



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Katie Grott, field station manager at SDSU's Cottonwood research facility near Philip, stays busy overseeing several ongoing projects designed to deliver practical and profitable solutions for producers.

## Blazing new trails

Ag research abounds at Cottonwood  
Pages 8-9

Line work courses through their veins  
Pages 12-13

# District Meeting Overview



**Tim McCarthy**  
General Manager/  
Chief Executive  
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@  
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com

The Cooperative's district meetings began at the end of February. Each year, your director and I provide attendees an overview of what is happening at the Cooperative. For those of you who are not able to attend your district meeting, I summarized our presentation for this month's Manager's Column. We also end each meeting with a Q&A session. Members can ask any questions, and I do my best to answer them. If you are not able to be at your meeting but have questions, please email me at [tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com). Here is a summarized version of my district meeting comments to members:

I think it's appropriate to acknowledge the enormous gravity and impact COVID-19 has had on this Cooperative and your communities. The last two years have been some of the most challenging of my 34-year career in the energy industry. Unfortunately, many of you had to endure some pretty difficult times. At the Cooperative, we did, and are doing everything we can to work closely with our members who experience sickness and loss. One of the Cooperative's core principles is commitment to community, and we can never forget that. Our sole purpose is 'Serving Our Members. Always.'

What does that mean, though? It's a broad mission statement. That mission helps direct us to the same question that we ask ourselves as employees and as an organization on a regular basis – Is this work, activity, or event serving our members? We ask that question as we plan for line maintenance and construction, as we develop rebate and incentive programs, as the Board considers rates, as we determine how to help our communities, and much more. If the answer is yes, we move forward. If the answer is no, it goes by the wayside.

We even ask that question as we review the most impactful portion of the budget each year – the cost of power supply. Given that the cost of power makes up more than 60 percent of the Cooperative's budget, it's imperative that Sioux Valley Energy maintain a reliable, affordable, and stable source of wholesale power that offers diversity in its generation portfolio. We

have that with our current power suppliers. Long-term contracts are key to providing the electricity you need now and into the future. We currently have the security of those long-term contracts with our power suppliers – East River Electric and L&O Power Cooperative. This helps power supply co-ops plan for and ensure availability of power to their members.

As power supply becomes less and less carbon-intensive, you'll hear more about beneficial electrification. It's an old concept with a new name. For example, SVE's water heater load management program is one of the oldest forms of beneficial electrification we have. The term simply means "Go Electric." It's the application of electricity to end uses that would otherwise use fossil fuels. Beneficial electrification is becoming an important part of the future for electric utilities, and that includes Sioux Valley Energy. Over the last several years, we have expanded our programs and services meant to encourage beneficial electrification. As demand for these services and programs increased, we decided to combine several different departments into one unified Beneficial Electrification Department. We felt by combining these internal resources, such as wiring and energy services along with engineering expertise, Sioux Valley Energy could better serve its members.

The Beneficial Electrification Department also works to conduct research and development into various electric technologies and strategies. An example of that is our plan to invest dollars from the Renewable Energy Credit or REC fund toward research and development projects, including battery storage for a solar array. Sioux Valley Energy will use that project to research whether there's a reduction in its system peak during coincidental peak times. A residential in-home battery storage system or systems will also be installed as well, so the Cooperative can gather more information about how it pairs with a Time of Use Rate or a pilot Residential Demand Rate, which is also planned for 2022. Additionally, there is a proposal to construct a 50-kW community solar array at the Colman headquarters. The panels will be available for purchase by members and will be pre-sold before

**Continued on next page.**

## 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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(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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

### Manager's Column, Continued from Page 2

the construction of the project. Once we have those details worked out, we will let you know.

As I already mentioned, one of Sioux Valley Energy's core values is commitment to community. This is something we take very seriously and put significant time and effort into. We provide donations and sponsorships to area community organizations, our employees volunteer, and most recently, we began building a program called REVIVE 2030. The idea behind REVIVE 2030 is to create a program that will assist with and connect communities to resources for economic and community development. We recently held two meetings – one in Colton, South Dakota, and one in Hardwick, Minnesota. The meetings were designed to get feedback from people on where their communities need help.

We identified several different areas of community and economic development, but as we listened to feedback, it became clear many of these rural communities want hands-on assistance, which is why Sioux Valley Energy decided to hire an economic and community development professional to help. We believe this investment will bring much needed development assistance to rural communities throughout our service territory.

A long-standing testimony of the Cooperative's commitment to community is Operation Round Up®. Thanks to the generous donations from members and employees, Operation Round Up hit the \$2 million milestone in December. This program has touched so many lives, and we are excited to see how it impacts your communities in the future.

As I mentioned earlier in this column, our district meetings feature a time for Q&A. If you are not able to attend a meeting yet have questions, please send me an email. Spring is inching closer – enjoy the warming temperatures and as always, stay safe!

## Bare Root Trees Available to SVE Members

Celebrate Earth Day 2022 by picking up a trio of small bare-root trees (hackberry, maple and spruce) at Sioux Valley Energy. In recognition of Sioux Valley Energy's commitment to community and caring for the environment objectives, the Cooperative will purchase 350 sets of bare root trees for members to plant. Each member is eligible for three trees in total for as long as they last. The give-away event (which is dependent upon weather, shipment dates and availability) will take place at each of the Co-op's service centers in Colman, Brandon and Pipestone. Members can stop by one of the offices on Thursday, April 21 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Any extra trees will be available Friday, April 22, during the hours of 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Trees will be given out on a "first-come, first-served" basis. So once the trees are gone; they are gone! Check Facebook and [www.siouxvalleyenergy.com](http://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com) for updates or call 800-234-1960 before you come to ensure there are still trees available!



# 10 helpful tips for spring energy savings

Every season of the year provides many unique energy-saving opportunities for you and your family.

Here are some ideas particularly well suited for you to apply this spring.

- 1. Clear the air:** Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate throughout your home.
- 2. Cook outside:** Enjoy the sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.
- 3. Search and seal:** Cracks and spaces let conditioned air slip outdoors. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.
- 4. Natural light:** Open blinds and curtains and turn off the lights to save energy and money.
- 5. Be fan friendly:** Use ceiling fans to circulate air and keep cool.
- 6. Atmospheric adjustment:** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the warmer months ahead.
- 7. Tune up:** Schedule an appointment with a qualified heating, ventilating and air conditioning technician to identify any potential problems with your system.
- 8. Peak savings:** Plan household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low).
- 9. Take charge:** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.
- 10. Move outdoors:** Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save more money.



## DON'T TOY WITH PERSONAL SAFETY



When playing outdoors, keep a safe distance from power lines, substations and other equipment your electric co-op uses to send electricity to your home.

Flying remote-controlled toys and drones is a great way to have fun, but accidentally making contact with a power line or other electrical equipment can be dangerous and, in some cases, even deadly.

- Never fly kites or drones near power lines.
- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a power line, call your electric co-op.



## Fire Prevention

### Jonie Smith

Jonie Smith sends out an important safety message for campers to extinguish fires before leaving the area. Jonie is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith of Castlewood. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative.

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.

# LIP-SMACKING BEVERAGES

## BLUEBERRY BANANA SMOOTHIE

**Ingredients:**  
 1 cup spinach  
 1/2 cup water  
 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar  
 1 tbsp. almond butter  
 1/2 cup bananas, frozen  
 1/2 cup blueberries, frozen  
 1 tbsp. chia seeds  
 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon  
 1/4 tsp. minced ginger  
 1/2 cup berry yogurt  
 fresh blueberries, for garnish (optional)  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

In blender, blend spinach, water, apple cider vinegar, almond butter, frozen bananas, frozen blueberries, chia seeds, cinnamon, ginger and yogurt until smooth. Pour into two glasses and garnish with fresh blueberries, if desired.

[culinary.net](http://culinary.net)

## FRENCH ICED COFFEE

**Ingredients:**  
 3 cups strong coffee  
 2 cups sugar  
 1 pint cream or half & half  
 1 qt. milk or almond milk  
 2 tsp. (vanilla) flavoring (other flavorings also work)

### METHOD

Dissolve sugar in hot coffee. Cool. Add other ingredients. Pour into containers (I use the tall 2 c. Tupperware for individual drinks, but also use quarts.) Freeze. Take out and let thaw.

**Ruth Schilberg, Viborg**

## SWAMP WATER

**Ingredients:**  
 1 small package lime gelatin  
 1 cup hot water  
 1 (12-oz.) can frozen unsweetened pineapple juice concentrate  
 2 liters carbonated water

### METHOD

Mix lime gelatin with hot water to dissolve. Add frozen concentrate and carbonated water. Chill. Makes 10 servings.

**Lily Gums, Clear Lake**

## FRUIT SLUSH

**Ingredients:**  
 4 cups sugar (granulated)  
 6 cups water  
 1 46 oz. can pineapple juice  
 2 12 oz. cans frozen orange juice  
 1 12 oz. can frozen lemonade (pink or yellow)  
 2 small bananas, mashed very fine (or other fruit)

### METHOD

Mix and bring to a boil the sugar and water. When mixture is cool, add juices and fruit. Put in 5-quart pail and freeze. When frozen, use 2-3 scoops in a glass with 7-Up or ginger ale. Great drink for spring or summer.

**Alana Neville, Milesville**

## STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

**Ingredients:**  
 2 cup fresh strawberries, stemmed & halved  
 1 cup plain yogurt  
 1/2 cup ice cubes or chips  
 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom  
 1/4 tsp. ginger

### METHOD

In a blender, combine all ingredients. Blend on high speed until smoothie texture. Makes 2-12 oz. glasses.

**Jane Ham, Rapid City**

**Please send your favorite casserole 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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.**

# Electrify Your Lawn Care this Spring



**Sheila Gross**  
Energy Services  
Specialist

If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric (or battery-powered) options. Electric lawn care equipment is becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

## ELECTRIC LAWN MOWERS

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage. Newer cordless electric mowers are more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines. Cordless electric mowers range from \$200 to \$500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require about one to two hours to fully charge, and most batteries can run for a full hour. If you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may best suit your needs.

## ELECTRIC TRIMMERS

Cordless electric string trimmers are a

great option for most lawns. Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts. When purchasing, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.

## ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWERS

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you'll need to clear off those walkways and patios for the finishing touch.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about \$150 and up.

If you're looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you'll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month – with less maintenance, hassle and noise (and your neighbors will thank you!).



Scan this code to check out our rebates and incentives:



# REGISTER TO WIN

Register by **April 30, 2022** to win an EGO Power+ Select Cut 21-inch electric lawn mower (valued at \$679).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## I WOULD ALSO LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Pump Rebate   | <input type="checkbox"/> Time of Use Rate              | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Heat Rebates    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Heat Rate   | <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Irrigation Rebate | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable Energy Credit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Audit   | <input type="checkbox"/> SmartHub Account Tool         | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Saving Tips         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loan Program   | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Thermostat Rebate       | <input type="checkbox"/> Interlock Kit/Generator    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Vehicle Program   | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial/Ag LED Program     | <input type="checkbox"/> Marathon/HTP Water Heaters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like more information on purchasing panels for the community solar project when details are available. |  |   |

# COMMON UTILITY SCAMS: DISCONNECTION DECEPTION

Scammers call and threaten service disconnection, demanding immediate payment.

- **Email Address**
- **Mailing Address**
- **New Service Address**
- **Social Security Number or Federal Tax ID Number**
- **Date of Birth**
- **Rental or Ownership Status of Property**
- **Other Names of People with Security Access to Account**

If a security deposit is needed, a new member would have to pay that over the Cooperative's automated IVR phone system, online SmartHub website or app, or in person at one of the offices. You will never be asked to provide payment information over the phone by one of the Sioux Valley Energy Member Services Representatives.

Members will be asked to verify the last four digits of their social security number on their account to authenticate who they are when they call to ask about their account. Other individuals authorized to have access to your account will be asked a password that was created by you before they are able to receive information on that account.

On occasion, Sioux Valley Energy does contract with a third party to conduct member satisfaction surveys, but those questions will be of a general nature regarding satisfaction of service, broad demographic information, usage of electric appliances, etc.

If you ever doubt the validity of a text message or phone call claiming to be Sioux Valley Energy or "your electric company," do not respond; hang up and call the Member Services Department at 877-511-8062 or the Cooperative's general number 800-234-1960 to verify.

## AVOID THE SCAM

### Scammers Continue to Target Consumers

**Carrie Vugteveen**

Vice President of Public Relations

You get a call from someone claiming to be your utility company. They demand immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your electricity. Is it a scam? If they are demanding immediate payment over the phone – it very likely is a scam.

Sioux Valley Energy will never ask a member to make a payment directly with an employee over the phone. If your account is past due and facing disconnection, Sioux Valley Energy will call or email to notify members. If your account is up for disconnect, you will be asked to call prior to 9 a.m. on

the disconnect date and make a payment over the automated interactive voice response (IVR) phone system by calling 877-779-7476. If you have questions about your account, you can call a Member Services Representative at 877-511-8062.

The only time Sioux Valley Energy will ask for specific identifying information is when you sign up for electric service or to verify an account. A new member placing an account into their name will be asked for the following information by a Sioux Valley Energy Member Services Representative:

- **Full Name**
- **Phone Number**



# ROBO RANCHING

Cottonwood Field Station Manager Katie Grott and student Lily McFadden take a break from their work. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## Cottonwood Field Research Station is abuzz with studies designed to increase producer profitability

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdua.coop

There are robo-cops, robo-codes and robo-calls. But robo-cattle ranching?

That futuristic phrase is part of the nomenclature surrounding a beef production movement called “precision ranching,” an offshoot of the “precision agriculture” approach that promotes the use of advanced technology to improve yields and profitability.

This new wave of ag research evokes postmodern images of bovines grazing through the fields wearing high tech gadgets. Turns out, it’s a description not too far off the mark, according to Dr. Jamie Brennan, an assistant professor of research and extension specialist at South Dakota State University.

Based out of the West River Research and Extension Center in Rapid City, Brennan is using SDSU’s Cottonwood Field Station near Philip to study the viability of using high-tech GPS tracking collars to deliver real-time information on steer activity and behavior.

“By monitoring animal movement we can identify changes in behavior that might indicate sickness, for example, which can be sent as an alert to producers,” Brennan said.

He’s deploying the type of advanced accelerator technology commonly associated with Fitbit watches, vehicle trackers, smartphone map apps and other monitoring devices.

“We’re working to develop the capability for producers to easily identify not only where animals are on the landscape but also where they are selecting for grazing and resting locations,” Brennan said. “The work we are doing at the station is designed to determine the potential benefits - and possible shortcomings - of precision ranching technology and to predict the return on investment for the producer.”

Brennan’s project is just one of several intriguing studies currently in play at the Cottonwood Field Station. One of six field research centers in the SDSU Agriculture Experiment Station network, Cottonwood is among the

oldest facilities of its kind in the country. Covering more than 2,600 acres, Cottonwood was established in 1907 and has received regional and national acclaim with impactful results such as developing a new method of determining stocking rates for western regions and devising the Universal Soil Loss Equation now known as RUSLE2.

These scientific forays into precision ranching include virtual fencing (Vence™), Smart Feeder™ systems, mobile app-based mineral consumption monitors, methane emissions measuring devices and soil moisture monitoring.

The exploration into virtual fencing holds plenty of promise in helping producers manage their livestock and landscape more efficiently and effectively, according to Cottonwood Field Station manager Katie Grott.

While it may be hard for an old-school rancher to envision a world without barbed wire, fence posts and cattle guards, moving this technology to market could result in substantial savings for farm families.

Grott explained the technology is a much more sophisticated version of the kind of residential-grade invisible fence



A cow at the Cottonwood Field Research Station waits patiently for a Smart Feeder to be loaded with hay.

designed to keep pets from wandering around the neighborhood streets. Virtual fencing is already being used to contain goat herds and other smaller animals with measurable success.

The latest research testing involves combining an electrical pulse administered through a GPS-enabled collar, combined with an auditory stimulus to keep cattle confined within certain boundaries. A software program allows the rancher to define those boundaries as needed for successful grazing rotation and land management.

“We’re looking at how virtual fencing affects animal behavior, performance and natural resources,” Grott said.

Dr. Krista Ehlert, assistant professor and extension specialist, is also involved in the project and adds, “Virtual fencing turns physical labor into cognitive labor for producers, helping to reduce labor and potentially improve work-life balance for producers.”

Other projects at Cottonwood include work being led by assistant professor Dr. Hector Menendez. The research uses technology developed by the Rapid City firm, C-Lock. C-Lock has a scale that collects daily weight records on animals every time they drink. The data provide

valuable information on stocking rates, forage quality and weather conditions on individual animal performance.

“It’s an exciting time in the area of agricultural research,” Menendez said. “We have secured funds to proceed with a project on interdisciplinary engagement in animal systems and precision livestock water monitoring. And we’re excited about holding producer-oriented workshops, training classes and field days to educate producers on how these advancements can improve their profitability.”

One rancher who keeps a close eye on the latest research results is Eric Jennings, president of the South Dakota Cattleman’s Association.

“There are some interesting new concepts being explored through this facility and others,” Jennings said. “We’re watching to see which of these systems prove to become both practical and affordable for producers to implement in their daily operations. For instance, the idea of virtual fencing has been around for a while, but the research and application of new technology has emerged as a viable option.”

Brennan, Ehlert, Menendez and others who work daily to blaze new pathways

Amount of acres  
researchers have

**2,640**

at their disposal at the  
Cottonwood  
Field Station

for cattle producers take gratification from knowing their labor and application of scientific methods could result in a farm family turning the corner toward profitability and sustaining a generational way of life. Plus, they enjoy drawing students into the process and inspiring the next generation of farmers.

“They receive training in animal science, rangeland ecology, precision technology, modeling, computer programming and boots-on-the-ground ranching,” Menendez said. “One of our aims is to encourage the next generation of professionals that can merge precision technology to maximize rangeland livestock production while maintaining ranching culture.”



**CO-OP CONNECTIONS® CARD CORNER**

The Co-op Connections Card is a partnership between Sioux Valley Energy and local businesses! Each member

received the Co-op Connections Card free in their January magazine. You get your Co-op Connections Card simply because you're a member of Sioux Valley Energy.

Each month, we'll include a listing of businesses participating in the program. Below are businesses located in Brookings.

**Brookings**

- Anytime Fitness
- Apollo Water Systems
- The Automotive Service Center
- b.beautiful hair lounge
- B-Free Satellite
- Brookings Family Dentistry
- Campus Hair
- Cubby's Sports Bar & Grill
- Dakota Lux LED Lighting Solutions
- Hometown Service and Tire
- Martin Oil
- Midwest Glass, Inc
- The Optical Shop
- Party Depot
- Perry Electric Air Conditioning & Heating
- Powershop Gym
- Qdoba Mexican Grill
- Schoon's Pump N Pak
- Sixth Street Optical
- Tee'd Off Golf Simulators
- The UPS Store
- Young Door Service Inc

Scan this code to access the Sioux Valley Energy website where you can download the Cooperative Connections Card app for mobile devices.



**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Sioux Valley Energy Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, June 7, 2022**  
**Sioux Falls Convention Center**  
**Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

**TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!**

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a member or employee of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond.

**They could win up to \$3,000!**



**Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives**

Nominate your local hero at [WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM](http://WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM)

**FUNDING COLLEGE DREAMS**

**32 area students awarded scholarships**

Thirty-two graduating high school seniors were awarded a total of \$17,000 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, L&O Power Cooperative, and the Rodney Park Memorial Scholarship. Rodney Park was a journey lineworker who worked at Sioux Valley Energy from 1973 until 2006 when he passed away. The Rodney Park Memorial Power Line Scholarship was created to honor his memory and is funded by Sioux Valley Energy and its employees.

A total of 112 high school seniors applied for the scholarships. Applications were judged on the basis of grades, ACT or SAT test scores, work experience, school activities, volunteer community service and an essay question.

Scholarships were given to students pursuing degrees at technical colleges and four-year institutions.

Each student is recognized at their local district meeting and reads a portion of their essay to attending members.



**Wyatt Hansen**  
Chester Area High School  
\$1,000 Rodney Park Memorial Scholarship



**Abigail Morse**  
Madison HS  
\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship



**Tara Paulsen**  
Hills-Beaver Creek HS  
\$1,000 L&O Power Co-op Scholarship



**Preston Dorow**  
Chester Area High School  
\$500 Power Line Scholarship



**Will Matson**  
Oldham-Ramona High School  
\$500 Power Line Scholarship



**Noah Reiff**  
St Mary's Catholic High School  
\$500 Power Line Scholarship



**Brayden Vogel**  
Chester Area High School  
\$750 Power Line Scholarship



**Carter Wermers**  
Oldham-Ramona High School  
\$500 Power Line Scholarship



**Tayven Badger**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$750



**Jaelyn Benson**  
Garretson High School  
\$250



**Tessa Bowar**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$250



**Martin Davis**  
Elkton High School  
\$250



**Lauren Fick**  
Garretson High School  
\$750



**Tara Feucht**  
Brookings High School  
\$750



**Kadin Groen**  
Lincoln High School  
\$250



**Grace Harden**  
West Central High School  
\$750



**Grace Heiberger**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$250



**Joe Hornick**  
Sioux Valley High School  
\$250



**Emma Jackson**  
Tri-Valley High School  
\$250



**Ellie Jaspers**  
O'Gorman High School  
\$250



**Cody Klein**  
Madison High School  
\$250



**Ethan Kruger**  
Hills-Beaver Creek High School  
\$500



**Abigail Mitchell**  
West Central High School  
\$250



**Samantha Moser**  
Hills-Beaver Creek High School  
\$250



**Amanda Oberg**  
Tri-Valley High School  
\$500



**Elsie O'Neil**  
Pipestone Area High School  
\$250



**Tate Roberts**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$750



**Dylan Singrey**  
Arlington High School  
\$750



**Rachael Spencer**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$250



**Erin Steen**  
Garretson High School  
\$750



**Julia Steffensen**  
Sioux Valley High School  
\$750



**Henry Wright**  
Brandon Valley High School  
\$1,000

#THANKALINEMAN

# VOLTAGE IN THEIR VEINS

The Miller and Wingen men share a total of 177 years of experience in the electric utility industry. Pictured above are Joel Miller, Rollie Miller, Travis Miller, Corey Miller, Wes Wingen and Dustin Wingen.

## Miller, Wingen utility workers represent a combined 177 years of faithful service

### Tara Miller

taram@centralec.coop

Take a moment to imagine life without electricity. No household appliances, no electric heat, no air conditioning, no internet and no phone. In 1925, only half of homes in the U.S. had electricity. Fast forward to 2022, and electricity is a basic necessity.

April is Lineworker Appreciation Month – a time to celebrate and honor the brave men and women who often work in hazardous conditions to power our world.

The Miller family, originally from Canova, has 177 years of electric industry experience, and most of them started their careers as lineworkers.

### WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Before attending school to become a lineworker, Joel Miller, better known as “Joe” or “Smokey” to some, graduated from Canova High School and began working at Overhead Door Company

in Sioux Falls. While he didn’t mind the work, he knew it wasn’t what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Joe then heard about an opportunity to attend school and become a lineworker.

“I knew Ron Callies. He was an instructor,” Joe said. “He told us to look at the program, so Robert Zens and I checked it out and thought we would give it a try.”

Joe graduated from what is now known as Mitchell Technical College (MTC) in 1978 and began the family’s legacy of life on the line when he joined East River Electric in Madison. He started on the construction crew and later worked in maintenance. His friend Robert Zens also worked at East River Electric, but passed away in a motorcycle accident in 1980.

Joe worked at East River Electric for nearly 20 years before he moved to Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) in Pierre. WAPA is a federal organization that markets and delivers hydroelectric power and related services

across the 15-state region. Joe retired from his position of line foreman at WAPA in 2020 after 43 years.

### FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Rollie was next in the Miller family line-up, a year younger than Joe. His mom talked him into going to Pipestone, MN, to work at Bayliner Boats with his older brother Ed. Rollie then worked at Feterl’s Manufacturing in Salem where he welded augers until he decided to enroll in line school at MTC at the age of 20.

“The biggest reason I went to line school was because Joe had just done it, and I was friends with Robert Zens. I saw how they just did it, and I thought I could do it, too,” Rollie explained.

Rollie now manages Vigilante Electric Cooperative in Dillon, MT. Before running the show, he worked for an electrical contractor and for West River Electric.

He then attended SDSU and worked for Bob’s Electric in Flandreau with Reggie Gassman, who is manager of customer electrical services at Sioux

Valley Energy. They both grew up in the Canova area.

Rollie earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, allowing him to become a licensed professional engineer.

"My education has greatly benefited me throughout my career," Rollie said.

Rollie's boys are also following the family tradition. Cody Miller attended SDSU to become an electrical engineer and consults for electric utilities, and Logan "L.J." Miller is enrolled in the power line construction and maintenance program at MTC.



Cody Miller



L.J. Miller

"It's not a cake walk. I told them you really have to study and work hard," he said.

After Rollie, Corey was the next Miller brother to attend MTC.

"The reason I went into it is because I had two older brothers who were

linemen. I knew when I was a freshman in high school that I was going to be a lineman," Corey said.

After graduating from MTC in 1987, Corey became an apprentice lineworker at Public Service of New Hampshire. He worked there for three years, then took a position at Missouri Public Service.

Like his brothers, Corey worked his way up the ranks. He was hired as a lineworker and promoted to foreman, then supervisor, and now works in management. He is also on the board of directors for the International Lineman Rodeo Association, helping host the annual lineman rodeo event which promotes lineworker safety.

Corey's 15-year-old son Zach plans to become a lineworker after high school. Corey shares this advice for anybody

- **Joel Miller**, Retired Line Foreman at Western Area Power Administration (Pierre, SD)  
43 Years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Rollie Miller**, General Manager at Vigilante Electric Cooperative (Dillon, MT)  
42 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Corey Miller**, Director of Regional Operations at Evergy (Lexington, MO)  
35 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Travis Miller**, Foreman at Southeastern Electric (Salem, SD)  
30 years of industry experience
- **Wes Wingen**, Manager of Meter Services at Black Hills Power (Rapid City, SD)  
15 years, 10 months of industry experience
- **Cody Miller**, Electrical Engineer (Dillon, MT)  
8 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Dustin Wingen**, Former Lineworker at Alaska Village Electric Co-op (Anchorage, AK)  
2 years of industry experience
- **Logan (L.J.) Miller**, Student in the power line program at Mitchell Technical College

considering a career in the field:

"We need linemen. It is an awesome profession to get into. Linemen live to restore power – that's their lifeblood. And, quite honestly, you will make a very good wage while doing that."

Travis was the last of the Miller brothers to attend line school. He decided milking cows wasn't his calling, so in 1991 at age 26, Travis followed the path started by his big brother Joe.

"I figured they all did it, so I could probably do it better," Travis joked. He is now the foreman at Southeastern Electric in Salem.

Wes and Dustin Wingen are the sons of Stacy (Miller) and Bob Wingen. They are nephews to the Miller brothers and have also been involved in the electric utility industry. Dustin was a lineworker in Anchorage, AK, before coming back home to farm. Wes is an engineer and manager of meter services at Black Hills Power in Rapid City.

### IT'S A MILLER THING

The Miller family had nine children: Sandy, Duane, Ed, Joe, Rollie, Stacy, Derrin, Travis and Corey. Marcella, mother of the youngest eight children,

passed away in 2011, and Duane "Stub" Miller, the family patriarch, currently resides in Howard. Stub shared, "People don't know it today, but having electricity is something we shouldn't take for granted."

The four Miller brothers share a combined 151 years of electric industry experience. When you add it all up, the Miller and Wingen men boast an impressive 177 years of electric industry experience.

They couldn't have worked in this profession without the support of their families, which are too large to list. All the storm jobs, dangerous assignments and family moves were worth it when they think about the people they serve. They all agree, "It's a Miller thing" and working with voltage is in their veins.

### THANK A LINEMAN

Please take time to thank lineworkers for all they do to brighten our lives. We thank the Miller family for their many years of service in the industry.

*Editor's note: Writer Tara Miller is Travis Miller's wife and works for Central Electric Cooperative near Mitchell.*



**Each year, Sioux Valley Energy holds a series of 10 district meetings to inform members of the Cooperative about what is happening at the organization.**

Sioux Valley Energy's District Meetings are off to a good start with more than 600 people attending the first three meetings. The meetings are scheduled through the month of March.

Non-contested elections will take place in districts 4, 6 and 10.

Each meeting includes a complimentary meal of bacon wrapped

chicken, cheesy hash browns, green beans and a cookie. Members who attend may also be eligible for a \$25 bill credit in lieu of a meeting registration gift.

Meeting topics include cooperative power supply, COVID-19 operational update, Operation Round Up®, beneficial electrification, and introduction of scholarship winners.



Above: Manager Tim McCarthy discusses Operation Round Up during his report. Top Right: Attendees at the District 8 meeting in Luverne enjoy a complimentary meal served by Generations members. Right: District 8 Director, Dan Leuthold, visits with a member.



Lineworkers  
always rise to  
the challenge.

#ThankALineworker

Lineworker Appreciation Day • April 11, 2022

**EMPOWER**  
YOUTH LEADERSHIP

**STEP UP AND STAND OUT!**  
Leadership, learning, friendships and challenges. Energize your potential through the EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program!

This inspiring, interactive program will help you discover personal strengths, build & improve leadership skills, link up with peers & professionals, and explore career paths.

**Have a chance at: SCHOLARSHIPS! TRIPS!**

**FOUR FUN-FILLED, PEER-ADVISED PROGRAM DAYS FOCUS ON:**

- Leadership Skills
- Cooperatives
- Personal Strengths
- Communication Skills
- Team Building
- Health & Wellness
- Electrical Safety/CPR
- Networking
- Career Options

**TO APPLY:**  
The 12-month program is open to upcoming juniors and seniors who are ready to commit to fully EmPOWER themselves with fun, positive, open minds. Applications are available from your school counselor or on the Sioux Valley Energy website. Submit via email to [Empower@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:Empower@siouxvalleyenergy.com).

Brought to you by  
**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**  
A Student Energy Cooperative

[EMPOWERYOUTHLEADERSHIP.COM](http://EMPOWERYOUTHLEADERSHIP.COM) Apply By May 13, 2022.

**OPERATION ROUND UP AWARDS**



The Pipestone County Historical Society was awarded an Operation Round Up® grant towards the carpeting of Exhibit Gallery III. The exhibit gallery will open sometime in April.



Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sioux Falls received an Operation Round Up grant in March 2021 to assist with moving a home built by Career and Technical Education students. The home was moved onto its foundation last summer and new homeowners closed on the home in February 2022.

Learn more at [www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup](http://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup)



**APRIL 16**  
Easter Egg Hunt at  
Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**MARCH 25-26**

**Schmeckfest**  
748 S Main Street, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

**MARCH 26**

**Annual Ag Day**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 30**

**Elton John Tribute Concert**  
Performing Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-7813

**APRIL 1-3, 7-10**

**Those Crazy Ladies In the House on the Corner**  
Palace Theatre, Luverne, MN, 507-283-4339, [www.palace-theatre.us](http://www.palace-theatre.us)

**APRIL 2**

**Watertown Coin and Currency Show**  
Elks Lodge, Watertown, SD, 605-882-4663

**APRIL 8-9**

**Forks, Corks & Kegs Festival**  
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, [deadwood.com/event/forks-corks-kegs](http://deadwood.com/event/forks-corks-kegs)

**APRIL 8-9**

**Jackrabbit Stampede Rodeo**  
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, [swiftelcenter.com](http://swiftelcenter.com)

**APRIL 8-10**

**CAHF Spring Fling Eggstravaganza Series**  
Carroll Acres Hobby Farm, Rapid City, SD, [carrollacres-hobbyfarm.com](http://carrollacres-hobbyfarm.com)

**APRIL 8-16**

**The Passion and the Cross**  
Orpheum Theater Center, Sioux Falls, SD, [siouxfalls-orpheum.com](http://siouxfalls-orpheum.com)

**APRIL 9**

**Keystone Spring Fling Vendor Fair**  
1101 Madill Street, Keystone, SD, 605-786-3035

**APRIL 9-10**

**DGTCA Gun Show**  
Rushmore Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-270-0764

**APRIL 16**

**Easter Egg Hunt**  
Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-2867

**APRIL 22**

**River Rat ½ Marathon, 10K, and 5K**  
Gavins Point Area, Yankton, SD, [allsportscentral.com](http://allsportscentral.com)

**APRIL 22-23**

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

**APRIL 23**

**Lakota All Star Basketball Games**  
The Monument Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-41985

**APRIL 23**

**Martina McBride**  
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, [swiftelcenter.com](http://swiftelcenter.com)

**APRIL 23**

**Winefest Renaissance**  
1121 1st Avenue SE, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-8714

**APRIL 23-24**

**46th Mobridge Area Art Show**  
Scherr-Howe Arena, Mobridge, SD, 605-845-2060

**APRIL 23-24**

**Brookings Quilt Guild Show**  
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, 605-690-3246

**APRIL 27-30**

**45th Annual Kingswood Rummage Sales**  
Southwest Sioux Falls, SD, [kingswoodrummage.com](http://kingswoodrummage.com)

**APRIL 28-30**

**26th Annual Black Hills Dance Festival**  
The Monument, Rapid City, SD, [blackhillsdancefestival.com](http://blackhillsdancefestival.com)

**APRIL 29-MAY 1, 5-7**

**Ordinary Days**  
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, [pierreplayers.com](http://pierreplayers.com)

**APRIL 30**

**SDSO Centennial Finale**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, [sdsymphony.org](http://sdsymphony.org)

**MAY 7**

**Cinco de Mayo Fiesta**  
Falls Park, Sioux Falls, SD, [jrothenbuehler@presentationsisters.org](mailto:jrothenbuehler@presentationsisters.org)

**MAY 14-15**

**Ellsworth Air and Space Show**  
1940 EP Howe Drive, Ellsworth AFB, SD, [ellsworthairshow.com](http://ellsworthairshow.com)

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