

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Gardening Greats

**Master Gardeners
Cultivating Community
Growth**

Pages 8-9

Bridging History
Pages 12-13

Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

Rates: Basic Service Charge



Tim McCarthy
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We just finished our 2025 District Meetings, which are held in each of the Cooperative's ten districts. During those meetings, we set aside time for member questions. We received inquiries on issues that ranged from power generating resources like nuclear to net metering for home renewable systems. The topics are often varied, but there is one question that is inevitably asked in some form year after year – Why do I pay less/more for my electric service than someone else?

Sioux Valley Energy has several rate classes, but for the sake of this discussion we will focus on some of the most common which include Residential, Rural Residential, and General Service. Residential members live in mostly congested areas in/around cities or towns. Rural Residential members are more spread out and live in rural areas or on farms. General Service accounts are often sheds or other services that do not use a significant amount of electricity. Each of these rate classes pays a different Basic Service Charge for single-phase service.

There are two components of rates for Residential, Rural Residential, and General Service – the Energy Charge and the Basic Service Charge. The Energy Charge is the kWh line item on your bill. It measures and accounts financially for the amount of electricity you use over a period of time. The Basic Service Charge covers the fixed costs associated with providing electricity to your location. Fixed costs include items such as meters, transformers, electric lines, and billing. These costs are independent of your electric usage. In fact, you could use no electricity, and you will still have the Basic Service Charge because there is a cost to the infrastructure that makes electricity available to you 24/7.

So why is the Basic Service Charge different for various rate classes? It's all based on the average of what it costs to get electricity to a location and the return on that investment to recover the initial expense and maintain the account over time. Sioux Valley Energy conducts a 'Cost of Service' study routinely

to ensure that rates generate enough revenue to cover the cost of providing the service and reflect why the costs occurred (what caused the cost).

Let's look at this example – A large shed that has lighting and some outlets for occasional use is considered a General Service account. This account, which uses very little energy throughout the month, still has a significant amount of infrastructure needed to power the lights and occasional plug-in load. The infrastructure requirement to get the service to this structure is every bit as expensive as what it would cost to run service to a home. It can sometimes be more expensive based on location. While the kWh charge is the same as Residential and Rural Residential accounts, the Basic Service Charge for this single-phase General Service account is more. The reason for the higher Basic Service Charge is because there is very little to no revenue recovery from energy use to help pay for that fixed infrastructure cost.

There are several ways to design electric rates. At Sioux Valley Energy, our rates are designed to address costs where they are created, and our Board has worked hard over the years to eliminate cross subsidization of rates, so each member pays as closely to the true cost they create on the system. Within that structure, the largest portion of the fixed cost attributed to any rate class is collected in the Basic Service Charge while the remainder is collected incrementally in the variable energy usage. This methodology helps eliminate vast subsidization across rates classes. We review the cost of service for our rate classes on a regular basis. This helps provide our members with electric rates that are fair and equitable.

As I close this month, I just want to remind you to keep safety on your mind and be aware of your surroundings if you are out in the fields doing spring work – watch for overhead lines and other electrical equipment when moving machinery. Also, keep an eye out for crews working on the side of the road. Slow down, move over, and keep our crews safe as they do their work.

At Sioux
Valley Energy, our
rates are designed to

**address
costs**

where they are
created.

**Want to
know
more?**

Check out
the web page
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My Bill" on
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COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

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SVE CREWS ASSIST WITH NEBRASKA STORM REPAIRS



A crew of eight Sioux Valley Energy employees headed to Burt County Public Power District in Nebraska from March 20 to March 27 to assist with repairs from an ice storm which knocked out power to 95 percent of their system.

More than 100 outside workers assisted with repairs, including workers from



five South Dakota cooperatives. **ABOVE:** SVE employees who headed south were, from left, Tony Remund, lead journey lineworker, Dan Doyle, lead journey lineworker, Eli Bowen, apprentice lineworker, and journey lineworkers Landon Hazelton, Jeremy Rolag, Matt Determan, Josh Entzel, and Jager Rus.

LEFT: Mud and broken poles were common.

Director Elections Held

Between February 25 and April 21, Sioux Valley Energy held 10 district meetings throughout the Co-op's territory.

During the meeting in Districts 2, 4, 6 and 10, elections were held for the director in that district. Gary Fish was re-elected to the District 6 seat in a contested race while only one candidate filed petitions in Districts 2, 4, and 10.

The directors will officially be seated to their three-year terms at the Annual Meeting June 10.



Ann Vostad
District 2
Volga, S.D.



Dave Daniel
District 4
Madison, S.D.



Gary Fish
District 6
Brandon, S.D.



Lucas Roskamp
District 10
Edgerton, Minn.

Power Life Safely

May is Electrical Safety Month

Every May, Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.

Your electric cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May, but year-round.

By following key safety practices, you can reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected. Here are five essential tips for powering up safely at home.

1. **Be vigilant.** Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for any signs of damage or outdated components and replace any frayed electrical wires or cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're relying on extension cords as permanent power solutions, consider contacting a qualified electrician to install additional outlets where you need them.
2. **Use Surge Protectors.** Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances from surges with surge protectors. These handy devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not all power strips include surge protection, so read the product label carefully. Additionally, surge protectors can lose effectiveness over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated.
3. **Practice Safe Power Strip Use.** Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with a "busy" power strip can lead to overheating and create a fire hazard, so be sure to check the power strip's wattage rating before plugging in items.

4. **Water and Electricity Don't Mix.** It may seem obvious, but accidents involving water contact with electrical items happen. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances – never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed in areas where water and electricity are typically in close proximity, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.
5. **Educate Family Members.** One of the best ways to ensure the safety of everyone in your household is to talk about electrical safety. Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances and ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions in case of emergencies.

Practicing electrical safety at home is essential for protecting your family, property and peace of mind. Remember, electrical safety isn't just a one-time effort – it's a year-round responsibility. Taking these steps can help ensure a safer, more secure home for you and your loved ones.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Jeremiah Barlow

Jeremiah cautions readers not to plant trees near power lines. Thank you for your picture, Jeremiah! Jeremiah's parents are Mosiah and Cristine Barlow, members of West River Electric Association.

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.



Delicious CHICKEN

CHICKEN BREAST SUPREME

Ingredients:

4 chicken breasts
(boned and halved)
8 strips bacon
2 pkgs. chipped beef
8 oz. sour cream
1 can cream of chicken soup
6 oz. evaporated milk

Method

Wrap each half of chicken breast in a piece of bacon. Place in a baking dish lined with two layers of chipped beef.

Blend sour cream, soup, and milk. Pour over chicken.

Bake uncovered at 300°F for three hours. Serve over rice.

*Makes 8 servings.

Sharon Houchin
Central Electric Member

CHICKEN ROLLUPS

Ingredients:

8 oz. tube crescent rolls
4 boneless chicken breasts
(cooked shredded and seasoned to taste)
8 oz. cheddar cheese
(finely shredded, divided)
10 1/2 oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 packet chicken gravy mix
1 cup water

Method

In a bowl, mix the shredded chicken and 1/3 of the cheese. Take a scoop of the mixture and roll it into a crescent roll then place in a greased 9" x 13" pan. Bake at 350°F until the crescent rolls look browned on top. Mix the soup, gravy mix, 1/3 of the cheese, and enough water to make the mixture pourable. Pour over the crescent rolls. Sprinkle the remaining 1/3 of the cheese on top and bake again until the cheese melts and starts to brown.

Nicole Einrem
B-Y Electric Member

SMOKY CHICKEN TACOS

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. oil
1 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
1/4 cup Flavor Maker Taco Night Topping Seasoning
1/2 cup water
12 (6-inch) flour or corn tortillas, warmed

Method

Heat oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir just until browned.

Stir in Flavor Maker Seasoning and water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened and chicken is cooked through, stirring occasionally.

Spoon chicken into warm tortillas. Serve with desired toppings, such as shredded lettuce, shredded cheese, sour cream, guac or salsa.

McCormick.com

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.

Sign Up for Time of Use and SAVE!



Sheila Gross
Energy Services
Specialist

For info on beneficial electrification programs, contact Sheila Gross at sheila.gross@siouxvalleyenergy.com to learn more. Check out our incentives and resources here:



I think most of us would agree that it feels like the price of everything has gone up, including utility bills. When it comes to your electric bill, there is a monthly Basic Service charge that you can't change, but did you know that members with Residential and General Service accounts have a choice when it comes to the kilowatt-hour (kWh) rates you pay? Here's your chance to join more than 800 participating members (including me) in taking more control of electric bills by signing up for the Time of Use Rate (TOU). To reduce peak energy demand and save money, Sioux Valley Energy developed an optional TOU rate program to encourage electricity use during off-peak hours – when energy is less expensive to provide. Using less on-peak power means lower costs for the Co-op and in turn, lower rates for members. Electric rates based on time of use offer members the ability to lower their electricity costs without having to reduce the amount of electricity they use. Members can put the power in their hands to save money simply by shifting energy use to off-peak times.

Members on the standard rate pay 11.25 cents/kWh regardless of the time of day energy is consumed. Members on the TOU rate take advantage of paying a very reduced rate of 6.62 cents/kWh 16 hours of every day (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and again from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.). The rate is higher during the on-peak hours of 7 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 9 p.m. at 17.01 cents/kWh. For those with submetered electric heat, that rate is not impacted by being on the TOU program.

What can you do to save money on the TOU rate?

- Shift your daily chores such as laundry and dishwashing to off-peak times.
- Utilize smart home automation. Adjust your thermostat settings to sync up

with the TOU rate. Changing your thermostat even one or two degrees during on-peak times will help you save money. Strategize for cooling in the summer by pre-cooling before an on-peak period begins.

- Install automatic timers to equipment like recirculating pumps, hot tubs, pool pumps, water heaters, battery chargers, and other appliances. Water heaters controlled through SVE's load management program are not consistently controlled during on-peak periods, but will occasionally line up.
- If you own a plug-in electric vehicle, schedule charging to take place during off-peak hours.
- Practice conservation: turn off lights in unoccupied rooms and unplug electronics when not in use. Use a power strip for easy convenience. Cooking appliances such as air fryers, pizza ovens, and slow cookers can use less energy than a traditional stove. Grill outdoors in the summer to avoid extra AC costs from heating up your kitchen.

Is there risk in signing up for the TOU rate?

- No. We offer a three-month risk-free trial to help you get acclimated to the new rate. During those months, you will be billed whichever rate is to your advantage. Members can request to return to the standard rate program at any time.
- Every monthly billing statement will include a note in red lettering under the bar chart for usage and temperature information to indicate if you saved on the time of use rate compared to the standard rate.

Call 1-877-511-8062 to learn more and sign up for the risk-free Time of Use Rate trial!



\$HIFT TO TIME OF USE RATE & \$AVE



CONGRATULATIONS WHO POWERS YOU CONTEST FINALIST



Two area individuals were recognized in the first few weeks of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Who Powers You? Contest in March and early April.

Finalist Susan Gilkerson, a teacher at Rutland, was featured on KELOLAND Living on March 20, 2025, while finalist Allen Ludens of Sioux Falls was featured April 3, 2025, for his work with Call to Freedom.

Susan Gilkerson

Oldham-Ramona-Rutland teacher Susan Gilkerson was nominated by fellow teacher Amy Woolston who noted, “Susan is a source of inspiration in our community. At home, she has a home full of wonderful children, each of whom has the freedom under Susan and her husband, to flourish as their own unique individual with a strong focus upon God, volunteerism, and courtesy.”

“Susan drives the school bus before and after school, on top

of her role as a math educator at Oldham Ramona Rutland School District. Susan also directs the One-Act play and the All-School play with tireless energy and working 70+ hours every week. She drives students home from school, then comes back to school with her own kids who are in the play and in sports, to direct the play until 7:30 p.m. or 8 p.m. at night. She then drives back home and is somehow refreshed for the next morning’s bus duty, teaching, and directing the play. I have witnessed her tutoring math to students before play practice, and also painting play sets after play practice and on weekends.

“She wants the students to have fun and learn to work together, so she is an excellent example of giving your ‘all.’ I am often amazed by her zeal and ‘can-do,’ attitude.”

Allen Ludens

“Allen Ludens ‘powers’ Call to Freedom, ensuring that our community’s most vulnerable individuals have the right to live with freedom, dignity, and respect,” wrote Rachel Schartz, Call to Freedom’s grants management director, who nominated Ludens.

Founded in 2016, Call to Freedom is a Sioux Falls-based nonprofit dedicated to serving those impacted by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.



“Allen is a volunteer whose impact cannot be fully put into words. ‘Going above and beyond’ is Allen’s baseline, and as a volunteer and financial supporter of Call to Freedom, he has single-handedly helped survivors access vital resources, secure stable housing, and rebuild their lives with unwavering dedication and compassion. Allen began volunteering with us in May 2019 and has given hundreds of hours in service of our clients. Housing is a top need for survivors of trafficking and exploitation, as many face homelessness or housing instability upon exit. Allen serves as a member of Call to Freedom’s moving team, through which he helps coordinate and execute moves for survivors once they have identified a safe housing option. He’s helped relocate over 20 survivors, an accomplishment that goes beyond the physical logistics it represents the realization of a dream many survivors once believed was unattainable.”



GARDENING GREATS

How Master Gardeners are Cultivating Community Growth

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdua.coop

After years of tending to her garden, Codington-Clark Electric member Dianne Rider of Hazel can confidently say she is an expert in horticulture. However, her extensive experience of working with the earth isn't the only reason she is considered a soil savant.

In 2016, Rider earned the prodigious title of Master Gardener through the South Dakota State University Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer Program. This program provides in-depth horticultural training – covering topics like plant science, soil management and sustainable gardening practices – so enthusiasts like Rider can share their extensive gardening knowledge with their communities.

Becoming an Extension Master Gardener volunteer is a commitment. Applicants must complete horticulture classes, pass the course test and contribute 40 hours of volunteer service

during the first year of involvement. Despite the challenges, Rider had aspired to this achievement for decades, but it wasn't until she retired from her teaching career that she was able to dedicate herself fully and earn her place as a Master Gardener.

Reflecting the adage, “once a teacher, always a teacher,” Rider continues to educate and influence those around her, even after retirement, through gardening.

“Becoming a Master Gardener has always been on my bucket list since they organized,” Rider said. “I’ve always been a teacher, so finding a way to help others through gardening is probably what’s most rewarding.”

As a Master Gardener, Rider plays a key role in organizing annual gardening events for SDSU Extension, including the Master Gardener Annual Update Conference at Joy Ranch near Watertown. This event, attended by more than 125 Master Gardeners, serves as a thriving forum for gardening clubs to exchange ideas on the latest and greatest

Missouri Valley Master Gardeners remove invasive bellflower and other non-desirable plants at the Dorothy Jenks Memorial Garden in Yankton.
Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

projects they are tackling.

“The event is a lot of fun, because when you get 125 Master Gardeners in one room – let me tell you, the conversations are riveting,” Rider laughed.

Master gardeners also help SDSU Extension achieve its broader goal: to make cutting-edge research easily accessible to the people who can benefit from the findings. Master Gardeners have regular continuing education opportunities with experts from the SDSU Horticulture team, such as Professor John Ball, a SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist and South Dakota Department of Agriculture Forest Health Specialist. Once equipped with this information, volunteers can share the most significant takeaways from research being conducted across the state through the university, providing a bridge between research and practical application.

“Dr. John Ball’s presentation on how to trim a tree after planting it is one of the best things that I’ve learned that I can now share with others,” said Rider. “He says that raising a tree is just like raising a kid: you have to shape your tree when

they are young, otherwise they turn into ugly adults.”

Master Gardener Field Specialist Prairey Walkling emphasizes that the connection between research-based information and enthusiasts is what the Master Gardener Volunteer Program thrives on. And the research goes far beyond just trees. SDSU’s horticulture research also extends into innovative mulching techniques, soil care and even studies on the growth and quality of four popular zinnia varieties.

“SDSU Extension wants to empower individuals to reach their gardening goals through providing science-based information. Each person has different pieces of land, resources and goals for their gardens and landscapes,” she said. “We strive to provide them with trusted, research-based information to help them make decisions.”

Walkling said the impact of these volunteers cannot be understated. According to Walkling, there are more than 400 Master Gardeners across the state and 14 Master Gardener clubs. In 2024, these vital volunteers hosted 153 gardening events, including farmers market booths, gardening workshops and demonstrations, reaching nearly 10,000 South Dakotans. Regardless of the event or what is being discussed, Walkling said Master Gardeners carry an infectious love of digging in the dirt.

“These volunteers help get people excited about gardening,” she said. “There are so many volunteer opportunities – teaching youth, teaching adults, maintaining demonstration gardens, answering questions, organizing events, engaging in horticultural research, writing horticulture articles – the sky is the limit.”



SDSU Extension Master Gardeners host an educational booth at the SD State Fair. From left: Lael Abelmann, Sharelle Meyer and Nancy Kadous.



Coteau Prairie Master Gardener Club (Watertown area) hosted the 2024 state conference at Joy Ranch. | Photos courtesy of SDSU Extension.

Packing Up

Residents of the Madison Peaceful Pines senior living facility each week prepare some of the 180 kids backpacks as volunteers for the Lake County Food Pantry. The backpacks are distributed to all Lake County public schools.

Lake County Food Pantry's Backpack Program Among Operation Round Up Grantees

Scores of Lake County children will receive food backpacks through a \$1,000 Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up® (ORU) grant to the Lake County Food Pantry.

Each backpack of food distributed in Lake County costs \$6.25 and approximately 180 school children at Madison Central, Chester, and Oldham-Ramona-Rutland schools receive food during the 37 weeks of the school year when food is distributed.

Community support for the backpack program comes not only from donations for the food, but also from residents of two facilities in Madison, S.D., who help prepare the weekly backpacks.

The program was one of 31 entities that received a grant during ORU's first quarter distribution of 2025.

Sioux Valley Energy members continue a tradition of giving through their Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up® Program. This quarter, groups

receiving funding range from those assisting kids to a local fire department and even tax preparation assistance.

More than \$2.3 million has been donated to area non-profits, schools, and communities since the year 2000 when Sioux Valley Energy started its Operation Round Up® program. The program is simple – participating members “round up” their electric bill to the next highest dollar and those “rounded up” funds are placed into a trust. Additionally, many Sioux Valley Energy employees donate from their paycheck each month. Each quarter the Operation Round Up Board of Trustees meets to review applications and consider grant requests.

A list of recent grant recipients, as well as information on how local organizations can apply for funding, can be found at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/operation-round-up>.

The next deadline to apply for funding is May 20 with grants being awarded in June.



First Quarter of 2025 Operation Round Up® Grant Recipients

- Brookings, S.D.:** The Salvation Army of Brookings County – \$1,000
- Brandon & Brookings, S.D.:** National Inventors Hall of Fame, Inc. – \$1,375
- Colman, S.D.:** Colman Fire and Rescue Department – \$750
- Colton, S.D.:** Colton Friends of Baseball – \$750
- Crooks, S.D.:** Crooks Community Daycare Center – \$1,000
- Dell Rapids, S.D.:** Dell Rapids Baseball Association – \$750
- Garretson, S.D.:** Blue Dragon Academy – \$750
- Harrisburg, S.D.:** Educators Rising SD – \$1,000
- Hartford, S.D.:** Hartford Area Sports and Rec – \$750; West Central Education Foundation – \$750; West Central Music Association – \$750
- Hills, Minn.:** HBC Letter Club – \$750
- Luverne, Minn.:** Rock County Community Library – \$750; Luverne Elementary Grade 4 Science – \$984.90
- Madison, S.D.:** Lake County Food Pantry, Inc. – \$1,000; The Friends of the Madison Public Library – \$500; The Gathering Meal – \$1,000
- Mitchell, S.D.:** Abbott House – \$1,000
- Pipestone, Minn.:** ACE of SW MN – \$250; ELA – Pipestone – \$1,000; Jasper Jolly Juniors 4-H Club – \$750; Pipestone Area Youth Fastpitch – \$750; Calumet Players – \$750
- Sioux Falls, S.D.:** Boys & Girls Club of the Sioux Empire – \$500; Center of Hope – \$750; Children's Home Shelter for Family Safety – \$1,000; Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation – \$1,000; Sioux Falls Zoo and Aquarium – \$500; The Foster Network – \$1,250
- Tea, S.D.:** S.D. Players Inc. – \$750
- Volga, S.D.:** Volga Christian School – \$950

TAKE THE TIME. EVERY TIME.

This spring, check
your clearances
and keep your
distance from
electrical equipment.



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2024 JAY A. YORK SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Pipestone Area Schools graduate Keera Pottratz was named one of five Minnesotans to receive The Jay A. York Scholarship in December.



Keera Pottratz
2024 Pipestone
Area Schools
Graduate

The \$500 scholarship was established in recognition of the first Minnesotan to head the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Jay York was a prominent figure in rural electric cooperative issues for nearly 30 years. He was elected in 1964 to the Nobles Cooperative Electric Board. Mr. York was not only well-known for his great leadership ability but also great dignity, a deep understanding of the issues, and an unyielding dedication to his fellow rural Americans.

Pottratz attends St. Cloud State University where she majors in social work and Spanish with an honors minor.

"My goal is to study abroad at least once and to graduate in three years instead of four," Pottratz said.

Attention Teachers

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Tour energy production sites and get a close-up look at the role the lignite plays in North Dakota's economy.



Need CE Hours?

June 9-12, 2025





Local, state and federal officials celebrate the ribbon-cutting of the new Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge, March 25, 2025. Photo by Marcy Anderson, Courtesy of the Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce.

BRIDGING HISTORY

The Demolition of the Waldron Memorial Bridge

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Tons of concrete and steel came crashing down in a planned demolition of the Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge that connected Pierre and Fort Pierre over a half mile stretch of river. The planned explosion marked a significant historic moment for not only Pierre and Fort Pierre, but also eastern and western South Dakota.

The demolition of the bridge unfolded in seconds. A plume of black smoke erupted from the detonating cord placed at key points in the bridge, quickly followed by a bone-rattling shock wave. Paul Nelson, a recently retired employee of the South Dakota Department of Transportation, witnessed the end of the bridge's 63-year lifespan. Nelson, a member of Oahe Elec-

tric, spent over 40 years with the SDDOT, serving most of that time as the regional bridge engineer. In this role, he was responsible for the maintenance, inspection and upkeep of the very bridge that he saw demolished.

As legacy bridge engineer, this was not Nelson's first experience with such a demolition. "I had actually witnessed the 1986 demolition of the old truss bridge that was just downstream of the current railroad bridge – so I have been around something of this magnitude before," he explained.

Even still, Nelson laughed that the modern demolition had a "pretty good report when it went off."

Although the bridge has been decommissioned, its history endures. In 2002, the bridge was dedicated to Lt. Cmdr. John C.

Waldron, a naval aviator from Fort Pierre who led a torpedo squadron during the Battle of Midway in World War II. His actions proved pivotal in the battle, but led to death of himself and most of his squadron. Of the 30 men who served under his command, only one survived the Battle of Midway.

Waldron's legacy is still commemorated through the new Pierre-Fort Pierre Bridge, which had its ribbon-cutting ceremony last month.

Construction of the new bridge began in 2020, just yards from the old bridge's location. In total, the bridge cost nearly \$50 million and is designed to last a century.

"This bridge is going to be a beautiful and wonderful enhancement to the communities and something that will last more than a hundred years," South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden said at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new bridge that now connects the two halves of the state.

BRIDGE DEMOLITION



The Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge comes crashing down at 9:03 a.m., on March 13.
Photos by Frank Turner.



\$23,000 in Scholarships Awarded

Twenty-five graduating high school seniors were awarded nearly \$23,000 in technical college and university scholarships from Sioux Valley Energy and its power suppliers this year. The majority of scholarship funds came from Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Roundup® program, with additional funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC), L&O Power Cooperative, and the Rodney Park Memorial Scholarship. Rodney Park was a journey line worker who worked at Sioux Valley Energy from 1973 until 2006 when he passed away.

\$1,000 Scholarship Recipients



Rebecca Heinemann
Dell Rapids
St. Mary's
\$1,000 BEPC



Tyson Bleyenbergh
Southwest
Minnesota
\$1,000 L&O



Lincoln Fersdahl
Dell Rapids
Public \$1,000
Rodney Park



Logan Brakke
Brandon Valley



Rylee Folkerts
Pipestone Area



Brayden Hanson
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland



Soraya Luschas
SF Lincoln



Carter Peterson
Brandon Valley



Makayla Schut
Chester Area



Zoe Dissing
Tri-Valley



Cole Downs
Madison



Lane Ellefson
Garretson



Rachel Heinemann
Dell Rapids
St. Mary's



Jon "Charley" Larsen II
SF Washington



Jack Moser
Hills-Beaver
Creek



Kennedy Nemitz
Brookings



Dillon Renaas
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland



Megan Rosendahl
Pipestone Area



Savannah Schulte
Tri-Valley



Colin Shellum
Garretson



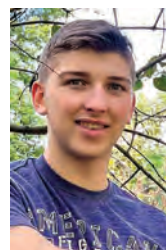
Landin Tucker
Brookings



Preston Singrey
Arlington



Nicole Sjaarda
Sjaarda Christian
Academy



Arien Stalford
Chester Area



Gabriel Stern
Brookings

\$750 Scholarship Recipients



HS JUNIORS: JOIN US IN 2025-26

QUESTION: What is EmPOWER Youth Leadership?

The EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program helps area teens build leadership skills and develop a comprehensive understanding of cooperatives.

“EmPOWER is truly a program that transforms the lives of our youth today. It shows them career opportunities that may be a good fit based on their strengths, builds lasting connections and relationships, develops them as leaders, and gives them the tools they’ll need to write the next chapters of their lives. EmPOWER leaves an impact that will last a lifetime.” said Chinelle Christensen, Sioux Valley Energy’s Culture and Training Development Strategist who leads the EmPOWER program.

QUESTION: When is it held?

The program is offered over four interactive sessions held on state holidays in October, November, January, and February. A makeup day will be scheduled for Good Friday, if needed.

QUESTION: What happens at EmPOWER Youth Leadership?

Each session builds upon skills learned in the previous session and extends into exploring career opportunities, networking with other students and business leaders, and learning more about the cooperative business model. Students are also eligible for scholarships and additional learning opportunities through travel to Washington, D.C., and cooperative facilities in North Dakota.

“The students who participate in the EmPOWER program will

gain a deeper understanding of the cooperative impact and business model all while determining who they want to be as a leader and how that can impact their future.” Christensen said.

QUESTION: How many students participate in EmPOWER Youth Leadership?

More than 500 teens have gone through the program since 2014.

QUESTION: When are applications due?

Applications for the 2025-26 group are due May 9.

QUESTION: How do I apply?

Application materials were distributed to area schools in March and April. The application is also available at www.sioxvalleyenergy.com.



MAY 31, JUNE 28, JULY 26
Fort Sisseton Lantern Tour
 Lake City, SD
 605-910-4465

*Photo courtesy of
 Travel South Dakota*

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.

MAY 2-3
SD Spring Square Dance Festival
 Fri. 7:30-10:30 p.m.
 Sat. 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Faith Lutheran Church
 Sioux Falls, SD
 Call for events & times
 605-360-2524

MAY 3-4
Prairie Village Events
 Sat. Consignment Auction
 Sun. Season Opening
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

MAY 3
American Legion Post 15
Just Because It's Time to Dance
 6-10:30 p.m.
 El Riad Shrine
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-336-3470

MAY 6-7
7th Annual Energize!
Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference
 Hosted by SDSU Extension
 Community Vitality
 Platte, SD
 605-626-2870

MAY 10
Cinco De Mayo
Falls Park Fiesta
 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
 Sioux Falls, SD

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 Vivian, SD
 605-222-3296

MAY 17
Annual Plant Sale
 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
 Codington Co. Extension Complex
 Watertown, SD
 830-534-5359

MAY 23-25
Brandon's Big Car Show
 Carnival & Car Show
 Fri. 6-11 p.m.
 Sat. 1-11 p.m., Car Show 1-4 p.m.
 Sun. 12-5 p.m.
 815 McHardy Rd
 Brandon, SD

MAY 31
Auto Parts Swap Meet & Car Show
 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

SAVE THE DATE **1-800-234-1960**

JUNE 10 **Sioux Valley Energy** **Annual Meeting**

West Central School
 Becker Center (Hartford SD)
 Generations (Luverne MN)
 Sioux Valley School Gym
 (Volga SD)

AUG. 9
Safety Day
 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Sioux Valley Energy
 Brandon Service Center
 108 N Heritage Rd, Brandon, SD

MAY 31
Miss Prairie Village Pageant
 6:30 p.m.
 Lawrence Welk Opera House
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day
Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Daneville Heritage Museum
 Viborg, SD
 605-766-1312
danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 11
Agricultural Women's Day
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Agar-Blunt-Onida School
 Onida, SD
 605-769-0013

JUNE 13
Jesse James Days
 Garretson, SD
visitgarretsonsd.com

JUNE 19-22
Hartford Jamboree Days
 Hartford, SD
 605-941-0809

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.