

Cooperative Connections

Faulkton mural is turning heads

Pages 8-9

Co-ops practice road safety

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The 110-foot mural that towers over the town of Faulkton has attracted attention from across the country



2020 in Review



Alan Veflin

Board President
aveflin@traverseelectric.com

On behalf of the board of directors and the employees of your co-op, Traverse Electric, it is our pleasure to welcome everyone to the 81st annual meeting of Traverse Electric. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this year will again be a drive-thru meeting format. Challenges are nothing new to your rural electric cooperative, and neither is overcoming them. Eighty-one years ago, against the odds, local folks who were burdened with no access to electricity banded together to form a self-help member-owned cooperative to focus on electrifying our rural areas. Decades later, here we are, still governed by your neighbors, and hosting our 81st annual meeting, drive-thru style. Rural voices cannot afford to become any weaker, and we can be heard if we all work together. This last year has been challenging in a different way. Last spring, the world economy reacted to the unknowns of COVID-19. Jobs were impacted, supply chains were disrupted, and people were forced to hunker down in their homes due to a virus. But Traverse Electric still had a job to do – keep the lights on, and that is precisely what your employees did.

2020 sets the high marks in several categories. Your Cooperative ended the year with operating revenue of \$11,577,778.02, with sales of kWh at 117,076,547. We also ended the year with an operations margin of \$943,421.21 and total margins of \$1,541,854.12. As a result of the Cooperative's sound and stable financial condition, we returned \$600,000 to estates and general retirement capital credits to those who received electricity in 2003 and 2004. That adds up to more than \$9.5 million returned over the years - quantifiable proof that you are an owner of a successful, effective organization.

2020 continued to be a year of growth for the cooperative; the line crews continued to install and upgrade services for new grain dryers, drain tile pumps, houses, and new shops. We also converted overhead single-phase lines with underground cable in areas where the terrain and weather affect these members reliably served on these lines. We already have several jobs lined up next spring. The crews also installed new three-phase underground lines to serve larger loads on the system and replaced the failing underground conductor.

We continued to work on our maintenance programs, where we continued our pole testing program, OCR maintenance program, overhead line inspection, underground inspection, and right-of-way program.

We also completed our Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) installation that replaced the existing and aging metering equipment. AMI allows for two-way communication and has the capabilities to track a broader range of data and analytics. Information provided will include kilowatt-hour readings, voltage, kilowatt demand, load profiling, verifying load control, alarms signaling power interruptions, and remote disconnect and reconnect.

While we are proud that planning and hard work has paid off, we still remind ourselves that dependable service and customer satisfaction are as – or maybe more critical – than bottom-line numbers. As we work our way into 2021, we will keep those thoughts in mind and continue to deliver more than just electricity to our members.

In closing, our sincere thanks to our members for your continued patronage this past year. We appreciate your business and the opportunity to serve as your board president and general manager. We also want to express our thanks and appreciation to our employees. Their constant service, commitment to the membership, and support for our mission have enabled the Cooperative to complete another successful year in 2020. Their collective expertise and steadfast effort at what they do help us move forward confidently down this new road we are traveling as we search and discover new and better ways to serve our members.

At your service we remain,

President Veflin and Manager Janorschke



Joel Janorschke

General Manager
jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com

Traverse Electric Mission Statement: To provide dependable service at the lowest possible rates, consistent with sound business principles.

Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-903)

Board of Directors

President: Alan Veflin, Sisseton, SD
Joe President: Pat Homan, Beardsley, MN
Secretary: Mark Pearson, Rosholt, SD
Treasurer: Russ Armstrong, Wheaton, MN
 Doug Diekmann, Beardsley, MN
 Michael Gaulrapp, Breckenridge, MN
 Terry Monson, Veblen, SD
 Michael Marks, Norcross, MN
 Tom Frisch, Dumont, MN

Office Personnel

Joel Janorschke - General Manager
 Karen Lupkes - Office Manager
 Dale Schwagel - Operations Manager
 Stephen Powers - Member Service Representative/Electrician
 Melissa Przymus - Accountant
 Susan Wilts - Billing Clerk

Operations Personnel

Richard Davis - Foreman
 Lonnie Tekrony - Journeyman Lineworker
 Joe Gahlon - Journeyman Lineworker
 Chris Falk - Journeyman Lineworker
 Austin Reinke - Journeyman Lineworker
 Colden Helberg - Apprentice Lineworker
 Dennis Koch - Facility Technician

General Managers Contact Information

Joel Janorschke
 Cell: 320.304.1392
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**In case of a power outage call
1-800-927-5443**

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Web site: www.traverseelectric.com. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Our Mission: To provide dependable service at the lowest possible rates, consistent with sound business principles.

Design assistance by SDREA.



TRAVERSE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Traverse Electric Cooperative 81st Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

At Traverse Electric's Office, 1618 Broadway, Wheaton, MN

Join us for a modified "Drive-thru" event

The board of directors of Traverse Electric Cooperative approved modifying this year's annual meeting format due to COVID-19 restrictions. Notice is hereby given that the annual membership meeting of Traverse Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held as a "Drive-thru" on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at Traverse Electric's Office from 3:00 PM-6:00 PM. Members will register, receive a gift, and will also receive \$40 in food vouchers when used at area participating restaurants or they can be redeemed for a \$20 electric bill credit. We encourage you to use them to support our area restaurants that are printed on the back of the voucher.

This year Districts 2, 5, & 8 have director seats up for election. Registered members of those districts will receive a ballot to vote for their director if there is more than one candidate seeking election. You are a member of Traverse Electric if you are currently receiving electric service from Traverse Electric, and the electric account is in your name.

The General Manager's Report, reviewing the operations of your cooperative in 2020 and other pertinent information, will be videotaped and available on our website for viewing after the annual meeting at www.traverseelectric.com.

After the meeting, we will draw names from the registered members for bill credits. Winners of the bill credit drawings will be announced on our Facebook page and in our newsletter.

Please join us for the annual meeting without ever having to leave your vehicle!

Below is a list of candidates from Districts 2, 5, and 8 who are interested in serving as a director as of Feb. 3, 2021. If you are a member of one of these districts and are interested in being a director or would like more information, please contact Joel Janorschke at 320-304-1392 by February 28, 2021.

Director Candidates

Here are the candidates running for election in each of the districts:

DISTRICT 2

Michael Marks

DISTRICT 5

Pat Homan

DISTRICT 8

Matthew Glynn, Eugene Bartz

ANNUAL MEETING DOOR PRIZE REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete

this prize drawing

registration ticket

and bring it with

you to be entered

in the drawings.

Name: _____

Address: _____

- Please print your name as it appears on the mailing label or your electric bill.
- Clip and bring this ticket with you to the meeting when you register.
- One registration ticket per member.

Five Electrical Dangers in Your Home

Of all the hazards that exist around your home, getting shocked by electricity is one that should not be taken lightly. Depending on the level of electrical current, contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to more severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some circumstances, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

- **Appliances.** Most shocks from appliances occur when people are trying to repair them. It's not enough to just turn off an appliance before attempting to work on it – you also need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of consumer product-related electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent. There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present.
- **Ladders.** Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of consumer product-related electrical shocks were also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area, including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is at least 10 feet away from them.
- **Power tools.** Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. When you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords with power tools, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.
- **Electrical outlets and extension cords.** Inserting anything that doesn't belong – screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact. Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots. Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't hit the pole! Be safe!"

Monroe Steiner, 6 years old

Monroe is the daughter of Brandon and Jen Steiner of Lake City, SD. They are members of Lake Region Electric.

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

Super Seafood Recipes

Sheet Pan Fish and Chips

1/4 cup buttermilk	1 tablespoon oil
5 teaspoons OLD BAY® Seasoning, divided	1/4 cup flour
1 pound cod fillets, cut into 4x2-inch pieces	1 egg
2 large russet potatoes, cut into wedges (about 1-1/2 pounds)	1 cup cornflake crumbs
	McCormick® Tartar Sauce

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Mix buttermilk and 1 teaspoon of the OLD BAY in large resealable plastic bag. Add fish, then seal the bag. Refrigerate for 20 minutes. Toss potatoes and oil into large bowl. Sprinkle with another 2 teaspoons of OLD BAY; toss to coat evenly. Spread potatoes in single layer on foil-lined 15x10x1-inch baking pan that has been sprayed with no-stick cooking spray. Bake 25 minutes, turning potatoes halfway through. Remove pan from oven. Push potatoes to outside edge of the pan. Set aside. Place flour in a shallow dish. Beat egg, another 1 teaspoon of OLD BAY and 1 teaspoon water in a separate shallow dish. Mix cornflake crumbs and remaining 1 teaspoon OLD BAY in another shallow dish. Remove fish from the buttermilk mixture, allowing excess to drip off into bag. Coat fish in flour, shaking off excess flour. Dip in egg mixture, then press into the cornflake mixture until evenly coated. Discard any remaining flour, egg and cornflake mixtures. Place fish on a wire rack in center of pan with the potatoes. Bake 15 minutes or until fish is golden brown and flakes easily with a fork and potatoes are tender. Serve fish with potatoes and tartar sauce, if desired.

www.mccormick.com

Salmon Cheese Balls

1 16 oz. can of salmon	1 T. salt
8 oz. cream cheese	1 T. lemon juice
1 T. chopped onion	1 T. horseradish

Mix all ingredients together and shape into individual balls. Roll balls in chopped pecans and serve with crackers. Chill before and after shaping into a ball.

Denene Miles, Doland, SD

Shrimp Fettuccine with Pesto

15 extra large shrimp	comes in gluten free variety)
6 cloves of garlic	2-6.7 oz. jars of basil pesto
Extra virgin olive oil	Finely shredded parmesan cheese
12 oz. box of fettuccine (also	

Peel and chop garlic until finely diced. In large saute pan, pour a couple of tbsps. of extra virgin olive oil. Add shrimp (shelled and wiped dry with a paper towel). Cook until orange and slightly browned on each side (2-3 minutes per side). Add garlic and cook until light brown (do not over cook or garlic becomes bitter). Put on plate. Fill saute pan 3/4 full with cold water and bring to a rolling boil. Add entire box of pasta and cook 12 minutes. Stir to make sure pasta has separated. Drain in colander. Put the pasta, shrimp and garlic back into the saute pan. Add two jars of pesto sauce. Cook until heated. When serving, add parmesan cheese on top. Serves 4-6. Shrimp & Garlic with Cocktail Sauce: Prepare shrimp and garlic as directed above. Cool. Serve with cocktail sauce.

Sue Nipe, Sioux Falls, SD

Parmesan Baked Salmon

1/4 c mayo	4 salmon fillets
2 T. Parmesan Cheese	2 t. lemon juice
1/8 t. ground red pepper (cayenne)	10 crackers, crushed

Mix the mayo, cheese and pepper. Place salmon on foil on a cooking sheet. Drizzle with lemon juice. Top with cheese mixture. Sprinkle on cracker crumbs. Bake at 400 for 15 minutes. Then enjoy!

Julie and Jared Frank, Sioux Falls, SD

Please send your favorite beverage 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

MEET YOUR STAFF AND CREW



Joel Janorschke
3 Years of Service



Karen Lupkes
19 Years of Service



Dale Schwagel
21 Years of Service



Stephen Powers
1 Year of Service



Melissa Przymus
8 Years of Service



Sue Wilts
42 Years of Service



Rick Davis
14 Years of Service



Lon TeKrony
21 Years of Service



Joe Gahlon
13 Years of Service



Chris Falk
13 Years of Service



Austin Reinke
2 Years of Service



Colden Helberg
9 Months of Service



Dennis Koch
25 Years of Service

Members Thank Traverse Electric

We would like to thank the crew that so promptly restored the power on our place. An underground line on the farm site had gone bad so it and the transformer were replaced. It was the middle of December and the ground was not yet frozen and they did it all before the ground froze. It was great not to have a temporary line on the ground to work around all winter.



Allen and Beth Wold
Wheaton, MN

Thank you to the crew that cut the trees down across from our yard. It will help a lot. Thanks again.

Mike & Bonnie Sebek
Claire City, SD

I would like to thank you for choosing me as the Traverse Electric Scholar of the Week. Thank you so much for this honor.

Gus Hasbargen
Breckenridge, MN

Thank you for the Department 56 Dickens Village I won on your Facebook drawing. It is a nice addition to my Christmas decorations. Thanks for all you do to keep the lights on for all your customers. Happy New Year.

Jeanette Pistorius

TEC December Financial Information

	December 2019	December 2020	YTD 2020
Total Revenue	\$1,157,110.31	\$1,049,450.68	\$11,577,778.02
Cost of Power	\$669,614.72	\$667,228.47	\$7,082,244.99
Total Cost of Service	\$949,243.18	\$927,294.59	\$10,634,492.60
Operating Margins	\$207,867.13	\$122,156.09	\$943,285.42
Total Margins	\$683,656.18	\$657,663.46	\$1,541,856.12
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Purchased	12,149,571	11,821,959	122,993,074
Kilowatt-Hours (kWh) Sales	11,572,712	11,237,452	117,076,547
Line Loss	4%	5%	5%

Traverse Electric Cooperative 80th Annual Meeting

July 27, 2020

The eightieth annual meeting of Traverse Electric Cooperative was held at the office of Traverse Electric, 1618 Broadway, Wheaton, Minnesota on Monday, July 27, 2020. Registration started at 3:30 p.m. and ended at 7:00 p.m.

General Manager, Joel Janorschke, welcomed members to their annual meeting via Facebook.

President Veflin called the meeting to order and conducted the meeting via Facebook. Veflin explained that due to COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting is being conducted as a drive-thru. Members register in their vehicles outside the office building where they are given ballots to vote on the bylaw amendments and directors. They then drive to the next station where tellers collect the ballots. Members registering for the meeting receive a gift and two \$20 vouchers for area participating restaurants or to be used as an electric bill credit.

President Veflin thanked Janorschke and the employees for their continued service.

Members were given ballots to vote on proposed bylaw amendments and director elections in District 1, 4, and 7. The following candidates were nominated at their district meetings or by petition:

District 1	Tom Frisch
District 4	Doug Diekmann
District 7	Mark Pearson

After registration and voting ended at 7:00 p.m., President Veflin named the tellers: Tim Gleason, Roger Derby, Melanie Lupkes, and Dennis Koch. The tellers counted the votes.

President Veflin then introduced Melanie Lupkes who announced the results of the director elections and the bylaw amendments as follows:

District 1: Tom Frisch was reelected with 34 votes

District 4: Doug Diekmann was reelected with 31 votes

District 7: Mark Pearson was reelected with 13 votes.

Bylaw amendments: Passed 208 to 5.

President Veflin thanked Lupkes and announced that they will draw for the door prizes and the winners would be posted on Facebook the next day.

President Veflin then adjourned the meeting.

Mark Pearson

Mark Pearson, Secretary

2020 Capital Credit Checks Invalid Address List

Name	Address	Years in Service
Bailey, Roy	Ortonville MN	2001-2008
Chizek, Linus	Wahpeton ND	2000-2008
Cook, Ken & Donna	Gilbert AZ	1995-2013
Decoteau Jr, Thomas	Sisseton SD	2003-2004
Genia Jr, David	Sisseton SD	2003-2009
Goding, Vicki	Rockport TX	1999-2006
Greybuffalo, Leslie	Browns Valley MN	1992-2017
Lucek, Randy	Breckenridge MN	2000-2008
Munter, Randy	Appleton MN	2004-2006
Ortley, Julia	Wheaton MN	2003-2004
Redday, Brenda	Bismarck ND	1982-2005
Reese, Arlie & Susan	Florence AZ	2003-2004
Seaboy, Danny D III	Sisseton SD	2000-2005
Stave, Roderick & Joyce Trust	Park Rapids MN	1973-2007
Wanna, Katherine	Fargo ND	2009-2012, 2016
Zluticky, Brian	Corona CA	2003-2006



The mural in Faulkton is a prominent feature in the town. Aerial photography by Billy Gibson.

EYE-POPPING APPEAL

Faulkton Mural Attracts Attention from Far and Near

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@srea.coop

The story of how the small town of Faulkton became an attraction for art aficionados far and near actually begins on another continent many years ago.

Today, Faulkton is home to an imposing 110-foot mural displayed on three sides of an Agtegra grain elevator, the town's most prominent structure. Visible from long distances on Hwy. 212, the mural depicts a boy and girl and several wide-brimmed hats blowing between them in the prairie wind. While the meaning of the mural is open to as many interpretations as there are viewers, the intriguing story of how the artwork came into existence is a "10 beer tale," according to Dave Hedt, the community leader who initiated the project.

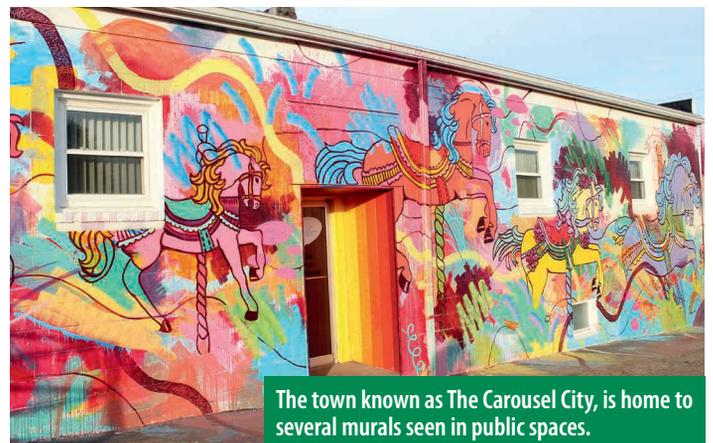
A native of Australia, the mate known among the locals as "Aussie Dave" was nursing a "frothy" in a bar in Melbourne when he encountered a chap from Faulkton who happened to be in Melbourne on business. He and Craig Mutsch struck up a conversation during that chance encounter in 1998 and kept in regular contact until 2013 when Hedt decided to relocate to South Dakota on a permanent basis.

Hedt went to work for Mutsch in the beginning before eventually setting down roots in Faulkton. He later married a gal from Harrold, became a regular at Lakeside Golf Club, built a retail strip center along the highway across from the Agtegra elevator and established several businesses in the quiet town.

The idea of creating the mural is actually credited to Hedt's father, who was visiting his son one day in 2015: "He was here and we were driving into town and he saw the grain elevator. He said, 'Hey, why don't you call Guido about painting a mural on that.' Right away I thought it was a great idea," Aussie Dave recalled.

In this case, Guido is the internationally renowned photographer and visual artist Guido Van Helten, who had painted a highly acclaimed mural on the side of a set of grain silos in Brim, Australia, not far from Hedt's home town of Dimboola.

"That mural had such a positive impact on the community, I knew it would get the same kind of response here and create the



The town known as The Carousel City, is home to several murals seen in public spaces.

Faulkton Mural Fast Facts

- The mural stands 110 feet high
- The project took seven weeks to complete
- Artist Guido Van Helton has done similar projects all around the world
- Local residents donated their time and labor to prepare the grain elevator for painting

same kind of excitement, for the town,” Hedt said.

He got in touch with the artist, who didn’t hesitate to take on the project. Van Helten visited Faulkton several times conducting preliminary work before taking his brushes in hand. As he’d done with previous similar projects, Van Helten spent time getting involved in community events and getting to know the residents of The Carousel City. He was hosted by a local family and tried to capture the ambiance of the town to inspire the visual and thematic elements of his work.

He received tremendous support from the community as folks chipped in to help the project financially and also contributed some “sweat equity” by scraping, cleaning and pressure-washing the elevator’s concrete surface in preparation for Van Helten’s artistic touch.

Grant funding was received from the South Dakota Arts Council and other non-profit groups, while the balance of the funds were raised privately through sponsorships and contributions from local businesses. Hedt is quick to point out no taxpayer money was used. For its part, Agtegra was quickly sold on the idea as plans were to eventually take the elevator out of service and move the operation to another site east of town.

As for what would ultimately appear on the side of the elevator, the residents were lending their support without knowing how the project would actually turn out. They figured they could always paint over it if they felt the mural’s theme wasn’t congruent with the town’s self-image.



FAULKTON MURAL

Artist Guido Van Helton spent several weeks in Faulkton getting to know the local residents and getting a sense of the town’s spirit before he started painting.

“Guido kind of kept that a secret,” Hedt said. “He wanted it to be a surprise, but knew from the other things he’d done that it would be spectacular and something that we would all be proud of. He always paints what he feels is reflective of the town and the people.”

After the surface was prepared, it took several weeks for Van Helten to complete the painting while working suspended beside the large concrete canvas. The painting was unveiled on Sept. 1, 2018. Hedt said the result of the project has brought more positive results than anyone in the town could have anticipated.

“In terms of the financial impact, it’s just unbelievable the traffic we get through the town,” he said. “We had a woman from Washington state fly all the way here just to see it.”

Dawn Melius is owner of a local insurance agency and has been involved in the project since the beginning. She said the mural has brought a unique and welcomed vibrancy to the community.

“It’s such a great work of art, and people can interpret it however they want. That’s part of the fun of it and the attraction of it. It’s such an amazing project and it has brought a lot of interest to the town. Of course, once people are drawn here by the mural and they stop and spend some time around town, they like what they see and they have a real positive experience.”

Find an aerial video of the mural by visiting the Cooperative Connections Plus YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/n2gEDAltHMk>. Find out more about Van Helten at www.guidovanhelten.com.



Tom Frisch
District 1



Michael Marks
District 2



Michael Gaulrapp
District 3



Doug Diekmann
District 4



Pat Homan
District 5
Vice President



Russ Armstrong
District 6
Treasurer



Mark Pearson
District 7
Secretary



Alan Veflin
District 8
President



Terry Monson
District 9

December 2020 Board Meeting Highlights

The December board meeting was held on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020 at 9 a.m. Absent: None. Staff members present were General Manager, Joel Janorschke and Karen Lupkes.

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the November board meeting were approved.

The November check register was approved.

Discussed the East River & Basin video reports.

Homan reported on the East River board meeting.

Janorschke presented the Manager's Report, which included:

- Provided a Basin Electric update.
- Provided an East River update.
- REED Fund review.
- NRECA update.
- MREA and MN legislative update.
- SDREA and SD legislative update.
- Discussed matter involving ditching near poles.
- Discussed current and future facility needs, options, and preliminary cost estimates.
- Reported on the Mid-West Annual Meeting and Livestock Seminar he attended virtually.

Lupkes gave the Office Manager's Report, which included:

- November 30, 2020 accounts receivable balances were reviewed.
- A list of new members was reviewed.
- COVID-19 update. Office remains closed to the public.
- Capital credit retirement from 2003-2004 was applied to active members accounts and checks were mailed to inactive members in December.
- Scholarship applications are available for the \$1000 Basin and \$500 Traverse Electric scholarships. Deadline to apply is Feb 17, 2021.

Reviewed and approved the November Financial Report.

Janorschke gave the Operations Report. Items discussed included:

- Outages were reviewed.
- Reviewed completed projects and new services.
- Crews have been working on pole changes.
- Carr's Tree Service will focus on the SD side of Lake Traverse in 2021.
- OCR maintenance will begin in January.
- Annual inventory physical count will start this week.
- Reviewed our Safety Program.

District meetings are canceled in January due to COVID restrictions.

Approved that members interested in serving as a director from Districts 2, 5, & 8 should contact Janorschke to be put on the ballot to be voted on at the annual meeting.

Discussed and approved the annual meeting format. The annual meeting will be held as a drive-thru meeting on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at Traverse Electric Cooperative. A registration gift and food vouchers will be given to each registering member.

Approved Board Policy 522 Employee Volunteering/Community Service.

A list of upcoming meetings and attendees was reviewed.

Meeting adjourned.

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2020

What We Have

Assets and Other Debits			
Utility Plant			
Utility Plant in Service	\$26,283,386		
Construction Work in Progress	<u>-\$2,364</u>		
Total Utility in Plant		\$26,281,022	
Less: Reserve for Depreciation	<u>\$10,371,095</u>		
Utility Plant Less Reserve for Depreciation		\$15,909,927	
Investment and Fund Account			
Capital Credits-East River, Basin & CFC	\$6,242,837		
Investments in Associated Enterprises	\$374,916		
Temporary Investments	<u>\$4,037,574</u>		
Total Investment and Fund Account		\$10,655,327	
Current Assets and Deferred Charges:			
Special Deposits	\$0		
Accounts Receivable	\$934,290		
Prepayments/Materials and Supplies	\$380,281		
Interest Receivable	\$2,880		
Deferred Debits	<u>\$124,223</u>		
Total Current Assets and Deferred Debits		\$1,441,674	
Total Assets and Other Debits		<u><u>\$28,006,928</u></u>	

What We Owe

Liabilities and Deferred Credits			
Long-Term Obligations to REA	\$11,852,305		
Long-Term Obligations Other	\$571,738		
Current and Accrued Liabilities	\$1,003,072		
Deferred Credits	<u>\$29,787</u>		
Total Liabilities and Deferred Debits		\$13,456,902	
Net Assets - Member Equities		<u>\$14,550,026</u>	
Total Liabilities and Other Credits		<u><u>\$28,006,928</u></u>	

What We Own

Member Equities			
Patronage Capital	\$12,508,646		
Operating Margin - Current Year	\$943,285		
Non-Operating Margin	\$598,572		
Other Equities	<u>\$499,524</u>		
Total Member Equities		\$14,550,027	

Comparative Operating Statistics

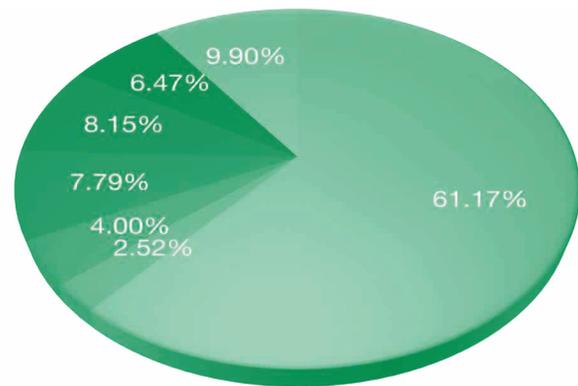
	2020	2019
Number of Miles Energized - Distribution	1,734	1,714
Number of Services in Place	3,260	3,217
Kilowatt Hours Purchases	122,993,074	121,406,122
Kilowatt Hours Sold	117,076,547	115,279,896
Percent Line Loss	5%	5%

Revenue and Expenses

January 1 to December 31, 2020

Operating Revenue		\$11,577,778
Cost of Purchased Power	\$7,082,245	
Total System Operations	\$1,145,712	
Total Consumer Services	\$293,017	
Total Depreciation	\$748,622	
Total Interest	\$463,044	
Total Administration	<u>\$901,853</u>	
Total Cost of Electric Service		\$10,634,493
Operating Margins		\$943,285
Non-Operating Margins		\$72,025
Transmission Capital Credits		\$526,544
Total Margins		\$1,541,854

What Do Your Dollars Pay For?



- 61.17% - Purchased Power
- 2.52% - Consumer Services
- 4.00% - Interest
- 7.79% - Administration
- 8.15% - Operating Margins
- 6.47% - Depreciation
- 9.90% - Systems Operations

Summary of Loan Fund

Total Debt Obligation, December 31, 2020	12,424,043
Balance	12,424,043
Less: Advance Payments	0
Net Obligations to RUS, FFB, CFC and USDA 12/31/2020	12,424,043

Capital Credits Paid*

1956 to 2003		2012	\$220,197.99
	\$4,283,247.49	2013	\$199,990.49
2004	\$219,103.90	2014	\$299,995.08
2005	\$38,449.06	2015	\$288,893.81
2006	\$245,719.10	2016	\$300,004.40
2007	\$245,782.06	2017	\$400,010.49
2008	\$280,627.11	2018	\$400,000.00
2009	\$321,723.71	2019	\$450,000.00
2010	\$331,007.12	2020	\$600,000.00
2011	\$384,588.29		

Total Paid Back \$9,509,340.10

*Capital credits shown above have been paid to estates of deceased members plus payments to members for years 1942 through part of 2004.



Troy Ziebart, line foreman at Douglas Electric in Armour, loads up his vehicle before hitting the road to perform maintenance work on the co-op's system. Photo by Billy Gibson.

On the Road Again

Cooperative crews log millions of safe miles each year

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Some people follow their instincts to run away from emergency situations, others are obligated to steer towards them.

South Dakota's electric cooperative linemen often find themselves headed toward the site of potentially hazardous predicaments, whether it's simply answering an emergency outage call or engaging in rebuilding many miles of poles and lines in the most austere conditions in the aftermath of a major storm.

In any event, the first task for linemen is to arrive at the scene and make the return trip to co-op headquarters with themselves and their vehicles all in one piece. Many cooperative consumers are unaware of the fact that co-op linemen in South Dakota collectively log more than 8 million miles on the road each year taking care of maintenance projects, installing equipment, performing public service work, answering outage calls or other daily duties.

That figure includes those instances when linemen are called upon to drive long

distances across state lines to assist other fellow cooperatives restore power after a natural disaster, which raises the potential risk for accidents.

Compared to the amount of time and number of miles they travel on a routine basis, cooperative linemen have an impressive track record of operating their vehicles without incident and without harm to either themselves or the motoring public.

According to Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) in Pierre, safe operating practices do much more than just save lives and property; they also keep insurance premiums down and help control the cost of fleet maintenance.

"Safety is such an important aspect of what we do as electric cooperatives, and it takes on many dimensions," Patterson said. "We often think of safety as adopting prudent practices when it comes to working in close proximity to different equipment such as power lines, transformers and substations. But it also includes other aspects such as safety in the workplace,

emergency preparedness, handling hazardous materials and knowing how important it is to be safe out on the road every time we leave the back shop and pull out of the gate."

As with many aspects of their operations, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are using the power of computer software and advanced technology to promote safety on the road. Many co-ops use software programs such as NexTraq, which processes and provides a wealth of information to help maintenance managers keep records on vehicle tracking and telemetry, fuel use and efficiency, service scheduling, driver performance, job completion and more.

These systems deliver real-time data not only on vehicle speed, heading, location, etc., but they also indicate where each vehicle is positioned at any given moment within the service territory so that supervisors can more effectively and efficiently coordinate movements of various crews throughout the system and throughout the work day.

"Linemen from the old days would be amazed at the advanced technology we



Cooperative linemen log thousands of hours on the road but sometimes find themselves having to take their vehicles off the paved surfaces. *Aerial photography by Billy Gibson.*

now have at our disposal,” Patterson said. “And it’s not just things like hydraulics and buckets and all the equipment we use today, but also the computer-based tools we have to help us do our jobs better. It all adds up to making the best use of the members’ resources and ultimately making sure the electricity we deliver is as affordable as possible. Members can count on the fact that cooperatives are trusted stewards of their resources and we’re doing everything we can to keep costs low.”

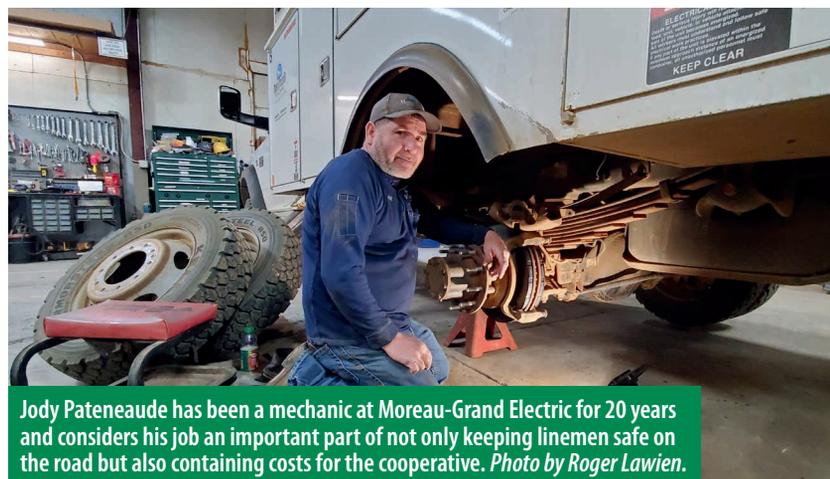
One of those mechanics who remembers the “old days” is Jody Pateneau, who has kept watch over the vehicle fleet at Moreau-Grand Electric for the past 20 years. Pateneau, who notes that linemen are required to carry a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) and that he has one himself, said fleet maintenance was more of an art in the past.

“We kept records as well as we could, but we would just kind of know when parts or brakes or oil needed to be changed

and what needed to be done,” he said. “But with the new technology, we know what needs to be taken care of a long time before the guys driving the vehicle know. Our job is to make sure there are no break-downs when our guys get out there and that no one is in danger, and the computer helps us accomplish that goal.”

Patterson pointed out that the public also plays a role in making sure cooperative linemen and their vehicles stay accident-free. He said every year linemen and other utility workers across the country are severely injured or killed either in their vehicles or in their work sites.

“We should all be more aware of emergency workers who perform their jobs along roadsides or other places where traffic is present,” Patterson said. “We always remind the public to ‘slow down and move over’ when they see a work area or utility vehicle nearby. It’s not only good, sound advice, but it’s also the law in the state of South Dakota.”



Jody Pateneau has been a mechanic at Moreau-Grand Electric for 20 years and considers his job an important part of not only keeping linemen safe on the road but also containing costs for the cooperative. *Photo by Roger Lawien.*

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for “Co-op Connections Plus” and you’ll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to “like” and “subscribe.”





Quin and Tom Brunner (foreground, center) are strong supporters of home schooling. They home schooled each of their seven children. Brunner is a former state legislator who served as an advocate for alternative education options for South Dakota families.

Home Schooling Learning from Home Provides Flexibility for Families

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

If home schooling were a common stock and you jumped into the market 10 years ago, you'd be on Easy Street right now.

Statistics show that since 2010, the number of families home schooling their children in South Dakota has increased 125 percent. And with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the numbers continue to climb steadily. According to state records, there were 5,109 home schoolers in 2019. Last year that number increased 27 percent to 6,698.

Once seen as somewhat of a fringe movement, home schooling is getting a fresh look from families all across the country.

And that's just fine with Tom Brunner, a board member at Butte Electric Cooperative in Newell and a member of the state Legislature for 14 years. Brunner and his wife, Quin, have taught each of their seven children from home. Today those children are grown up and pursuing a variety of career tracks, an occupation list that includes earth science, welding, legal counseling, music instruction and more.

While Brunner no longer serves in the statehouse, he recalls being a vocal advocate for alternative education options for South Dakota families.

"I was grateful to receive a lot of cooperation from my fellow lawmakers and people at the Department of Education because I think everyone understood that the department is responsible for overseeing the education of all of the students in our state, not just those attending public schools," he said.

Looking back on his legislative career, Brunner said he is proud of the work he did to make sure parents and families had choices, but that those families also needed to be held accountable for adhering to certain guidelines. For example, parents must comply with state law by submitting a Notification for Public School Exemption Certificate to the local superintendent each year.

While home school instructors aren't required to attain certification, they cannot instruct more than 22 students and must conduct nationally standardized testing in grades four, eight and 11. Local officials are allowed to monitor those tests while the state is entitled to inspect the records of alternative education programs if there is probable cause of non-compliance.

It's also the local district's responsibility to track the student's progress using the Student Information Management System (Infinite Campus System) to make sure certain educational

How to Begin Home Schooling in South Dakota

To home school in South Dakota, parents must complete the following steps:

- Every year, complete and file a notification for Public School Exemption.
- Return the completed exemption form to the public school district office where you reside.
- Choose the best home school curriculum that includes required subjects of language arts and math.
- Participate in standardized tests in grades 4, 8 and 11.
- Keep good records.
- Have fun learning together!



standards are being met and students aren't "slipping through the cracks."

"I've always felt families have the right to do what's best for the education of their children, but as a state we also have a duty to make sure our children are being taught what they need to know to be successful in life," Brunner said. "There's a fear that kids who aren't in public schools might be used as laborers or just sitting around the house and not being supervised. I've never seen a case where that fear is a reality."

The good news for home school parents and those searching for options is that in addition to the state DOE, there are many resources available. South Dakota is home to roughly 15 associations, alliances, cooperatives and other groups created to help families achieve their educational goals.

There is also the Home School Legal Defense Association based in Purcellville, Va., a non-profit organization whose mission is to "defend and advance the constitutional right of parents to direct

the upbringing and education of their children and to protect family freedoms."

Like many aspects of society, home schooling was given a second blush after the pandemic struck. Community schools were among the first public gathering places to be shut down once the virus began spreading across the country. When it became clear the virus wouldn't be disappearing soon, parents became accustomed to juggling the responsibilities of work while dealing with their children receiving instruction remotely.

While some parents struggled with the new reality, others gave consideration to adopting the home school platform on a permanent basis. Observers with the U.S. DOE predict the increased interest in home schooling will be sustained long after the pandemic has passed. The National Federation of Children conducted a poll that indicated 40 percent of U.S. families are more likely to home school or enroll their children in a virtual school after the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, the reason most

parents gave for choosing home schooling for their children was a "concern about the school environment, such as safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure." Other top reasons were a desire to provide more moral and religious instruction, a dissatisfaction with public school instruction and the ability to take a "non-traditional" approach to education.

Brunner said he has explored and discussed many different sides of the issue and is fully aware that when it comes to matters of public policy, public funding and personal choice, people can have strong feelings.

"In our state, we place a high value on our rights and freedoms," he said. "I've been in many meetings with those who have very strong opinions, but we've always had very civil discussions. And while our opinions might differ, there's always been a clear understanding that we all want the same outcome: making sure all of our children get the education and preparation they need to live a fulfilling life and have an opportunity to raise a family of their own."

Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual
605-574-9454

February 20

Family Gras, Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-6000

February 20-27

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

February 25

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood Live: Neighbor Day, Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-6000

February 27

Nemo 500 Outhouse Races Nemo Guest Ranch, Nemo, SD
605-578-2708

March 5-6

SD High School State Debate & IE Tournament, Central High School, Aberdeen, SD

March 5-7

BH Rapid's President's Cup 2021, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rushmore Hall, Rapid City, SD 605-394-4115

March 11-14

Team 8-Ball Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rushmore Hall, Rapid City, SD 605-394-4115

March 12-13

St. Patrick's Day Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976



March 13

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD
605-641-4963

March 13

St. Patrick's Day Celebration, Knights of Columbus Hall, Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD
605-859-2280

March 19-20

Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6000

March 23-24

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Fine Arts Theatre, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead Hills, Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center, Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

March 27

SD State High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD

April 8

The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest, Sioux Falls Arena/Virtual, Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

April 9-10

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

April 9-18

Four Weddings & An Elvis, Mitchell Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

April 17

Winefest Renaissance, Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-8714

April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.