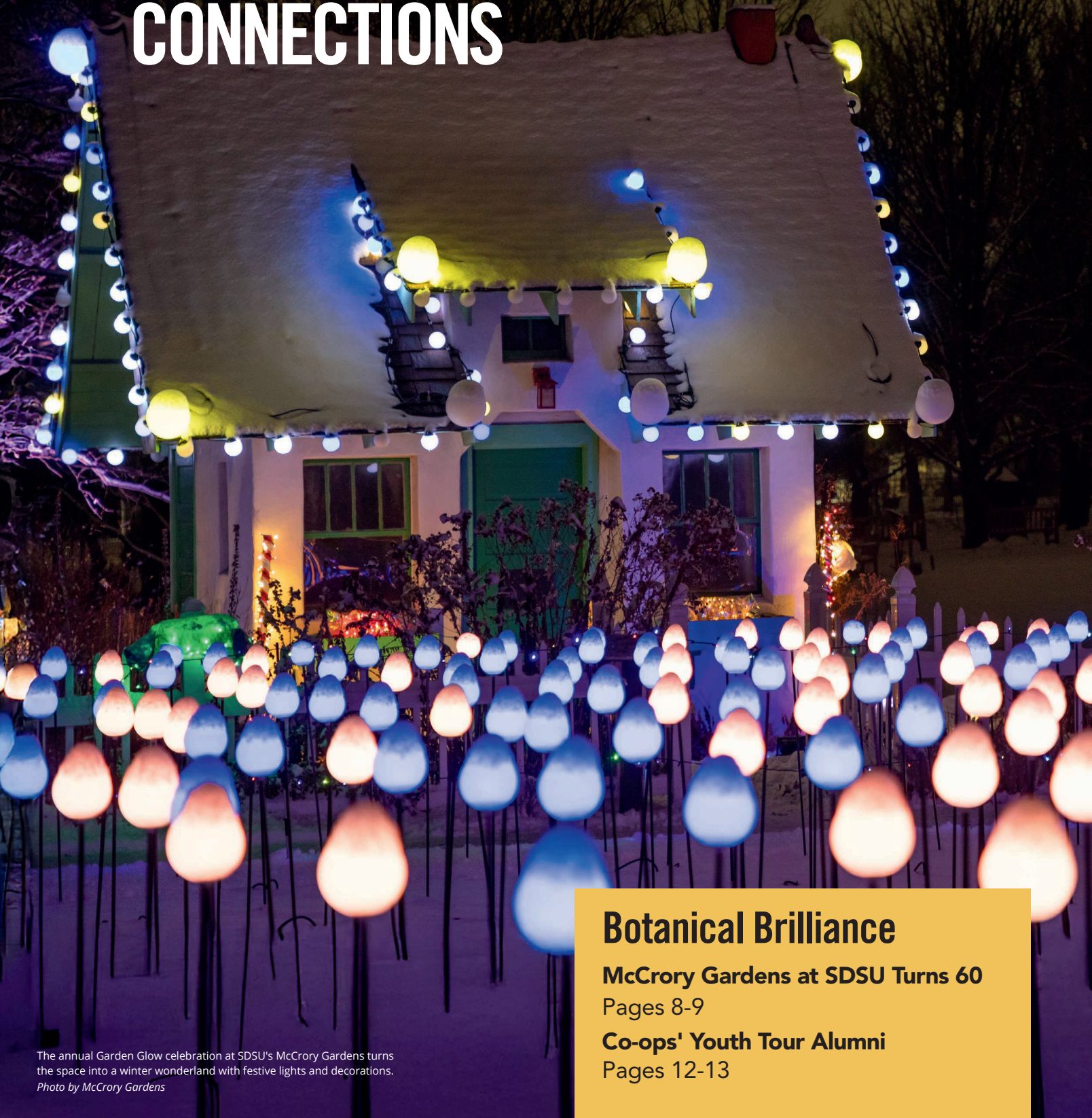


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Botanical Brilliance

McCrary Gardens at SDSU Turns 60

Pages 8-9

Co-ops' Youth Tour Alumni

Pages 12-13

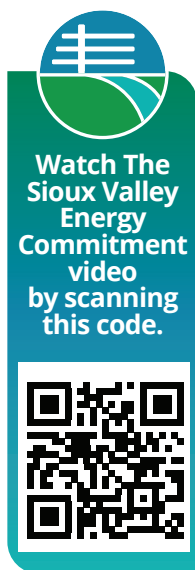
The annual Garden Glow celebration at SDSU's McCrary Gardens turns the space into a winter wonderland with festive lights and decorations.
Photo by McCrary Gardens

Electric Rate Design



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@
siouxvalleyenergy.
com



Sioux Valley Energy's membership has grown to over 30,000 meters and we expect that growth to continue for years to come. In fact, we are forecasting that our membership and corresponding electric demand will nearly double over the next 25 years. To be clear—this is what we would consider traditional growth (residential, farm, commercial, etc.). Our forecast does NOT include any potential super large electric users such as data centers or AI (artificial intelligence) facilities that may be constructed.

Power Supplier Investment to Serve Growth

Sioux Valley Energy is not alone in this growth. The Cooperative's wholesale bulk power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is seeing that same high demand for electricity throughout its entire nine-state region. Basin provides wholesale power to approximately three million end-of-the-line members, spanning 500,000 square miles from the Canadian to the Mexican borders.

To keep up with this demand and continue to provide reliable wholesale power to cooperatives like Sioux Valley Energy, Basin Electric will invest between \$11 and \$12 billion in electric generation and transmission projects over the next 10 years. To support this investment, Sioux Valley Energy will pay 11% more for wholesale power and transmission in 2026. We are working at the local level to get that number down to approximately 9% as an overall average for our members. Over 60% of your electric bill goes towards paying for wholesale power and the transmission of that energy. It's the number one factor that has an impact on your electric rates. In other words,

when wholesale power and transmission costs go up, those costs are passed on to you and are reflected in your electric bill through the rates you pay.

Rate Design

There are countless ways to design electric rates and none of them are perfect. However, Sioux Valley Energy's philosophy incorporates several objectives in its rate design. Top objectives include making sure rates recover costs and are financially adequate; ensuring that those rates are fair and equitable; and establishing rates that reflect cost causation meaning costs are paid by the members who are responsible for incurring them.

Because the 2026 rate adjustment is primarily driven by higher wholesale power and transmission costs, the increase will be applied as a direct pass through to the membership. This means for residential, rural residential, and general service rate classes, the increase will only affect the energy component of your electric bill (kilowatt hour or kWh charge). Check out our Electricity 101 article found on Pages 10 and 11 to learn more about the various rate components and explore in more detail how electric rates are designed.

Online Rate Webinar: Tuesday, December 16

We are planning to host an online rate webinar on the evening of Tuesday, December 16. You can find more information and links to the online rate webinar at www.sioxvalleyenergy.com. If you can't take part in the online event, we will also be discussing the rate adjustment at our upcoming District Meetings. The schedule for those can be found on Page 14.

HOLIDAY

OFFICE CLOSINGS

Sioux Valley Energy's offices will be closed on the following dates for the holidays:

THANKSGIVING – Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28

CHRISTMAS – Wednesday, December 24 and Thursday, December 25

NEW YEARS – Thursday, January 1

Please report outages to our 24-hour dispatch center at 800-234-1960 or through the Smart Hub® app.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

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Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017. Families subscribe to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* is to provide reliable, helpful information to Sioux Valley Energy members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: Sioux Valley Energy members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Colman, SD 57017 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017; telephone 605-534-3535; toll free 800-234-1960.

How to contact us: Phone: 1-800-234-1960
e-mail: sve@siouxvalleyenergy.com
Website: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found on-line at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

**Sioux Valley Energy is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.**



Tree of Giving Hope



Needed Items:

Scan this code to find a list of needed items:



This year's Donation Drive
benefits area food pantries.
Food donations should have their original labels, damage-free packaging and be within their expiration date.

Drop donations off at any
Sioux Valley Energy office
between now and Dec. 31,
and receive a small gift.

Area Food Pantries to Benefit from Tree of Giving Hope Donation Drive

Sioux Valley Energy members can help be a light for others this holiday season through its annual Tree of Giving Hope drive. This year's donations drive will benefit food pantries in the Cooperative's service area.

Food donations should have the original labels, damage-free packaging, and be within the expiration date. The Cooperative will start collecting items Monday, November 10, 2025. Donations will be distributed to local food pantries throughout the drive.

Below is a list of items food pantries in the area told us they are most in need of right now:

•Pancake mix & syrup	•Sugar	•Snack Items
•Cereal	•Canned vegetables +canned tomatoes	•Cake & brownie mixes
•Boxed dinners +Hamburger Helper	•Pasta and pasta sauce	•Instant mashed potatoes
•Canned meats +especially chicken	•Soups +chunky, cream	•Peanut butter
•Spaghetti O's; Ravioli	•Canned fruit	•Laundry detergent
	•Saltine crackers	•Toilet paper
		•Money for meat

SVE members can bring donations to one of SVE's offices during business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Hartford closes at 4 p.m.) through December 31, 2025, and receive a small gift in return.

Sioux Valley Energy Office Drop off Locations:

Brandon Service Center: 108 N Heritage Road, Brandon, SD
Colman Headquarters: 23491 471st Ave. Colman, SD
Hartford Service Center: 1185 Ruud Trl. #4, Hartford, SD
Pipestone Service Center: 1102 7th St SE, Pipestone, MN

DECEMBER 2025 | COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS 3

So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

If you come across downed power lines...

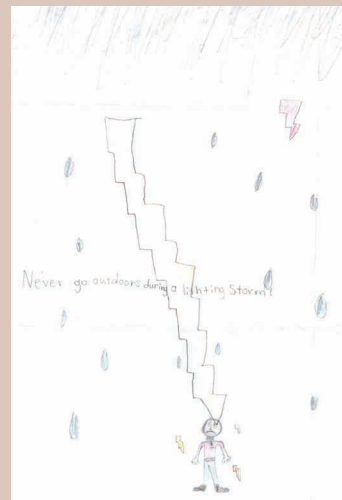
Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines – not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



"Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



**Josiah Krcil,
Age 9**

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, 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.

Specialty SOUPS

CHEESEBURGER VEGETABLE SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef
2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese
(2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk
(3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup
1 can French style green beans
1 can mixed vegetables
1 can diced potatoes

Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

Wendy Thorson
Northern Electric

DUMPLING SOUP

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 tsps. sesame oil
1 cup carrots, shredded
5 green onions, thinly sliced (whites and greens separated)
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 cup white miso paste
6 cups chicken vegetable broth, divided
1 lb. frozen mini dumplings
3 cups baby spinach
3 tsps. soy sauce (plus more to serve)
Hot sauce or chili oil to serve

Method

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

Susan Forma
Union County Electric

PHEASANT CHOWDER

Ingredients:

2 pheasants (thighs and breasts: or only breasts if preferred)
4 celery stalks, sliced
1/2 lb. bacon strips, sliced
1 large yellow onion, diced
4 cups chicken broth
4 medium size Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 cloves garlic, diced
5 tsps. flour
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup parmesan cheese
Salt and Pepper

Method

Put cubed potatoes in a separate pot, cover with the chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they are soft.

Slice the pheasant meat, across grain into 1/4 to 1/2 inch strips.

Cut bacon slices into small pieces and put in a Dutch oven on medium heat. Add diced celery and onion and cook until the bacon and celery are cooked through and onions are transparent. Add the garlic and pheasant. The meat should cook quickly because of the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

Nick Kvernevig
Lake Region Electric

Please send your favorite 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Go Electric! for Your Christmas Wish List



Sheila Gross
Energy Services
Specialist

For more info on SVE programs, contact Sheila Gross at sheila.gross@siouxvalleyenergy.com to learn more.

Connect with us!
Check out our resources to make the most of your energy dollar!

Embrace the benefits of going electric this Christmas season with gifts that are both exciting and practical. From the latest smart home devices to electric-powered tools, appliances, electronics, toys, and much more – the transformation to going electric is becoming popular among consumers. “Go Electric!” There is something for everyone on your list. Here are a few ideas.

Go Electric! for the Tech Enthusiast:

There’s an array of devices that can help you connect from anywhere, save money, and add convenience. Smart thermostats, smart plugs/ power strips, and smart lighting allow you to control these devices from anywhere. They can be great tools to help your tech enthusiast save energy. There are devices that can also take the work out of daily chores such as robotic technologies for vacuums and lawnmowers. Digital picture frames, crafting machines, and 3D printers are fun ways to explore creative technologies.

Go Electric! for the Home Chef: Take a walk through a kitchen appliance aisle and you’ll find a variety of electric appliances designed for convenience and saving time. Many of these cooking devices also use less energy than a traditional stove. Electric grills, air fryers, pizza ovens, instant pots, slow cookers, food processors, kitchen stand mixers, and ice cream makers are a few favorites on my list. And today’s coffee maker options can turn anyone into a professional barista.

Go Electric! for the Handyperson: Pick your brand and take advantage of interchangeable batteries to make home projects a breeze – cordless drills, saws, impact drivers, etc. **Go Electric!** for yard and lawn tools and get rid of the hassles of oil and gas. Electric lawnmowers, snowblowers, leaf blowers, trimmers, chain saws, and power washers are all great gift ideas.

Go Electric! for the Outdoor Enthusiast:

Electric gifts can provide power and convenience on any adventure. E-bikes are a popular trend with lots of features and prices to choose from. Battery operated heated apparel, portable power stations, and rechargeable gadgets are designed to handle the outdoor elements.

Go Electric! for the Kids: For young kids, a battery-powered ride-on car or ATV provides endless hours of fun. A karaoke machine or gaming station are a hit for any age. Kids can have fun with tablet learning games, instant print cameras, and remote-control toys. An electric toothbrush may help get kids excited about that chore.

As 2025 comes to a close, we want to help you celebrate this holiday season with a special Christmas Energy Makeover Contest. We’re going electric for the whole family! Three prizes will be given away – a Milwaukee Compact Combo kit (drill/impact driver), a Ninja Dual Brew Pro Coffee Maker, and a child’s Zero-turn Mower Jr. Battery Powered Ride-on Toy. Register to win by December 19! Three winners will be drawn on December 22.

Sign up to WIN in our Energy Makeover Contest!

Register to win one of three prizes – a Milwaukee Compact Combo Kit (drill driver/ impact driver), a Ninja Dual Brew Pro coffee maker, and a child’s battery operated lawnmower ride-on toy. **Contest entries must be received by December 19.**

Register by **December 19, 2025**. Drawing to be held December 22.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, ZIP: _____
Account #: _____
Phone #: _____
Email: _____

Mail this form to: Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

Application deadline is Jan. 16

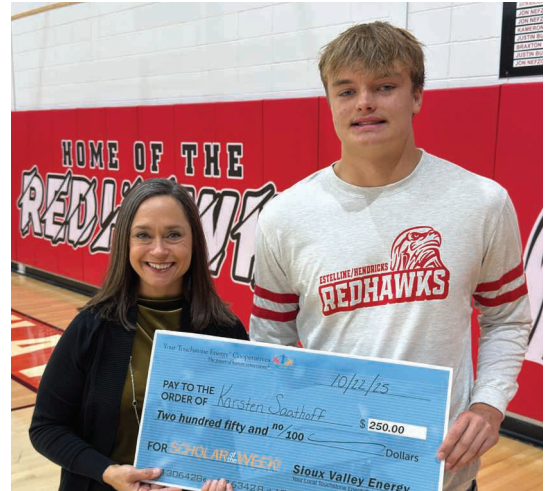
To be eligible you must...

- ➔ Be a graduating high school senior or a first-time attendee.
- ➔ Plan to be a full-time student in an accredited university or technical college.
- ➔ Be a child or dependent of a Sioux Valley Energy member.
- ➔ Have a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA for a four-year college or university scholarship and a minimum of a 2.5 or higher for a technical college scholarship. Submit your ACT/SAT scores (if applicable).
- ➔ Provide a written recommendation from a teacher, administrator, or counselor.
- ➔ One winner per family/per year.

Application details... Applications will be judged on the basis of grades, ACT or SAT test scores (if applicable), work experience, school activities, volunteer/community service, recommendations, and an essay question. Scholarship funds must be used to pay expenses directly related to your continuing education. Application forms are available from your school counselor, from any Sioux Valley Energy Service Center (in Colman, Pipestone, Brandon, and Hartford), on the web at <https://www.sioxvalleyenergy.com/youth-scholarship-programs>, or by calling 1-800-234-1960.



Deadline... The deadline for this year's applications is 4 p.m. on Friday, January 16, 2026. Applications and supporting materials (*postmarked no later than January 16, 2026*) may be sent to: Sioux Valley Energy/Scholarship Contest, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017 or email to scholarships@siouxvalleyenergy.com.



Estelline's Karsten Saathoff Named Scholar of the Week

Karsten Saathoff, a senior at Estelline High School, was named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week for the week of October 27, 2025.

He was nominated by Estelline school counselor Morgan Hanenberger.

During his high school career, Saathoff has been involved in football, basketball, track, trap shoot, National Honor Society, student council, and the Dakota Valley Conference (DVC) Leadership Team.

Saathoff plans to attend Mitchell Technical College in Mitchell, South Dakota, to become a power lineworker.

He is the son of Jason and Amanda Saathoff of Estelline.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now Television, Sioux Valley Energy, and other local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors accomplished high school students. As a Scholar of the Week, Saathoff was featured the week of October 27 on Dakota News Now and will receive a scholarship from Sioux Valley Energy. He is also now eligible for a chance to win a scholarship that will be given away this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.



During the annual Garden Glow event, McCrory Gardens in Brookings is transformed into a winter wonderland.
Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

NATURE GROWS & GLOWS AT MCCRORY GARDENS

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, community-focused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a spring-time syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summer-time TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see — just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summer-time home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

"We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace."



Lisa Marotz – McCrory Gardens Director since 2016 – with intern Kathryn Bowar, who is beginning her third fall working at the garden.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



The 1991 Sioux Quartzite rock garden and 2013 waterfall are a favorite fixture in the garden — and the site of numerous summertime marriage proposals.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



During the Garden Glow event, the East Terrace Lawn and Gazebo becomes The Enchanted Forest. Marotz notes this was the site of the first Garden Glow in 2015 — miniscule compared to today's expansive decorating.

This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.

Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

60TH ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY STORY

*Photos submitted by
McCrory Gardens*

1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.



1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



2025

McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!



Electric Rates: Art or Science?

Designing electric rates is more of an art than a science. Every utility has its own way or philosophy of collecting the revenue needed to cover its expenses. Why is that? It's because each utility is different. No two utilities have the exact same operating costs or distribution system investments. For example, depending on the utility, they may have a different power supplier; are required to meet specific state regulations with associated costs; or may have made more/fewer upgrades to their distribution system.

The one thing every electric utility has in common is the components within the electric rate that need to be paid for which include energy, demand, and electrical facilities.

Demand

Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW) and represents the rate at which electricity is being used. In other words, it's the amount of power required in an instant to satisfy the needs of all your connected appliances, lighting, heating, and anything else in your home requiring electricity at the exact same time.

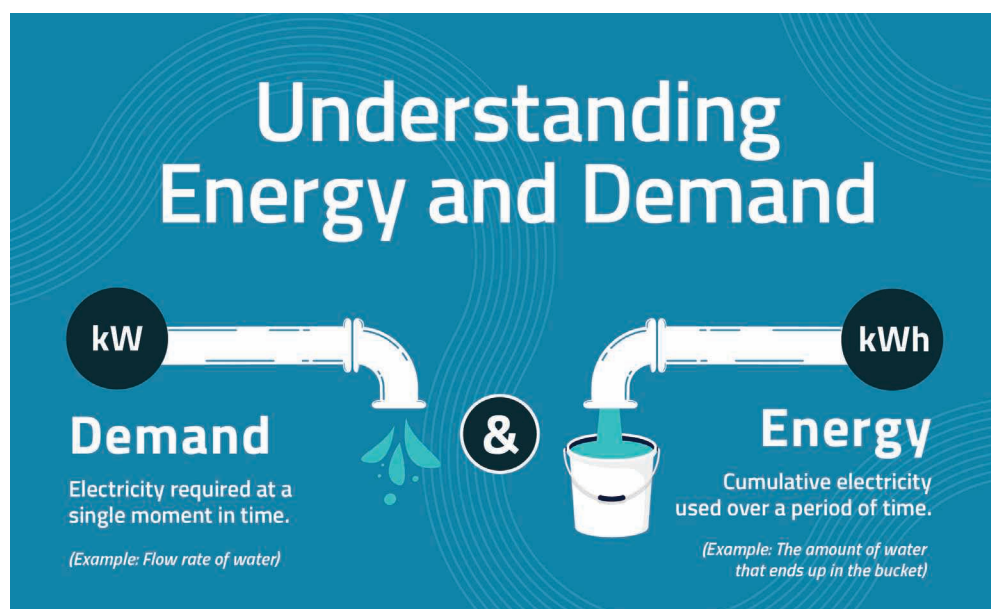
Sioux Valley Energy residential members currently do not pay the demand charge posted on their bill, instead those costs are embedded into the energy charge. This may change in the future to more accurately reflect power

supply charges to the Cooperative. The Cooperative's wholesale power supplier charges Sioux Valley Energy for demand. In fact, half of the Co-op's nearly \$70 million dollar yearly power bill is based on demand during just six hours throughout the entire year! Large power members do pay a demand charge.

Energy

Energy is the total amount of electricity consumed over a certain time-period and is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh). Sioux Valley Energy must pay for all of the energy its members use.

An easy way to think of energy and demand is through a water bucket analogy (see below). In this example, demand represents the speed of the water flow at any single moment in time and energy corresponds to the total amount of water that ends up in the bucket.



Facilities

Electric facilities and the associated maintenance are paid for through the Basic Service Charge on your bill. Every wire, cable, transformer, and switch costs money. This equipment is necessary so you can have the power you need at your home or business. That equipment must be there regardless of how much or how little you use it, so electricity is available 24/7 when you turn on a light or start a load of laundry.

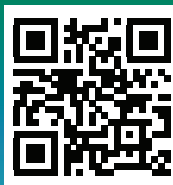
Each rate class has different Basic Service Charges based on the average amount of infrastructure it takes to get electricity to your home or business. For example, the urban residential members pay a lower Basic Service Charge than the rural residential members because there are more members per mile of line in congested areas to help recover the costs of the facilities.

Rate Design

Rate design is a multi-step process at Sioux Valley Energy. The thorough process helps ensure that rates recover actual costs and are financially adequate; are fair and equitable; and are paid for by the 'cost causers' meaning costs are paid by the members who are responsible for incurring them.

Shown in the graphic to the right is the rate design process at Sioux Valley Energy.

As the Cooperative works through the rate design process, please know the Strategic Leadership Team, Board of Directors, and employees are all focused on you, our member. That focus is based on our organizational commitment. Scan the QR code below to learn more about the Sioux Valley Energy Commitment.



Scan the code to watch the Sioux Valley Energy Commitment video.

Sioux Valley Energy's Rate Design Process

1. Proposed Yearly Budget Developed

Proposed yearly budget developed by the Cooperative's Strategic Leadership Team



2. Cost of Service Study Conducted

Cost-of-service study conducted through an independent third-party engineering firm



3. Internal Rate Committee Review

Internal rate committee comprised of SVE employees review and study current and potential new rates



4. Strategic Leadership Evaluation

SVE Strategic Leadership Team evaluates the recommendations of internal rate committee and cost of service study to develop a proposed rate schedule



5. Board of Directors Consideration

Board of Directors considers proposed budget and associated rate schedule based on revenue requirements



6. Rate Schedule Approval

Board of Directors approves the budget and official rate schedule, and the membership is notified of any changes



The 2006 Youth Tour group takes a photo on the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

YOUTH TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdsrea.coop

Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent

its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Fouberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025

he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

“These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids,” Larsen said. “I’m from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota – a lot of people don’t even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody’s home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm.”

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. “You build connections you don’t expect,” he said. “One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife’s, and years later he attended our wedding.”

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. “She was so passionate about the places we visited,” he said. “We weren’t just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant.”

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. “That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen,” he said. “When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I’d get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too.”

Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. “I’m pretty sure my best



Kevin Larsen
2006 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo



Andi Fouberg
1994 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool,” she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an unusual reason.

“The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles,” she said with a laugh. “We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together.”

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune’s communications director.

“Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point,” Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

“I’d see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I’d think, that was me,” she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

“The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment,” she said. “It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people.”

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

“Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don’t know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour,” she said. “Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour.”



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

2026 DISTRICT MEETINGS SET

The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved the 2026 District Meeting schedule during their September meeting. Four elections will take place in Districts 5, 6, 7, and 9.

Members interested in running for the Board must submit a Director Petition, Conflict of Interest Statement, and Qualification Certification 60 days prior to the meeting date. Petitions must be delivered to a Sioux Valley Energy office location or postmarked by the petition deadline. Sioux Valley Energy encourages members to gather extra member signatures and to deliver or mail completed petitions in advance of the petition deadline to ensure time for member verification.

PETITION DEADLINES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- ❑ District 9 – Friday, January 23, 2026
- ❑ District 6 – Friday, January 30, 2026
- ❑ District 5 – Friday, February 20, 2026
- ❑ District 7 – Sunday, March 1, 2026

Petitions can be obtained at www.sioxvalleyenergy.com or by calling 800-234-1960. The Cooperative Bylaws state the qualifications needed to be a director. Interested members are encouraged to contact Brenda Schelhaas, Executive Assistant. All Board seats elected in 2026 will serve three-year terms.

Sioux Valley Energy

2026 District Meeting Schedule

DISTRICT 1	ELKTON, SD Community Center THURSDAY APRIL 23
DISTRICT 2	VOLGA, SD Sioux Valley High School THURSDAY APRIL 16
DISTRICT 3	FLANDREAU, SD William J. Janklow Center THURSDAY APRIL 9
DISTRICT 4	MADISON, SD Dakota Prairie Playhouse TUESDAY APRIL 14
DISTRICT 5 Director Election	COLTON, SD Tri-Valley High School TUESDAY APRIL 21
DISTRICT 6 Director Election	BRANDON, SD Brandon Valley High School TUESDAY MARCH 31
DISTRICT 7 Director Election	HARTFORD, SD West Central High School THURSDAY APRIL 30
DISTRICT 8	LUVERNE, MN Generations Event Center TUESDAY MARCH 3
DISTRICT 9 Director Election	PIPESTONE, MN Pipestone Area School TUESDAY MARCH 24
DISTRICT 10	EDGERTON, MN Edgerton Public School THURSDAY MARCH 26

Area Groups: Earn \$500 Donation for Assisting at Meetings

Sioux Valley Energy is seeking non-profit groups in 10 area communities to serve the meal at upcoming District Meetings. Each group will be asked to provide 10 to 12 volunteers to serve the meals prepared by our event caterer.

Youth-oriented groups must have adults assisting with the serving. Servers will assist prior to the start of the meal and finish their work at the start of the 7 p.m. business meeting.

To sign up your group, or for more information, contact Amy Voelker at 800-234-1960 or amy.voelker@siouxvalley-energy.com by December 15.

Preference is given to groups residing in the district where the meeting is held and also to groups who have not served the previous year. If multiple groups sign up to serve a meeting, a drawing will be held.





**THE COUNTRY
COOKIN'**
cookbook

RECIPES NEEDED

Help us create
another great cookbook
by submitting your
favorite recipes.

Submit recipes to
graphics@eastriver.coop
or contact your local co-op
for more information.

Deadline: December 15



Submit to be entered into a drawing
for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards

CAPITAL CREDIT REFUND

Included on November Bill

At the end of each year, if Sioux Valley Energy has received more revenue than was necessary to cover expenses, the difference is allocated back to members as capital credits based on their share of electricity purchased.

When the Co-op's financial condition permits, the Board of Directors may decide to retire, or pay back, some of the capital credits. This year,

the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved a \$2.12 million general capital credit retirement – refunding a portion of capital credits for the years 2001, 2002, and 2024.

Capital credits are returned to current and former members. For current members, this will be applied as a credit on bills mailed in November.

Account Number: 9999999999 Service Address: 123 COOPERATIVE LANE Map Location: 999-9-999-99

Meter #	Rate Description	Billing Period From	To	Readings Previous	Present	Diff	Meter Mult	Energy (kWh)	Demand (kW)
99999	RURAL RESIDENT SERVICE	10/1/2025	11/1/2025	44001	45149	1,148	1	1,148	7,540

Account Activity

Payment(s) Received - \$179.00

Previous Balance \$179.00

Account Balance Before Current Charges \$0.00

Current Charges

Energy Charge 1,148 kWh @ 0.10550 \$121.11

Demand Charge 7,540 kW @ 0.000 \$0.00

Basic Service \$65.00

Capital Credit Retirement - \$10.92

Sub Total \$175.19

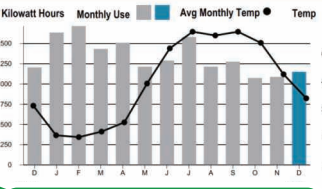
Taxes \$12.80

Operation Roundup \$0.01

Total Current Charges Due \$188.00

Total Amount Due \$188.00

Kilowatt Hours Monthly Use Avg Monthly Temp



Accounts past due 10 days after the due date are subject to a late fee of \$5.00 or 1.5%, whichever is greater. A \$30.00 fee will be assessed for all returned checks. A security deposit may be applied to accounts not in good standing.

This line item will appear on your billing statement if you qualified for a capital credit refund.

This is an example bill for illustrative purposes and not your actual bill.

Co-op Month Celebrated

Members of Sioux Valley Energy and Alliance Communications cooperatives showed up on October 18 at Cherry Rock Farms south of Brandon for the cooperatives' Co-op Month Celebration. More than 225 pumpkin vouchers were given to co-op members and an estimated 650 people attended the three-hour event.



Members attending the Co-op Month Event received hot chocolate and donuts in addition to their free pumpkin voucher. Left: Future co-op members spin the wheel for a prize.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



NOV. 25-DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m. (holidays included)
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178
christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov

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.

NOV. 21-JAN 5
Winter Wonderland at the Falls
5 p.m.
Falls Park
Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 29
Parade of Lights
6 p.m.
Holly Boulevard
Brandon, SD

NOV. 29
How the Grinch Stole Christmas Holiday Parade
6 p.m.
Flandreau, SD
605-864-1200

NOV. 30
Pepperberries Christmas Market
11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
141 N. 3rd St.
Emery, SD

DEC. 1
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 5
Colman Looney Lights
5 p.m.
Colman, SD

DEC. 5
Hometown Christmas
Downtown
Salem, SD

DEC. 5
Christmas Tree Lighting & Standstill Parade
5:30 p.m.
Alcester, SD

DEC. 5
The Winter Roundup Holiday Vendor Fair
4-9 p.m.
307 E. 6th St.
Alcester, SD

DEC. 5-7, 12-14
Mighty Corson Players Humbug
Dec. 5-6, 12-13: 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 7, 14: 2:30 p.m.
Corson, SD
www.mightycorson.com

DEC. 6
KJAM Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Madison, SD
605-256-4514

DEC. 6-7
The Black Market
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Expo Building
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

DEC. 7
Parade of Lights/Christmas Tree Lighting
5:30 p.m.
Downtown
Hartford, SD

DEC. 13-14
Alexandria Winterfest
Downtown
Alexandria, SD

DEC. 14
Lake Campbell Lutheran Cookie Walk
9 a.m.
46610 219th St.
Volga, SD
605-864-9907

DEC. 14
Canova Firemen's Pancake Feed
Legion Hall
Canova, SD

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.