

# Cooperative Connections

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# What is the Monthly Base Charge on My Electric Bill?



**Joel Janorschke, General Manager**

[jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com](mailto:jjanorschke@traverseelectric.com)

Since I have started here at Traverse Electric, I have had several members ask me what the monthly base charge on my billing statement is. Every service has a monthly charge that is set forth to cover the cost of providing that service whether it's for your electricity, telephone/cellphone or cable/satellite television, they all carry some form of charge. The term monthly charge has been called by different names, such as a service charge, fixed charge, facility charge or monthly minimum charge. For the members of Traverse Electric, we refer to it as a monthly base charge. Like any business, Traverse Electric has both fixed and variable costs. The fixed charge is designed to recover Traverse Electric's local distribution costs related to making a basic electric service available to all its members.

Many fixed costs go into operating, maintaining and improving Traverse Electric's system for every existing and future member. With the monthly base charge, Traverse Electric can support the following functions:

- The Cooperative's Fleet
- Poles
- Power Lines
- Transformers
- Buildings
- Insurance
- Labor
- Right-of-way Clearing of Trees
- Line Maintenance
- Administrative Costs
  - Calculating costs, sending bills, posting payments, accounting, financing, collections, dispatching, customer service and communication

**By recovering a portion of these necessary expenditures through the base charge, instead of through energy charges (which do vary by levels of use), the costs are distributed fairly among members.**

While the list of costs could go on and on, the important message here is that none of these costs change regarding how much energy you or your neighbor use. The fixed charge is designed so that each member is paying a fair share of the cost to access electric service.

A major driver of the cost associated with the monthly fixed charge is density, also known as the number of members per mile of line. Co-ops on average serve 7.4 members per mile and in Traverse Electric's case, we have 3,200 accounts and 1,700 miles of line, leaving us at about 1.8 members per mile of line. That meets the definition of a rural electric cooperative, especially in comparison to our investor-owned utility (IOU) counterparts that serve larger cities and on average 30 customers or greater per mile of line, and municipals, which average 48 customers per mile. For example, if the cost to build a mile of line of a single-phase distribution line is \$45,000, Traverse Electric has 1.8 members to recover that investment compared to the IOUs that have 30 or more due to the density of the cooperative. For example, if you use one kWh of electricity and your neighbor uses 1,000 kWh, Traverse Electric still incurs the same cost to build the line, maintain the distribution system and deliver electricity to both of you.

By recovering a portion of these necessary expenditures through the base charge, instead of through energy charges (which do vary by levels of use), the costs are distributed fairly among members. The base charge ensures our members' expectations for continuous power and outstanding customer service are met.

# Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-903)

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 Lonnie Tekrony - Journeyman Linemen  
 Dennis Koch - Meterman/Groundsman  
 Mark Koch - Groundsman

## In case of a power outage call 1-800-927-5443

Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly by Traverse Electric Cooperative, PO Box 66, 1618 Broadway, Wheaton, MN, 56296 for its members. Families subscribe to Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Traverse Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 66, Wheaton, MN 56296; Phone (320) 563-8616; Fax (320) 563-4863;

Web site: [www.traverseelectric.com](http://www.traverseelectric.com). This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Design assistance by SDREA.



## Update Your Contact Information

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible? By keeping your contact information up-to-date, you can take full advantage of the services Traverse Electric offers.

You may have noticed prompts through our billing statements and webpage requesting your updated contact information. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it makes it very difficult to contact you during an outage.

Updating your contact information is helpful because it speeds up the power restoration process. With correct information, we can also contact you in advance of planned outages for repairs and maintenance.

Please call 320-563-8616 and make sure you're up to date.

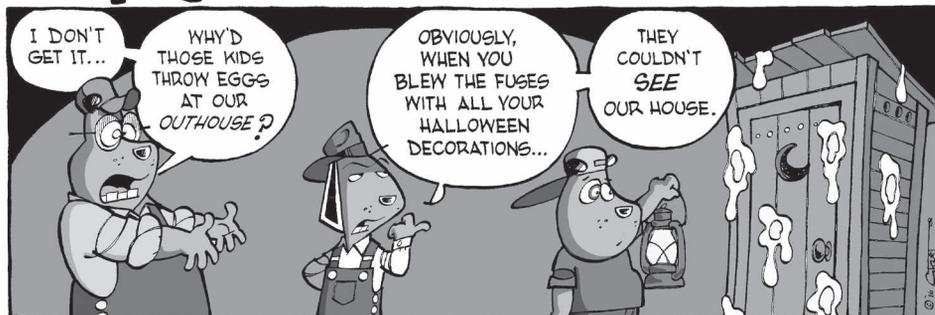


## Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Cooler temps are just around the corner! Is your home's heating system ready? Remember to replace furnace filters once a month or as recommended. If you heat your home with warm-air registers, bas board heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to increase efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Murphy



## IN CASE OF OUTAGE

- 1<sup>ST</sup>** Check the fuses or breakers in your home or building in which you do not have power.
- 2<sup>ND</sup>** Check your breaker below your meter on the yard pole. Some residential members may not have breakers.
- 3<sup>RD</sup>** If you still do not have power, call your neighbor to check if their electricity is also off.
- 4<sup>TH</sup>** Call immediately; do not wait for your neighbor to call in the outage.
- 5<sup>TH</sup>** Call Traverse Electric Cooperative at 1-800-927-5443.



## S.D. Fire Marshal: Know That Fires Can Start Anywhere

This year's Fire Prevention Week encourages people to be mindful that fires can start anywhere. Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 7-13 and will be observed by fire departments throughout South Dakota. This year's theme is "Look. Listen. Learn. Be Aware - fire can happen anywhere."

"It is easy to take fire safety for granted, especially if we are staying in a new hotel or working in a new building," says State Fire Marshal Paul Merriman. "But it is important to be aware of your surroundings and know where the exits are if a fire starts."

Merriman says the three "L's" in this year's theme signify essential ways people can reduce their risk to fire:

- Look for places fire can start
- Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm
- Learn two ways out of each room

At the same time, Merriman says individuals and families should make sure they have two ways out of their home in case of fire. He says people need to remember that fires can start anywhere in the home due to an electrical problem or another issue.

"Families should hold fire drills in their homes at least twice a year; once during the day and another time at night," Merriman says. "It is important that everyone, especially children, know how to get out of a burning structure using more than one exit."

Another emphasis during the week will be the use of smoke alarms. Merriman says the importance of smoke alarms can't be stressed enough.

"We have seen too many house fires where there were no smoke alarms present or the alarms in the homes were not properly working," he says. "Smoke alarms can help save lives. But they do no good when not properly maintained."

### Smoke alarm messages for this week include:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
  - Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
  - Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do when they hear it.
  - If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.
  - Call the Fire Department from outside the home.
- To learn more, go to [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

The state Fire Marshal's Office is part of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

## Farm Bill Conference: Electric Co-op Priorities



Strengthen RUS electric loan program



Support House broadband provisions



Promote innovative rural development programs

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Don't plant trees below power lines."**

**Erin Kangas**, 10 years old

Erin is the daughter of Andrew and Gail Kangas, Lake Norden, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake, 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. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Perfect Pasta

## Pasta Rings and Deviled Ham Salad

1 (7oz.) pkg. macaroni rings, cooked and drained	1/3 cup dill pickle relish
2 cups ground cooked ham	1-1/4 cups mayonnaise
3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped	1 tsp. mustard
1 cup finely chopped celery	1/4 tsp. pepper

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Chill thoroughly before serving.

Becki Hauser, Tripp, SD

## Hamburger-Macaroni Casserole

1 lb. ground beef, do not brown	1 can tomato soup
1 T. instant onion	1 can cheese soup
1/2 cup diced celery	1 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup diced green pepper	1 tsp. salt
1 cup uncooked macaroni	1/4 T. basil, optional

Combine all ingredients in casserole; refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour. Serves 6.

Shirley Thedorff, Centerville, SD

## Easy Chicken Noodle Dish

1/3 cup chopped onion	1 tsp. salt
1 T. butter	1 cup sour cream
3 cups noodles, uncooked	2 cups cooked chicken
2-3/4 cups chicken broth	1/4 cup silvered almonds
1/4 tsp. lemon extract	3 T. snipped parsley

Sauté onion in butter. Add noodles, chicken broth, extract and salt. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook on low heat for 25 minutes or until noodles are tender. Stir in sour cream, chicken, almonds and parsley. Serve hot in bowls. Serves 4.

Verna Knapp, Waubay, SD

## Creamy Parmesa and Sun-dried Tomato Chicken Penne

2 cups penne pasta	1 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Italian Seasoning
2 T. butter	1/2 tsp. McCormick® California Style Onion Powder
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	1/2 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Sicilian Sea Salt
1 lb. chicken tenders	1/4 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Black Pepper, Coarse Ground
1 cup half-and-half	3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 T. cornstarch	
1 (14.5 oz.) can petite diced tomatoes, undrained	
1/4 cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes	

Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, melt butter in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add garlic; cook and stir 30 seconds. Add chicken; cook and stir 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Mix half-and-half and cornstarch in small bowl until smooth. Add to skillet along with tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, seasonings and Parmesan cheese. Bring to boil, stirring constantly with wire whisk until well blended. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Stir in pasta; toss gently to coat. Serve with additional Parmesan cheese, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

**Shrimp variation:** Use 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined, in place of the chicken. Cook and stir shrimp in melted butter 2 minutes. Continue as directed.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 292, Total Fat 12g, Saturated Fat 7g, Cholesterol 66mg, Sodium 486mg, Protein 22g, Carbohydrates 24g, Dietary Fiber 2g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

Please send your favorite slow cooker, holiday favorite or soup 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 2018. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Stay Comfortable This Winter



**Pat Keegan**

Collaborative Efficiency

**On average, a typical home loses about half its air every hour and that amount can increase when outdoor temperatures are extremely cold and the wind is blowing.**

**Dear Pat:** Last year, we spent our first winter in our new place, which is actually an older home. Even with the heat turned up, it always felt chilly indoors. This year, we added insulation, but we're wondering if there are additional steps we can take to make the house more comfortable this winter. Can you offer any advice? – Emily

**Dear Emily:** When we talk about comfort in our homes, we usually think about where the thermostat is set. But, as you're finding, there's more to the picture than just the indoor temperature.

An important piece of the comfort puzzle is radiant heat, which transfers heat from a warm surface to a colder one. A person sitting in a room that's 70 degrees can still feel chilly if there's a cold surface nearby, like a single-pane window, a hardwood floor or an exterior wall. Covering these cold surfaces can help. Try using area rugs, wall quilts or tapestries, bookcases and heavy curtains to help prevent heat loss and make your home feel more comfortable. Keep in mind, radiant heat can really work in your favor. A dark-colored tile floor that receives several hours of direct sun can retain heat during the day and radiate it into the room during the evening.

Another possible cause of discomfort during the winter is air movement. We recognize this when weather forecasts report chill factor, which is a calculation of air temperature and wind speed.

Moving air makes us feel colder, which is why we use fans in the summer. But during the winter, cold, outdoor air can infiltrate our homes.

On average, a typical home loses about half its air every hour and that amount can increase when outdoor temperatures are extremely cold and the wind is blowing. In this case, the best way to keep your home toasty is to minimize air leaks. You can easily locate air leaks in your home with a blower door test, which is typically conducted by an energy auditor. These are some of the most common spots air leaks occur:

- Penetrations and cracks around windows and doors
- Exterior cracks in brickwork and siding
- Plumbing and wiring penetrations from the exterior to the interior of the home
- Mail slots or pet doors

A variety of products like caulk, weather stripping, outlet cover gaskets and dryer vent covers can be used to seal these leaks.

A fireplace can also be a major source of air leakage. If you don't use the fireplace, you can seal the opening or install an inflatable chimney balloon. Before using the fireplace, consider this: unless you have a high-efficiency insert, your fireplace will suck heated air from the room out through the chimney. Always close the fireplace flue when it's not in use.

Your pursuit of comfort should also include a careful look at your home's heating system. Is it distributing heat evenly and efficiently? Forced-air systems distribute air through supply ducts and registers. Small rooms may only have one register, but large rooms could have several. You may find some supply registers are blowing copious amounts of warm air and others little at all.

Ideally, every room should have return air registers. If you see possible shortcomings with your forced-air system, enlist the help of a certified contractor that really knows how to improve ductwork.

Ensure your furnace is running at peak efficiency by scheduling an annual inspection. Check your filter monthly and replace or clean it as necessary. If you heat your home with radiators, bleed them at the beginning of the season so they flow more efficiently.

Beyond that, you can always warm yourself by wearing heavier clothing, doing some light exercise throughout the day and snuggling with a pet or under a blanket.

By taking some of these small steps, I hope you will enjoy a more comfortable winter in your new (older) home!

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).



## Winner, Winner, Grill a Dinner!

Two lucky people won Meco® Americana Grills after registering at the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booths at Dakotafest and the South Dakota State Fair.

Douglas Electric Member Brady Moke of Armour was the winner at Dakotafest held Aug. 21-23 at Mitchell.

Kay Fawcett of Miller was the winner at the South Dakota State Fair held Aug. 30-Sept. 3.

Between the two shows, more than 2,000 people signed up to win.



**October is  
Cooperative  
Month**

## High School Big Idea Competition Launches Statewide

South Dakota high school students are invited to compete in the 11th annual BIG Idea Competition business idea competition where winners will receive more than \$5,500 in cash awards and scholarships.

Students may work individually or as a team and will be able to submit their business idea applications online from Sept. 1 until Oct. 31. The online application, as well as various resources and examples, can be accessed at the BIG Idea website: [www.BIGIdeaSD.com](http://www.BIGIdeaSD.com). For the optional marketing design competition, students will create an ad to support their business idea. A Wellness Category, sponsored by Sanford Health, offers an additional \$500 cash prize to the best business idea in this category. New this year is a Food Animal Agriculture Category sponsored by Midwest Ag Supply, which offers an additional \$500 cash prize for the best business idea in this category.



Coordinator Kelly Weaver of the Small Business Development Center said, “Understanding the basics of business is important to students, regardless of their career path. The BIG Idea Competition is a great way for students to learn about those business basics. For those students interested in pursuing a business, we can connect them with resources and mentors to help further their entrepreneurial growth and business success. We are also excited to be offering even more prizes this year.”

The final competition and awards event will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Northern State University in Aberdeen. Students will participate in various activities surrounding entrepreneurship. Prior to the awards presentation, all finalists will give an elevator pitch of their business idea.

## Build Dakota Scholarship Recipients Announced

The Build Dakota Scholarship Board has selected 356 students as recipients of the Build Dakota Scholarship for the 2018-19 school year.

The scholarships cover tuition and fees, books, equipment and other related program expenses for eligible programs within eight high-need industry areas at South Dakota’s four technical institutes. Recipients were selected from a total of 1,150 applications.

“The Build Dakota Scholarship allows students to step into high-need, well-paying career fields free of debt,” said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. “It is encouraging to see the growing number of industry partnerships, through which businesses sponsor students and commit to pay part of their program expenses. These partnerships help Build Dakota dollars stretch even further and of this year’s scholarship recipients, 216 students have an industry partner.”

The Build Dakota Scholarship program was announced in late 2014. The scholarship is funded by a \$25 million donation from T. Denny Sanford and \$25 million in future funds committed by Gov. Daugaard.



Build Dakota aims to support students entering high-need workforce programs at South Dakota’s technical institutes to fill the state’s technical career fields with skilled professionals.

In-state and out-of-state students of all ages are eligible to apply. Scholarship applicants must be accepted into their approved program of interest. Recipients of the scholarship must enroll full-time, complete their educational program on schedule and commit to stay in South Dakota to work in their field of study for three years following graduation.

Applications for the 2019-20 school year open in January 2019. Find more information, visit [builddakotascholarships.com](http://builddakotascholarships.com).



Line workers account for a portion of energy-related careers.

# ENERGIZED JOBS

## Careers in Energy Fields Hold Potential

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

America's energy sector looks to put a spotlight on careers within the field during Careers in Energy Week Oct. 15-19.

According to information from the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD), key jobs in the energy workforce – line workers, technicians, plant/field operators and engineers – represent 44 percent of the energy workforce. And, demand for these jobs has remained steady.

Industry leaders work to ensure there is a balance in the supply of qualified workers with specific demands. The goal is to have the right number of workers with the right skills at the right time and in the right place.

A 2015 CEWD report noted that while the workforce is getting younger in these key jobs, gaps still exist for engineers and technicians and, in some areas, especially small, more rural areas, utilities, in particular can struggle with attracting



Jobs in the energy sector hold potential for many seeking careers.

Photo by iStock/Getty Images/Theerapong28

talent and replacing expertise lost by retiring workers.

According to U.S. Department of Labor statistics, more than 116,000 people work as electrical power line installers and repairers. In South Dakota 850 people have such jobs, representing about 2.04 jobs per 100,000 jobs in the state, ranking it among the highest location quotients in the nation. (The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.)

Another visible energy job in the area deals with wind energy. According to United States Department of Labor statistics, there are 4,390 wind turbine service technicians nationwide, with 510 calling the Dakotas and Minnesota home.

The *U.S. Energy and Employment Report* released in May 2018 by the National Association of State Energy Officials and the Energy Futures Initiative noted that

the traditional energy and energy efficiency sectors employed approximately 6.5 million Americans out of a total workforce of approximately 145 million. The report noted this was a 2 percent increase from the previous year, adding 133,000 net new jobs.

The report noted that within the traditional energy sector, electric power genera-

**Electric power generation and fuels directly employed more than 1.9 million workers in 2017.**

tion and fuels directly employed more than 1.9 million workers in 2017, an increase of 15,000 jobs from 2016. In 2017, 55 percent – or 1.1 million – of these employees worked in traditional coal, oil and gas electric power generation and fuels, while almost 800,000 workers were employed in other generation technologies including renewables, nuclear and natural gas.

Firms covered by the survey anticipate about a 6 percent growth in jobs in 2018.

But while these sectors are anticipating growth, more than 70 percent of employers reported difficulty in hiring qualified workers in the past 12 months.

Two South Dakota technical schools – Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, S.D., and Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., offer energy-sector career training and have received national recognition for the educational programs and Minnesota's technical schools have strong energy-related programs.



OCTOBER 15-19, 2018

Among energy sector workers are the nation's 4,300 wind service technicians, 510 of which are in the Dakotas and Minnesota.



Photo by iStock/Getty Images/ aydinmutlu



**Traverse Electric Mission Statement:**

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

**Member Comments**

Thank you so much for your donation and great support. We can't do what we do without your help and support.  
Graceville Area Healthcare Foundation, Graceville, MN

Thank you very much for the generous scholarship. This scholarship will greatly help me to continue my education at North Dakota State College of Science where I will be pursuing a degree in Agriculture with emphasis in farm management, precision agriculture, and crop production, sales, and technology. Thank you again.  
Ben Findlay, Herman, MN

Thank you for your generous donation to the Beardsley Town and Country Gals calendar raffle. Your support is appreciated.  
Beardsley Town and Country Gals, Beardsley, MN

We would like to thank you and your organization for your advertisement that helped create the WHN Football T-Shirts.  
Warrior Football Program, Wheaton, MN



**July Board Meeting Highlights**

The July board meeting was held on Tuesday, July 31, 2018, at 8 a.m. All board members were present.

Staff members present were General Manger Joel Janorschke, Dale Schwagel, Jerrel Olson and Karen Lupkes.

- The minutes of the June board meeting were approved.
- The June check register was approved.
- The East River July video report was viewed.
- Pat Homan reported on East River board and Basin Electric business.
- Janorschke and Olson accompanied Minnesota Representative Jeff Backer and candidate for Minnesota Governor Jeff Johnson on a tour of the Traverse Electric facilities and equipment and the Wheaton-Dumont Elevator facilities in Dumont and Graceville.
- Armstrong reported on the MREA District meeting he attended.
- Schwagel give the Operations Report. Items discussed included:
  - ▶ June outages were reviewed
  - ▶ Completed projects were reviewed
  - ▶ Safety program update
  - ▶ We have received final approval for the URD conversion project west of Sisseton.
  - ▶ Reviewed upcoming projects including the new East River transmission substation in Roberts County and the Wheaton Dumont Elevator fertilizer facility near New Effington.
  - ▶ Pole inspections are complete – 2,500 poles were tested with a 10 percent to 11 percent reject rate.
  - ▶ List of contractors was reviewed.
  - ▶ We will begin URD inspections next year.
  - ▶ We will focus on tree trimming next year.
- Jim Pederson from STAR Energy presented on their Generator Program.
- Kristi Robinson from STAR Energy reviewed the results of the Cost of Service Study.
- Approved the purchase of a new AMI meter system from Landis & Gyr to begin in 2019.
- Janorschke presented the Manager's Report, which included:
  - ▶ Discussion on topics discussed at the East River manager's meeting.
  - ▶ Negotiations update. Board approved union contract.
  - ▶ Performance review.
- Reviewed and approved the June Financial Report.
- Selected voting delegates for upcoming meetings for East River and Basin Electric.
- List of upcoming meetings and attendees was reviewed.

# Minnesota Cold Weather Rule Explained

During the cold weather months, from Oct. 15 to April 15, both the cooperative and the electric consumer have rights and responsibilities as set by law. South Dakota does not have a cold weather rule. This applies to Minnesota accounts only.

One of the most basic responsibilities of the consumer (cooperative member) is to give us a call to arrange a payment schedule if he/she is unable to pay their monthly electric bill. Do not be under the misconception that the cooperative cannot disconnect for nonpayment during the winter! The fact is that if a consumer does not fulfill his/her responsibilities as outlined in the Cold Weather Law, the electricity can be disconnected if the cooperative follows the proper notification procedure.

The consumer has the right to enter into a payment schedule. However, it is up to the consumer to call the cooperative to arrange the schedule. Once the payment schedule has been determined, it must be kept!

The consumer has the right to fill out the Inability to Pay Form with the co-op. Along with the completed Inability to Pay Form, income documentation must be provided to the cooperative. If the total household income is less than 50 percent of the state median income, the member is eligible for protection from winter shutoff. However, the consumer must provide the household income documentation to the cooperative in order to determine if the account is eligible for cold weather protection.

If the consumer is eligible for wintertime protection because the household income meets the criteria set forth in the Cold Weather Law, he/she would also be eligible to receive energy assistance.

Traverse Electric Cooperative would like to remind customers about Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule. Traverse Electric will not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer who meets certain criteria between Oct. 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects their primary heat source. The criteria is as follows:

1. The customer declares an inability to pay on forms provided by Traverse Electric.
2. The household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income.

3. Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or Traverse Electric, unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility.
4. A customer whose account is current for the billing period immediately prior to Oct. 15 or who, at any time, enters into a payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and is reasonably current with payments under the schedule.



Before disconnecting service to residential customers between Oct. 15 and April 15, a utility must provide the following information:

- A notice of proposed disconnection.
- A statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities.
- A list of local energy assistance providers.
- Forms on which to declare an inability to pay.

If you are having financial difficulties and cannot pay your electric bill and if you do not meet state guidelines for cold weather protection, contact our office immediately to set up a mutually acceptable payment plan. Remember your bill is your responsibility. Arrangements for payments need to be made before the crew is sent out to disconnect.

A residential customer may be involuntarily disconnected for failure to comply with or for inability to meet any one of the four conditions mentioned directly above.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND WEATHERIZATION CONTACTS

**West Central MN Communities Action**  
Elbow Lake, MN • [www.wcmca.org](http://www.wcmca.org)  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

**Prairie Five, CAC, Inc.**  
Montevideo, MN • [www.prairiefive.com](http://www.prairiefive.com)  
320-839-2111, 320-269-6578 or 800-292-5437

**South Dakota LIEAP**  
Pierre, SD • <http://dss.sd.gov>  
605-773-6480 or 800-233-8503

# Celebrating Cooperatives

Co-ops  
Play  
Important  
Role in  
Economy

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sirea.coop

**Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services.**

## CO-OP CARLA'S AMAZING DAY

### HOW COOPERATIVE IS YOUR DAY?

Cooperative Carla knows that joining and supporting cooperatives helps to make her community stronger and build a better world. She also knows that the owners of cooperatives are the ones closest to the business and she's proud to benefit from membership in cooperatives and happy to support cooperatives around her.

Carla's typical day is pretty amazing.



COOPERATIVES FOR A  
**BETTER  
WORLD**



From the moment one wakes up to the minute one falls asleep – and throughout the night – cooperatives play a role in the daily lives of most South Dakotans and many Minnesotans.

Power from electric cooperatives charges phones, illuminates lights, heats homes and provides the electricity integral to many farms and businesses in the area. Telecommuni-

cation cooperatives across the region connect families and businesses with internet, phone and cable services, keeping them informed and connected to the world around them.

Gasoline, ethanol and propane are often bought from regional cooperatives that are among the largest cooperatives in the nation.

Grains and other products are bought and sold through farmer cooperatives big and small.

Hundreds of financial transactions occur daily at the areas credit unions.

In fact, there are more than 40,000 cooperative businesses in the United States with 350 million members (many people belong to more than one co-op). These cooperatives generate \$514 billion in revenue and more than \$25 billion in wages, according to a study conducted by the Univer-



Carla is also planning on making some updates to her living room. She stops by her local hardware store for some paint samples and takes a look at her options at the local flooring and lighting stores - all cooperatives!

Did you know, purchasing cooperatives like **Ace Hardware, Carpet One Floor & Home and Lighting One** help independent, local businesses compete with big box stores?

sity of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, with support from USDA Rural Development (<http://reic.uwcc.wisc.edu/default.htm>).

- Cooperatives represent a strong business model and greatly contribute to both the national and local economies.
- Studies show that consumers want to do business with companies that share their values, making today's environment ideal for cooperatives and their commitment to the communities in which their members live and work.
- Co-ops don't have to answer to outside shareholders; they care about meeting their members' needs.
- Co-ops represent democracy in action, with control exercised by a board of directors elected from the ranks of members; the board hires and directs management and is ultimately responsible to the members;
- Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services. Cooperatives often take part in community improvement programs, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from the cooperative experience.

## Co-op Month Fun Facts

- Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.
- Co-op Month has been a nationally recognized celebration since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.
- The first national theme in 1964 was "Cooperatives: USDA Helps Build a Better America."
- The U.S. Government sponsored Co-op Month from 1964-70.
- Since 1971, cooperatives, statewide associations and the National Cooperative Business Association have fueled their own events and promotions.



## RISE & SHINE

As Carla turns off the alarm clock and turns on the lights she thinks about her membership in her local electric co-op.



Carla is one of  
**42 Million Americans**  
whose homes are powered by local **Electric Co-ops!**

Carla always starts off the day with coffee and breakfast from the local food co-op where she always finds fresh, healthy options for her family. Food co-ops spend more revenues locally - by buying more products locally and contributing more to the local economy than conventional grocery stores.



For every **\$1,000** spent at a **food co-op**,  
**\$1,604**  
goes back into the local economy.

Food co-ops buy more organic produce and recycle more plastic than conventional grocers too!

Over **2 million farmers** own the companies that cooperatively market their dairy products. **Organic Valley, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Land O' Lakes** sound familiar? They're all Co-ops!



Even the milk in her cereal is from a farmer-owned dairy cooperative.



## OFF TO WORK

Carla works at a worker-owned cooperative that produces paper products. She takes pride in her work knowing that she is able to weigh in on big decisions and owns a share of the business.



Carla is one of  
**100 Million People**  
who work for **Co-ops** around the world!

# Four Reasons Co-op Careers Are Unique

Paul Wesslund

NRECA

**This is an exciting time to be a part of the energy industry.**

The search for a purposeful career can begin and end at your local electric cooperative.

Those aren't just words or wishes. Working toward a greater purpose is at the heart of the co-op business model.

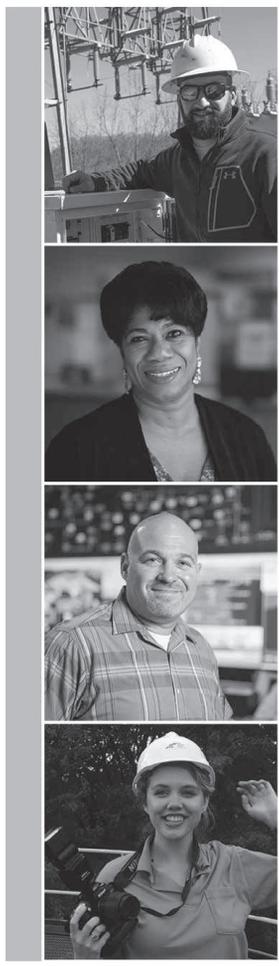
Electric co-ops are community-focused organizations that deliver safe, reliable and affordable energy to the consumer-members they serve. This is an exciting time to be a part of the energy industry. Technology is continuously advancing and consumers want more say in the way they manage their energy use. That means electric co-ops need a variety of skillsets to develop new technologies and infrastructure, keep the electric grid secure and power the lives and economy of our local communities.

Here are four reasons why electric cooperative careers offer a unique opportunity to make a difference:

## 1. Member-Led

Because consumer-members lead and own the organization, co-op employees can take comfort knowing that the loyalty of their employer is with those served by the cooperative.

"If you work for an investor-owned business, you might be helping people in your community, but more likely you're helping stockholders who could live anywhere in the world," says Adam Schwartz, founder of the consulting firm,



## Why choose a career with an electric co-op?

- **LOCAL**, community-focused organization
- **DYNAMIC** and exciting industry
- **COMPETITIVE WAGES** and excellent benefits
- **VARIETY** of job opportunities



Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperatives

The Cooperative Way. "Co-ops, with the services they provide, can have a great impact on the quality of life in the local community."

## 2. Locally Owned

The best thing about an electric utility owned by its consumer-members is that all it will ever care about is its local community. And that makes a difference to an employee, says Michelle Rinn, senior vice president of human resources at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"People want to feel like they're doing

work that matters, like they're contributing to the world at large," she says. "For co-ops, that comes from a connection to the community and the fact that the folks you're taking care of really are your neighbors, the people you go to church with or you see at the grocery store every day."

Rinn says that when it comes to a job that provides electricity, "That's work that matters. Especially when there's a storm and the lights go out."

Both Rinn and Schwartz agree that electric co-ops also achieve a larger employment goal by providing jobs in smaller commu-

nities where they're typically located. As long as people will need electricity, electric co-ops will help the local economy with a strong, stable business.

### 3. Variety of Jobs

The more than 900 electric co-ops in 47 states require a lot of different skillsets to keep the lights on. That means potential employment seekers could find work in construction, electrical equipment operation, engineering, customer service, communications and public relations, employee benefits coordination, software analysis and vehicle maintenance, to name a few.

Schwartz says another high-tech co-op career is emerging as local economic development efforts begin to ask electric co-ops for help in providing high-speed broadband service for their communities.

Rinn sees different advantages for employees depending on the size of their co-op. In larger cooperatives, a variety of professions are available. At smaller cooperatives, employees have the opportunity to flex multiple professional muscles in a single role.

"At a really small co-op, people have to wear multiple hats," she says. "You don't come in and you're just the accountant, or you're just the receptionist, or you're just the executive assistant. There's the opportunity to work on a lot of different things and build a broad range of skills."

### 4. Guided by Co-op Principles

The first modern co-op was formed in 1844 and developed a set of principles that guides co-ops today. Those include voluntary, open membership; democratic control by the membership; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education and training; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

America's electric cooperatives are looking for individuals to lead the charge in meeting our nation's energy needs. Together, we can create a brighter future for all.

To learn more about electric co-op career opportunities, visit:

- **South Dakota:** <https://www.sdrea.coop/content/employment>
- **Minnesota:** <https://www.mrea.coop/networking/>
- **Nationally:** <https://www.touchstoneenergy.com/co-op-business-resources/careers/find-co-op-jobs/>

## Spark Your New Career

With more than 63,000 employees nationwide, the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives network offers numerous career opportunities. Our member cooperatives are seeking the best workers to supplement their teams and better serve their own members. Some of the best, brightest, most creative and dedicated people have chosen to serve their communities and develop their careers with us.

### Work Environment

Recognized as a leader in the field of innovation and customer satisfaction, the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives network also offers its employees competitive salaries, excellent benefit packages and the satisfaction of knowing the work performed directly benefits their communities. Our co-ops are dedicated to helping further their employees' careers, offering a full range of opportunities for distance learning, accreditation or professional development programs.

### Nationwide Employment

The electric cooperative network stretches across 47 states, from the smallest rural communities to large, bustling cities. Employees can trust that the same healthy, creative work environment and commitment to service is found across all areas, including benefit packages and career opportunities that transfer from co-op to co-op.

### Co-op Job Benefits

Electric cooperatives developed their own co-op-tailored benefits more than 60 years ago through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). These benefits, which most co-ops subscribe to, are the standard for all electric co-op benefits, no matter the size of the co-op and are transferable between co-ops that participate in their plans.

### Committed to Job Training and Education

Cooperatives are committed to giving our employees opportunities to learn, grow and advance in their careers. Whether you're looking to increase your skillset, advance in your job or change jobs, you can take advantage of a full range of distance learning and professional accreditation and certification programs, as well as professional development programs. Most electric co-ops even offer tuition reimbursement to obtain a certification or degree.

### Diversity Powers Every Co-op

Working in cooperation to create a better community is a key principle of America's electric cooperatives. That includes the belief in treating all people with respect and dignity and commitment to the goals of equal opportunity. Electric co-ops strive to create a work environment that fosters and supports fairness, equity and respect for social and cultural diversity, free from unlawful discrimination and harassment.

At Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, we recognize our talented and diverse workforce as a key competitive advantage. Our business success is a reflection of the quality and skill of our people. More than that, we value our diversity because it contributes to the richness and strength of our entire network. By including the ideas, opinions, perspectives and talents of all who comprise our workforce, we enrich our entire co-op network and the member-owners we serve.

We're committed to employing the best people to do the best job possible.

## September 20-23

South Dakota Film Festival, Aberdeen, SD, 605-725-2697

## September 20-23

South Dakota Festival of Books, Brookings, SD, 605-688-6113

## September 21-23

South Dakota Quilt Guild, Crossroads Event Center, Huron, SD, 605-352-9953

## September 21-23

Annual Sturgis Off Road Rally, Ballpark Road, Sturgis, SD, 605-720-0800

## September 22

Harvest Fest, Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

## September 22, October 6

Lawn Mower Races, Pukwana, SD, 605-680-1718

## September 25-29

Black Hills Plein Air Paint-Out, Hill City, SD, 605-645-7196

## September 27-29

Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival, Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

## September 28-29

PREMIER Rodeo, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

## September 28-30

SiouxperCon, Sioux Falls, SD, admin@siouxpercon.com

## September 29

Wheelin' to Wall, Main Street, Wall, SD, 605-685-3882

## September 29

Living History Fall Festival, Groton, SD, 605-715-7117

## September 29-30

Northern Plains Indian Art Market, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-856-8193

Your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative presents the first

# LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

NOVEMBER 15, 2018  
SDSU CAMPUS, BROOKINGS, S.D.  
[yourcoopower.com/LivestockSummit](http://yourcoopower.com/LivestockSummit)



## September 30

Fall Volksmarch, Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

## October 5-7

Black Hills Powwow, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

## October 6

Agritourism Tours, Free, Brandon, SD; 605-681-6793 or SDSPAinfo@gmail.com

## October 6

Pumpkin Train, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## October 11-12

South Dakota Women in Ag 2018 Conference, The Lodge, Deadwood, SD, 605-390-4241, amy.pravecek@zoetis.com, southdakotawomeninag.com

## October 11-13

Wild West Songwriters Festival, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

## October 11-14

Great Scarecrow Festival, Huron, SD, 605-352-9781

## October 12

Pumpkin Fest and Parade of Lights, Webster, SD, 605-345-4668

## October 20-21

South Dakota State and National Cornhusking Contest, State is on the 20th and National on the 21st, 9 a.m., Flandreau, SD

## October 20-January 6

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

## October 26-28

Autumn Festival, An Arts and Crafts Affair, Sioux Falls, SD, 402-331-2889

## November 1-3

South Dakota Local Foods Conference, Brookings, SD, Contact 605-681-6793 or SDSPAinfo@gmail.com

## November 8-10

Ringneck Festival and Bird Dog Challenge, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

## November 9

Hairball, Deadwood Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD, 605-559-1188

## November 10

Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters 21st Annual Holiday Extravaganza, Sisseton, SD, 605-698-7425

## November 16-17

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show, Masonic Temple, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

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.