

West River Electric

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Cooperative Connections

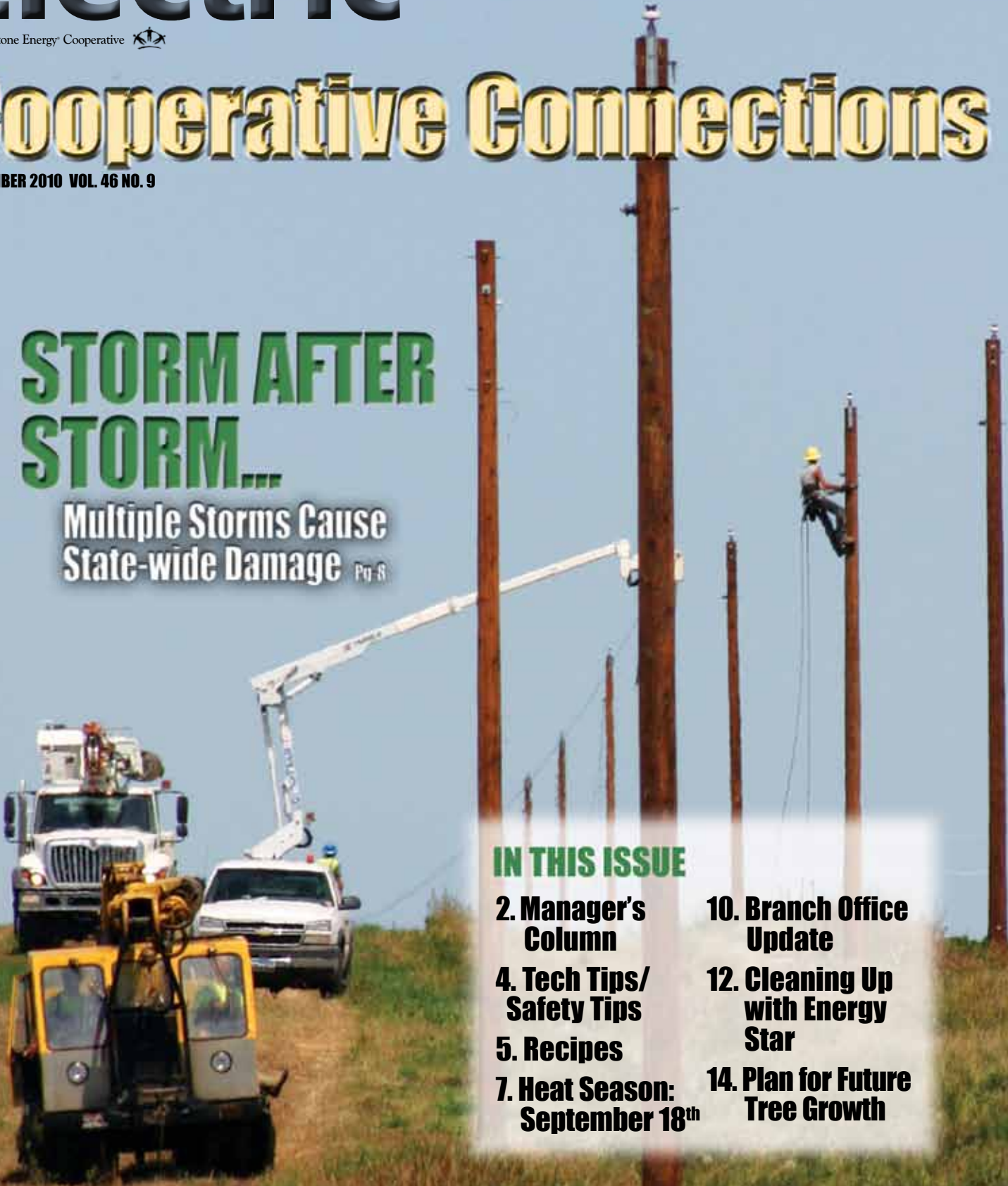
SEPTEMBER 2010 VOL. 46 NO. 9

STORM AFTER STORM...

Multiple Storms Cause State-wide Damage Pg. 8

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“Work Hard, Work Smart, Work Together”



Dick Johnson
West River Electric Association
CEO/General Manager

On my drives between Wall and Rapid City, I many times listen to audio books. The latest one I am finishing is by Dean Smith, one of the greatest college basketball coaches of all time from North Carolina. In his book he mentions how he told his players to “play hard, play smart, play together”. In the business world, he translates that to say “work hard, work smart, work together.” I liken this saying on our future at

West River. I just recently attended a meeting with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a cooperative that supplies us with approximately 85% of our power needs. There was plenty of interesting news to go around. One item of good news that came during the meeting was that it appears the cap and trade debate is dead in Congress for this session. They are still talking about some sort of energy bill that will likely be passed by year end, but Congress appears to be more interested in dealing with the problems relating to the Gulf oil spill. It appears there could be some sort of national renewable energy standards put into place. These standards will require generators to have a certain amount of their generation in renewable products. That is another good piece of news for Basin. Basin has a strong portfolio of renewables. In fact, by 2011, Basin will have almost 500 wind turbines generating over 700 MW of electricity providing approximately 16% of their generation.

Basin has had to embark on a building program like they did back in the 1980's. The Dakota's and Wyoming have seen growth in electricity usage unlike many areas of the country. Granted, we have seen a temporary slowdown in our growth, but we still continue to see new housing and commercial load develop. There has also been a boom

in oil drilling load and new oil pipelines through eastern and western South Dakota. With the growth, there comes a requirement for increased, stable, base load electrical generation. Basin is in the final stages of construction of the Dry Fork coal fired generating plant near Gillette WY which will go online sometime this spring. This plant will produce approximately 350 MW of power for Basin to help meet future needs. Along with the plant, additional transmission line is being built to move power around where needed from the new wind turbines and coal plant. West River will benefit from these projects by a stable, reliable energy supply.

The electric industry is under a change like no one has seen since the start of cooperatives back in the 1930's.

You can probably see this will provide pressure on rates. Basin has tried to keep rates stable hoping to avoid a large, sudden increase when these projects come on line. What the increases in rates will be is still being ironed out. Along with our single largest expense, power costs, West River has increased costs for labor, transportation, and capital projects such as the branch office and re-built Rushmore sub. We will be completing a new cost of service study within the next few months and should know better what our future rates will be upon completion of the study. Please be assured our Board and management staff is looking at every possible scenario, much like Basin, to see what we can do to control costs.

The electric industry is under a change like no one has seen since the start of cooperatives back in the 1930's. You, our members, have helped build a strong cooperative these last 70 years. So as Dean Smith would say, we are going to have to “work hard, work smart, and work together” to continue our strong tradition here at West River Electric.

**WREA WILL BE CLOSED: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2010
IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR DAY**

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.

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Design assistance by:

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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

Welcome to West River Electric's Annual Meeting



Our community has changed over the years. You may remember as a kid buying groceries and hardware at mom-and-pop stores – most are now long gone, driven out by national retailers.

It seems everything today has become a bit generic, focused more on profits than people. Yet it's nice to know we still have locally owned and controlled businesses we can count on – such as West River Electric Association.

By receiving electricity from the co-op, you're a member – an owner, really – of the business. You have a say in how the co-op's run. Your voice rings loud and clear every year at the West River Electric Annual Meeting. That's where you join other members to elect folks, like us, to represent your concerns on a daily basis.

We're members, just like you, and elected by you to form your board of Directors. Your co-op is managed by ranchers, business owners, and professionals – who live near you. We want what you want – affordable energy bills and the comfort of knowing lights will turn on when you flip a switch.

With those goals in mind we work throughout the year to invest in our electric system and keep power reliable. We focus on educating members how to use energy efficiently. We talk to you in the grocery store and on the street, listening to your concerns and ideas.

The board's role is a simple one – we look out for your interests because, quite frankly, we share them. We are elected to represent you at the co-op. And the best part about our co-op is simple: anyone can be a member. We're founded on a set of seven principles, including voluntary and open membership. Anyone who needs electricity within our service territory, regardless of race, religion, sex, or economic circumstances, can become an owner of this hometown co-op.

We're looking forward to seeing you the next time our community joins voices to guide the co-op. Don't miss West River Electric's Annual Meeting on October 9, 2010. Call the co-op at 605-393-1500 and ask for Veronica Kusser, Manager of Member Services if you have any questions. We'll see you there!

– *West River Electric's Board of Directors*

All the Talk About Talk

VoIP. It sounds like a distant planet on a made-for-TV SciFi thriller, but it's saving people money by using their high speed Internet connection to make long distance phone calls. And long distance can mean a very long distance.

You'll need to assess your long distance habits to see if there is a better or cheaper way to go. Everyone's needs are different, and if the Aunt or Uncle you are calling also has high speed Internet, it can be very easy to use a free service like Skype for audio or video calls and save a bundle.

My family recently followed a trend to dump the home phone line we've had for years. It was a tough decision; there were many things to weigh. From having to notify friends, family, banks, mortgage companies, credit cards, etc. to the very real concern of having a "land line" phone for 911 calls, it may be that you want to keep your line. In our case, when the youngest son got a cell phone, it just wasn't practical to pay a monthly charge just so the telemarketers could get a hold of me at dinner time.

There is a box we plug in now to our old phone system in the house that connects via Bluetooth to up to two cell phones allowing us to use our old handsets with our new cell phones. Kind of neat. But back to VoIP.

Your choices range from almost \$30 a month with a national company, to \$20 a year to "magically" add another phone line. And there is a big list of concerns. Look up VoIP on Wikipedia if you would like the laundry list, but there is also a list of conveniences and you may find that VoIP may just suit your needs. I've set up a few links for you at www.techradio.us.

While there visit our guide for keeping your data safe, too. The Computer Guys are hearing a lot of stories about waterlogged CPUs and lost family photos. Don't let that happen to you. Follow our easy 3-2-1 guide to backing up your data by clicking on the link in the menu bar.



Send us your questions and comments – our e-mail address is midday@sdpb.org and our mailing address is PO Box 5000, Vermillion, SD 57069. TechRadio featuring the Computer Guys is heard online at sdpb.org and over-the-air on your local South Dakota Public Broadcasting radio frequency twice a month on the first and third Friday's. More information about the topics covered in this newsletter can be found at www.techradio.us. Kent Osborne is Director of Online Services for SDPB.

Back to School Safety

With many young students heading back to school soon, it's time for parents to study up on some safety tips. Law enforcement and other safety experts offer the following advice:

- If your child will be walking to school or to a bus stop, study the route they'll be taking – and don't let them walk alone. Make sure the route isn't close to alleys, wooded areas or empty buildings. Show children safe places they could run to in an emergency, such as a neighbor's house or a busy store and tell them not to use cell phones and headphones while walking, to avoid any distractions.
- Remind children to avoid strangers, especially around playgrounds, public restrooms and empty buildings. Explain to children that if they spot a stranger loitering or if someone tries to follow them, they should run to a public place. Tell them that when possible, they should try to get a good look at the stranger's face, vehicle and license plate. That could help police. If a stranger gets too close, children should run and scream something that would alert other adults. Tell children to shout something like, "This person is trying to hurt me!" or "Stay away from me!"
- Make sure children know their full name, address and telephone number. Remind them not to share this information with strangers. Also, don't hang a house key around your child's neck. That will only tell strangers that your child will be home alone after school. Put the key inside a pocket or sock.
- MP3 players, iPods and other popular devices could attract thieves. Children should not display MP3 players, cell phones or even small amounts of cash in public.
- Talk to kids about bullying. Children may be embarrassed about being targeted by bullies and they might not confide in you. Tell them it's OK to report a bully to a teacher or a school resource officer.
- And for motorists: Remember that school speed zones – and the law enforcement officers enforcing them – will be back in effect.

Source: *Sun-Sentinel.com*

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Watch out for power lines."



Adam Ronke, 9 years old
Adam is the son of Gene and Kristy Ronke, South Shore, S.D. They are members of Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, Watertown, 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.

Garden Delights



Colonel's Coleslaw

- 3/4 cup Miracle Whip
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 T. sandwich spread
- 1 T. dill pickle vinegar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 4-1/2 cups grated cabbage

Mix together first 7 ingredients. Pour over cabbage. Let chill thoroughly.

Lee Anne Birkeland, Dupree
Cooperative Connections

Mock Raspberry Jam

- 4 cups chopped green tomatoes
- 4 cups sugar
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1 (6 oz.) pkg. raspberry gelatin

Do not peel tomatoes. Grind tomatoes or put in food processor until chopped. Boil chopped tomatoes, sugar and lemon juice in large kettle for 20 minutes; stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; stir in gelatin. Pour into sterilized jars. Seal with paraffin wax or lid and band and process in hot water bath.

Margene Paige, Presho
Cooperative Connections

Wild Mulberry Jam

- 6 cups nearly ripe mulberries
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 (1.75 oz.) pkg. fruit pectin
- 5-1/2 cups sugar

Remove stems from mulberries, if desired. Puree berries and lime juice in blender. Pour into large, heavy stainless steel saucepan. Stir in pectin; cook over high heat, stirring until fruit is at a full boil. Quickly stir in sugar; return to full boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Pour into sterilized jars. Seal with paraffin wax or lid and band and process in hot water bath.

Julie Peterson, Canton
Cooperative Connections

Lemony Zucchini Bread

- 4 cups flour
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 (3 oz.) pkg. instant lemon pudding
- 1-1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 eggs
- 1-1/4 cups milk
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 T. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon extract
- 2 cups shredded zucchini
- 1/4 cup poppy seeds
- 2 tsp. grated lemon peel

In a large bowl, combine first 6 ingredients. In separate bowl, whisk eggs, milk, oil, lemon juice and extract. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in zucchini, poppy seeds and lemon peel. Pour into two greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pans. Bake at 350°F. for 50 to 55 minutes. Cool 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

Dee Herlyn, Marion
Cooperative Connections

Savory Beet & Goat Cheese Tart

- 1 T. olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 refrigerated piecrust
- 1 (16 oz.) jar Aunt Nellie's Sliced Pickled Beets, well drained*
- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. herb and garlic-flavored goat cheese
- 2 T. chopped fresh thyme
- Grated or shredded lemon peel (optional)

In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onions; cook and stir until softened and golden brown about 15 minutes, reducing heat if necessary. Remove from heat. Unroll crust and place on ungreased baking sheet. Spread onions evenly over crust, leaving a 1-inch border. Arrange beets over onions and dot with goat cheese. Sprinkle with thyme. Fold pastry edge over beets crimping edges, leaving center uncovered. Bake at 450°F. until crust is golden, about 20 minutes. To serve, slice into wedges and garnish with thyme and lemon peel, if desired. (Makes 10 to 12 appetizer servings.) *To use drained beet juice: Reserve 1/2 cup drained beet juice and combine with 1 clove minced garlic, 2 T. Dijon-style mustard and 2 tsp. honey in blender container. Blend on high 10 seconds. Pour 1/3 cup olive oil into mixture with machine running and blend well. Serve as salad dressing.

Nutritional Information per serving (1/10 of recipe): 213 calories, 6 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 14 g fat, 286 mg sodium, 18 mg cholesterol, less than 1 g dietary fiber, 1 mg iron, less than 1 mg thiamin, 355 IU Vitamin A, 2 mg Vitamin C.

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Veggie Mac and Cheese

- 1 carrot, thinly sliced
- 2 T. butter or margarine
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 medium yellow summer squash, halved lengthwise and sliced
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1-2/3 cups cooked macaroni
- 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled

In a large skillet, sauté carrot in butter for 2 minutes. Add onion; cook and stir 2 more minutes. Add zucchini and summer squash; cook for 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Combine soup, milk, salt and pepper; stir into skillet. Add macaroni; heat through. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and cook for 2 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with bacon.

Rebecca Walz, Tripp
Cooperative Connections

Acorn Squash

- 1 small acorn squash, cut in half
- 3 T. butter
- 2-1/2 heaping T. Kraft caramel dip

Place 1-1/2 T. butter in each squash. Add caramel dip. Stir. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Nancy Peterson, Sioux Falls
Cooperative Connections

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

Steam Savings Add Up



Jim Dulley

www.dulley.com

Dear Jim: I want a healthy and efficient method to cook meals for my family and I don't like microwave ovens for most food. How efficient are residential steam ovens? Do they bake and roast as well as a regular oven? – Jan T.

Dear Jan: Steam ovens are used by professional bakeries

and restaurants because of the quality of cooked foods and the dramatically reduced cooking time. Shorter cooking times result in less energy being used and lower utility bills. Bear in mind the initial price of a steam oven, whether it is built-in or freestanding (similar to a microwave oven), is considerably greater than a standard or convection oven.

Don't run out and buy a professional steam oven. Professional ovens, steam or conventional, may be slightly less expensive but often do not have the safety features required for home use. Play it safe and get an oven designed for home use and approved by Underwriter Laboratories (UL).

Nearly everyone has used a small electric countertop steamer for vegetables and rice. The food cooks quickly and retains more of the natural flavors and nutrients than other cooking methods. With more natural flavors, less salt and other seasonings are needed – further enhancing the health benefits of steam cooking.

Within the past several years, steam oven models have become available for home use. The built-in models look similar to a conventional wall oven. Most models have a small (typically 1.25 quarts) water reservoir so they do not require a water line connection. Fill the reservoir each time you use the oven.

Food cooks much faster in a steam oven because steam has a higher heat content and heat transfer rate than hot air. Water normally boils at 212 degrees and becomes steam. Some steam ovens can produce superheated steam as hot as 500 degrees. When this steam hits the food surface, it transfers its heat to the cold food. As the steam transfers the heat and condenses, the latent heat also goes into the food.

Roasting a large chicken in a steam oven takes about 20 minutes, as compared to two hours in a conventional oven. The overall heating element wattage in a steam oven also rates less

than the elements in a conventional oven. Most models plug into a standard 120-volt wall outlet.

Superheated steam also heats the fat in meat quickly without searing the outside surface. This liquefies fat almost instantly – much of it drips off into a pan, resulting in lower-fat meat. If too much fat dripped off in a conventional oven, the meat would taste dry and tough. In a steam oven, the steam keeps the meat moist and tender without the higher fat content.

There are additional energy savings because an entire meal (meat, vegetables and potatoes) can be made in the steam oven without using separate pots on a stovetop. Stovetop cooking is particularly inefficient because much of the heat never gets to the food. Instead, it escapes around the sides of the pot into the room air, making your air conditioner run even harder during summer.

Because steam cooking at home is relatively new, most people don't know how to cook with it. Most new steam ovens have a menu of foods from which you select in the computer memory. The oven determines the proper cooking time and settings for each food. Some ovens have hundreds of food items stored in memory and you can select combinations.

Roasting a large chicken in a steam oven takes about 20 minutes, as compared to two hours in a conventional oven.

If you are planning to have fish, spinach and potatoes, select the three items. The oven prompts you to place the potatoes in the oven since they take the longest to bake. After 18 minutes, it prompts you to add the fish. After nine more minutes, it prompts you to add the spinach for the final three minutes; then, your entire meal is ready.

For more versatility, combination steam/convection ovens can cook even faster. Steam ovens do not brown meats, so the convection portion of the oven can be used to accomplish that task. For breads, the moisture inside the steam oven makes much better crusts and provides more even baking.

The following companies offer efficient steam wall ovens: Gaggenau, (877) 442-4436, www.gaggenau.com; Kitchenaid, (800) 334-6889, www.kitchenaid.com; Miele, (800) 843-7231, www.mieleusa.com; Sharp, (800) 237-4277, www.sharppusa.com; and Viking, (888) 845-4641, www.vikingrange.com.

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

Aerial Truck & Pole Top Rescue Training

The West River

Electric Linemen received training at the July safety meeting on pole top and aerial truck rescue training. Each year the linemen go thru a training requirement put on by SDREA. They are required to lower a 180 pound dummy down from the pole using a hand line, a cross arm, or a screw driver driven into the pole. All the linemen were also certified in pole climbing requirements.



The 2010 Heat Season Begins With the September 18th Meter Reading

The heat season is just around the corner, it begins with the September 18th reading.

Be sure that the breaker to the heat meter is on so that you receive the maximum benefit of our electric heat rate this heat season. We ask that you leave your breakers on to the heat meter year round. Without power to the automated meter reading system, we cannot detect trouble with the meter or get readings.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Tracea at 393-1500 or 1-888-393-1500 in the Rapid City area or Debbie at 279-2135 or 1-888-279-2135 in the Wall and Enning areas.

If you have electric heat, but do not have a heat meter, contact Member Services at 393-1500 or 1-888-393-1500 to find out how to start saving money!

Record Precipitation Results in Bumper Hay Crops

Reminder from West River Electric. With the above average precipitation in the area, come bumper hay and alfalfa crops, which can pose safety hazards for area farmers and ranchers.

West River Electric encourages farmers and ranchers to stack hay bales away from power lines.

“In 2010, South Dakota has been blessed with record rainfall,” said West River Electric Manager of Member Services, Veronica Kusser. “West River Electric is concerned that some members may be tempted to stack their bales below or close to power lines. That’s a bad idea.”

Kusser said that some farmers and ranchers like to stack their bales three high, presenting the possibility of loaders coming into contact with power lines. Later, when stack movers raise the bales to move them to where they are needed, it presents another possibility of electrocution, she said.

Stacking bales beneath power lines also could pose hazards this winter when ice storms may cause the lines to build up with ice, possibly causing them to arc and emit sparks, potentially igniting hay under the power lines, Kusser warned. “Overall, this is a safety issue and we want our cooperative members to be aware of it and stay safe.”



A Blizzard of Paperwork

Winter storms will likely expose weakened portions of the cooperatives' systems.

by Brenda Kleinjan

FIRST THERE WAS THE BLIZZARD. THEN THERE WAS the blizzard of paperwork. And, in between was another blizzard and a tornado or two.

"It's trying to have storm after storm after storm," said Melissa Maher, general manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake, S.D., one of the hardest-hit cooperatives in the January 2010 ice storm that knocked out power to thousands of rural South Dakotans, including the nearly 3,750 MGEC members in Corson, Dewey and Ziebach counties in north central South Dakota.

"After the January storm, you think nothing this bad could happen again, and then the Good Friday storm hit," said Maher.

And as the co-op emerged from that storm, tornadoes wiped out portions of Dupree, S.D., a community the cooperative serves.

Between the three storms, the co-op lost a total of 4,300 poles – 3,100 in January alone.

"If you think the storm was bad, then you have the second part of the storm – it's a whole other element," said Maher of the record keeping involved with documenting a storm.

She maintains two large plastic tubs in her office which containing folders, binders, rolled up maps and other information documenting the storm. She accesses both tubs nearly daily as she fields questions about work done as the cooperative seeks reimbursement through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In November 2008, the cooperative was hit with a storm that downed 500 poles.

"We thought that was the storm of our life, but the Good Lord just did a little test run with that one," Maher said.

Through it all, Moreau-Grand and the other co-ops hardest hit by the January 2010 ice storm continue the slow and steady process of restoration of a storm that will likely cost \$80 million.

More than 100 miles east of Maher, FEM Electric Association general manager Scott Moore also wades through a sea of paperwork as the cooperative seeks to right itself after the January storm knocked out power to nearly 80 percent of the system at the height of the storm – only the extreme eastern edge of the Ipswich, S.D.-based cooperative, which serves Faulk, Edmunds and



McPherson counties in South Dakota, remained unaffected.

The final count of poles downed in the storm was 4,318 at FEM – or about 14 percent of the approximately 31,500 poles the co-op has.

“The paper work is enormous,” said Moore.

“Two of our linemen are in the office nearly every day of the week trying to keep the paperwork straight,” said Moore. For Moore and crew, the storm was the biggest in the co-op’s history, eclipsing the damage caused in the winter of 1997 when the co-op lost 500 poles and had about 1,500 wirebreaks. FEM was missed in the 2005 storm, which caused damage at 19 South Dakota cooperatives in eastern South Dakota.

The paperwork includes hotel and lodging bills that totaled more than \$100,000 per property in addition to the millions being spent on supplies. Now, a co-op that typically saw its monthly expenses at less than \$100,000 a month prior to the storm copes with monthly bills that top \$1 million a month. FEM estimated its initial damage at \$9 million and Moreau-Grand reports a similar amount.

Moore breaks down storm response into stages:

First is getting the power back on, while maintaining safe working practices.

Second is documenting the damage. At FEM this meant equipping crews with digital cameras to record the damage as they made repairs.

Third was to clean up debris followed by restoring power to lower priority services.

He estimates it will take four years to finish all restoration.

A similar process is in place at Moreau-Grand. And, both co-ops are doing what they can to prepare for the winter.

“We’re doing maintenance just to get the line back in before winter hits,” said Moore.

Winter storms will likely expose weakened portions of the cooperatives’ systems.

“We know that the first heavy snowfall with wind will reveal weaknesses in the system,” said Kent Larson, head of Moreau-Grand’s Operations Department, which is responsible for keeping the power flowing. “When we get near-storm conditions, we’ll see a whole new bunch of poles go down and wire breaks. We’ll just deal with it when it comes.”

The cooperative maintains more than 3,500 miles of overhead line in an area of 6,950 square miles. (MGEC’s land mass is larger than the states of Rhode Island, Delaware or Connecticut.)

Larson uses a shag rug and paper clips as an analogy of what his crews face.

“Imagine a large shag carpet and then toss out 70,000 paper clips onto the carpet. Now go pick out just 4,100 paperclips that are scattered throughout. That’s what we’re facing,” said Larson.

And, it’s not over yet.

“After the January storm, I thought we’d be back up 100 percent by snowfall,” said Larson. “Now, it’s going to be two



Above: FEM Electric General Manager Scott Moore reviews a system map that outlines the co-op’s reconstruction progress.

or three years. It’s been compounded by the different storms.”

In addition to the visible broken poles, other damage is also sustained, but may not be immediately visible as wire was severely stretched in the storm and hardware loosened.

“We found three new poles yesterday,” Maher said in late July, noting that the poles were likely damaged in January. “That’s just going to happen.”

“The linemen tell me the system will never be the same,” said Maher. “It’s compromised the system, which is 62 years old. It’s not going to be fixed overnight.”

“When the wind blows, I hold my breath,” said Maher. It was several months before she was able to come into the office and not have reports of overnight outages sitting on her desk in the morning.

Moore also is dealing with a compromised system.

When a tornado hit the Bowdle area in late spring, it caused more disruption than would normally be expected.

“We’re so dead in the water,” said Moore. “At that time we couldn’t back feed.”

Like Moreau-Grand, FEM brought in extra crews during the storm and has retained some additional manpower to continue with repairs and clean up.

Four clean up crews patrol for debris removal, riding or walking every mile of line that was damaged, picking up poles, wire, damaged transformers, insulators and even the occasional misplaced tool. The damaged was strung out among 1,430 of the co-op’s 1,700 miles of overhead line.

“With storms you do whatever you need to do to survive,” said Maher.

One of the things happening at Moreau-Grand in the aftermath of the storm is a re-evaluation of co-op policies regarding minimum-use and vacated services.

“We have 1,300 well accounts; 40-plus percent are minimum users (which is defined at \$20 a month or less usage for well and seasonal accounts) and 10 percent are idle. You have to look at spending millions of dollars to build back for a minimum bill,” said Maher.

She estimates that it will cost \$28,000 per mile to build back services to those accounts, many of which would require multiple miles of line to be constructed.

“Our members are going to count on us to make the right decisions; that’s quite a bit of burden,” said Maher.

Cover: Moreau-Grand Electric crews rebuild portions of the transmission line damaged in 2010 storms. *Photo by Roger Lawien/MGEC* **Opposite:** A crew from Moorhead, Minn.-based Aevenia Energy and Electrical Construction rebuild a single-phase line for FEM Electric Association northeast of Roscoe, S.D. *Photo by Brenda Kleinjan*

Update on Construction of Rapid City Branch Office

By the time you receive this Connections, the sheetrock should be up, taped, textured and the first coat of paint will be dry. They have started doing some outdoor landscaping – preparing for grass, trees and bushes. The pavers are working in the parking lot. Three-fourths of the concrete floor in the shop has been poured. The anticipated day of taking possession of the new office from Sampson Construction is approximately October 15th.

Just a reminder to you, our members, 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.

Updates on the Branch Office available at www.westriver.com.



July 31 Microburst Causes Outage

A microburst, with winds of 70 to 80 mph, one mile north of the intersection of Elk Creek and Elk Vale roads swept thru the area Saturday evening, July 31st, leaving approximately 200 members without power. WREA linemen worked thru the night, restoring power to all consumers by 7:00 a.m. Sunday.

We lost 25-3 phase poles, within a half mile in each direction of the intersection of Elk Creek and Elk Vale Roads. All poles were replaced by Tuesday evening, August 3.



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

Edna Fortune Wins \$10.00 Credit

Edna Fortune of Quinn 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.

Call SD One Call Before You Dig at 811

STATS

June 2010 - # of Meters 15,131
 KWH 15,494,644

June 2009 - # of Meters 14,869
 KWH 15,395,319

Time is Running Out for Claiming Energy Efficiency Tax Credits

by Magen Howard

Only three months remain to tackle home improvement projects if you want to take advantage of energy efficiency tax credits authorized under the federal stimulus bill. Measures that qualify include replacing windows, doors, or roofs with materials that reduce your home's heat loss or gain; adding insulation; replacing certain air conditioners; and installing air-source heat pumps, hot-water boilers, and biomass stoves.

We want to make sure you, our members, know that these tax credits are available and you can take advantage of them before they expire on December 31, 2010. This is a great opportunity for folks to invest in residential energy efficiency and see energy bill savings right away.

You can recover 30 percent up to \$1,500 – of costs associated with buying and installing heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and biomass stoves. Installation costs are not covered for windows, doors, roofing, and insulation.

ENERGY STAR, a joint program of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, provides guidelines on what qualifies for the tax credit at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits. Tax credits are

especially beneficial as they directly reduce, dollar for dollar, any taxes you owe.

"These are tough times, and we know it's important for our members to keep their monthly electric bills as low as possible," explains Veronica Kusser, Manager of Member Services. "Making home energy efficiency upgrades offers a great way to save energy and money, and these tax credits can help make that a reality."



If you're interested in renewable energy, the government also offers a renewable energy tax credit that expires Dec. 31, 2016. That credit covers 30 percent of the cost of materials and installation for solar panels, solar water heaters, and geothermal heat pumps, for both new and existing homes.

Be sure to keep your receipts and your Manufacturer's Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit) for your records. Then claim the credit on your 2010 taxes using IRS Form 5695.

Source: ENERGY STAR, Database for State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency

Murphy



Cleaning Up with ENERGY STAR®

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner around \$50 a year.

by Brenda Kleinjan

SINCE HOME WATER HEATING ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 15 percent of a home's energy use, it provides a fairly obvious place to look to improve energy savings.

And, looking at where you use hot water may lead to some of the greatest savings.

Hot water consumption is the water you use at appliances and faucets. Every gallon of hot water you use is replaced by a gallon of cold water in your water heater that must be heated. If you reduce your hot water consumption, you'll reduce the amount of electricity your water heater consumes. You can reduce your hot water consumption by installing low-flow showerheads, for a savings of 5 to 10 gallons per shower. You'll also use less hot water by using the cold-water wash-cycle on your washing machine. Modern soaps do a great job of cleaning clothes without hot water, and you'll save up to 10 gallons of hot water per cycle.

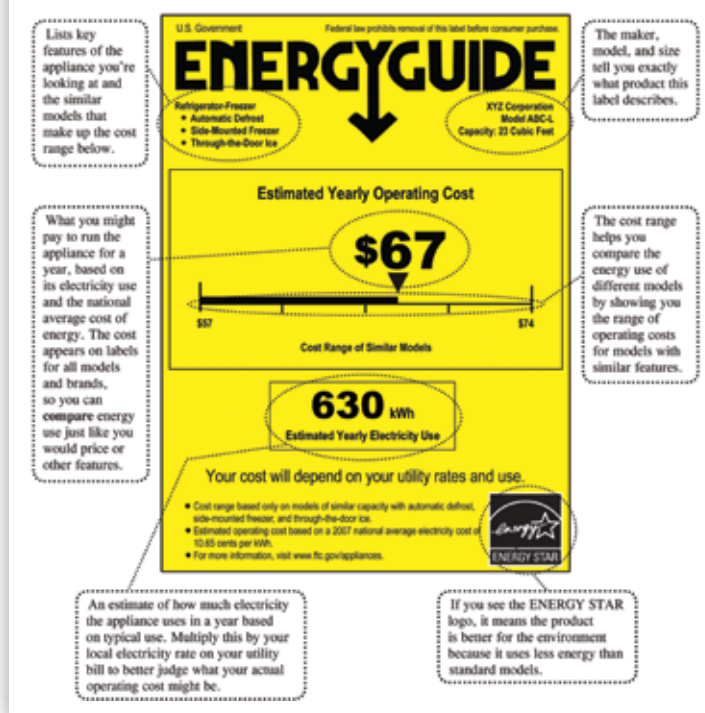
And, if it's time to replace your dishwasher and washing machine, you may be able to put \$150 or back into your pocket every year by selecting an ENERGY STAR®-labeled model.

One option that no one should overlook is an energy-efficient washing machine. These machines can be identified most easily by the ENERGY STAR® label. Approximately 93 percent of all households have a clothes washer, and about 102 million clothes washers currently are in use in the U.S. About 9 million washing machines are sold each year. Energy-efficient models make up slightly more than one-third of all washing machines sold.

ENERGY STAR-rated washing machines do cost slightly more than their less efficient counterparts, running from \$400 to \$1,500, depending upon what features the consumer desires. Obviously, the more bells and whistles added, the greater the cost. Those bells and whistles do not always mean more savings,



How to Use the EnergyGuide Label



however. For this reason, pay careful attention to the yellow EnergyGuide on each individual washing machine when making a purchase.

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner around \$50 a year, or \$540 to \$600 over the life of the appliance. Efficient washing machines also will save more than 5,000 gallons of water a year. Careful shopping could mean that the resulting savings will pay for the washing machine over its lifetime.

ENERGY STAR-qualified clothes washers use the latest technology to reduce energy and water consumption substantially, compared to non-qualified models. The energy and water efficiencies of clothes washers are measured according to their Modified Energy Factor (MEF) and Water Factor (WF). These criteria generally limit ENERGY STAR qualification to front-loading and advanced top-loading models.

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water, instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water needed to clean clothes. A clothes washer consumes the most energy when it heats the water. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, thereby reducing both drying time and energy use.

ENERGY STAR-qualified top-loading models typically use spray valves to rinse clothes, rather than a new tub of water. The spray rinse cycle consists of repeated high-pressure rinses to remove soap residues. This method not only reduces the energy required for water heating, but typically saves an average of 15 gallons of water per wash, compared with conventional clothes washers.

Qualified top-loading models also have sensors to monitor incoming water temperature, which is then adjusted to maintain an optimal temperature. This temperature keeps the water hot enough to dissolve the detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize hot water damage to fabrics. This technology results in less hot water consumption and therefore, less energy consumption. One limitation of efficient top-loading washers is that many models do not offer a high-temperature standard wash option.

Consumers typically purchase a washing machine when their current one fails. Price and features generally are the two criteria used when buying a new washing machine. If you remember to look for the ENERGY STAR logo and shop at a store with knowledgeable staff, you should be able to leave the store knowing that, over time, your new energy-efficient washing machine will pay for itself.

Most of the energy used by dishwashers is actually the energy required for heating the water they consume. So the most efficient dishwashers use less water to do the job.

Most dishwashers available

today use booster heaters to add heat to the water that is supplied by the water heater. This helps get your dishes cleaner, and it may kill more germs. But it also allows you to lower the temperature setting on your water heater. With this type of booster, you can lower your current water-heater water temperature to about 120° F and still have clean and sanitary dishes.

Newer dishwashers also use significantly less water than hand washing – as much as one-half less. Like clothes washers, dishwashers conserve energy and water when using their low and medium cycles. Water usage varies from a low of seven gallons, for the light wash, to a high of 14 gallons for the heavy-duty cycle.

Many of the most efficient dishwashers incorporate soil-sensors to adjust water use depending on how dirty the dishes are in each load washed. An improved dishwasher test procedure, used to provide the information on the EnergyGuide labels, gives a more realistic estimate of the energy consumption of soil-sensing dishwasher models. Be sure to read the EnergyGuide labels whenever you buy a new dishwasher or other appliance.

Recent studies have shown that most new dishwashers do a great job cleaning even the dirtiest dishes without pre-rinsing. In a recent study, dishwashers were compared to doing the job by hand. The dishwasher was more efficient and got the dishes cleaner than its human counterparts.

Editor's Note: John Krigger and Brian Sloboda contributed to this story. Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Plan For Future Growth When Planting Trees

With the wet year that we have had many of you are busy planting trees and shrubs, plan ahead and plan for future growth.

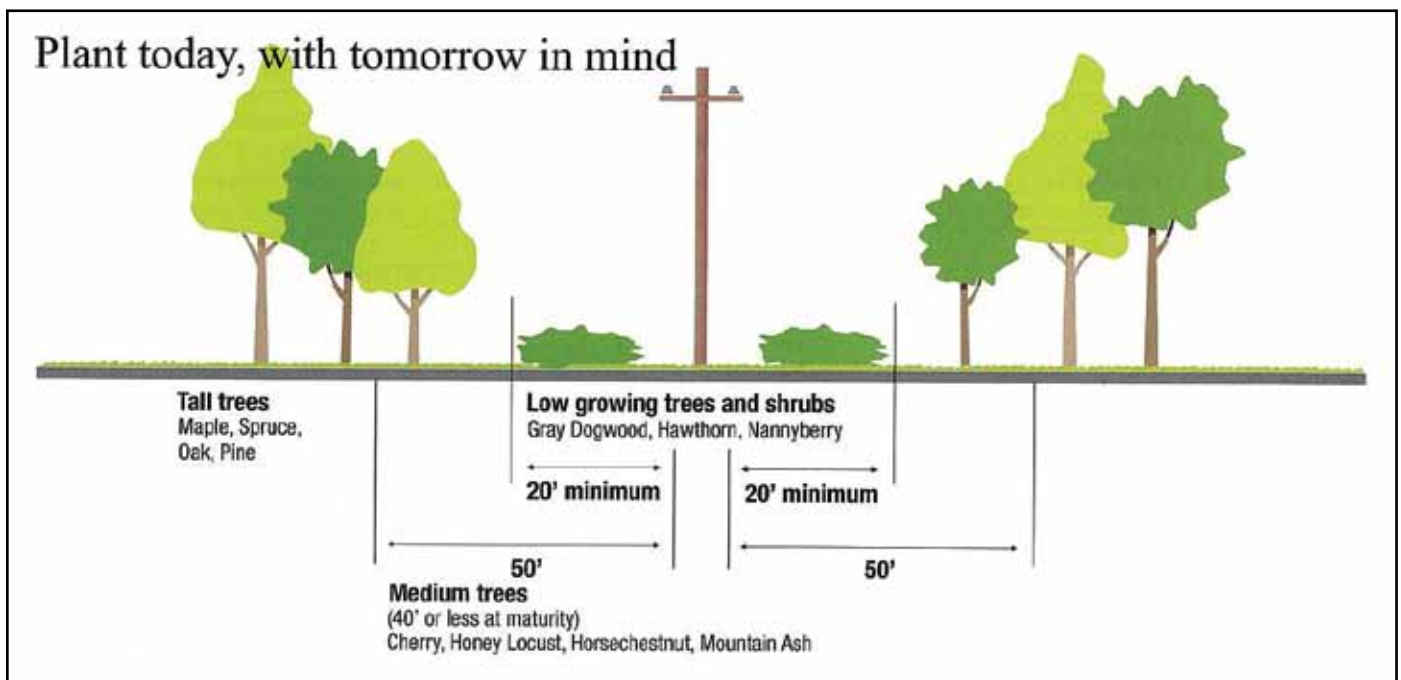
Trees are a major cause of power interruptions both flickering and longer outages, for West River Electric consumers. We spend thousands of dollars each year trimming trees that cause problems to our electric lines.

Shrubs and bushes should be placed at least 20 feet away from overhead power lines, tall growing trees should be at least 50 feet away from overhead lines. A reminder to plant trees and shrubs at least eight feet away from underground lines and transformers.

Trees, tree branches, vines and brush are also good conductors of electricity. Electrical shock can occur through indirect contact when trees or tree branches have grown into or close to energized power lines or equipment.

Carefully selected and placed, a tree can provide your family with years of enjoyment without interrupting your electric service. Trees can provide shade in the summer and protection in the winter to help you conserve energy.

Look up before you plant a tree. Planting a tree too close to a power line can cause problems when the tree is at its mature height. Call 811 to have your underground utility lines located 48 hours prior to the start of digging.



Prepare For The Fall Heat Season

As many know, changing furnace filters regularly is essential to keeping the furnace running efficiently. Make sure that you know where your furnace's filter is located and what size it is. Inspect it periodically, and replace it

when it is dirty. How frequently you need to change the filter depends on the amount of dirt in the house and around the furnace as well as how much time the furnace runs.

Interactive Voice Response System

Making Payments, Bill Inquiries and Outage Notices is now easier with the recently installed Interactive Voice Response system better known as an “IVR”. The IVR system allows our members to inquire on their account balance and make payments 24 hours a day, 7 days per week via credit card or e-check. Our phones will still be answered during business hours by a friendly WREA live voice. This system does allow members to privately transact services without having to visit with a customer service representative (CSR) on the phone. You can make payments over the phone using this system; to set up a pin number you will be required to enter the last 4 digits of your social security number, the system will then prompt you to enter your own pin number. You will need to use this pin number whenever you make a payment on your account. This system will also be used during business hours should we have a large outage and our call volume will not allow us to answer your calls personally. We will also be using this system to do call backs in the case of outages, calls prior to planned outages, and for reminders of past due balances.

Federal regulations have tightened requirements on us to make certain your private information is not compromised. This system will help to make sure that member’s credit card and banking information is as secure as possible. To access the system, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, dial 605-791-6555. With this number you will now be able to access the WREA IVR to make payments and balance inquiries at any time. Or during regular business hours you can call 605-393-1500 or 888-393-1500 for the Rapid City area or 605-279-2135 or 888-279-2135 for the Wall area. You will hear the announcement that your call will be recorded and then have the option to go into the IVR by choosing the voice prompt and you can stay on the line for a CSR to assist you.



Our after hours procedures for answering outage calls will not change with our call center handling those calls. Please don't hesitate to contact us at 279-2135 or 393-1500 should you have any questions or concerns on the IVR system.

**WREA WILL BE CLOSED:
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2010
IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR DAY**

**WREA WILL BE CLOSED:
MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2010
FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING**

Line Rebuild in the Sturgis Area

WREA will be rebuilding a three phase line from south of the Buffalo Chip Campground to Pleasant Valley road. Wilson tree service will be clearing the existing right of way and Kainz Construction will be rebuilding the line. Members in the immediate area will be affected by occasional planned outages. We will do our best to notify everyone of the outages and try to keep the outage times to a minimum. If you have any questions please contact Koozie Johnson or Mike Letcher at the Rapid City office at 393-1500 or 1-888-393-1500.

Regional Dateline

July 16-18

Annual Artist Ride
Art Show
Wall, SD
605-279-2665

August 20-22

Steam & Gas
Threshing Bee
Sturgis, SD
605-347-0635

August 20-29

Central States Fair
Central States Fairgrounds
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

August 26-29

Kool Deadwood Nites
Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

September 2-6

South Dakota State Fair
Huron, SD
605-353-7340

September 2-6

Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
605-347-3662

September 3-6

Black Hills UTV Rally
Rapid City, SD
605-737-4200

September 5-7

Labor Day Weekend
Open House
Crazy Horse
Custer, SD
605-673-4681



PHOTO COURTESY OF SD TOURISM

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.

Events of Special Note

September 4-6

Thunder on the Prairie
Oahe Speedway, Pierre, SD
605-223-9885

October 9

West River Electric Association
Annual Meeting
Wall Community Center
Wall, SD
605-393-1500, 605-279-2135

September 10-11

Dakota Polka Festival
Rapid City, SD
605-787-5584

September 11

Rapid Valley
United Methodist Church
Fall Bazaar
9:00-3:00
Rapid City, SD
605-393-9611

September 11-18

Black Hills
Road Bicycle Tour
Rapid City, SD
800-755-2453

September 17-18

Deadwood Jam
Deadwood, SD
800-999-1876

September 17-19

Black Hills
Photo Shootout
Rapid City, SD
605-773-3301

September 18

Black Hills Model
Engineering Show
Rapid City, SD
605-716-4647

September 18-19

Wine Express
In The West
Hill City, SD
605-574-2222

September 25

Pedal Regatta &
Fall Festival
Sturgis, SD
605-347-2556

October 7-9

South Dakota High School
State Soccer Tournament
Mitchell, SD

October 11

West River Electric Association
Will be Closed
For Employee Training
605-279-2135
605-393-1500

October 24

The Russians Are Coming
BH Symphony Orchestra
Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center Theatre
Rapid City, SD
605-394-4111

November 14

Wall Community
Center Craft Show
Wall Community Center
Wall, SD
605-279-2665