

West River Electric

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Cooperative Connections

JANUARY 2010 VOL. 62 NO. 1

WIND EASEMENTS

Developing Good
Neighbors Pg. 8

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CONSTRUCTION NEARING COMPLETION



Jim Pahl
West River Electric Association
CEO/General Manager

As I write this column toward the end of November, we have been enjoying some nice fall like weather. I don't know how long it will last, but the nice fall weather has allowed us to complete a number of projects that we have been working on. We still have some major projects we are working on, so some additional nice weather wouldn't hurt our feelings at all.

I thought I would give you an update on the re-build of our

Rushmore Substation. Construction is still on-going with new equipment being installed. It is still estimated this project will be completed by the end of January, 2010. It will be nice when we have that project completed and everything back to normal. Right now, that load is being served by a portable substation.

Also, progress is being made on implementing load management. We are proceeding with it, and likely in the next few months you will be hearing from us with the program we plan to offer. Stay tuned for more details.

At this time of the year, we are working on our budget and work plan for 2010. With the exception for the increases we are expecting in wholesale power costs, we expect our 2010 budget and work plan to be routine in its content.

And lastly, by the time this newsletter reaches you, the Holiday Season will be upon us. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors, Employees and myself to wish each of you a Joyous Holiday Season and a Prosperous 2010.

You can contact Jim Pahl at 605-279-2135 or at jpahl@westriver.com

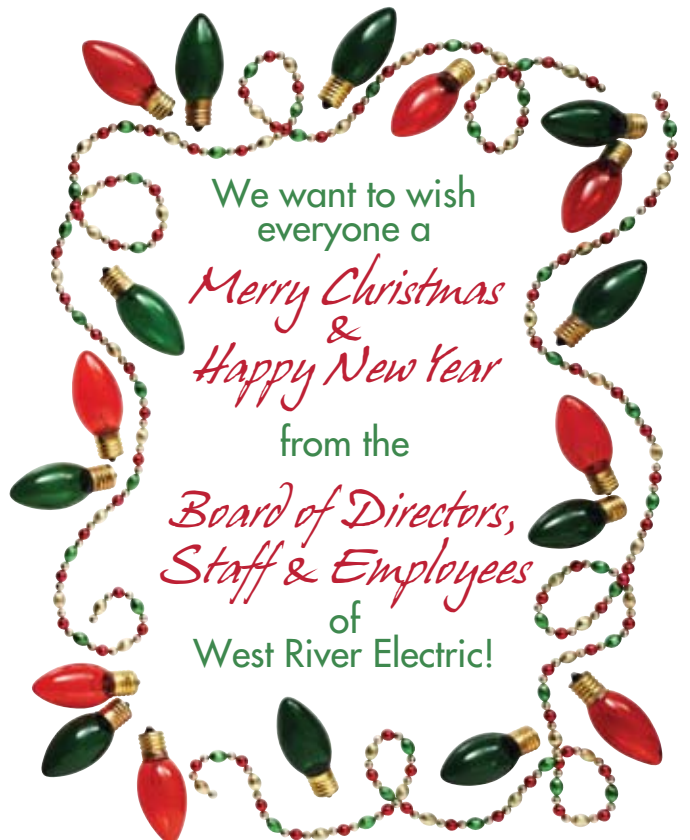
Goodbye & Good Luck Jeanne Botz Retires



Jeanne Botz will retire after 35 years of service to West River Electric and the membership. Jeanne started at West River Electric in July of 1974 as the Secretary at the Main office in Wall.

Jeanne has enjoyed her time at West River Electric working with the consumers and fellow employees over the years. Some of the biggest change she has seen is new technology changes.

Jeanne and husband Marv plan to spend time gardening, sewing, and following the grand kids activities. Jeanne's last day will be January 4, 2010. Congratulations and Best of Luck!



West River Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 675-840)

Our Mission

To inform you about your cooperative and its efforts to serve your energy needs; about how to use electricity safely and efficiently; and about the people who define and enhance the quality of life in communities served by electric co-ops.

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West River Electric Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of West River Electric Association. Members subscribe to *Cooperative Connections* as part of their electric cooperative membership for \$6.00 a year. *West River Electric Cooperative Connections* purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better living. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12.00 per year. Periodicals Postage Paid at Wall, S.D., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *West River Electric Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 412, Wall, SD 57790-0412.

Other correspondence to: *West River Electric Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 3486, Rapid City, SD 57709; telephone (605)393-1500, Exts. 6617, 6631 or 6619; fax (605)393-0275; e-mail vkusser@westriver.com

Design assistance by:

TDG Communications, Inc. Deadwood, S.D.



Call before you dig:

All underground cable location requests for the entire state of South Dakota are made through the South Dakota One-Call System. The number is toll free, 1-800-

781-7474 (dial 811 instate). You are required to provide this one-call center with information regarding the location where you will be digging, along with a description of the type of work you will be doing. You are required to give at least a 48-hour notice before you dig. The one-call center will then notify all utilities with underground facilities in the area where you will be digging.

Co-op News

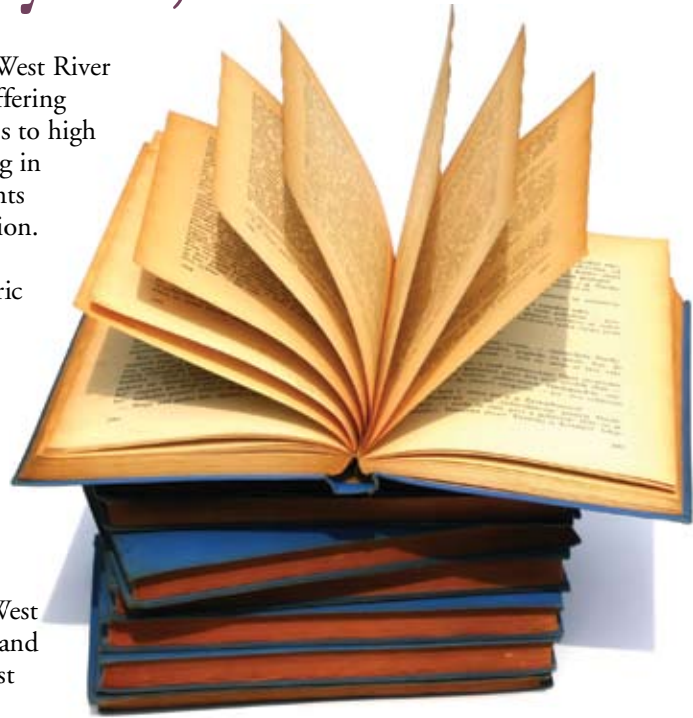
Scholarship Application Deadline is February 16, 2010

For the 19th year, West River Electric Association is offering three college scholarships to high school seniors graduating in May of 2010 and students currently in post education. A \$1,000 scholarship, provided by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our power generation cooperative, and two West River Electric \$500 scholarships, will be awarded to winners in April.

Applicants for the scholarships must be dependent children of West River Electric members and a U.S. citizen. They must be planning to enroll or in attendance in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

Scholarship recipients will be chosen by a selection committee on the basis of academic record, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, a written essay and an outside appraisal. Applications may be picked up at the cooperative offices or at area high schools.

Completed applications and supporting documentation must be returned to West River Electric Association in Wall or Rapid City before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. Winners will be announced in April. For more information or to request an application, stop by or call us at 279-2135 or 393-1500.



WEST RIVER ELECTRIC WILL BE CLOSED

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2009 FOR CHRISTMAS DAY
FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2010 FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

The Truth about Tankless Water Heaters

Many homeowners have seen advertisements for tankless water heaters. The ads promise big savings. But are they accurate?

Unlike a traditional water heater, a tankless model does not store hot water. It heats water only as it is used. One or a series of heating elements within the water heater is activated when a hot water faucet or valve is opened. The unit heats the water as long as the faucet or valve is open. When it is closed, the tankless unit stops heating the water.

Companies that make tankless water heaters generally cite four advantages the design has over a tank-type water heater:

- Unlimited (continuous) supply of hot water
- Instantaneous hot water if installed at point of use
- Reduced water-heating costs
- Small amount of space required for installation (usually wall-hung)

It is true that tankless water heaters do not require a lot of space. A large unit requires an area no larger than 24 inches square, and extends from the wall about eight to 10 inches. But what about the other three claims?

An unlimited supply of hot water may sound appealing, but even the largest whole-house unit may not supply enough hot water for simultaneous, multiple uses. If the users demand too much water, the temperature will drop. A tankless system probably won't meet the needs of a large family.

Tankless electric water heaters usually require an upgrade in electrical service, something the home improvement stores often do not mention.

A tank water heater with 4,500-watt elements operates on #10 wire and a 30-amp circuit breaker. One whole-house tankless water heater has four 7,000-watt elements for a total electrical load of 28,000 watts. This load requires wire and a circuit breaker that will handle at least 120 amps, at a cost many times that of electrical service to a conventional tank water heater. The load will also necessitate a larger and more expensive meter loop and main panel for the house.

Consumers who want to replace an existing conventional water heater with a tankless unit or add a tankless unit in a home-remodeling project will incur initial installation costs much greater than for installations in a new home.

Picking the Right Water Heater – Consumers looking for an efficient water heater should consider a traditional storage electric water heater that is heavily insulated. These water heaters are often the most cost effective option over the life of the water heater.

If consumers want to reduce their water heater energy costs, there are several ways to do so. According to a report by Oak Ridge National Laboratory, measures such as tank insulation, temperature setback, timers, heat traps and low-flow shower heads are more practical, much less expensive, and have a greater return on investment than installing a tankless water heater in an existing home with a conventional water heater.

The Cooperative Research Network monitors, evaluates, and applies technologies that help electric cooperatives control costs, increase productivity, and enhance service to their consumers.

Post-Holiday Safety Tips

The following guidelines for electrical safety will help you stay safe as you prepare to remove and store your holiday decorations:

- During the first week of January, take down, inspect and store all decorations for next season. Holiday decorations are intended for temporary use only. Keeping decorations up for several months far exceeds the time period set forth in accordance with safety standards, leaving wires unnecessarily exposed to the elements, shortening the product life span and posing serious dangers of electrical shock and fire over time.
- Use the gripping area of the plug when unplugging lights and appliances. Yanking or tugging on the cord could damage the wires and insulation, possibly leading to an electrical shock or fire.
- Separate outdoor from indoor decorations. Label them accordingly.
- Discard broken or faulty lights.
- Store decorations away from children, pets and water.
- Make sure all electrical lights, toys and appliances bear the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency, such as CSA, Intertek Testing Services or Underwriters Laboratories.
- Send warranty and product registration forms to manufacturers so that they can notify you promptly in case of a recall.
- Check to make sure that electrical cords are in good condition and are not frayed or cracked.
- Inspect ladders for loose or missing screws, hinges, bolts and nuts.
- Post-holiday sales are a great time to purchase fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.

Source: *Source: esfi.org*

Kids' Corner Safety Poster "Stay away from power lines."



**Aaron Goodale
9 years old**
Aaron is the son of Ken and Kathy Goodale, Chester, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.

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

Hearty and Hot



Pepperoni Pizza Chili

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 (16 oz.) can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 oz.) can pizza sauce
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can Italian stewed tomatoes
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 1 (3.5 oz.) pkg. sliced pepperoni
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 tsp. pizza seasoning or Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp. salt
- Shredded mozzarella cheese, optional

In a large saucepan, brown beef; drain. Stir in remaining ingredients except cheese. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered for 30 minutes or until chili reaches desired thickness. Garnish with cheese, if desired.

Dorothy Horst, Canton Cooperative Connections

Roasted Tomato and Barley Soup

- 1 (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 large onions, diced (about 2 cups)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 T. olive oil
- 4 cups Swanson Chicken Broth
- 2 stalks celery, diced (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 2 T. chopped fresh parsley

Heat oven to 425°F. Drain tomatoes, reserving juice. Place the tomatoes, onions and garlic into a 17x11-inch roasting pan. Pour the oil over the vegetables and toss to coat. Roast for 25 minutes. Place the roasted vegetables into a 3-quart saucepan. Stir in the reserved tomato juice, broth, celery and barley and heat to a boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and cook for 35 minutes or until barley is tender. Stir in parsley. Serves 8. *Nutritional information per serving: Calories 113, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 3mg, Sodium 618mg, Total Carbohydrate 18g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 14%, Calcium 3%, Iron 5%*

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Ham, Potato and Corn Chowder

- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1-1/2 cups cubed ham
- 2 cups water
- 6 Yukon gold potatoes, cubed
- 1/4 cup chopped celery with leaves
- 1 tsp. or 1 cube chicken bouillon
- 2 cups fresh, frozen or canned corn, drained
- 4 cups milk, may use 1 cup half-and-half and 3 cups milk
- Pepper to taste

In a 4-quart pan, simmer onions and ham in water for 5 minutes. Add potatoes and just enough water to cover. Add chicken bouillon and celery. Simmer mixture until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes uncovered. Remove from heat; smash a few of the potatoes. Add corn, milk and pepper. Heat until mixture starts to bubble around the edges. Cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

NanCee Maynard, Box Elder Cooperative Connections

Oyster Stew

- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 tsp. butter
- 1 pint oysters
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1 T. parsley
- 1/4 tsp. white pepper

In a large saucepan, cook onion in butter until tender but not brown. Stir in undrained oysters and salt. Cook over medium heat about 5 minutes or until oysters curl around the edges, stirring occasionally. Stir in milk, half-and-half, parsley and white pepper. If desired top each serving with additional butter. Serve with oyster crackers.

Debra Sanderson, Balaton, MN Cooperative Connections

Philly Cheese Steak Soup

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1 green pepper, diced or cut in strips
- 1 orange, yellow or red pepper, diced or cut in strips
- 1 medium onion, diced or cut in strips
- 8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2/3 cup flour
- 6 cups milk
- 1 can beef consommé
- 3/4-lb. cooked beef or rib eye, diced (leftover roast works great)
- 8 oz. Swiss/American cheese slices
- Salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter in large, heavy stockpot. Add peppers, onions and mushrooms; sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add flour; cook an additional 5 minutes, stirring continuously. Slowly whisk in milk; bring to a simmer, stirring often until soup thickens. Reduce heat to medium low; stir in consommé and beef. Slowly add cheese until all is melted and incorporated into the soup.

Tina Flynn, Pierre Cooperative Connections

Potato-Sauerkraut Soup

- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (16 oz.) can sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
- 8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium potato, cubed
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3/4 lb. smoked Polish sausage, cubed
- 2 T. vinegar
- 2 tsp. dill weed, optional
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

Mix all ingredients in a 4-quart kettle. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender.

Pam Hofer, Carpenter Cooperative Connections

Please send your favorite seafood recipes and bread and breakfast recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2010. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Energy Commandment No. 7: Thou Shalt Not Believe Everything You Hear



Doug Rye
www.dougye.com

As I mentioned last month, we have so very much for which to be thankful this holiday season. And electricity is certainly one of the most important things. I am still reviewing the lists that many of you have submitted about additional uses for electricity. Please be patient with me and I promise I will name the

winner in next month's column.

I have been teaching folks about energy efficiency for more than 30 years and I tell you, there is more information available today about that subject than at any other time in history. It seems that everyone has an interest and opinion about saving our world and helping people have lower utility bills. Every day I see energy tips on television, in magazines, newspapers and even direct mail pieces sent to the house. You can go to the Internet and read about energy efficiency for hours. Most of the stuff I see says something like this: "Saves up to 50 percent on your heating and cooling costs." If that were true, I would suggest you do just two of the items and save 100 percent. If only it were that easy. Actually folks, up to 50 percent means anything from 1 percent to 50 percent. If that product saved you 10 percent, it would meet the claim. Simply stated, there are lots of folks out there trying to sell you something. It is my opinion that few, if any, of the advertised products regarding energy savings actually will give you the advertised savings.

This may come as a shock to you, but misleading advertising is not new. About 25 years ago, I developed what is still known as the Doug Rye Super Energy-Efficient house. It also happened to be very "green" but that color wasn't as important in those days. The Doug Rye house had cellulose insulation, lots of caulking, energy-efficient windows,

tight ductwork and a geothermal heat pump. When people built their houses in this manner, they could heat and cool a 1,200-square-foot house for about 50 cents per day or \$15 per month. One day a national company came to me and said if you will use our product in your houses we will guarantee a 30 percent savings on heating and cooling costs. Well, I figured 30 percent of \$15 is \$4.50 a month. I asked what it cost to use their product on a 1,200-square-foot house and he said, "\$1,100." Well, I immediately knew this was not a good investment. I also knew this product wouldn't do anything to make a Doug Rye house more efficient.

But they persisted and showed me a four-page warranty of which I read every single word using a magnifying glass. The warranty said to file a claim, one must submit a copy of the last 12 months' utility bills prior to the installation of the product and a copy of the 12 months' utility bills after the installation of the product. The claim must be filed in the 13th month after the product was installed.

Simply stated, there are lots of folks out there trying to sell you something.

I noticed that the name of the warranty company was at the end of the form so I called them for more information. When I talked to the man at the warranty company he wasn't even familiar with the product I was asking him about. He told me his bonding company had placed warranties on hundreds of products and just assumed they would have to pay a few claims. They intentionally made it as difficult as possible to file the claim, he added.

Well, at least he was honest about it. Folks, just remember, there are a lot of people trying to take your green by claiming to be green. Please listen to me and don't believe everything you hear.

Reprinted courtesy of Rural Arkansas magazine and Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. Doug Rye, a licensed architect living in Saline County, Ark., is the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show and a promoter of energy efficiency building. To reach Doug, call him at 501-653-7931.

Rapid City Branch Office Update

With the nice weather this past month, progress is being made on the Rapid City Branch Office. Mid American Drilling and B&B Foundations are busy getting piers drilled for the foundation of the building.

Antler Enterprises is drilling the wells for the geothermal. There will be 80 wells drilled, each one being 300' deep.

The north end of the yard, which is a storage yard, has had a layer of black top put down. There will be one final layer put down in the spring after the ground thaws.

We have lost a lot of our parking at the Rapid City Branch Office due to the construction of the new building. Please be careful when coming in to conduct business as parking is limited.



Murphy



Wind Easements

It is inevitable that existing and future co-op facilities will need to be constructed in places where wind easements are in place.

by **Brenda Kleinjan**

WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF WIND FARMS IN THE state come a myriad of contracts, easements and leases. And, these agreements may have far-reaching consequences that landowners need to be aware of.

“A wind lease typically isn’t just about getting a turbine on your land and [a developer’s] ability to take electricity off that turbine,” said Bob Sahr, general counsel for East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D., and a former state utility regulator. “And from the cooperative standpoint, are they asking you to give up your exclusive rights to put transmission lines on your property that could impact your local cooperative or transmission lines?”

Other types of agreements – including easements and options – can also be areas of concern.

In past legislative sessions, cooperative leaders have voiced concerns about wind options. The option is not defined by South Dakota state law and there are no provisions governing them.

“In some cases, we believe they [options] are being used to circumvent the five-year limitation on easements,” said Ed Anderson, general manager of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D. Anderson and other co-op employees lobby on behalf of the state’s 31 electric cooperatives and, you, their 110,000 member-owners.

“Easements are defined – we firmly believe that the five-year parameter is the best protection that landowners have and possibly the only protection,” said Anderson.

South Dakota law provides the easement itself is void if no actual development occurs within five years (South Dakota Codified Law 43-13-17), but there is some question whether that five-year limitation also applies to an option to obtain a lease.

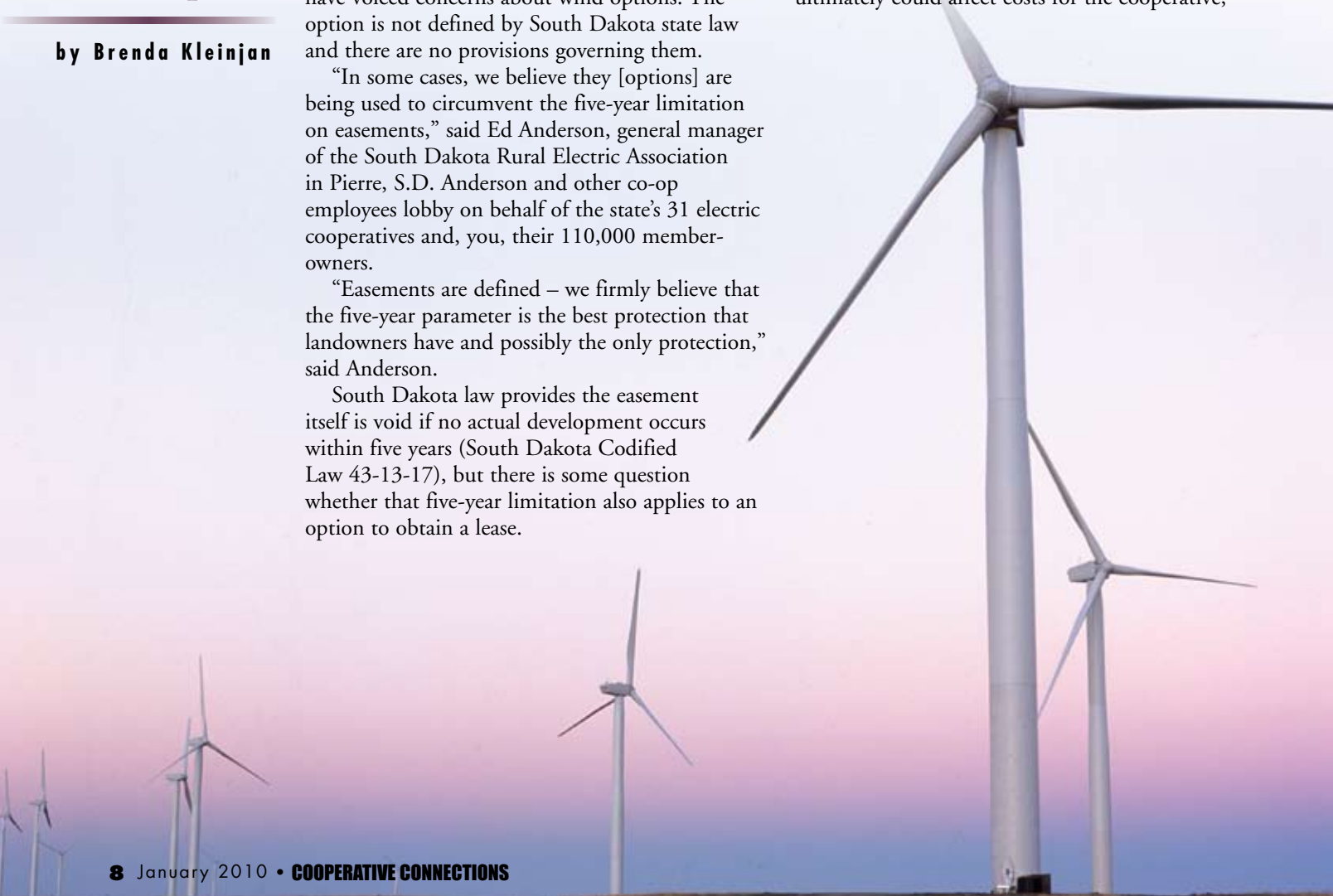
As an easement is a legally binding contract, it should be reviewed with an attorney before signing, as should any document, especially those dealing with wind development whether it be an option, easement or lease.

So, why is your electric cooperative wading into this issue?

First, as most landowners are electric cooperative members, it is seen as being a good member of the community and looking out for the member-owners.

“The vast majority of landowners that sign up with wind developers are co-op members. We want to work with the ag groups to make sure landowners are treated fairly. The prime reason is they are our member-owners,” said Sahr.

Second, when abused, the easement process could be hampering the very utility the landowners own – their local electric cooperative. This ultimately could affect costs for the cooperative,



which means individual electric bills could be impacted.

“We’ve had situations where wind developers sign up landowners on both sides of the road for exclusive transmission rights,” said Sahr. “That can put us in a very difficult position if we’re trying to put infrastructure down those roads.”

To lessen the threat of overly restrictive easements that would hamper your cooperatives’ ability to provide services, Senate Bill 184 was enacted by the South Dakota Legislature in 2009. This “Good Neighbor Bill” in essence says that a utility cannot hold up another legitimate project unless the two utilities involved are both wind developers.

Given the large footprint of wind projects, it is inevitable that existing and future co-op facilities such as distribution lines, transmission lines, substations and generation plants will need to be constructed in places where wind easements are in place.

This potential conflict could impact other services such as telephone, rural water, natural gas or others which seek to cross through an easement.

“In our state, there have been situations in the past where the utilities – whether electric, telephone or water – have easements and we’ve been able to put our infrastructure in place,” said Sahr.

But, if a developer has gathered up easements simply to prospect with little to no intent of actually constructing a wind farm, then other utilities and co-ops should be allowed to “play through” with non-competing, yet essential, construction.

“Some wind developers have a slightly different business model where they’re more aggressive, so we asked for the legislation,” said Sahr.

“Senate Bill 184 forces the easement holder to the table,” said Anderson. Because many easements contain confidentiality clauses, it is difficult for co-ops to know what restrictions the easements place on the land.

This legislative session, South Dakota cooperatives will seek to add generation into the Good Neighbor Bill.

“We seek to amend 43-13-20 to protect generation opportunities from sterilization of wind developers. Using easements as the vehicle, they can sterilize the land so that nothing can happen on it,” said Anderson. Sterilization is a process where a developer grabs exclusive rights to a parcel of land and, even if the developer has no intentions of using the land, can prevent anyone else from using it.

“We’re concerned we might be in a situation where someone has a wind easement and doesn’t intend to build a wind farm but is preventing us from building a needed plant to serve our members,” said Sahr.

Opposite and Cover: Wind farms are sprouting up in portions of South Dakota and with their development come a variety of legal contracts that can have far-reaching impacts. *Photos Courtesy Basin Electric Power Cooperative.*

Info for Landowners

Below are excerpts from the “South Dakota Landowner’s Wind Power Development Handbook” prepared by the South Dakota Energy Infrastructure Authority, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission and the South Dakota Attorney General’s office.

The purpose of the 10-page handbook, which is available online, is to provide background information for South Dakota landowners who may be considering development of the wind resource on their property for generating electricity.

The document is for general informational purposes only and is not intended as legal or financial advice. The authors of the publication urge individuals to consult with legal counsel and other appropriate consultants of your choosing before entering into any letter of intent, lease or other agreement of any sort.

... Large scale developments involve an external developer who secures land leases and handles all development and operational issues. This type of development may present the landowner with the least amount of risk. Before entering into any negotiations with a developer, the landowner should attempt to verify the corporate and financial soundness of the developer. For example, how many operational as well as planned projects does the developer have? What is their experience nationally as well as in South Dakota? Has the developer identified all environmental issues that would impact the project? Have they identified a specific market to purchase or use the electricity? What electricity transmission issues have to be resolved in order to move the electricity to market? Is the project schedule realistic or does it depend on too many variables? Has the wind resource been evaluated on or near the proposed development site? If not, does the developer have plans to do so, and when? Learn as much about the project as possible. If possible, check to see if there are any other proposed projects in your area

... Because of the lack of in-state demand for electric power, the electricity from a large-scale wind development will most likely have to be sold and delivered to markets outside South Dakota. The current lack of adequate electric transmission facilities, both within South Dakota and outside the state, to move large amounts of electricity to out of state markets presents a major obstacle to large wind power development in the state. An extensive discussion of this subject may be found in the South Dakota Energy Infrastructure Authority’s report – “South Dakota Wind Power Report,” which can be found on the Internet at www.SDEIA.com. Landowners should be aware of this issue and question developers concerning how they propose to overcome it.

Developers usually first secure an option for a wind power development lease on land they consider as a candidate for development. South Dakota law provides the easement itself is void if no actual development occurs within five years (South Dakota Codified Law 43-13-17), but there is some question whether that five-year limitation also applies to an option to obtain a lease. Accordingly, if the developer wishes to purchase an option, it is important for the landowner to understand all of the terms and conditions of the option. These may include how long the option will prohibit the landowner from granting an actual easement to another developer and any other restrictions on the landowner’s use of the property.

The first step in a wind power development is to survey the potential site and erect a meteorological tower to collect detailed wind and weather data. At a minimum, one year of data is needed to accurately quantify the value of the wind resource. Two or more years of data are preferred. The developer uses these data to plan the location of towers and estimate the amount of electricity that will be generated.

Large scale wind developments are not built quickly. In addition to the minimum of one year’s worth of meteorological data, there is the time required to order and manufacture the wind turbines. Finally, there is the time required to obtain permits for and construct electric transmission facilities to deliver the power to markets, as was noted above.

Regarding the lease document, legal counsel is highly recommended. Unfortunately, there is no standard lease form to rely on.

Operation Round-Up Application Deadline is set for February 26, 2010



New Underwood PTO received a check for \$500.00 to help bring the Missoula Children's Theatre in to work with the children of the New Underwood School with a performance put on by them.

You can now participate in a member-to-member contribution option that's quick, inexpensive and unites the entire membership to help each other. Operation Round-Up is designed for ease and maximum benefits for the program. Members volunteering for the Round-Up option agree to have their monthly bill rounded up to the nearest dollar with the extra pennies going to the program.

The average donation will amount to about \$6 during the course of a year. Imagine, if 50% of West River Electric's nearly 12,000 members signed up for Round Up, the fund would have \$36,000 to be used to help local charities and civic organizations.

Round-Up to help others, your electric bill is rounded to the nearest dollar each month. Your last bill of the year will show your total contribution for tax purposes. Your voluntary participation will help someone else.

Round-Up is voluntary! Just fill out the form below and return it with your next bill payment to your local office or drop it in the mail.

In 2009 contributions were awarded to:

- Central Meade County Preschool
- Disabled American Veterans
- Eastern Pennington County Transit
- Junior Achievement of SD
- Meade County 4-H Interstate Exchange
- Mission In Time – Kid Cozy Project
- New Underwood PTO
- Rural Meade Ambulance Service
- Suncatcher Therapeutic Riding Academy
- Union Center Wrestling Club
- Wall Gymnastics
- Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence
- Meals on Wheels – New Underwood
- Meals on Wheels – Rapid City
- White Owl Community Center

Operation Round-Up will be accepting applications for funding, the deadline to apply is February 26, 2010. Anyone interested in applying for funds, please stop by to pick up an application at the Wall or Rapid Valley Office, call Wall at 1-888-279-2135 or Rapid City at 1-888-393-1500 or go online to westriver.com. To sign up to donate to Operation Round-up fill out the form below and return with your payment.



Yes I want to participate in Operation Round Up Please send me more information

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Acct # _____

I would like to donate an additional amount over and above the normal roundup amount of

\$ _____ per month, please apply this amount to my bill each month. Please return with your bill or fill out and mail to:
West River Electric, PO Box 412, Wall, SD 57790.



Update Your Phone Numbers With WREA

If **your phone number** or any other pertinent information has changed, please contact West River Electric to request a change to your account information. Please e-mail changes to info@westriver.com, contact us by phone at 393-1500 in the Rapid City area or 279-2135 in the Wall area.

If you currently take advantage of e-bill, you can make changes to your address or phone number by going into your account, going to the "Service My Account" section and then click on the "Change Mailing Address or Phone Numbers". We would like to update your e-mail address, home, work, and cell phone numbers.

Accurate information is important so we can notify you of planned outages or anything else that may pertain to your services. In the near future we plan to go to an Interactive Voice Response System which will help in reporting outages, making payment arrangements, and getting account balances.



Mission In Time received an Operation Round-Up check for \$500.00 to help with the purchase of supplies for sleeping bags for homeless children in the area.



Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence received a check for \$400.00 to assist with the purchase of Home Modification and Adaptive Devices for individuals with disabilities.



Wall Gymnastics received a check for \$200.00 to help with the purchase of uniforms and equipment needed to perform in gymnastics.

Sign Up For E-Bill For Quick Easy Bill Pay

Sign up for E-billing

by going to our web page at www.westriver.com and click onto the link that says "Login to your E-Bill Account".

From there you will be directed to a page where you will click on the bar that says "Click here to sign up for online account access." This will take you to the next page where you sign up. You will need your account number, which is located in the upper right corner of your bill.

Once you sign up for E-Billing, you will no longer receive a bill in the mail. However it will be available to print on-line.

To pay your bill on line, once you are registered go to View/Pay My Bill to pay by check, credit or debit card.

If you have questions regarding E-Billing, please feel free to call either the Wall office at 279-2135 or the Rapid City office at 393-1500.



Insulating for Savings

The R-value depends on the type of insulation and includes its material, thickness, and density.

by Brenda Kleinjan

HOMEOWNERS LOOKING TO IMPROVE THEIR home's energy efficiency and take advantage of tax credits may just need to look up.

"If you're looking at permanent solutions, attic insulation is a good place to start," said Mark Munsen, an instructor at Mitchell Technical Institute's architecture design and building construction program in Mitchell, S.D. Munsen and his counterpart, Greg Nepl, have recently been designated Certified Green Professionals by the National Association of Homebuilders and are incorporating energy efficiency practices into their preparation of the state's future homebuilders.

While Munsen and Nepl focus on training students for new construction, much of what the students learn applies for remodels as well.

One of the first steps to improving energy efficiency is to stop air infiltration by sealing up cracks.

"It's all about sealing up the walls so there is no air movement at all," said Munsen.

But, short of completely gutting a structure down to the studs, it's hard for homeowners to make major insulation improvements to existing homes.

"The first thing I would look at would be attic insulation – if it's not sufficient, blow some more in there. That's probably the easiest, most economical pay-back wise," said Munsen.

According to an online tool, Energy Efficient Rehab Advisor, produced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, bringing an attic's insulation up to an R-49 rating from minimum code requirements would cost less than \$1,000, but would provide energy savings of \$88 a year for a 2,000-square-foot house and would pay for itself in less than 10 years. (For more on this tool, go to <http://www.rehabadvisor.pathnet.org/>)

"If you have your walls open, look at some of the newer types of insulation. The traditional batts are still used, but there are ways that will provide a higher R-value," said Munsen, noting that spray foam and blown in batt (BIBs) technologies tend to provide better insulation coverage.

Homeowners can also get energy efficiency tips from their local cooperative at www.TogetherWeSave.com. Here, online calculators will help homeowners discover where energy savings may be lurking in their homes.



Adding Insulation to an Existing Home

Unless your home was specially constructed for energy efficiency, you can usually reduce your energy bills by adding more insulation. Many older homes have less insulation than homes built today, but adding insulation to a newer home may also pay for itself within a few years.

To determine whether you should add insulation, you first need to find out how much insulation you already have in your home and where.

A qualified home energy auditor will include an insulation check as a routine part of a whole-house energy audit. An energy audit will also help identify areas of your home that are in need of air sealing. (Before you insulate, you should make sure that your home is properly air sealed.)

If you don't want an energy audit, you need to find out the following:

- Where your home is, isn't and/or should be insulated
- What type of insulation you have
- The R-value and the thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have.

If you live in a newer house, you can probably find out this information from the builder. If you live in an older house, you'll need to inspect the insulation yourself if you don't want an energy audit.

Inspecting and Evaluating Your Insulation

- Check the attic, walls and floors adjacent to an unheated space, like a garage or basement. The structural elements are usually exposed in these areas, which makes it easy to see what type of insulation you have and to measure its depth or thickness (inches).
- Inspect the exterior walls using an electrical outlet:
 1. Turn off the power to the outlet.
 2. Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is.
 3. Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.

4. Check outlets on the first and upper floors, if any, and in old and new parts of a house. Just because you find insulation in one wall doesn't mean that it's everywhere in the house.

- Inspect and measure the thickness (inches) of any insulation in unfinished basement ceilings and walls or above crawl spaces. If the crawl space isn't ventilated, it may have insulation in the perimeter wall. If your house is relatively new, it may have been built with insulation outside the basement or foundation walls. If so, the insulation in these spaces won't be visible. The builder or the original homeowner might be able to tell you if exterior insulation was used.
- Once you've determined the type of insulation you have in these areas and its thickness (inches), see the U.S. Department of Energy's online Insulation Fact Sheet for how to determine the R-values of insulation previously installed in your home.

The R-Value of Insulation

An R-value indicates an insulation's resistance to heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness.

The R-value depends on the type of insulation and includes its material, thickness, and density. When calculating the R-value of a multilayered installation, add the R-values of the individual layers. Installing more insulation in your home increases the R-value and the resistance to heat flow.

The effectiveness of an insulation's resistance to heat flow also depends on how and where the insulation is installed. For example, insulation that is compressed will not provide its full rated R-value. The overall R-value of a wall or ceiling will be somewhat different from the R-value of the insulation itself because some heat flows around the insulation through the studs and joists. Therefore, it's important to properly install your insulation to achieve the maximum R-value.

The amount of insulation or R-value you'll need depends on your climate, type of heating and cooling system, and the section of the house you plan to insulate.

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11340

Insulation Locations, Types and R-Values

INSULATION LOCATION	R-VALUE*	NOTES
ATTIC	49	-
WOOD FRAME WALL CAVITY	13	Blow insulation into any uninsulated exterior wall cavity.
FLOOR	30	Over unheated, uninsulated space.
CRAWL SPACE WALL	25	Crawl space walls are only insulated if the crawl space is unvented and the floor above the crawl space is uninsulated.
BASEMENT WALL INTERIOR	25	-
INSULATIVE SHEATHING ON EMPTY WALL	6	Recommendation assumes that the exterior siding was removed for other purpose, i.e., does not include any consideration of the cost of removing and replacing the exterior siding.
ADD INSULATIVE SHEATHING TO R11 WALL	5	

Having Trouble Keeping Up With Your Winter Utility Bills?

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides financial assistance to low-income South Dakota households to pay their home heating bills.

The program assists those families who would otherwise be unable to pay the cost of heating their home. Energy assistance may not pay the full cost of a family's home heating bills.

No household is automatically eligible. All households must apply, showing proof of income and home heating costs. To be eligible, a household's total gross income may not exceed maximum income guidelines and the household must be responsible for paying home heating costs. Energy assistance payments will be made to energy suppliers.

Energy assistance money will be distributed on a first-come basis.

Applicant eligibility and assistance amount are calculated according to household size, income, type and cost of heating and geographical location in South Dakota of your home.

For more information on Energy Assistance go to www.state.sd.us/social/ENERGY/energy.htm or call 1-800-233-8503.

The Weatherization Assistance Program is to help low-income people in South Dakota overcome the high cost



of energy, by making energy-saving improvements to their homes.

Beginning July 1, 2009, families with an annual income of up to 200% of the federal poverty level will be eligible for assistance. This is a temporary change in eligibility and is dependent on funding availability. Funds are limited and priority is given to the elderly, handicapped and to families with small children. There is no cost for weatherization assistance.

Some weatherization measures that may apply for assistance are:

- Weather stripping doors and windows
- Insulating attics, walls and floors
- Caulking and sealing cracks and holes in the homes structure
- Repair work to a non-functional heating system

For more information on Weatherization Assistance Program in Western South Dakota, contact Western South Dakota Community Action at 605-348-1460 or 1-800-327-1703. The counties served by Western South Dakota Community Action include Bennett, Butte, Corson, Custer, Dewey, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, Shannon, Pennington, Ziebach.

Line Patrol

Crews are working on annual line patrol. This is a yearly inspection of all of our lines. Yes, even lines that are not connected, if it belongs to us, we inspect it every year. This inspection is for safety and operational purposes, our linemen are looking for any hazards to the public. This can include things such as haystacks and silage piles under a line, buildings constructed under a line, clearance issues on new roads/driveways, dirt work over buried cables, etc. They are also looking for any damaged equipment and loose hardware, that may cause future outages. The electrical system we operate is very reliable, but as you all know, Mother Nature doesn't always play fair, summer storms can cause damage

that goes unnoticed. This annual inspection helps us repair that damage before it causes an outage.

If you see one of our vehicles in your area, line patrol may be the reason. In addition to our usual white trucks, we also use UTV's to patrol lines that are not along roads. This is a quicker way to get to some of the more remote areas, and is easier on the land than driving a truck over it. If you have questions concerning line patrol in your area, contact Wayne Shull in the Wall office at 279-2135, Ron Lauer in the Rapid City office at 393-1500 or Lane Butler in the Enning office at 985-5360.

Plan ahead

When considering a new service for a home, outbuildings, well, or any other reason. Please keep in mind to plan well in advance. Not only does West River Electric need advance notice for planning purposes, we also must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

This requires us to do an archeological study of the area, to make sure our construction activities will not affect any historic properties. This process involves an "on the ground survey" conducted by an archeologist. The Archeologists report is then sent to the South Dakota Historical Society for approval. It is only after we receive approval, that we can begin construction. The process usually takes 4-6 weeks, so remember to plan well in advance.

Sign Up

Fill out and send to:
West River Electric Assoc.
Cooperative Connections,
PO Box 3486,
Rapid City, SD 57709
 Or drop it in with
 your payment.

Sign up for:

- Operation Roundup
- Budget Billing
- Pay By Bank
- Automatic Credit
- Card Payment
- Blocks Wind Energy

I am interested in more information on:

- Marathon Water Heater
- Radiant Cove Heat
- Meco Grills
- Special Electric Heat Rate
- Geothermal & Air to Air Heat Pumps
- Rebates
- Radiant Floor Heating

Be sure to include your name and address if you mail this coupon
E mail: vkusser@westriver.com

Call SD One Call Before You Dig at 811

Daniel Kruse Wins \$10.00 Credit

Daniel Kruse of Interior is our latest winner of the survey drawing. These surveys are available at both offices for any member who would like to give us their comments. In return, you'll have a chance to save \$10.00 on your electric bill.

STATS

October 2009 - # of Consumers 14,942 KWH 16,910,657
 October 2008 - # of Consumers 14,767 KWH 15,150,479



Put an Electric Grill at the Top of Your Wish List for Christmas

Bring the outdoors in all year long by giving someone special an electric grill for Christmas this year. They are safe and easy to use – just plug them in.



MECO TABLETOP GRILL

Thermostat controlled, rotisserie, 200 sq inches of cooking space, handy grease tin, and a 120 volt grounded plug. A tabletop grill is a perfect gift for any season.

\$136.50



MECO CART GRILL

Thermostat controlled, rotisserie, 200 sq inches of cooking space, heat saving reflector pan, handy grease tin, 120 volt grounded plug, and a heavy duty cart. The perfect gift for the hard to buy for on your Christmas List. \$190.00



Regional Dateline

December 15-31

Jingle in the Jungle
Reptile Gardens
Rapid City, SD
605-342-5873

December 20

Christmas Music Festival
Wall Community Choir
7:00 p.m.
Wall Community Center
Wall, SD

December 22

United Blood Services
NU Community Center
City Hall, New Underwood, SD
605-754-6777

December 23

United Blood Services
Amcon Distributing
Rapid City, SD
605-342-3750

December 31

New Year's Eve With
The Symphony
BH Symphony Orchestra
Rushmore Plaza Civic
Center Theatre, Rapid City, SD
1-800-468-6463

January 7-9

Broadway: Annie
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD
605-394-4111

January 12

Central High School
Winter Band Concert
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD
605-394-4111



COURTESY PHOTO

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.

**WEST RIVER ELECTRIC
WILL BE CLOSED:
Friday, Dec. 25, 2009 For Christmas Day &
Friday, Jan. 1 For New Year's Day**

January 16

SD High School
All-State Band Auditions
Rapid City, SD

January 29-31

SD Youth Hunting
Adventures Outdoor Exhibit
Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn
Rapid City, SD
605-348-4984

January 29-February 7

BH Stock Show & Rodeo
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD
605-394-4111

February 4-6

SD High School
State One-Act Play Festival
Brandon, SD

February 16

West River Electric Assn
Deadline for Scholarship
Applications, Rapid City, SD
605-393-1500, 605-279-2135

February 19-20

SD High School State
A & AA Gymnastics Meet
Aberdeen, SD

February 26-27

SD High School State
A Wrestling Tournament
Rapid City, SD

Events of Special Note

January 14

West River Electric
Electro Technology Expo
Ramkota Best Western
Rapid City, SD
605-393-1500
605-279-2135

February 26-27

SD High School State
B Wrestling Tournament
Sioux Falls, SD

March 6

BH Symphony Orchestra
Trumpetissimo
Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center Theatre
Rapid City, SD
1-800-468-6463

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual
2010 Gun Show
American Legion Hall
Philip, SD, 605-859-2635
605-859-2280

April 10

BH Symphony Orchestra
Out Of This World
Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center Theatre
Rapid City, SD
1-800-468-6463