


# West River Electric

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

## Cooperative Connections

JANUARY 2011 VOL. 47 NO. 1

### HOME ENERGY AUDITS

Uncover Savings PT. 8



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# Delayed Delivery of Nov. 26 Bills



**Dick Johnson**  
CEO/General Manager

**By the time** this edition gets to all of your households, Thanksgiving will be just a figment of our imagination and Christmas will be within days and New Years not far behind. The weather now certainly feels more like New Years than Thanksgiving. I have loved the beautiful fall weather even though it has been very tough on our electric sales.

As many of you are aware, our November 26 bills were delayed at the post office. Many members were calling on December 1 asking where their

bills were. We did some checking with our software vendor who does our printing, stuffing, and mailing of our bills. They had proof they dropped them off at their post office on November 27. For some reason, the bills did not show up in Rapid City until Saturday, December 4. Thursday, December 2, as the bills could not be located, and no one had any idea when and if they would reach our members, we made a decision to have the bill file reprinted and send out duplicate bills on Friday December 3. The next day the originals began arriving in mailboxes and then the reprinted, duplicate bills, arrived on Monday, December 6. We apologize to our members for the confusion, but we had no idea when we made our decision to reprint the bills, whether they would arrive in 3 days, 7 days, 10 days, or 30 days. Thank You for your patience. This is another good reason to sign up for ebill!

When you get this, we will be within days of moving into our new branch office. There have been some unexpected

delays, but overall, we are right on target with our initial move in date when the building was started in September 2009. We could have moved earlier, but we felt with the Christmas holidays and year end staring us in the face, we didn't want to add to the stress of a move along with everything else going on. Be sure to watch our website and announcements of when and what surplus items we will be auctioning off right after we move. We also plan on having a grand opening some time shortly after we open for our members to stop by and take a good look at their building.

I would like to remind you that the electric heat rate will be going up 2 mills. Our new heat rate will be going from 4.4 cents per kWh to 4.6 cents per kWh. You will see this change in your January bill you receive on February 1. We received notice from our power supplier of a rate increase for heating usage which we are passing on. To put this into perspective, if you use 1,000 kWh per month for heating, it will cost you an additional \$2.00 per month in heating costs. We continue to work on our cost of service study to see what we will do with our general rates in 2011. If we do anything, any rate changes will be implemented in the spring of 2011.

You will also notice an article elsewhere in the Connections about policy changes that will affect our members as of January 1. The only real policy change that is significant deals with the retirement of capital credits upon death of one of the members. We are changing the formula we use to compute the amount that we discount the early retirement of capital credits. The new formula will be fairer to the coop and especially the members that are still active.

Finally, from my family, and the employees and directors of West River Electric, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please remember to slow down the hectic pace and cherish the reason for the season. Until next time...

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## Scholarship Application Deadline is February 11, 2011

**For the 20th year**, West River Electric Association is offering three college scholarships to high school seniors graduating in May of 2011 and students currently in post education. A \$1,000 scholarship, provided by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our power generation cooperative, and two West River Electric \$500 scholarships, will be awarded to winners in April.

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

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

Completed applications and supporting documentation must be returned to West River Electric Association in Rapid City or Wall before 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 2011. Winners will be announced in April. For more information or to request an application, stop by or call us at 393-1500 or 279-2135.

# 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.

### President

Jerry Hammerquist, Caputa, S.D.

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### CEO/General Manager

Dick Johnson

### Editor

Veronica Kusser

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.

# SILENT AUCTION

West River Electric Association, Inc.

January 11, 2011  
3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Old Rapid Valley Office  
3250 E. Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD

- Desks (wood) - 4
- Desks (steel) - 16
- Office chairs - 21
- Guest, break room, line man's room chairs - 49
- Modular work stations (cubicles) - 9
- Bookcases - 9
- File cabinets - 14
- Tables (assorted) - 19
- Credenza's - 6
- Cabinets (steel) - 4
- Cabinets (wood) - 3
- Metal shelving (sections) - 10
- Drafting table - 1
- Base cabinets with countertop - 3
- Lockers (steel) - 12
- Folding chairs - 11
- 15Kw gas generator
- 1976 Olate Tree Chipper
- 14 drawer check storage unit
- 3 drawer card cabinet - 3
- Circular card storage unit
- 10 foot tilt bed trailer
- 3 point blade
- Shop scale
- Hotsy pressure washer



This is a partial listing – for a complete listing check our website at [www.westriver.com](http://www.westriver.com) or call 605-393-1500.

All items are sold "as is" without warranty of any kind. All items must be removed by noon January 12th.

# Secure Your Data

If Santa brings you a laptop, netbook, tablet or other portable electronics for Christmas this year, you'll no doubt find many uses for it, perhaps making it an indispensable part of your work or play.

There are some things you should know and some practices you should adopt to make sure your device and the data it holds stay safe and secure.

You can keep your laptop off a thief's radar by avoiding the use of computer bags, not setting your case on the ground, checking it with your luggage, leaving it in a hotel room or at the front desk. There are several good anti-theft devices you can purchase, but none of them work if you don't make a habit of using them. Don't leave your items in plain sight when locked in your car or truck.

Take steps to secure your data. If your laptop doesn't have a login password, create one. Encrypt your hard drive (and thumb drive) to ensure only you have access to it and consider installing tracking software. Don't keep account information and passwords written down and stored in your case.

Don't forget to back up your data. If your device is stolen or destroyed, you'll want copies of your important work. This is easier than ever with backup services like Carbonite and Mozy. Or if you use Google Docs or Windows Live and keep your files 'in the cloud' you'll be all set.

When using open WiFi hotspots, take steps like using secure connections to avoid sharing your user names and passwords – assume someone is listening on your unencrypted data stream.

Some of these tips may seem extreme but the stakes are too high to not be a bit paranoid about your property.



Send us your questions and comments – our e-mail

address is [middy@sdpb.org](mailto:middy@sdpb.org) and our mailing address is PO Box 5000, Vermillion, S.D. 57069. 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 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](http://www.techradio.us). Kent Osborne is Director of Online Services for SDPB.

# Post Holiday Home Security

## Most people know the holidays

are prime time for burglars to enter your home and steal from you while you are at a friend or family member's party. They go after unwrapped and new high-end items that they can re-sell or "fence" on the "black market." It's pretty obvious who's home and who is not at home when the lights are off and there is no car in the driveway.



All a burglar has to do is ring a door bell to see if you are actually home. If no one answers, they then jiggle the door knob to see if it's locked or not. If it's locked, they will head to the back door and jiggle that. Many times they will walk right in because people are often irresponsible and leave the doors unlocked because they believe "it can't happen to me." If the doors are locked, they may try a few street level or basement windows. Brazen burglars will not waste any time and may break glass or use a crowbar and forcibly enter the residence.

Trash day is coming and they may case a neighborhood looking for boxes where electronics such as computers, flat panel TVs, game consoles and other re-saleable items may be.

For holiday safety, use these holiday home security suggestions:

- Lock your doors and windows.
- Install a monitored alarm system.
- Give your home the lived-in look.
- Leave the TV on LOUD while you are gone.
- Install timers on your lights both indoor and outdoor.
- Close the shades to prevent peeping inside.
- Use defensive signage.
- Store item boxes for at least 90 days because if you have a defective product, you will need the box for a return.
- After 90 days, tear up the box so it's undistinguishable then recycle or put it in a black trash bag.

Source: [homesecuritysource.com](http://homesecuritysource.com)

## Kids' Corner Safety Poster



**"Never put water and electricity together."**

**Rebecca Anglin, 6 years**

Rebecca is the daughter of Joe and Laurie Anglin, Spearfish, S.D. They are members of Dakota Energy Cooperative, Huron, 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.

# Sensational Soups



## Ham and Cheddar Soup

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 T. olive oil                      | 1 T. flour                     |
| 2 carrots, chopped                  | 1 cup half-and-half            |
| 2 ribs celery, chopped              | 1 (14.5 oz.) can chicken broth |
| 2 shallots, minced                  | 1/2 cup raw rice               |
| 1 clove garlic, minced              | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese  |
| 1 lb. ham, cut into 1/2-inch pieces | 2 T. parsley                   |
| 1 (12 oz.) can beer                 | 1/4 tsp. hot pepper sauce      |
|                                     | 1/2 tsp. pepper                |

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add next 4 ingredients; cook, stirring until softened, about 5 minutes. Add ham; cook, stirring occasionally, until browned – about 3 to 5 minutes. Add beer; cook 3 minutes. Stir flour into half-and-half; stir into soup. Add broth; bring to a boil. Add rice. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until rice is tender, about 25 minutes. Stir in next 4 ingredients; cook, stirring until smooth – about 5 minutes.

**Sandi Litschewski, Spearfish**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Cabbage Patch Soup

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef       | 1 can kidney beans  |
| 1 onion, sliced         | 1 tsp. salt         |
| 1/2 cup celery          | 1/4 tsp. pepper     |
| 1 (16 oz.) can tomatoes | 1 tsp. chili powder |
| 2 cups water            | 1 cabbage, shredded |

Brown ground beef; add onion and celery. Saute 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, water, beans, salt, pepper and chili powder. Bring to a boil. Add cabbage and cook 8 to 10 minutes until cabbage is done. Can be cooked in crockpot.

**Dolores Reed, Osmond, NE**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Broccoli or Asparagus Soup

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2 quarts boiling water                                 | 1/2 lb. butter or margarine           |
| 6 chicken bouillon cubes or 6 T. chicken bouillon      | 8 T. flour                            |
| 2 (10 oz.) pkgs. frozen broccoli or asparagus, chopped | 4 cups milk                           |
| 4 small onions, chopped                                | 1 tsp. salt                           |
|  | 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened |

Dissolve chicken bouillon in boiling water. Add broccoli or asparagus and onions; simmer until tender. In separate pan, make white sauce. Melt butter; add flour and salt. Add milk; cook until thick. Add cream cheese, cut up in pieces, to white sauce and stir until smooth. Add white sauce to broth. This soup can be frozen. It will look curdled when thawed but creamy when warmed up.

**Elfrieda Postma, Sioux Falls**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Chicken Pot Pie Soup

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1-1/2 tsp. McCormick rosemary leaves, crushed | 4 cups reduced sodium chicken broth                            |
| 1-1/2 tsp. McCormick thyme leaves             | 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces |
| 1 tsp. McCormick garlic powder                | 1-1/2 cups frozen pearl onions                                 |
| 4 tsp. butter, divided                        | 1 cup frozen peas  |
| 1 pkg. (8 oz.) mushrooms, sliced              | 8 thin bread slices  |
| 1 cup sliced carrots                          | 1 tsp. oil   |
| 1/2 cup flour                                 |  |

Mix rosemary, thyme and garlic powder in small bowl. Reserve 1/2 tsp. Heat 1 tsp. butter in large saucepan on medium heat. Add mushrooms, carrots and remaining seasoning mixture; cook and stir 3 minutes. Remove from saucepan. Set aside. Melt remaining 3 tsp. butter in saucepan on medium heat, stirring to release browned bits from bottom of skillet. Sprinkle with flour; cook and stir 3 to 4 minutes or until flour is lightly browned. Gradually stir in broth until well blended. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 10 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring occasionally. Add vegetable mixture, chicken, pearl onions and peas; simmer 8 minutes or until chicken is cooked through, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cut bread into rounds with 3-inch cookie cutter. Place on baking sheet. Brush bread with oil and sprinkle with reserved seasoning mixture. Bake at 350°F. for 10 minutes or until toasted. To serve soup, ladle into soup bowls and top each with 1 crouton.

*Makes 8 (1-cup) servings. Nutritional information per serving: 4211 Calories, Fat 7g, Protein 16g, Carbohydrates 21g, Cholesterol 42mg, Sodium 469mg, Fiber 2g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Vegetable Beef Soup

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 2 to 3 cups cooked roast beef            | 1/3 cup barley        |
| 2 cans diced garlic and oregano tomatoes | 2 cups diced potatoes |
| 2 cans plus 4 cups water, divided        | 2 cups sliced carrots |
| 3 beef bouillon cubes                    | 2 cups sliced celery  |
|  | 2 T. chopped onion    |

Bring beef, tomatoes, 2 cans water, bouillon cubes and barley to a boil; cook 5 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots, celery, onions and 4 cups water; bring to a boil and cook until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes

**Elsie Heutinck, Olivia, MN**  
**Cooperative Connections**

## Homemade Tomato Soup

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 pint canned tomatoes | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 2-1/2 cups milk        | 1 T. flour               |
| 1 T. butter            | Pinch of baking soda     |

Put tomatoes with juice in a saucepan; bring to a boil. In separate pan, heat milk, butter, salt, pepper, flour (dissolved in some milk) and baking soda. Pour hot milk into hot tomatoes so it won't curdle. Serve immediately.

**Pam Hofer, Carpenter**  
**Cooperative Connections**

*Please send your favorite bread, breakfast and seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in July 2011. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*

# Inspect Ductwork Before Cleaning



**Jim Dulley**  
www.dulley.com

**Dear Jim:** When my furnace was serviced, he asked if I have had the ducts cleaned. I am concerned about my family's health and clean indoor air. How can I tell if they need to be cleaned and how do I select a company? – Michael N.

**Dear Michael:** Healthy indoor air should be a goal for

any family. This is particularly true in today's more energy efficient, airtight houses where the air quality is often worse than outdoor air. In addition to some dust from the ducts, there are many sources of indoor pollutants, including cleaning, cooking and outgassing synthetic materials. Many of these can be removed from indoor air with a combination of whole-house, furnace-mounted air cleaners and smaller individual room air cleaners.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), much of the dust in heating and air-conditioning ducts tends to adhere to the duct surface and it never gets into the indoor air circulating throughout the house. Just because you see some dust collecting on the grill over air registers does not necessarily mean the ducts are very dirty and need to be cleaned.

Other than just a benign, fine layer of household dust inside of the ducts, there can be some potentially harmful particles inside them. Especially in humid areas, mold spores inside the ducts can cause serious allergic reactions in some people.

Bacteria can also live in some ducts under certain conditions. Very fine particles, from cigarettes or wood-burning fireplaces, can become airborne and cause respiratory problems. Test kits are available to take a sample of the dust from inside the ducts and have the sample tested for mold and other potentially harmful contaminants.

Although it is commonly referred to as "duct cleaning," if you choose to have it done, it is important to have the entire HVAC (heating, ventilation, air-conditioning) system cleaned. This includes the furnace and air-conditioner blower, heat exchanger/coils and drain pans in addition to the ductwork. Air conditioner evaporator coils can collect a lot of dirt because they get damp when the unit is running and dust in the air sticks to the wet surfaces. This reduces the energy efficiency of the entire system.

If the contractor who services your HVAC system also does

duct cleaning, you may get a discount by having the service and cleaning done at the same time. The typical cost for a complete cleaning ranges from about \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the size of your home and the complexity of the duct system.

You might want to have the duct system inspected before going to the full expense of a cleaning. Look for a company that will deduct the inspection cost from the total project cost should you choose to have it cleaned. Technicians conduct the inspection by looking into ducts and the furnace blower unit and using mirrors at bends. They can also move a mini-television camera through the ducts.

When selecting a duct-cleaning company, there are several factors to consider. As with any project, the reputation of the company is highly important. Although the ducts can be inspected afterward to see how well they have been cleaned, your best assurance is to start with a reliable contractor. Always check references with their past customers.

The National Air Duct Cleaning Association (NADCA) is the trade group that certifies HVAC system cleaning contractors. The certification is legitimate and requires extensive training. For a company to be certified, it must have a Certified Specialist on staff. Find a national listing of certified companies, along with its number of specialists, at [www.nadca.com](http://www.nadca.com).

## When selecting a duct-cleaning company, there are several factors to consider.

Also, when selecting a contractor, ask about the type of cleaning equipment each uses. If an indoor vacuum unit is used, it must have a high efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA) filter on the exhaust to trap all the particles. Some of the particles they dislodge from the duct walls can be very fine and a lesser quality filter will not remove them from the exhaust air.

Another option is an outdoor truck with a built-in vacuum unit and a long hose. Because it is located outdoors, the exhaust filter is not critical. These large vacuums are very powerful to overcome the air flow resistance in the long hose. The only problem is during winter they suck quite a bit of the heated air out of your house during the cleaning process.

Some duct-cleaning companies may suggest spraying a chemical biocide inside the ducts to kill mold and bacteria and to keep them from growing in the future. If you do have this procedure done, make sure they use EPA-approved chemicals designated for sheet metal ducts.

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

# South Dakota Energy Assistance and Weatherization

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

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

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

Energy assistance money will be distributed on a first-come basis. Applicant eligibility and assistance amount are calculated according to household size, income, type and cost of heating and geographical location in South Dakota of your home.

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

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

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

Some weatherization measures that may apply for assistance are:

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

For more information on Weatherization Assistance Program in Western South Dakota contact Western South Dakota Community Action at 605-348-1460 or 1-800-327-1703. The counties served by Western South Dakota Community Action

include Bennett, Butte, Corson, Custer, Dewey, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, Shannon, Pennington, Ziebach.



## Line Patrol

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

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

## Community Rooms Available In Wall and Rapid City

**For several years,** our Community Room in Rapid City was closed due to the construction of the Southeast Connector portion of the Heartland Expressway. With the completion of our new building in Rapid City, West River Electric will once again have a Community Room available at both our Wall and Rapid City locations. The rooms are available for nonprofit and governmental groups that serve or provide a benefit to the community. The rooms are not intended for personal use such as merchandise parties, graduations, etc...

The Rapid City Community Room will be available on February 1st, 2011. For more information on room availability at either location, contact the Rapid City office at 393-1500, the Wall office at 279-2135.

# Energy Audits

**Audits help homeowners inventory the strengths and weaknesses of their home.**

by Ellen Nelson

**W**INTER'S DIPPING TEMPERATURES AND BUFFETING winds can expose the chinks in a home's armor and suck the cozy comfort right out of a dwelling. But, homeowners interested in fortifying their home's defenses against the elements have an arsenal of knowledge and expertise just a phone call away.

As more focus is placed on improving energy efficiency and reduce electricity demand, many local electric cooperatives can provide resources to homeowners looking to have an energy audit conducted of their homes. The energy audit is one of the first steps of several in making a home more energy efficient.

These audits help homeowners inventory the strengths and weaknesses of their home and identify areas where improvements can be made to decrease the home's energy consumption and put some much-appreciated post-holiday cash back into their wallet.

During the audit, a professional will conduct an external and internal home evaluation in order to account for all electrical and exhaust features. The number of lights, fan vents, spotlights, garden and path lights, water heaters, furnaces and air conditioners are all documented and accounted for. Heated ground surfaces, such as driveways,

sidewalks or dog kennels, are also documented and considered in the final analysis of the energy efficiency of a home.

Auditors note all of the specifics of electrical appliances including the type of light bulb in use, such as fluorescent, standards or LEDs. (Updating appliances more than 15 years old and converting to CFL lightbulbs will often provide homeowners with immediate energy savings.)

A home energy auditor walks through a home, as the owner points out all circuits, water heaters, light bulbs and other main electrical locations. Every detail is documented and taken into consideration of the final analysis and determination of where all the energy is actually going. Factors that professional home auditors take into consideration is whether the lights are on a timer or not and if protective storm windows are placed over screened windows.

Sneaky, rarely noticed energy suckers, referred to as vampire appliances, are common factors that often slide under the radar while silently rack up a home's electricity usage. A water heater pump is a prime example of a vampire appliance, which constantly runs hot water through a home's pipes. Remedies for such energy suckers are simple



appliance timers. At a cost of about \$5, appliance timers are an inexpensive investment that will save money and energy.

Another recommendation that can be anticipated by home auditors is the benefits of investing in a \$5 tube of caulk. Applying caulk around windows, doors and any other small openings stops air filtration in the house.

"A tube of caulk is really cheap," said Joe Connot, manager of member services at West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, S.D. Connot conducts energy audits for the co-op. "Getting someone up on the ladder to actually do it is the hard part."

Paying attention to details and caulking the small cracks around windows and doorframes may save hundreds of dollars on electric bills by preventing any air leakage that had been seeping through cracks.

Techniques such as a blower door test, accompanied with heat detecting, infrared cameras are also part of the audit. During the blower door test, an adjustable, electric fan is placed in an exterior doorway of a home and the air inside is sucked out, creating a pressurized environment. As the fan misplaces the air pressure, one is able to physically feel where any air leaks are located. By running a hand over suspected areas near windows and doors that are causing air leaks, one can feel the energy loss locations as air circulates through the gaps.

The heat-detecting camera used during the test allows the home auditor to locate and identify the exact spots of air leaks, which cause significant energy loss. An area with air being sucked out appears on the temperature sensitive screen, avoiding any assumptions or wonders of where the air leaks are located.

Home energy auditors will also be sure to check the exhaust coverings located on the exterior of the home. A net covering or flap should protect dryer vents and exhaust fan openings in order to help keep unwanted cold or warm air out. It will also keep small critters and debris out of the vent.

Last summer, Dr. Marty Allison of Fort Pierre, S.D., requested an energy audit for her home near Fort Pierre, S.D.

"It was helpful to make sure we were doing all we could to be as energy efficient as possible," said Allison. While their home was pretty efficient, she and her family were able to make some minor adjustments based on recommendations from the audit.

Audits alone will not save a home energy. The improvements recommended by the auditor become the homeowner's responsibility to implement. Next time frustration arises after reviewing an energy bill, an important question should be asked. Has your home had its energy audit lately?

**Opposite:** Thermal cameras can help identify sources of air leaks by measuring the temperature differences in areas. Here, the areas in red are a few degrees warmer than the areas in blue.  
**Inset:** Chad Reisenauer and Joe Connot install a blower door to test for air leaks in a home near Fort Pierre, S.D.

# Fortify Your Home

## ENERGY EFFICIENT PROJECTS YOU CAN DO IN UNDER AN HOUR

Winterize your home with some quick and easy energy efficient projects you can complete in under an hour.

Here are 10 ways you can save energy and money around in your home.

1. Replace your showerhead
2. Add aerators to your faucets
3. Install a water-efficient toilet
4. Switch to CFLs
5. Install a programmable thermostat
6. Build or install an insulated attic hatch
7. Stop chimney drafts
8. Drain sediment from your water heater
9. Replace your washing machine hoses
10. Add insulating window treatments

Each one of these little projects can range in price from \$10 to no more than \$250 but will save you so much more on your energy bill by the end of the year.  
*Source: TogetherWeSave.com*

## WINTERIZING TIPS THAT WORK WONDERS

If you are looking for quick and easy tips to winterize your home, below is a list containing some of the best ways to save energy and money.

1. **Get a Furnace Check-Up.** While this one may involve the help of a professional, it can be well worth the cost. A simple inspection can ensure that you'll have heat when you need it. Also be sure to make sure to change your air filter and keep any vents clear.
2. **Apply Weatherstripping to Windows and Doors.** This is the most common way to winterize your home. First, identify air leaks around your windows and doors, then measure the perimeters of each to know how much you will need to purchase to seal the cracks around movable joints in your home. There are a variety of different types of products to help you complete this task, but be sure to buy about 5 percent to 10 percent extra to account for waste from measurement or cutting errors. In addition, you can also purchase door sweeps to further seal your home.
3. **Seal the Cracks Around Your Home.** Perhaps the simplest way to guard your interior against chilly breezes is to use a commercial sealant. For best results, make sure the area is clean, dry and free of any previous sealant. Also try to apply the caulk or sealant in one continuous line, as compared to multiple, short applications.
4. **Install Storm Windows.** If your home's windows came with additional storm panes, it is important to install them in the weeks before colder weather starts. Otherwise, plastic insulation kits can give windows of any size or shape a better insulating factor when installed on the inside of the home. Kits start at around \$3 per window and usually include everything needed for installation.
5. **Put a "Blanket" Around Your Hot Water Heater.** Just like covering up with a blanket helps you stay warm, a water heater wrap will also keep in the heat. Covers, or "blankets," can be purchased at most home improvement stores for between \$35 and \$70 and are easy to install without professional help. However, be certain that the placement of a blanket will not void your manufacturer's warranty.



# Reducing Peak Demand With The Demand Response Program

When the coldest days of winter stretch across West River Electric's service territory, our members rely on electric energy to stay comfortable. Unfortunately, overall electric consumption increases, creating periods of peak consumption for West River Electric.

Electricity cannot be stored so it is produced at the time that it is being used. Consequently power plants, transmission lines, substations and distribution lines must be constructed and maintained to supply all of the demand for electricity during these peak times.

As a member of West River Electric, we all have an interest in reducing peak demand and lowering the costs associated with generating and transmitting electricity. Each time a system peak is established, the wholesale power costs borne by the members increases due to the additional costs of generating and transmitting electricity to meet the higher demand. Reduced demand for power means reduced need for additional facilities and a cost-savings to our members.

West River Electric, like most utilities, experiences peak demand when our members share common patterns of behavior. Most Co-op members get up in the morning, do their chores, heat or cool homes and offices, cook meals and use electrical appliances about the same time of the day.

However, by making small changes in how and when members use high-energy appliances, such as water heaters and air conditioners, we can reduce peak demand and decrease our energy costs.

West River Electric is adapting to this change with the latest technologies to improve efficiencies and hold down costs. By employing Smart Grids and Demand Response Units, we are empowering our members to reduce energy consumption during peak morning and evening periods.

The Demand Response Units can reduce your electricity costs by allowing West River Electric to cycle on and off a consumer's use of electricity during times of peak usage. By controlling high-energy loads, such as electric water heaters and central air conditioning units, you can help hold down future wholesale rate increases.

West River Electric will offer a one time incentive of \$25.00 to our members for the opportunity to install a Demand Response Unit (DRU) on water heaters and central air conditioning units. After a licensed electrician (hired by West River Electric) has installed the DRU, and we begin managing your energy consumption, you will receive a \$3.00 or \$5.00 monthly credit based on the size of the water heater. You must have total usage of at least 500 kwh each month in order to receive the monthly incentive.

If you would like join other members of West River Electric in the Demand Response Program you can contact Member Services at 393-1500 to set up a time to have a DRU installed.

## ENERGY TIP

Can you feel air flow around doors, windows or outlets? By adding weather stripping, caulk or outlet insulators you can lower your energy bills

## 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)

### Patrick Sigler Wins \$10.00 Credit

Patrick Sigler of Sturgis 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

September 2010 - # of Meters 15,198  
KWH 17,857,804

September 2009 - # of Meters 14,947  
KWH 17,066,655

# RAPID CITY BRANCH OFFICE UPDATE...



The contractors are doing the finishing work on the inside of the Rapid City branch office. They are waiting on the Fry-Reglet to be delivered and the cleaners to finish cleaning the inside of the building. We plan to take possession of the new branch office by the week of January 10. The Community Room will be ready to have meetings hosted in there beginning

February 1st. See separate article in this issue on how to reserve the room for your meeting.

We are planning to be open in the new office the week of January 10, 2011. The Silent Auction for the remaining desks, file cabinets and chairs will be held on Tuesday, January 11.

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.



## IVR Reminder

The Interactive Voice Response System that was installed this fall has made making payments, bill inquiries and outage information easier to access. You can make those inquiries 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 605-791-6555. You will be required to setup a pin number by entering the last 4 digits of your social security number, this number will be used when making any inquiries on your account.

The IVR system will be used in case of a large power outage when our call volume is too large to answer all calls personally. We will also use this system to do call backs after outages, calls prior to a planned outage and for reminder calls on past due accounts.

If you have questions about the IVR system you can call the Rapid City office at 393-1500 or the Wall office at 279-2135.

## Murphy



# Mixing In Renewables

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by Brenda Kleinjan

**E**LECTRIC COOPERATIVES IN THE REGION ARE building on a strong legacy of energy resources used to bring reliable and affordable electric energy to thousands of rural electric cooperative members.

For a half-century, reliable coal-based assets have been the proven, reliable workhorse in providing electricity to the region and will remain a vital part of cooperatives' energy mix. These assets were cultivated, in part, when demand for more electricity outpaced the power provided by the federal hydroelectric dams on the Missouri River.

In recent years, newer renewable energy assets, such as wind power and recovered energy generation, have become an increasingly important part of the cooperatives' energy mix as they expand their energy to ensure they are meeting the energy demands of their members.

Today, Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D., – which supplies energy to

**Newer renewable energy assets have become an increasingly important part of the cooperatives' energy mix.**

member cooperatives in nine states including South Dakota and western Minnesota – continues to diversify its energy portfolio to include wind, natural gas and zero-emissions waste heat. These green projects represent a capital investment of more than \$1 billion in renewable resources. By 2011, Basin Electric plans to have wind and green generation throughout North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Iowa with an installed capacity of more than 780 megawatts –



enough energy to power more than 262,500 homes on an annual average basis.

At the close of 2010, Basin Electric, which generates about 80 percent of the power used by South Dakota electric cooperatives, was projected to hold about 600 megawatts of green and renewable energy capacity in its generating portfolio, with more in store in 2011.

Among that power is 557 mw of wind generation, 44 mw of recovered energy generation and 375 kilowatts of bio-gas generation. (To assist in the economics of the renewable generation, the renewable energy credits – also known as green tags – are used to meet member purchases, regulatory needs or sold to third parties.)

Additionally, Basin Electric receives 279 megawatts of hydro power from the Western Area Power Administration for winter peaking power needs.

Among the wind projects owned by the region's electric cooperatives are some bragging rights of first and largest. Electric cooperatives were the first to construct utility-scale wind turbines in South Dakota with the creation of two 1.3 mw turbines near Chamberlain, S.D., which was operational in 2002.

At the end of 2009, cooperatives commissioned the final of 77 turbines that comprise PrairieWinds ND 1 south of Minot, N.D. It is the largest wind project in the nation owned solely by a cooperative. However, that distinction is destined to be short-lived as the cooperative outdoes itself.

In 2011, PrairieWinds SD1 north of White Lake, S.D., is scheduled to come online. The 151.5-mw wind project will then hold the distinction as the largest cooperatively owned project in the nation. (A companion community-owned wind project will account for an additional 10.5 mw of wind resources.)

Among the renewable resources that electric cooperatives access are six wind energy projects owned by NextEra Energy, including the 40-mw Hyde County Wind Project in central South Dakota and the 99-mw Day County Wind Project in northeastern South Dakota.

Through Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Iowa, the region's cooperatives purchase power from four wind projects totaling more than 35 mw.

Additional wind energy comes from energy cooperatives purchase from six wind projects owned by others in Iowa, South Dakota and Minnesota.

Cooperatives also purchase the output from more than



100 small wind, solar and biomass generators owned by members throughout a nine-state region. These purchases total more than 2,200 kilowatts (or 2.2 mw.) Among these projects is a newly installed small wind generator and solar panel project in Badlands National Park. Also in this mix are methane digesters located in eastern South Dakota.

Another ingredient in your cooperative's renewable mix is waste heat generation. Basin Electric purchase the output from eight recovered energy generation sites along the Northern Border Pipeline, including stations at Wetonka, Clark and Estelline, S.D., and Garvin, Minn. Each of the eight sites generates 5.5 mw of renewable energy from exhaust heat produced by the pipeline's compressor stations. Prior to the advent of the waste heat generators, this byproduct of the gas delivery system was unharnessed. The sites, owned by Ormat Technologies of Reno, Nev., produce power with virtually no incremental emissions and are considered carbon-free generation.

While energy from Basin Electric's resources account for nearly 80 percent of the needs of electric cooperatives, the state's cooperatives also have access to another renewable energy resource: hydro power. South Dakota cooperatives receive about 20 percent of their electricity from hydropower generated on the dams of the Missouri River. This power is purchased from the Western Area Power Administration.

**Renewable energy from wind resources (opposite) and other sources are increasingly joining hydro power (above) as part of cooperatives' energy mix.**

# Operation Round-Up

## Application Deadline is set for February 28, 2011



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

The average donation will amount to approximately \$6 during the course of a year. Imagine, if 50% of West River Electric's nearly 12,000 members signed up for Round Up,

the fund would have \$36,000 to be used to help local charities and civic organizations. Your last bill of the year will show your total contribution for tax purposes. Your voluntary participation will help someone else.

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



**Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence** received a check for \$500.00 to assist with the purchase of Adaptive Devices for individuals with disabilities



**Olweus Antibullying Program** at Valley View School received an Operation Round-Up check for \$250.00 to help raise awareness and educate the community about bullying in our schools.

### In 2010 contributions were awarded to:

- Olweus Antibullying Program
- Rural Meade Tumbling
- Pennington County Search & Rescue
- St Thomas More Theatre Dept.
- New Underwood Booster Club
- New Underwood Youth Organization
- Western Resource for Disabled Independence
- White Owl Community Center
- Rural Meade Ambulance Service
- The Country Cupboard
- Wall Home Health
- Plainview Community Hall

Yes I want to participate in Operation Round Up

Please send me more information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Acct # \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to donate an additional amount over and above the normal roundup amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_per month, please apply this amount to my bill each month.

**Please return with your bill or fill out and mail to:  
West River Electric, PO Box 412, Wall, SD 57790.**

# WREA Policy Changes

## Billing Deposit Policy 20-2 Change

The Association is required by the Federal Trade Commission "Red Flags Rule" to verify the identity of a new applicant per Policy 20-5 "Membership". The report that is generated by Online Utility Exchange (OUE) will also check the credit score of the applicant. The Association will use this report to determine if a deposit is required. If the report says that a deposit is required, OUE will generate an "Adverse Letter" that the Association is required to provide to the applicant. If this report is ran for a joint account, and the result states that one of the two applicants is required to have a deposit, then a deposit will be required for the joint membership.

## Capital Credit Estate Retirement Change

Estate retirements are the only way capital credits can be paid out early. They can be paid out in the case of a single or a joint membership. In the case of a joint membership, the surviving member will receive the capital credit refund and will be required to sign up for individual service. In each of these cases, the capital credit refund will be at a discounted amount.

Previously, these early retirements of estates were discounted by 5% for each year that capital credits were retired early. We are changing the method of calculating the discount. Beginning in January 2011, the discount will be based on the cooperative's weighted cost of capital, which includes the cost of equity and cost of debt and our capital credit rotation cycle. Like before, the discounted portion will be donated to the Association as a condition of early retirement. We are making this change to a net present value method as it is a more realistic calculation of the true cost of retiring capital credits early versus retaining them as equity in the Association until they are retired normally.

An alternative to accepting the discounted early retirement is the estate may assign the capital credits to another party. These capital credits would be paid out by the normal general retirement process. If you have any questions on this policy please contact Dawn Hilgenkamp at 279-2135.

**WEST RIVER ELECTRIC WILL BE CLOSED:**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2010  
IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2010  
IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEARS**

## WREA Rapid City Branch Office Open House



**February 11, 2011 • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

## Update Your Account Information With WREA

**Accurate information on your account** is important. With current phone numbers and e-mail addresses, we can notify you of planned outages or anything else that may pertain to your electric service.

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

You can e-mail changes to your account to [info@westriver.com](mailto:info@westriver.com) or contact us by phone at 393-1500 or 279-2135.

**GIVE SOMEONE SPECIAL  
AN ELECTRIC GRILL FOR  
CHRISTMAS**

**Meco Tabletop Grill** - Thermostat controlled, rotisserie, 200 sq inches of cooking space, handy grease tin, and a 120 volt grounded plug. A tabletop grill is a perfect gift for any season. **\$136.50**

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

**November 3 - April 27**

Quinn VFW Bingo  
Wednesday Night Bingo  
Starting at 7:00 p.m.  
Wall Community Center  
Meeting Room, Wall, SD  
605-279-2665

**December 19**

Community Christmas Concert  
Wall Community Center  
Wall, SD  
605-279-2665

**December 21**

United Blood Services  
Blood Drive  
McKie Automotive Group  
Rapid City, SD  
605-348-1400

**December 22**

United Blood Services  
Blood Drive  
Jeep Liberty Superstore  
600 Cambell St.  
Rapid City, SD  
05-721-6060

**December 22**

United Blood Services  
Blood Drive  
Toyota of the BH  
601 E Omaha  
Rapid City, SD  
605-342-2490

**December 23**

United Blood Services  
Blood Drive  
N.E.W.  
1400 Turbine St.  
Rapid City, SD  
605-341-8400



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**

**December 31**

First Night Sturgis  
New Year's Eve Celebration  
Sturgis, SD  
605-347-2556

**January 28 - February 7**

2011 Black Hills Stock Show  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

**December 24**

West River Electric  
Will Be Closed  
In Observance of Christmas  
605-279-2135  
605-393-1500

**December 27**

United Blood Services  
Blood Drive  
Sturgis Community Center  
Sturgis, SD  
605-342-8585

**December 31**

West River Electric  
Will Be Closed  
In Observance of New Years  
605-279-2135  
605-393-1500

**December 31**

BH Symphony Orchestra  
A Tale of Two Cities: New Years  
Eve In Vienna & London  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD  
800-468-6463

**January 11**

Silent Auction  
West River Electric  
Rapid City Branch Office  
3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City SD  
605-393-1500

**February 11**

West River Electric  
Rapid City Branch Office  
Open House  
3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD  
605-393-1500

**February 18-19**

State A & AA  
Gymnastics Meet  
Watertown, SD

**February 25-26**

State A Wrestling  
Tournament  
Sioux Falls, SD

**February 25-26**

State B Wrestling  
Tournament  
Aberdeen, SD

**March 5**

BH Symphony Orchestra  
Virtuoso  
Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD  
800-468-6463

**April 9**

Dakota Pianist  
Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD  
800-468-6463

**April 9-10**

Dakota Territory Gun  
Collectors Gun Show  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

**April 16-17**

CubFest  
Bear Country USA  
Rapid City, SD  
605-343-2290