals for their gardens and landscapes,” she said. “We strive to provide them with trusted, research-based information to help them make decisions.”

Walkling said the impact of these volunteers cannot be understated. According to Walkling, there are more than 400 Master Gardeners across the state and 14 Master Gardener clubs. In 2024, these vital volunteers hosted 153 gardening events, including farmers market booths, gardening workshops and demonstrations, reaching nearly 10,000 South Dakotans. Regardless of the event or what is being discussed, Walkling said Master Gardeners carry an infectious love of digging in the dirt.

“These volunteers help get people excited about gardening,” she said. “There are so many volunteer opportunities – teaching youth, teaching adults, maintaining demonstration gardens, answering questions, organizing events, engaging in horticultural research, writing horticulture articles – the sky is the limit.”



SDSU Extension Master Gardeners host an educational booth at the SD State Fair. From left: Lael Abelmann, Sharelle Meyer and Nancy Kadous.



Coteau Prairie Master Gardener Club (Watertown area) hosted the 2024 state conference at Joy Ranch. | Photos courtesy of SDSU Extension.

SEVENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

April 25th, 2024

The 76th Annual Meeting of the Members of Lacreek Electric Association, Incorporated, was held at the Old American Legion Auditorium, on the evening of April 25, 2024, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Member Services/IT Jessica Cook drew for the Early Bird prize. Member Services/IT Jessica Cook welcomed the members to the meeting and called upon President Wade Risse who asked the veterans to stand and be recognized. The members were then asked to stand as this year's Washington, DC Youth Tour Winner Camden O'Bryan sang the National Anthem.

President Risse then called the meeting to order and advised that the voting would cease in approximately 15 minutes. President Risse gave the invocation and reported the determination of a quorum was met with 132 members registered. President Risse introduced the Board of Directors and the candidates running: Zone 2- East Bennett County, Cole Blu Donovan, and Brent Ireland. Incumbent candidates running unopposed: Zone 4- East Oglala Lakota County, Marion Schultz, Zone 7- Cherry County NE, Tom Schlack, and Zone 9- West Oglala Lakota County, Donovan Young Man. He then called upon Secretary Scott Larson.

Secretary Larson read the Proof of Mailing of Notice of the 76th Annual Meeting. Secretary Larson asked if we could dispense with the reading of the minutes from the April 27, 2023, Annual Meeting and referred to the minutes printed in the program. The members agreed, and upon motion duly made, seconded, and carried, the 2023 minutes were approved.

Secretary Larson called on Treasurer Tom Schlack for the treasurer's report. Treasurer Schlack gave an overview of the financial statement and advised the members that the actual full financial report is printed in the program. Treasurer Schlack asked for a motion from the members to approve the treasurer's report. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the treasurer's report. President Risse announced that the voting had ceased and requested the Tellers (Kathy Kocourek and Gary Rayhill), Judges (Wayne Sterkel and Chris O'Bryan), Agents (Ashley Turgeon and Katrina Fish), and Attorney Robert Schaub be dismissed for counting the ballots.

President Risse introduced SDREA Manager Steve Barnett who presented to our membership that Director Donovan Young Man received a once-in-a-lifetime award

called Legacy of Leadership for SDREA earlier this year. This award highlights outstanding cooperative leaders who lend their talent, time, expertise, and passion toward achieving success for their cooperatives and their service areas. President Risse then presented Director Young Man with a star quilt.

General Manager Fanning welcomed the membership to the meeting and noted how honored we were to have several special guests and retirees of our cooperative in attendance tonight. He introduced SRS, our after-hours dispatch service from Bismarck, North Dakota. He referred to the Annual Report printed in the program and highlighted some of the changes and growth that occurred during 2023.

General Manager Fanning thanked the dedicated team of employees and the board of directors at Lacreek. He took a moment to acknowledge Anna Haynes, who recently retired after an incredible 31 years of service to Lacreek and will be greatly missed. He noted that Lacreek's last rate design was in April 2019 and with the constantly evolving landscape of today's industry we have been faced with various challenges such as inflation, rising demand, and escalating prices of electric utility materials. The Board of Directors was compelled to make a difficult decision after thorough discussions to adjust member rates effective April 2024. Additionally, Lacreek is actively pursuing opportunities for grants in areas such as system hardening, fire mitigation, cybersecurity, and communications. He reaffirmed Lacreek's commitment to serving its members with affordable, reliable, and safe electricity as we continue to adapt to today's challenges. He then announced Jessica Cook, Member Service. Member Service Representative Jessica Cook explained to the membership that in 2022 Lacreek created a 501c3 to receive matching funds to in turn give back more to the membership. She introduced the President of Lacreek Electric Youth and Community Support, Scott Larson, and asked all the Bennett County FFA and AG students and advisors to please come to the front. Aris Fanning then presented the FFA Creed. The Bennett County FFA and AG groups each received \$2,000 from The Youth and Community Support including matching funds from Basin Electric and CoBank.

Member Service Representative Jessica Cook announced the winner of this year's Washington, D.C. Youth Tour is Camden O'Bryan. Camden is the son of Chris and Mikayla O'Bryan. Ellen McDonnell was last year's winner and she put together a short slideshow of her trip. The Washington, D.C. Youth Tour video was shown.

Treasurer Tom Schlack announced the 5 scholarships to be awarded. The Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Lacreek Electric scholarship winner was Emily Zickrick. Emily is the daughter of Tom and Jennifer Zickrick. The Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Lacreek Electric scholarship winner was Grace Wolff. Grace is the daughter of Berry and Nancy Wolff. The two Lacreek Electric scholarship winners are Dante Rascher and Kassidy Heathershaw. Dante is the son of Kevin and Angie Rascher and Kassidy is the daughter of Myron and Tara Heathershaw. The second-year 2024 scholarship winner was Carter Anderson. Carter is the son of Travis and Angela Anderson. Treasurer Schlack congratulated all the winners and President Risse presented them all with a certificate. Lacreek's Attorney Robert Schaub with the Law Firm of Schaub Law Office, P.C. advised President Risse of the election results which President Risse informed the members of the results: Zone 2 - East Bennett County, the winner was Brent Ireland and all remaining directors ran unopposed: Zone 4 - East Oglala County, Marion Schultz; Zone 7 - Cherry County, NE, Tom Schlack; and Zone 9 - West Oglala Lakota County, Donovan Young Man. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the election results. They will all serve a 3-year term.

President Risse called for any old business. There was none. President Risse then called upon Robert Schaub, Lacreek's Attorney who asked for a motion to approve the actions taken by the Board of Directors of the Association since the last Annual Meeting of the Members; with a motion made, seconded, and carried to approve the Board's actions. President Risse called for any new business. There was none. President Risse thanked Stuart Livermont for the sound system, Matt Brunner and Eric Nelson from Rushmore, and SRS dispatch.

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

The Grand prize winner of \$300.00 cash was won by Mike Johnson.

HONORING ONE OF THE MOST HONORABLE MEN

On March 18, 2024, the Lacreek Electric family lost a remarkable leader, devoted servant, and cherished friend, Donovan Young Man. For 31 years, Donovan dedicated his time, wisdom, and heart to serving on the Board of Directors of Lacreek Electric, leaving behind a legacy of commitment, integrity, and service that will be remembered for generations to come.

Born on August 4, 1956, in Oglala, Donovan's life was deeply rooted in his family, community, and faith. His journey of service began early, first working in the local grocery store and later dedicating 41 years to the Oglala Lakota County School District. Throughout his career, he profoundly impacted the youth, shaping lives through his mentorship and unwavering belief in the power of education. His dedication to education extended beyond the classroom, serving on the Oglala Lakota College Board of Trustees since 2014, ensuring that future generations have access to quality learning opportunities.

In addition to his contributions to education, Donovan was a steadfast leader in his community. From 1992 to 1996, he served on the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council, demonstrating his commitment to advocacy and leadership. His faith played a vital role in his life, and he was an active and devoted member of the Makasan Presbyterian Church, where he found strength and purpose in serving others. Donovan's leadership at Lacreek Electric was nothing short of extraordinary. Since joining the board in 1994, he held multiple key positions, including serving as President from 2007 to 2010 and Secretary from 2013 to 2016. His involvement extended to crucial committees such as Tribal Relations and Safety, and his expertise was recognized at the state level through his contributions to the South Dakota Rural Electric Association since 2015. His leadership was characterized by a deep understanding of the industry, a willingness to mentor others, and an unwavering commitment to the mission of providing reliable electric service to the community.

Beyond his professional and community roles, Donovan was a rancher, tending to his land east of Oglala, reflecting his deep connection to his roots and the land he loved. In 1987, he married the love of his life, Dale, and together they built a life centered on love, faith, and service.

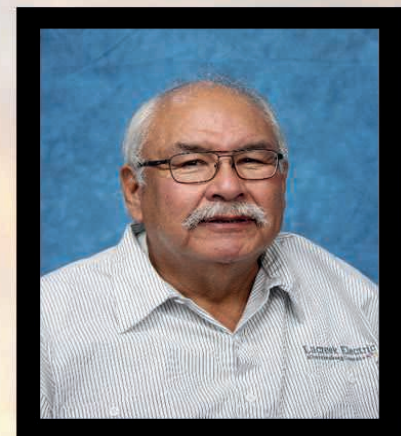
Donovan Young Man was a leader in every sense of the word. His impact on the lives he touched—through education, public service, and leadership—will endure as a testament to his character and vision. His legacy is one of kindness, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to making his community stronger. Though he is no longer with us, his spirit will forever illuminate the path for those who follow in his footsteps.

Rest in peace, Donovan. Your contributions will never be forgotten.

In Loving Memory



1994 - 2025





Local, state and federal officials celebrate the ribbon-cutting of the new Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge, March 25, 2025. Photo by Marcy Anderson, Courtesy of the Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce.

BRIDGING HISTORY

The Demolition of the Waldron Memorial Bridge

Frank Turner

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Tons of concrete and steel came crashing down in a planned demolition of the Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge that connected Pierre and Fort Pierre over a half mile stretch of river. The planned explosion marked a significant historic moment for not only Pierre and Fort Pierre, but also eastern and western South Dakota.

The demolition of the bridge unfolded in seconds. A plume of black smoke erupted from the detonating cord placed at key points in the bridge, quickly followed by a bone-rattling shock wave. Paul Nelson, a recently retired employee of the South Dakota Department of Transportation, witnessed the end of the bridge's 63-year lifespan. Nelson, a member of Oahe Elec-

tric, spent over 40 years with the SDDOT, serving most of that time as the regional bridge engineer. In this role, he was responsible for the maintenance, inspection and upkeep of the very bridge that he saw demolished.

As legacy bridge engineer, this was not Nelson's first experience with such a demolition. "I had actually witnessed the 1986 demolition of the old truss bridge that was just downstream of the current railroad bridge – so I have been around something of this magnitude before," he explained.

Even still, Nelson laughed that the modern demolition had a "pretty good report when it went off."

Although the bridge has been decommissioned, its history endures. In 2002, the bridge was dedicated to Lt. Cmdr. John C.

Waldron, a naval aviator from Fort Pierre who led a torpedo squadron during the Battle of Midway in World War II. His actions proved pivotal in the battle, but led to death of himself and most of his squadron. Of the 30 men who served under his command, only one survived the Battle of Midway.

Waldron's legacy is still commemorated through the new Pierre-Fort Pierre Bridge, which had its ribbon-cutting ceremony last month.

Construction of the new bridge began in 2020, just yards from the old bridge's location. In total, the bridge cost nearly \$50 million and is designed to last a century.

"This bridge is going to be a beautiful and wonderful enhancement to the communities and something that will last more than a hundred years," South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden said at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new bridge that now connects the two halves of the state.

BRIDGE DEMOLITION



The Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge comes crashing down at 9:03 a.m., on March 13.
Photos by Frank Turner.





Photo courtesy of the Belle Fourche Police Dept.

PROTECT AND SERVE

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Police Officers Memorial Day and the week as National Police Week.

As we pay special recognition to our law enforcement officers, we want to spotlight some of the selfless work police officers do to better serve communities and make positive impacts in people's lives.

Jacob Boyko

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In Belle Fourche, it's fun to hang out with the cops.

That's the consensus among fifth graders in the Kids-n-Cops programs when officers from the Belle Fourche Police Department arrive at kids' homes early in the morning to pick them up for an unforgettable Christmas shopping spree.

"We pick up the kids from their houses, drive them around for about a half hour and let them activate the lights and sirens, then we bring them to Runnings and go on a shopping spree for their family," explained Police Chief Ryan Cherveney. "They can buy shopping cart loads of gifts for everyone in their house, and then still buy some gifts for themselves."

The outing continues with games, gift wrapping and a pizza party. At the end of the day, officers drop the kids off at their

homes, leaving behind not only presents but a lasting friendship.

The police department works with the school to target children who may be going through something at home or could otherwise benefit from a friendly acquaintance with some of Belle Fourche's finest.

The program is supported by donations from community – last year, the community sponsored \$500 shopping limits for 16 kids.

Cherveney, who's headed the program for more than a decade, says it's as big of a hit with his officers as it is with the fifth graders.

"It's one of the things every year the officers look forward to," Cherveney explained. "We never have to ask for volunteers because just about everybody volunteers. Even the guys working the overnights come in, do the event, and then

go home and try to get the last two hours of sleep before they come back to work."

Knowing the community members they serve and making a difference in the life of a kid boosts officers' mental health "tremendously," he added.

"It helps keep the officers grounded – they know the people that they're serving and that they're there to protect. [Knowing community members] can help alleviate a really stressful situation into a much more manageable one where we're able to work with people to resolve things."

He continued, "Our main focus is just being out there in the community, helping kids recognize that when we show up to their houses during negative events, we're there because we have a job – it's less scary for the children and they see we're people they can always come to when they need somebody"

The success of the program and the outpouring of community support has led the department to expand their community involvement beyond Christmas shopping, according to Police Administrative Technician Mardi Reeves. The police force also distributed grocery

cards, gift bags, food and blankets to families in need. Reeves estimates a community-wide impact of nearly 200 people in 2024.

Police officers and other first responders also coach little league sports, with plans to soon offer registration fee and equipment “scholarships” so any kid can get involved.

“There are a lot of under-privileged children who can’t be in sports that end up wandering around town with nothing to do and trouble tends to find them,” Reeves said. “Having them participate in a sport really helps with that.”

Chervený says he is grateful for the continued community support that not only makes the Kids-n-Cops program possible, but also creates lasting friendships and memories for kids and their families.

“We had a kid that went shopping with us, and he ended up buying a popcorn popper, oil, butter, cheese, and the different popcorn toppings along with gifts for his other siblings,” Chervený remembered. “The family had never been able to go to a movie – the parents worked rough schedules – so this was the opportunity. The kid bought some movies and a Blu-ray player and the whole purpose was so that they could sit down and watch movies as a family.”

Gregory Police Chief Ryan Cook also believes in the merits of community

involvement. In Gregory, he spearheads multiple community initiatives including the popular bike rodeo.

A partnership between the police department, Avera Health and Gregory’s volunteer ambulance and fire services, the bike rodeo teaches kids – and anyone else interested – the rules of the road for kids on bicycles as well as other safety tips.

“We have volunteers at different stations and the kids go around to each station and participate in whatever event that is,” Cook explained. “One of the stations is helmet sizing and we hand out free helmets, other stations make sure the bicycle chain is lubed up and tight and the different parts are working correctly, and so on.”

The department is involved in other ways, too. For example, the officers work with the post office to ensure children’s letters to Santa Claus are delivered to the North Pole and receive a response.

The involvement is a necessity, explained Cook, because police can’t do their jobs and serve their communities without building relationships first.

“You need to be someone the community trusts,” he said. “You want folks to be comfortable approaching you, knowing there’s an open door, knowing they’re welcome to make the phone call or stop in. And obviously, when our officers are active and out doing stuff, it’s that much easier.”

Women in Law Enforcement



Metzger

Public service knows no gender, and neither does a career in law enforcement. That’s the message South Dakota Highway Patrol

deputy Emily Metzger wants to send to young girls with a passion for public service.

Originally from Kansas, Metzger attended the University of South Dakota in Vermillion to study criminal justice and public administration.

“I wanted to be in law enforcement since I was very young,” Metzger explained. My grandfather was in law enforcement, and in college I worked for the fire department and ambulance and really decided being a first responder was something I wanted to do.”

After college, she attended the police academy training in Pierre, where for 13 weeks she studied everything ranging from traffic stops to defensive tactics to interrogation. Then, another 10 weeks of highway patrol academy and another 10 weeks of field training.

“In South Dakota, the Highway Patrol offers a lot of different things,” Metzger said. “All of our education and training is 100% paid for and they pay your salary while you’re there.”

While the Highway Patrol isn’t exactly brimming with female troopers, Metzger said she’s on the scene to help just like anyone else.

“I have the same expectations as any trooper highway patrol – there’s no special treatment,” she said.

Metzger encourages young women interested in applying to reach out to a local law enforcement officer for more information.



Officer Allan Guinard helps local children with their Christmas shopping. Photo courtesy of the Belle Fourche Police Dept.



The Annual Bike Rodeo. Photo courtesy of the Gregory Police Dept.



MAY 31, JUNE 28, JULY 26
Fort Sisseton Lantern Tour
 Lake City, SD
 605-910-4465

*Photo courtesy of
 Travel South Dakota*

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.

APRIL 27
Country Roads
 2 p.m. Matinee
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

MAY 2-3
SD Spring Square Dance Festival
 Fri. 7:30-10:30 p.m.
 Sat. 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Faith Lutheran Church
 601 N. Cliff Ave.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 Call for events & times
 605-360-2524

MAY 3-4
Prairie Village Events
 Sat. Consignment Auction
 Sun. Season Opening
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

MAY 3
West River Pheasants Forever Banquet
 5 p.m. Central Time
 Draper Auditorium
 Draper, SD
 605-516-0143

MAY 3
American Legion Post 15
Just Because It's Time to Dance
 6-10:30 p.m.
 El Riad Shrine
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-336-3470

MAY 3
Rummage & Bake Sale
 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
 5103 Longview Rd.
 Rapid City, SD

MAY 6-7
7th Annual Energize!
Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference
 Hosted by SDSU Extension
 Community Vitality
 Platte, SD
 605-626-2870

MAY 10
Cinco De Mayo Falls Park Fiesta
 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
 Sioux Falls, SD

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 Vivian, SD
 605-222-3296

MAY 17
Annual Plant Sale
 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
 Codington Co. Extension Complex
 Watertown, SD
 830-534-5359

MAY 23-25
Brandon's Big Car Show
 Carnival & Car Show
 Fri. 6-11 p.m.
 Sat. 1-11 p.m., Car Show 1-4 p.m.
 Sun. 12-5 p.m.
 815 McHardy Rd
 Brandon, SD

MAY 31
Auto Parts Swap Meet & Car Show
 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

MAY 31
Miss Prairie Village Pageant
 6:30 p.m.
 Lawrence Welk Opera House
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

MAY 31
Hay Country Jamboree
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Daneville Heritage Museum
 Viborg, SD
 605-766-1312
danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 11
Agricultural Women's Day
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Agar-Blunt-Onida School
 Onida, SD
 605-769-0013

JUNE 13
Jesse James Days
 Garretson, SD
visitgarretsonsd.com

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.