

# West River Electric

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



## Cooperative Connections

MAY 2010 VOL. 46 NO. 5

### GIS AND CO-OPS

Using Resources  
More Efficiently Pg. 8

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# Basin Invests in New Technology



**Dick Johnson**  
West River Electric Association  
CEO/General Manager

**As I sit here** getting my mind in high gear to finish my column, it is a wonderful 70 degrees outside! How soon we forget those cold, snowy days we have encountered this winter. Many people think this has been the worst winter they have ever seen. I am not all that old, (?) but I can remember these types of winters were the norm back years ago. With that said, I still hate winter! My old bones just don't operate like they used to.

With all this strange weather going on worldwide, the ol' climate change debate really heats up. The

good news is that cap and trade appears to have stalled in Congress, but the bad news is that the EPA appears to be on a crash course to exert control over CO<sub>2</sub> under the Clean Air Act. We feel strongly that the Clean Air Act was not designed to control this type of emission. We have been working hard with Congress to take this away from EPA jurisdiction and leave in Congressional hands where it rightfully belongs. Glenn English, CEO of NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) characterized the EPA taking over jurisdiction as a "glorious mess" that could touch every aspect of the nation's economy.

Our main power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is working hard to develop and implement carbon capture and storage technologies for coal to

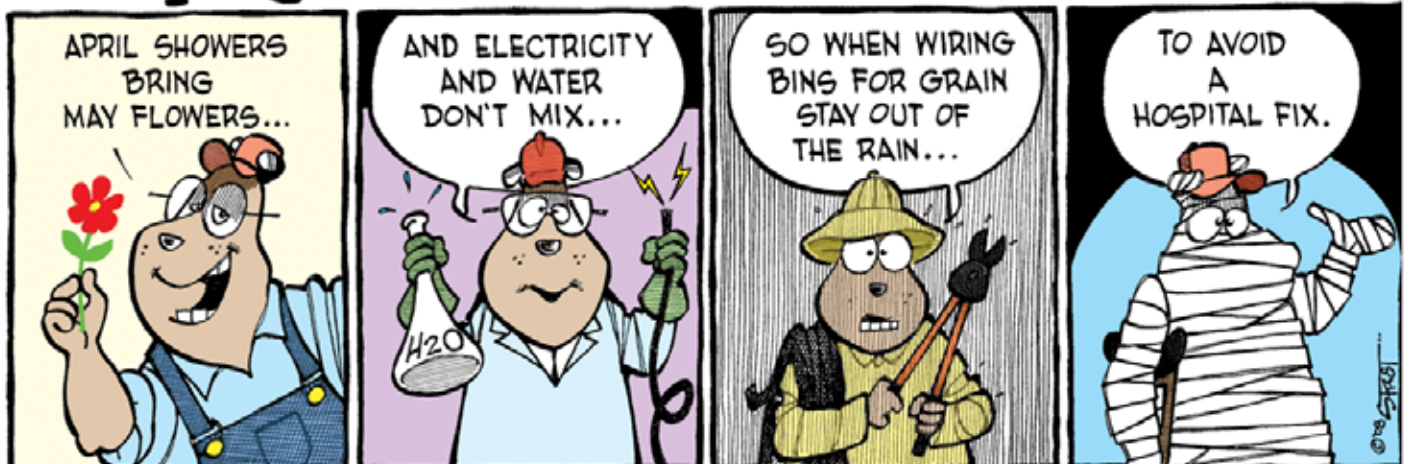
combat any climate change concerns. At the Antelope Valley Station (AVS), a coal fired power plant in ND, Basin is currently pioneering an effort for the first large scale carbon capture demonstration project of its kind in the US. A Basin subsidiary, Dakota Gasification Company, has been capturing carbon from its Great Plains Synfuels plant near Beulah, ND since 2000. The gas is compressed and sent via a 205 mile pipeline to Saskatchewan where it is used for enhanced oil recovery. The plan now is to test to see if they can capture CO<sub>2</sub> from the AVS plant and inject the carbon into the same pipeline to Canada. Besides this project, Basin is also working diligently on environmentally friendly wind projects, waste heat recovery projects, and combined cycle power plants to help meet power demands of the future so that when I turn up that thermostat, or flick on the light switch, I know it will come on.

Besides CO<sub>2</sub>, Basin has many environmental controls already in place to capture many different types of pollutants. They estimate that they have invested more than \$1.64 billion for environmental controls on their facilities, and it's estimated that the cost to operate these controls is a staggering \$147 million annually!

We continue to work on Capitol Hill with our Senators and Representative to make sure they understand that climate change legislation, if really needed, needs to be carefully thought through so that it doesn't cause an economic wreck for you our member owners. The solutions now offered will only cost you higher bills, especially in these turbulent economic times.

Until next time...

## Murphy



# 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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Dick Johnson

## Editor

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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

# Distribution Transformer Access

## Neighborhoods

served by West River Electric often have large green metal boxes in the homeowner's yard. These metal boxes may not be the most attractive lawn decoration, but they do serve an important purpose. These boxes contain a distribution transformer that allows West River Electric to deliver the proper voltage to surrounding homes.

As outlined on the Application for Electrical Service, West River Electric is provided by you, the homeowner, an easement giving us unobstructed access to our equipment at all times. We require 12' in front of the padlocked door to access the metal box.

We often find shrubs and flowers planted around them, or fences and rocks blocking them. These attempts at beautifying your lawn can cause safety and reliability issues for WREA. The large faux rocks that can be purchased to cover the boxes can be extremely dangerous. They prevent heat from being properly vented from the transformer.

We may need to access the distribution transformer for a number of reasons including repairs, upgrades and general maintenance. It is in the members best interest to keep the clearance of 12' requested by the cooperative clear. If not, it can cause a delay in restoration of power in an outage situation for you and your neighbors.

If you have questions concerning a transformer in your yard 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.



# Need Help Paying Your Bill?

**If you are** struggling to pay your electric bill on time, take the following steps to prevent being disconnected.

Call us at 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500. We will work with you to set up payment arrangements – it is important that you call before the due date.

After making your payment arrangements, it is important that you keep your arrangements. If you can't keep an arrangement, contact us before the date you arranged, to avoid possible disconnection.

## Free Anti-virus Protection

**The Computer Guys** received some great comments and questions from last month's column about backing up your documents and photos. You can hear our last show at [www.techradio.us](http://www.techradio.us).

Recently we've gotten several requests for information about free anti-virus programs, so this month, we'd like to talk viruses and malware. If your current solution is about to expire or has expired, please take action today to shore up any problems.

There are many great commercial anti-virus programs, Norton is a good example. We've had good luck with many free programs like AVS or AVAST. You may have Microsoft's One Care installed on your computer. If you do, you will have been getting warnings that your subscription is about to expire. We have had tremendous success in the past week upgrading to MS's new product – Security Essentials. It manages to remove stubborn trojans and malware that One Care could not handle. Besides working well, it's FREE. There is a link set up on our Web site. You will need to uninstall your current anti-virus products before installing Security Essentials. Installation should go smoothly after that. The program will update itself and run a full scan of your computer taking care of any problems it finds along the way.



Send us your questions and comments – our email address is [midday@sdpb.org](mailto:midday@sdpb.org) and our mailing address is PO Box 5000, Vermillion. TechRadio featuring the Computer Guys is heard online at [sdpb.org](http://sdpb.org) and over-the-air on your local South Dakota Public Broadcasting radio station twice a month on the first and third Fridays.

More information about the topics covered in this newsletter can be found at [www.techradio.us](http://www.techradio.us)

## Pesticide Safety Tips

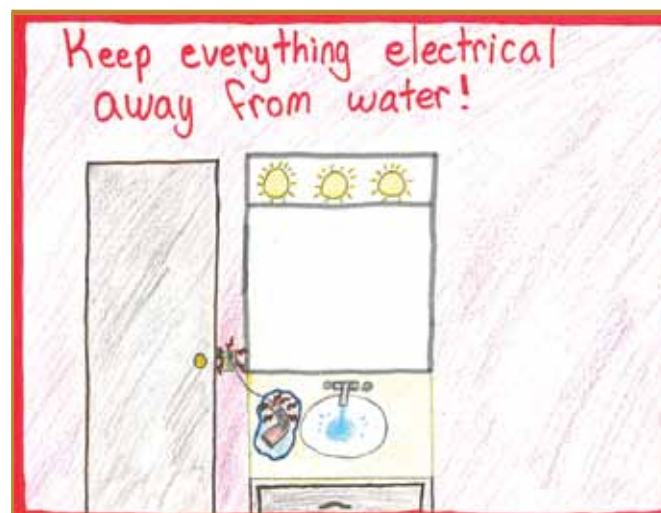
**Although pesticides can** be useful, they also can be dangerous if used carelessly or not are stored properly. Here are some tips for safer pest control:

- The most effective way to reduce risks posed by pesticides is to use non-chemical control methods to reduce or eliminate pest problems. Around the home, such measures include removing sources of food and water (such as leaky pipes) and destroying pest shelters and breeding sites (such as litter and plant debris).
- If you decide you must use pesticides, always read the label first and follow the directions to the letter, including all precautions and restrictions.
- Don't use products for pests that are not indicated on the label and don't use more pesticide than directed by the label. Don't think that twice the amount will do twice the job.
- Use protective measures when handling pesticides as directed by the label, such as wearing impermeable gloves, long pants and long-sleeve shirts. Change clothes and wash your hands immediately after applying pesticides.
- Before applying a pesticide (indoors or outdoors), remove children, their toys and pets from the area and keep them away until the pesticide has dried or as recommended by the label.
- Don't spray outdoors on windy or rainy days.
- Remove or cover food during indoor applications.
- Don't buy more pesticides than you will need. If you have leftover pesticides, check with your local government to determine whether your community has a household hazardous waste collection program or other program for disposing of pesticides. If no community program exists, follow label directions and any state or local regulations regarding disposal.
- Keep the telephone number of your area Poison Control Center near your telephone: 1-800-222-1222.

Source: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

### Kids' Corner Safety Poster

**"Keep everything electrical away from water!"**



**Celine Trask, 13 years old**  
Celine is the daughter of Pat and Rose Mary Trask, Wasta, S.D. They are members of West River Electric Association, Wall, 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.

# Party Favorites



## Creamy Ham and Macaroni Casserole

- 2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 4 tsp. chicken bouillon granules
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 8 oz. shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
- 1-1/2 cups cubed ham
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook macaroni according to package directions; drain and set aside. In a large saucepan, melt butter over low heat; whisk in flour until smooth. Whisk in milk, bouillon granules and pepper. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 cup Cheddar cheese, ham, parmesan cheese and macaroni. Pour into a prepared 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining Cheddar cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

**Margene Paige, Presho**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Pork Chops and Potatoes

- 6 pork chops
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1/2 soup can milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
- Hash browns (from 6 potatoes)
- 1 can French-fried onions, divided

Brown chops. Combine soup, milk, sour cream, 1/2 cup Cheddar cheese and 1/2 can French-fried onions. Stir in hash browns. Put mixture in a 9x13-inch pan. Lay chops on top. Bake, covered, at 350°F. for 1-1/2 hours. Top with remaining cheese and onions. Bake an additional 5 minutes.

**Joyce Dubois, Wolsey**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Pepperoni Macaroni

- 2-1/2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1 lb. bulk Italian sausage
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 (15 oz.) can pizza sauce
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 (3-1/2 oz.) pkg. sliced pepperoni, halved
- 1 (4-1/2 oz.) can sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 (2-1/4 oz.) can sliced ripe olives, drained
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Cook macaroni according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a skillet over medium heat, cook sausage and onion until meat is no longer pink; drain. Drain macaroni. In a large bowl, combine pizza sauce, tomato sauce and milk. Stir in sausage mixture, macaroni, pepperoni, mushrooms and olives. Transfer to greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Bake, covered, at 350°F. for 30 minutes. Uncover; sprinkle with cheese. Bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes or until bubbly and cheese is melted.

**Deloris Bachman, Rapid City**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Modern Tuna-Pasta Casserole

- 1-1/2 cups uncooked whole-wheat rotini
- Cooking spray
- 1 (16 oz.) bag frozen mixed vegetables, such as a carrot, broccoli and cauliflower blend, thawed
- 2 (5.5 oz.) cans low-sodium chunk light tuna, packed in water, flaked
- 1 (10.75 oz.) can low-fat condensed cream of chicken soup (lowest sodium available)
- 1/2 cup chopped bottled roasted red bell peppers, rinsed before chopping
- 1/2 cup fat-free half-and-half
- 1 tsp. all-purpose seasoning blend
- 3/4 cup lightly crushed (about 1/4-inch pieces) low-sodium whole-grain crackers (about 34 squares)
- 1/4 cup shredded or grated Parmesan cheese

Prepare pasta using package directions, omitting salt and oil. Drain. Transfer to a large bowl. Lightly spray a 2-quart glass casserole dish with cooking spray. Stir mixed vegetables, tuna, soup, roasted peppers, half-and-half and seasoning blend into pasta until combined. Transfer to casserole dish. Sprinkle with crackers and Parmesan. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 25 to 30 minutes or until casserole is warmed through and the topping is golden brown.

*Makes 4 1-1/2 cups servings. Nutrition Analysis (per serving): Calories, 400; Total Fat, 7.0 g, Saturated Fat, 2.5 g, Trans Fat, 0.0 g, Polyunsaturated Fat, 2.0 g, Monounsaturated Fat, 2.0 g; Cholesterol, 30 mg; Sodium, 537 mg; Carbohydrates, 52 g; Fiber, 8 g; Sugars, 7 g; Protein, 32 g; Dietary Exchanges: 3 starch, 1 1/2 vegetable, 3 lean meat*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Chicken Casserole

- 1 (7 oz.) package of elbow macaroni, uncooked
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 lb. Velveeta cheese, cut up
- 1 small can mushrooms
- 2 cups cooked, cut-up chicken
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1 cup milk
- Onion, chopped
- 1 stick butter or margarine, melted

Mix all ingredients and refrigerate overnight. Take out 1 hour before baking. Bake at 350°F. for 1-1/2 hours.

**Wanda Eilers, Canby, Minn.**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Hotdish for a Crowd

- 2 lb. browned ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 to 6 carrots, diced
- 3 to 5 potatoes, diced
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 (16 oz.) can string beans
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 5 T. soy sauce (or less)
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 soup cans water
- Garlic to taste
- Seasoned salt to taste, salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients in large roaster. Bake at 325°F. for about 1-1/2 hours.

**Darlene Eide, Corona**  
**Cooperative Connections**

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

# Energy Efficient Dishwashers: Clean Plates and Lower Bills



**Jim Dulley**  
www.dulley.com

**Dear Jim:** My 12-year-old dishwasher is noisy and does not have many cycle options. I think it's time to replace it. What are the important efficiency features when I compare models? Is hand-washing dishes more efficient? – Sandi T.

**Dear Sandi:** The good news is, using an automatic dishwasher is typically more efficient than hand-washing dishes (although if you take

your time and are very miserly with water usage, hand washing can be more efficient).

But your old dishwasher probably does need to be replaced because it has already survived longer than most typical dishwashers. No matter which new dishwasher you select, you can be certain it will use less electricity and hot water than your old one. The vast majority of dishwashers made today exceed the ENERGY STAR® efficiency standards. Over the life of the new dishwasher, the energy and water savings as compared to your old one can payback its initial cost.

The majority of the cost of using a dishwasher is for the energy to heat the water. A portion of this energy is used by the home's primary water heater, the rest by an internal heater in the dishwasher. With this in mind, if a dishwasher design consumes less water, less energy is needed to wash a load of dishes. Always compare the overall water consumption specifications for an average load cycle among the models.

Of course the most important feature is how well a washer cleans dishes. If it does not clean well, people tend to run it on the heavy cycle when normal will do or they hand rinse the dishes first. Rinsing can use more than 10 extra gallons of water and if hot water is used, more energy is being consumed. With a good dishwasher, a simple hand-scraping of dirty dishes should be adequate.

Top-of-the-line dishwashers offer many cycle settings to fine tune the process to the cleaning needs of the specific load. This is a nice feature, but most families can get by with three basic cycles: light, medium and heavy (for pots and pans).

Some dishwashers also sport a two-pump design in the bottom of the tank: one small pump is used for spraying the dishes

and another is used to drain the unit. Many models still use a single reversing pump which sprays in one rotation and drains in the other. Two smaller pumps require a smaller water reservoir, but the efficiency difference between one- and two-pump models has narrowed considerably.

Newer electronic controls offer greater convenience and efficiency. Hidden digital electronic controls – which typically run along the top edge of the door – look good when the door is closed, but you cannot watch the progress of the cycle and see the time left. Partially hidden controls are another option. A dishwasher I recently selected has exposed controls, which I find easier to see and use.

Newer dishwashers are also much quieter than older ones, accomplished by better motor/pump design and higher levels of insulation – both for noise reduction and for better efficiency. Layers of insulation are placed around the pump assembly and the walls of the cabinet and door. The stainless steel dishwasher I recently installed in my own home is significantly quieter and has shorter cycles.

Automatic dirt sensors measure the turbidity (cloudiness) of the water to determine when the dishes are clean and how long to run the cycles. There are several technologies to accomplish this and they function pretty well. A filter option strains the water inside the dishwasher to remove food particles. Self-cleaning models use a grinder, but this may increase the noise level. A rinse-hold feature uses only two gallons of water to rinse the dishes if you do not plan to run the dishwasher for a long while.

And as for efficient washing by hand? I've tested it in my own home using a Delta spray kitchen faucet with touch control, which allows me to minimize water usage when rinsing the washed dishes.

The overall energy savings when hand washing is really only realized during winter. I leave the warm sudsy water in the sink until it cools off. This heat is given off to the kitchen air, so the heating system has to run less (the same applies when taking a hot bath during cold winters). During summer, I do not hand wash dishes to reduce the heat and humidity buildup indoors. It can actually be a double loss during summer because your air conditioner has to run longer to remove the excess heat and humidity.

The following companies offer efficient dishwashers: Asko, (800) 898-1879, www.askousa.com; Bosch Appliances, (800) 944-2904, www.boschappliances.com; Dacor, (800) 793-0093, www.dacor.com; Kitchenaid, (800) 422-1230, www.kitchenaid.com; and Miele Appliances, (800) 843-7231, www.mieleusa.com.

*Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, Cooperative Connections, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.*

# Capital Credit Allocation Notices To Be Mailed in April


**Each member will** receive a capital credit allocation notice in the mail in the near future. As a member/owner of West River Electric Association, you can expect services at cost. Revenue over the amount needed to keep the co-op operating is called a “margin”. This margin is then returned in the form of capital credits. Your capital credits system keeps the business sound and meets the Internal Revenue requirements for a non-profit organization.

**Member rates are established to provide:**

- Sufficient amounts of revenue to cover all operating costs.
- Funds for capital requirements such as trucks, equipment, and other items not funded by RUS loans.
- Sufficient revenue to meet financial goals set by our lenders.
- Revenue for additional capital to keep pace with growth.

To implement the system, capital credit accounts, independent of the energy accounts, are established and maintained for each consumer. In the spring of each year, entries, called an allocation, are made to each consumer’s capital credit account. The entry is your share of the margin received during the previous year’s operation. For example, if the margin amounted to 1 percent of the total revenue, a credit would be made to your capital credits account amounting to \$1.00 for every \$100.00 you paid for electric service. You are notified each year of the amount credited to your capital credits account together with the total capital credits to date. **The allocation notice you receive is not a check and cannot be cashed, nor can it be used as a credit on your energy account.** The dollars in member capital credit accounts are referred to as patronage capital.

On the notice you will see a line item called “COOP”, one called “G&T” and one called “DGC”. The “COOP” line is for margins derived strictly from West River Electric. The “G&T” line is for margins that have been allocated by our power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC), of which we are a member. The “DGC” line item is for margins that BEPC derived from a coal gasification plant that BEPC owns called Dakota Gasification Company (DGC). This allocation was used in 2008 due to high natural gas prices. We do not have an allocation for 2009 for the “DGC” capital credits. West River Electric’s Board of Directors have made the decision to allocate DGC capital credits back separately as BEPC is not sure when they may pay those back to us. Therefore these capital credits from DGC may not be paid back to our members until such time



**West River Electric Assn., Inc.**  
The Telephone Energy Provider  
1208 West Fourth Ave.  
PO Box 412  
Wall, SD 57790-0412

Visit us at:  
[www.wrer.com](http://www.wrer.com)

Branch Office  
3200 E Hwy 44  
PO Box 3486  
Rapid City, SD 57709-3486

Contact us anytime:  
7:00 - 5:00 Mon-Fri  
279-2135 or 300-1500  
888-279-2135 (Wall area)  
888-303-1500 (Rapid City area)

2 1

RE: Capital Credit # 1234

**Capital Credit Allocation Notice**  
**THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PAYMENT**

Prior Years Balance: COOP 1333.69  
G&T 742.58  
DGC 0.00  
\$ 2076.27

CAPITAL CREDIT STATEMENT Calendar Year 2008			
Location	Patronage	Type	Capital Credits
12345678	348.81	COOP	12.56
	348.81	G&T	7.95
	348.81	DGC	18.73
12345678	126.00	COOP	4.32
	126.00	G&T	2.58
	126.00	DGC	6.79
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$53.48</b>

Total Unretired Capital Credits: COOP 1350.57  
G&T 753.06  
DGC 26.52  
\$ 2130.15

West River Electric exists for the purpose of providing its members with electric service on a non-profit basis. All excess margins are allocated back to its members.

**KEEP THIS STATEMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS**

You are part owner of West River Electric Association, Inc. and one way your ownership is reflected is through capital credits -- your share of what's left over after the co-op pays all its expenses.

Every month, you pay your bill for electric service, and the co-op pays the expenses incurred in providing that service. Any funds left over at the end of the year -- margins -- provide equity for the co-op and you, the member. These funds are called "capital credits".

We retain these capital credits for two reasons: (1) as working capital to keep the co-op financially sound and to allow for emergencies, such as storm damage that might require replacement of poles and power lines; and (2) to retire debts and build equity in the co-op.

As capital credits accumulate, we retain the amount needed for financial strength but distribute the balance to you, the owners.

Be sure to keep the Cooperative informed of your correct address so that you continue to receive your notices and future refunds. If you move, we recommend that you update your current address with us every five years.

Unretired capital credits cannot be applied to your 1234 energy bill or payment for any other services provided by your cooperative.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

as BEPC actually retires them to us, with the exception of estates.

Each year, the board of directors reviews the financial condition of West River Electric Association to determine repayment of capital credits. Under the bylaws of your cooperative, capital credits to each member’s account may be retired in full or in part at the discretion of the Board of Directors, after they have determined that the financial conditions of the cooperative will not be impaired by doing so.

If you have any further questions, please contact our Wall office at 279-2135 or our Rapid City office at 393-1500.

### Michael McPherson Wins \$10.00 Credit

Michael McPherson of Box Elder 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.

# Using Resources More Efficiently

by Brenda Kleinjan

**M**IKE KELLY'S VOICE GETS ANIMATED AS HE TALKS about a major technology project under way at Northern Electric Cooperative, headquartered at Bath, S.D.

Kelly, the co-op's operations manager, is in the midst of overseeing the installation of technologies that will tie in multiple levels of data about the cooperative into a real-time system.

"It's really unlimited what you can put in there," said Kelly, of the mapping system that will incorporate not only the location of co-op infrastructure, but also details about members served by those lines and hardware affiliated with each of the co-op's poles.

For example, using a laptop in the line truck, the linemen can access the map and click within a database to find out details about the

area they're heading to: pole size, height, wood species, attachments, type of conductor, size of transformers – all important information to have before setting out for the job site which can be 50 miles away from the office.

Assisting with NEC's move to the GIS (geographic information system) format was Robert Borchert, a GIS technician at Minnesota-based Great River Energy who was at the cooperative in April conducting training.

"It makes our line crews more efficient allowing us to use resources more efficiently," said Borchert of GRE's system.

"The bottom line: the biggest reasons to do this are to more effectively utilize your resources, time, reduce outage time and save money in the long run" said Borchert.

Using the GPS information, crews are able to map the shortest routes to get to all the poles.



GRE's system allowed the cooperative to have a complete inventory of thousands of miles of transmission lines extending from the middle of North Dakota to southern Minnesota.

At Northern Electric, one of the areas being tracked in the system are the results of the cooperative's annual pole testing program. Each year, about 5,000 poles are tested and their GPS (global positioning satellite) locations recorded. Through pole testing, 467 poles have been identified for replacement. Using the GPS information, crews are able to map the shortest routes to get to all the poles, therefore reducing drive time and increasing productivity.

Kelly adds that an additional benefit is that crews will know exactly what material needs to be taken to the job site.

The co-op is working on putting a GPS location on each of its 50,000 power poles that are spread along 2,916 miles of line in northern South Dakota in the Aberdeen area.

By adding layers of data to their digital map, co-op employees will be able to pull up real-time data about the cooperative.

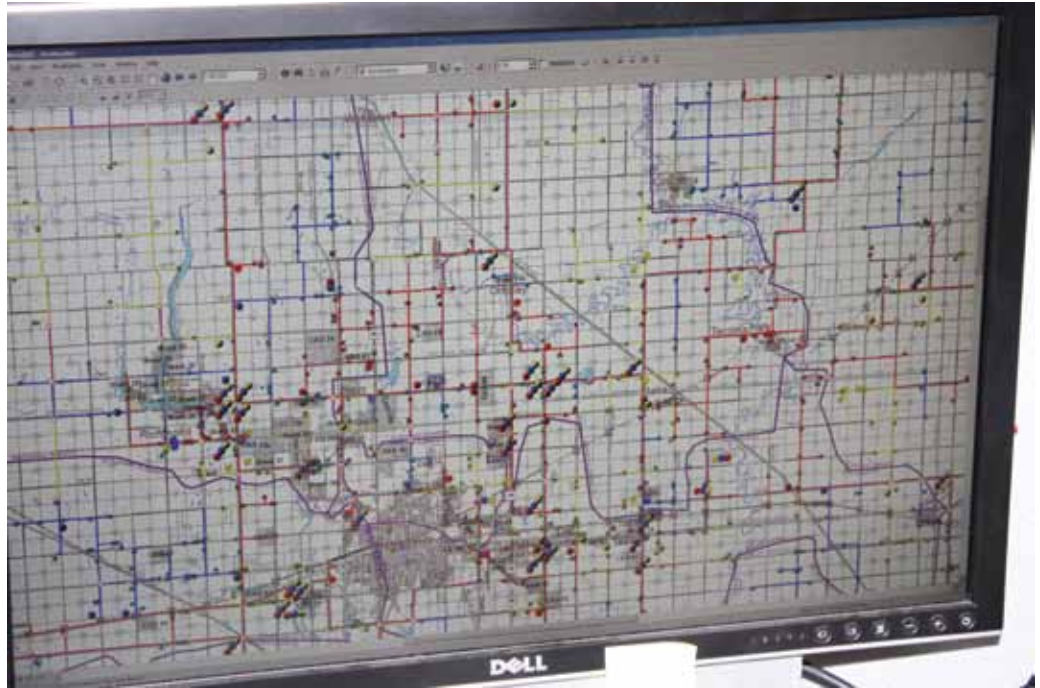
"Not only for the linemen, but it's a tool for us, too," said Kelly. "We'll eventually tie the TWACS® into this and be able to do outage management through this by pinging those meters."

TWACS is a type of advanced metering infrastructure that enables real-time communications with meters to provide information about kilowatt hour use and other data.

"We'll be able to look at the map and see which lines are OK and which are off," said Kelly. Unless a member calls in, crews must 'drive the line' or visually inspect hundreds of miles of line after a storm trying to determine where outages are. The technology will help isolate those areas resulting in fewer miles to assess."

The co-op maintains nearly 3,000 miles of power line for its 5,926 members, a density of 2.03 consumers per mile of line. If strung in a continuous line, these wires would extend roughly from Aberdeen to the southern tip of Texas and back to Redfield, S.D.

Another layer to the system will be the installation of AVLs



**Above:** A close up of a computer screen shows cooperative infrastructure and related data about Northern Electric Cooperative's system in the Aberdeen area. Each of the dots on the map contains information relative to the location. **Opposite:** Robert Borchert, a GIS technician with Great River Energy in Elk River, Minn., provides GIS training to Northern Electric Cooperative GIS Coordinator/Dispatch Aide Tyler Marken at the co-op's Bath, S.D., office. The cooperative is in the process of incorporating more GIS technologies into their system.

in the cooperative vehicles. AVL – automatic vehicle locating – is a technology that allows the cooperative to track the location of the cooperative vehicles.

While implementation of AVL is a ways off for NEC, Dakota Energy Cooperative in Huron, S.D., will be adopting the technology this summer.

For DEC manager Ken Gates, the real benefit for the system will come in after-hour outage calls and storm situations.

The January ice storm underscored the need for the system, Gates said, relating a potentially dangerous situation that occurred during the storm.

A crew working in a area of the system with poor cell service and lack of radio coverage worked in near-zero visibility conditions. The crew encountered weather-related difficulties.

"We couldn't locate the crew and were very concerned about their safety," said Gates.

Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, S.D., already utilizes the vehicle tracking devices.

Cooperatives throughout the state are implementing different aspects of technology into their systems, whether it be automated metering, vehicle tracking or items in between. The bottom line reason is to continue to improve their service to their members.

# See us at...



**31st Annual Invitational  
Cammack Ranch Supply Ag  
Trade Show**  
Union Center, SD • April 15-16, 2010

**Call SD One Call Before You Dig at 811**

### STATS

February 2010 - # of Consumers 15,014 KWH 25,968,437  
February 2009 - # of Consumers 14,826 KWH 22,975,223

## 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](mailto:vkusser@westriver.com)

# Wayne Shull Is Promoted

**Wayne Shull** began his career at West River Electric as a Apprentice Lineman May 1, 1984, became a Journeyman in May 1989 and was promoted to Wall Area Line Foreman in June of 2009. Wayne was recently promoted to Operations Superintendent with the retirement of Mike Erz. Congratulations and Best of Luck Wayne!



# Electric Heat Rate to End With the April 18th Reading



**The Electric Heat Rate** will end with the April 18th reading. Please do not shut off your breakers as we still need to be able to read your meter remotely and detect problems over the electric lines. If you have any questions you can contact the Wall office at 279-2135 or the Rapid City office at 393-1500.

# Area Teachers Encouraged to Attend Energy Seminar

**Basin Electric, the** Lignite Energy Council and the American Coal Foundation are sponsoring a teacher seminar titled “Lignite – 2010 Lignite Education Seminar: Energy, Economics and Environment” at Bismarck State College in Bismarck, ND, June 14-17, 2010.

Anika Schaff, Basin Electric employee, urges teachers in the region to attend. “The cost of the seminar and travel expenses will be paid by Basin Electric Power Cooperative for South Dakota teachers,” she says.

Now in its 25th year, Schaff says the seminar provides teachers with a broader understanding of the lignite coal industry and the important role it plays in providing electricity to consumers, farmers and businesses. The seminar will provide teachers with the information and educational materials they need to teach their students about how lignite is mined and converted into energy. Lignite’s economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the mining and power plant industry will also be discussed.

The seminar includes tours of a lignite mine, a power plant fueled by lignite, and the Great Plains Synfuels Plant. The Synfuels Plant converts coal into synthetic natural gas and other valuable byproducts. A tour of the visitor’s center at Fort Mandan is also included. Fort Mandan is the location where the Lewis & Clark Expedition spent its first winter.

The visitor’s center was constructed with the use of coal combustion byproducts.

The seminar is being held in cooperation with Bismarck State College and the Center for Economic Education at the University of North Dakota. Teachers can earn two semester graduate credits (economics - University of North Dakota, science – Minot State University, or education – North Dakota State University) by successfully completing the seminar requirements.

Teachers from all grade levels are encouraged to apply to the program, but earth science, social studies and energy education teachers will be placed first. There are 120 spots available.

Registration information for teachers from South Dakota is available in the “Online registrations” section of Basin Electric’s Web site at [http://www.basinelectric.com/News\\_Center/Event\\_Registration/index.html](http://www.basinelectric.com/News_Center/Event_Registration/index.html). Selected teachers will be required to send in a \$60 deposit that will be held and returned when registering on the first day of the seminar, June 14, 2010. They should not send the \$60 deposit until they have been confirmed to attend.

For further information or to register contact Anika Schaff at 1717 E. Interstate Ave., Bismarck, ND 58503. You may also call her at 1-800-242-2372 or e-mail her at [aschaff@becp.com](mailto:aschaff@becp.com).

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## West River Electric Loan Fund Audit



**Rita Shewmake from** the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (RUS) recently spent several weeks at West River Electric doing a loan fund audit. RUS requires a periodic audit of our records geared towards the loan funds that RUS lends to WREA. It has been 2 years since our last RUS audit, which is separate from our annual CPA audit.

Rita did a sampling of our work order and special equipment accounting records to make sure that WREA is following RUS accounting regulations and using the government loan funds properly.

# At the Helm for Rural America

**T**WO SOUTH DAKOTA NATIVES ARE WELL-PLACED TO GUIDE rural development issues critical to the state through the United States Department of Agriculture.

Last summer, Oldham, S.D.-native Dallas Tonsager was named USDA's Under Secretary for Rural Development. And, Rapid City, S.D.,-native Jonathan S. Adelstein was confirmed as the new administrator for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), a part of the Rural Development program that includes the rural electric program.

The following are excerpts of profiles on the two men which appeared in USDA's "Rural Cooperatives" publication.

## Administrator Adelstein

Jonathan S. Adelstein was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in July 2009 as the new RUS administrator. In his new post, he directs USDA's programs for rural electric and telecommunications utilities, as well as water and wastewater programs.

Prior to this appointment, he served nearly seven years as a member of the Federal Communications Commission. Before joining the FCC, Adelstein served for 15 years as a staff member in the U.S. Senate, including seven years as senior legislative aide to then Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., where he focused on telecommunications, financial services, housing, transportation and other key issues. Prior to his Senate service, Adelstein was a teaching fellow in the Department of History at Harvard University while studying at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Adelstein is a strong advocate to improve rural telecommunications and broadband. To ensure that all consumers have access to the latest telecommunications services no matter where they live, he has strived to improve universal service.

"I look forward to learning about the energy and water concerns facing our rural residents. It gives me a chance to work with some of the most dedicated leaders in our rural communities who run the electric co-ops and the small water systems. These are the folks who make those communities tick. It is incredibly rewarding to find myself in a position to help them meet their communities' needs."

## **RUS had its origins in funding rural electric and rural telephone cooperatives. Do you think the cooperative business model still works for today's needs?**

"Absolutely. Without a doubt, cooperatives play a vital role in meeting the needs of rural Americans. Because the cooperative business model is based on member ownership, control and benefit, its success is enduring. Rural electric and rural telephone cooperatives were established to deliver services to rural communities that were often neglected by neighboring for-profit companies that didn't want to incur the cost of extending service to rural areas.

"We know from our financing experience that it's not always profitable to build utilities in rural America. This is why cooperatives are so critical to the overall success of the rural economy – they have provided a vital service that may not have been otherwise as available or affordable.

"Changing demographics, our increasingly competitive environment and technological innovations have now opened the door to new services and an even better quality of life. Many rural areas would have been left out if not for the efforts of cooperatives. Cooperatives helped create rural businesses and rural businesses are sustained by the continuing evolution and reinvestment of successful cooperatives in their communities."

## **RUS today is composed of electric, telecommunications and water and wastewater programs. What are the major challenges that you expect to see in these three areas and what are some of your ideas as to how you might address these issues?**

"For telecommunications, we're currently in the midst of one of the biggest technological transformations ever seen in this country: the shift to broadband networks, on which voice service is just one application. The question we face is how to deliver broadband to areas that are still unserved or underserved, which is usually due to either geographic or economic issues.

"Current broadband service providers may have difficulty making the business case necessary to obtain financing in these areas. The Obama Administration and Congress recognized this in creating the stimulus program for broadband that RUS and the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) are conducting under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The unprecedented, \$7.2 billion for this broadband program will not deliver broadband to all areas currently lacking high-speed Internet service, but it may



**Above: RUS Administrator Adelstein addressed the NRECA annual meeting in Atlanta, Ga., in February and kicked off the 75th anniversary of rural electrification.**

serve as a blueprint for how we can meet these needs as soon as possible.

“For our electric programs, our challenges include funding the development of renewable and alternative energy, expanding and modernizing our transmission and distribution grids, improving energy efficiency, encouraging deployment of smart grid technology and meeting future electric needs while addressing environmental concerns.

“For water programs, again we are now expanding our efforts dramatically under the nearly \$1.4 billion water program investments under the stimulus act, which will finance over \$4 billion in projects. For some parts of the country, water – or lack of water – is an immediate threat to the health of our citizens or the preservation of the rural environment.

“With all three areas of infrastructure, there is a great need to fund repair and maintenance. Many of the systems in place today were built 50 to 75 years ago, or more. How we balance investment in new construction to meet future needs while funding needed upgrades and repairs to infrastructure is among the great debates occurring at all levels of government.

## Under Secretary Tonsager

Dallas Tonsager, a South Dakota farmer with wide-ranging experience working with agricultural cooperatives and in key government positions, is the new under secretary for USDA Rural Development. Tonsager will oversee a total portfolio of more than \$100 billion that USDA has invested through 40 different Rural Development programs to make rural America a better place to live and do business in. Rural Development has more than 6,000 employees in some 500 offices across the nation and in U.S. territories.

Tonsager is a well-known champion of rural America who has a keen interest in cooperatives – especially for the role they play in uniting producers and other rural people in order to develop their own value-added businesses.

Prior to his new appointment at USDA, Tonsager was a board member of the Farm Credit Administration (FCA), to which he was appointed in 2004 by President Bush. FCA is responsible for regulating and examining the Farm Credit System, a nationwide producer-owned cooperative financial system that meets nearly one-third of the credit needs of the nation’s farmers and ranchers. He also served as a board member of the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation.

This is the second major office Tonsager has held at USDA. Under President Clinton, he was state director for USDA Rural Development in South Dakota. He is thus well versed with the agency and its work to support and develop rural business and cooperatives, rural utilities, rural housing and community development. As South Dakota state director from 1993-2001, he oversaw a diversified loan portfolio of more than \$100 million. In 1999, he was recognized as one of Rural Development’s two outstanding state directors.

Tonsager grew up on a dairy farm and along with his brother, Doug, he owns Plainview Farm in Oldham, S.D., where they grow corn, soybeans, wheat and hay. He earned a bachelor of science degree in agriculture from South Dakota State University in 1976.

Tonsager and his wife, Sharon, have two sons.

## Can co-ops play a major role in the revival of the rural economy?

Absolutely and they are playing an important role in it every single day. We have rural co-op electric systems, co-op rural water systems, co-op telephone systems, co-op farm supply systems and co-op marketing systems. They are fundamental to agriculture and to life in rural America. Value-added co-ops – be they new-generation or traditional model co-ops – are essential to the rural economy and will play an important role in rural stimulus. We will look to support them in every way we can.

## Any specific sectors where you see special potential for co-op growth?

I think the local foods movement – “know your farmer, know your food” – is something that really lends itself to cooperatives. Producers of local foods can associate with other producers to pursue this market and in many cases they already are. It just makes a lot of sense.

Rural electric co-ops are also well positioned to help with economic stimulus. Many rural electric co-ops are using USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant



**Above:** Weeks after being appointed Under Secretary of Rural Development, Dallas Tonsager, met with South Dakota’s Rural Electric Youth Tour delegation in his Washington, D.C., office in June 2009.

Program to support economic development activity in their communities. This often involves setting up revolving loan funds for projects. Co-ops have also been very active in renewable energy development, including wind energy.

We’ve had a strong period of developing value-added businesses, especially alternative energy. Renewable energy has gone through some cycles, but I will be a strong advocate for using co-ops to continue building energy ventures and other value-added projects. I am also a very strong supporter of USDA’s Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG).

## How important is it that members be active in their co-ops?

By definition, co-ops are meant to help people assist themselves by working together. The more attention people pay to their local co-ops and participate in them, the more their co-op will reflect their needs. If co-ops have a weakness, it is that sometimes when they are working really well, people stop paying attention to them; they take the co-op for granted and think they no longer need to be active participants.

If co-ops are to be relevant in their communities, members must go to co-op meetings and participate in the life of the co-op. And they must communicate to the co-op what they expect from it. Co-ops need to constantly examine themselves to ensure they are reflecting their patrons’ needs. When that stops happening, co-ops get into trouble. When co-ops start focusing on things that do not necessarily serve their patrons, they have a problem.

# May is National Electrical Safety Month **Call 811 Before You Dig**

**Before you dig call** South Dakota One Call at 811! They will contact all utilities so the buried lines are properly marked, allowing you to dig in a safe environment.

So if you plan to dig, you are required to call South Dakota One Call 48 hours before digging to prevent damage to the utility lines. The only exception would be when the homeowner is gardening at a depth less than 12 inches or when a farmer is tilling a field at a depth less than 18 inches. Never assume that a buried line is at a specific depth as there are environmental factors that may have changed the depth of the line and where it is placed.

Power from the meter to the home or outbuildings is the



responsibility of the homeowner to have located, there are private locating companies or electricians who will perform this service for a fee.

After 48 hours have passed and the buried lines have been located, you can proceed with the digging you need to do. If it is necessary to dig within 18 inches of any marking, it should be done with hand tools to prevent damaging a buried line. If damage does occur to the buried lines, do not attempt to repair the damage – contact West River Electric immediately.

There is no cost to you to have your lines located. The utility companies of South Dakota support South Dakota One Call to prevent damage to their buried lines.

## Outages in Enning Area

**Friday, April 2, 2010** brought heavy wet snow to the West River Electric service area. The 69Kv line between Enning and Union Center slapped together causing the Bear Butte and Enning Substations to lose power. We had 492 consumers affected by this outage. Throughout the day on Friday, we had wire breaks and wires wrapped in the Enning area, causing individual outages. Power was restored at approximately 8:34 p.m. Friday evening to all West River Electric consumers.

## West River Electric Linemen Lend A Helping Hand

**Friday, April 2, 2010** a spring snow storm hit northwestern South Dakota affecting power delivery to consumers. We experienced some snow and ice build up issues in the northern part of



our system. Our neighbors to the north, Moreau-Grand Electric, experienced damage to the power lines causing the lights to go out for the second time this year.

On Saturday morning, West River Electric sent 6 linemen and equipment, to join 70 other outside workers to help restore power to the consumers of Moreau-Grand. They lost more than 800+ poles in the northern part of their system. Progress with repairs was slow and treacherous due to the muddy conditions.



## Update Branch Office Construction In Rapid City



The shop walls are up, and the contractors are working on the roof of the shop. The concrete footings are poured and they are putting up steel for the office portion of the building. The precast for the office walls should be here by April 26th and installed by May 1. The contractors will continue to work on the parking areas and begin pouring asphalt as the weather permits.

Just a reminder to you, our consumers, we have lost a lot of our parking at the Branch Office due to the construction of the new building. Please be careful when coming in to conduct business as parking is limited.

## Employees Receive Training On The New Outage Management Software



The linemen and CSR's were trained on our new Outage Management Software, which allows us to enter outage and blink information, track current outages, and receive reports showing our outage history. The linemen and office employees are now able to enter outages, assign crews and see what has been affected by an outage – making restoration quicker. This system is fully interfaced with our mapping software, allowing for easier location of a problem.

SRS, our after hours answering service, is able to initiate outage reports so they are ready for the linemen when they get into the office.

2/23/10

*Dear Willy Nohr,*

*Thank you for coming to career day I really enjoyed your lesson about power lines it was really interesting. I really liked learning about all of the equipment you brought. Tell Sam thanks too.*

*Sincerely,*

*Randee Thayer*

*Randee Thayer*

## Regional Dateline

### April 15-16

Cammack Ranch Supply  
Ag Trade Show  
Union Center, SD  
605-985-5591

### May 6-8

SD High School  
All-State Jazz Band  
Aberdeen, SD

### May 8

Fur Ball  
Humane Society of BH  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City  
605-545-0237

### May 15

New Underwood  
High School Graduation  
New Underwood, SD

### May 20-22

SD High School  
Boys Tennis State Meet  
Rapid City, SD

### May 22

Wall High School Graduation  
Wall High School Gym  
Wall, SD

### May 23

Douglas High  
School Graduation  
Football Stadium  
Box Elder, SD

### May 23

Rapid City Christian  
High School Graduation  
Rapid City, SD



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 Association will be closed  
in observance of Memorial Day on May 31  
605-279-2135 • 605-393-1500**

### May 23

St Thomas More  
High School Graduation  
Rapid City, SD

### May 23

Sturgis Brown  
High School Graduation  
Sturgis, SD

### May 24-25

SD High School  
Boys & Girls B  
Golf State Meet  
Aberdeen, SD

### May 24-25

SD High School  
Girls A Golf State Meet  
Rapid City, SD

### May 24-25

SD High School  
Girls AA Golf State Meet  
Spearfish, SD

### May 28-29

SD High School  
AA Track & Field  
State Meet  
Brandon, SD

### May 28-29

SD High School  
A Track & Field  
State Meet  
Lennox, SD

### May 28-29

SD High School  
B/Finals Track & Field  
State Meet  
Sioux Falls, SD

## Events of Special Note

### April 23

Big Brothers Big Sisters  
Bowl For Kids Sake  
Bandit Bowl  
Ellsworth AFB, SD  
605-343-1418

### June 6

Rapid City Central  
High School Graduation  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD

### June 6

Rapid City Stevens  
High School Graduation  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD

### June 12

7th Annual  
Yellow Bike-A-Thon  
Memorial Bandshell  
Rapid City, SD  
605-923-5991