

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Little cars, big smiles

**Smile makers build  
Toys for God's Kids**  
Pages 8-9

**Treatment center  
changes young lives**  
Pages 12-13

Asher Smith plays with a few  
of the thousands of small  
wooden cars built each year  
by Toys for God's Kids

# Forecasting into 2023

The main topics I keep reading about in our trade magazines and hearing about in the news continue to be inflation, supply chain and higher energy prices. I wrote about increasing electricity prices last month and I will be writing about it again over the next several months.

Let's start our discussion by looking at the winter weather forecast for our area. We are entering the third year of a La Niña winter. The Weather Channel is forecasting a colder than average season in the northern half and a warmer than average season for the southern half of the country. However, they are expecting a normal or slightly warmer December before it starts to turn colder in the new year with below average temperatures.

I was hoping that The Weather Channel forecast was an outlier, so I took a look at the Old Farmer's Almanac and the Farmers' Almanac outlook for the winter season as well. Both are forecasting below normal temperatures but differ on the amount of precipitation that we can expect over the winter.

Unfortunately, cold weather leads to more electricity usage and higher bills. If you are experiencing financial hardships or other financial issues with paying your electric bill, please contact our billing department to visit about options that are available to help you.

One program, the Energy Assistance Program/Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, may provide the help you need to stay current on your electric bill. If you would like to reach out directly to see if you qualify, you can reach out to United Community Action Program, Prairie Five Community Action Council, or Southwest Health and Human Services. You can find the contact information for each of the organizations in the chart below.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

To learn more about the Energy Assistance Program or to apply for assistance contact your county EAP service provider

**UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM**  
Marshall, MN  
Ph. #(800)658-2448



**PRAIRIE FIVE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL INC.**  
Montevideo, MN  
Ph. #(320)269-7976



**SOUTHWEST HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**  
Ivanhoe, MN Office | Marshall, MN Office  
Ph. #(507)694-1452 | Ph. #(507)537-6747



**Tim O'Leary**  
General Manager

We continue to work with our financial partner, the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) on updating our revenue requirements and cost of service study. Our first update on the study happened on October 25th and we are looking at sharing the final results of the study with the Board in January. The update let us know that we will need to do something with the rates as early as next year. The need and size of the change will be dependent on how the year end looks for our power suppliers. As far as timing, if we need to make a change in 2023, we will look for something mid-year or later in the year. We will know more and we will be able to share more at the district meetings in April next year and in our newsletter leading up to the district meetings.

We are also working with FEMA to receive disaster funds for the storms that happened on May 12th and May 30th. We are working on submitting the required paperwork and other documentation that are needed to qualify for the funding. Once we have our final numbers, we will update everyone through the newsletter on what we expect to help offset the costs associated with these two storms.

Thank you and have a great Thanksgiving celebration.

Years of Service



**Randy Keifer**  
Journeyman Lineman  
38 Years on Nov. 1st



**Tim O'Leary**  
General Manager  
20 Years on Sept. 3rd



**Rochelle Borresen**  
Accountant  
7 Years on Oct. 12th



**Sam Rohde**  
Apprentice Lineman  
1 Year on Nov. 16th

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**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

**LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC**

(ISSN 1540-6989)

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 Kathleen Schreurs, Tyler – Sec./Treas.  
 Jared Dritz, Porter  
 Galen Grant, Russell  
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[www.llec.coop](http://www.llec.coop)

Lyon-Lincoln Electric hours are: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, Mon. thru Fri.

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Jessica Gums, Editor



**Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**PAYMENT OPTIONS**

We offer several different options for members to pay their electric bill:



**SmartHub**- Pay online or through the SmartHub app! Also view detailed info. on energy use and manage your account while on the go.



**Drop Box**- Our drop box is located in East driveway of our parking lot and is checked daily during business hours.



**Pay Now**- Pay online without creating an account. Click the green "Pay Now" button at the top of our website, then enter you account number & name so you can quickly pay your bill online.



**Auto Pay**- Payments can be made automatically through a checking or savings account or debited from a credit or debit card. Contact our office to sign up today!



**Office**- Pay in person at 205 W. Highway 14, Tyler, MN.



**Mailbox**- Mail payments to: Lyon-Lincoln, P.O. Box 639, Tyler, MN 56178

# Deck your halls with home safety in mind

It's time to deck those halls - safely. More than 800 home fires are caused by holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season:

- Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly - indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.
- Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.
- Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

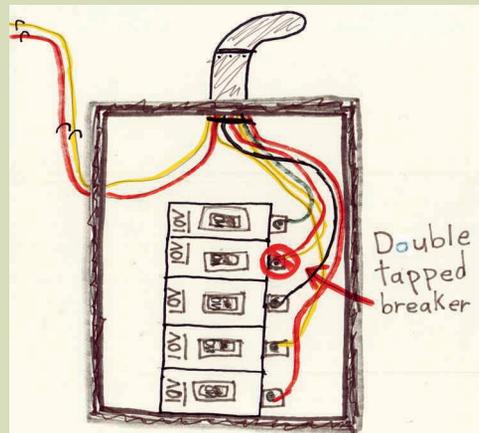


## A NEW TEACHING TOOL FOR SOLAR POWER EDUCATION



Rushmore Electric and Touchstone Energy have joined together to construct a demo trailer designed to teach co-op members across the state more about how solar power functions. The trailer is equipped with fold-out collection panels and also battery storage capability. Co-op energy experts use the trailer to frame discussions about net metering, interconnection agreements and more.

To see a video of the trailer and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Don't play on transformer boxes

### Olaf Sahlstrom

Olaf Sahlstrom, 9, shares a tip he learned from his parents, Ben and Naomi Sahlstrom: Double-tapped breakers are unsafe and can lead to overheating, arcing, and electrical fires. The Sahlstroms reside in Tracy, MN and are members of Lyon-Lincoln 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.

# CHRISTMAS DESSERTS

## GINGERBREAD KISSED THUMBPRINT COOKIES

Ingredients:

3 c. flour  
2 tsps. ground ginger  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg  
1/4 tsp. salt  
3/4 c. (1-1/2 sticks) butter,  
softened  
3/4 c. firmly packed brown sugar  
1/2 c. molasses  
1 egg  
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
1/4 c. granulated sugar  
60 milk chocolate kisses

**METHOD**

Mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and salt in large bowl. Set aside. Beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into a thick flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 350°F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in granulated sugar to coat. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges of cookies begin to brown. Immediately press a chocolate candy into center of each cookie. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Store cookies in airtight container up to 5 days.

[mccormick.com](http://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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## HOLIDAY HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients:

8 qt. box powdered milk  
1 lb. can Nestles Cocoa Mix  
7-8 oz. jar powdered creamer  
3 c. powdered sugar  
1/3 c. cocoa

**METHOD**

Mix in order given in large bowl. Put in air tight container. Use 1/4 cup mix per cup of hot water. Makes about 16-cup mix.

**Phyllis Niemann, Clear Lake**

## MOM'S CHRISTMAS DESSERT

Ingredients:

2-1/2 c. Rice Krispies  
1/2 c. light brown sugar  
1 c. slivered almonds or toasted nut meats  
1/2 c. butter, melted  
1/2 gal. vanilla ice cream  
1 can pie cherries  
1/2 tsp. almond flavoring

**METHOD**

Mix first four ingredients together. Spread half mixture in a 9x13 pan evenly. Cut and press vanilla ice cream on top and spread remaining mixture on top. Freeze. When ready to serve, stir pie filling and almond flavoring together and heat on stove top or microwave and use for topping individual pieces.

**Patty Sinning, Lennox**

## PEANUT BUTTER PIE

Ingredients:

1 heaping c. peanut butter  
1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese (softened)  
1 8 oz. tub cool whip (thawed)  
1/2 c. milk  
2 c. powdered sugar graham cracker pie crust (prepared)  
Crushed Butterfingers or Reeses for garnish

**METHOD**

Thoroughly mix peanut butter and cream cheese. Add 1/2 cup milk and slowly add 2 cups powdered sugar. Mix well. Fold in cool whip. Put in a prepared graham cracker crust. Makes two 9" pies or one 10" pie with a little extra. Top with crushed candy. Place in freezer until frozen. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving.

**Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg**

# September Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, September 26, 2022. Directors present were James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Jared Dritz, Galen Grant, Scott Johnson, Mary Gunnink, Sandy Ludeman, Dale Fier, and Mike Longtin. Also present at the meeting were General Manager, Timothy O’Leary, Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, and Attorney, Michael W. Cable.

The Board and others in attendance stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance. President Ludeman then called the meeting to order and routine business was conducted including approval of the August 22, 2022 meeting minutes, a review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, and shares to be cancelled.

Kristi Jensen, Finance Manager, gave the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending July 31, 2022. The Board reviewed information provided to the Co-op concerning a RESCO patronage dividend allocation and retirement, a National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation net patronage capital distribution and retirement, and a Cooperative Response Center, Inc. member patronage allocation.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, reviewed with the Board the August Outage Report and advised the

Board of the August Safety Meeting that was held on August 24, 2022 concerning The Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and their onsite observation. Mr. O’Leary, and Mr. Lamote reviewed with the Board the 2023-2026 Construction Work Plan for East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. and Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. Mr. Lamote also indicated that the linemen were finishing the last 1½ miles of underground line West of the Lynd Substation, will be working on ½ mile of underground line by Minneota, and underground at North Shore Drive.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, reviewed with the board his report which included a solar seminar review, and several scheduled classroom visits where he will be presenting “Co-op’s in the Classroom” to Marshall area 4th graders. Social media and electric vehicle updates were also given.

General Manager Timothy O’Leary then gave his manager’s report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: Marlene Hoef - 600401. The Board reviewed the August power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, and informed the board that the Strategic plan had been updated. Mr. O’Leary reported on East River’s MAC meeting that he attended, then

reviewed with the board upcoming meetings, events, and notices.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:14 o’clock P.M. and reconvened at 12:45 o’clock P.M. During that time, the Board watched the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Monthly Video Report which included the Basin Summary.

The Board reviewed the August Cyber Security Program Report. The directors then reported on training sessions and meetings attended, including the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting and the NRECA Region Meeting, and then reviewed and discussed upcoming meetings and educational workshops to be held.

With there being no further business to come before the board, a motion was made and carried to adjourn at 2:37 o’clock P.M.

## September 2022 Outage Report

(10 or more consumers)

9/13/22 - 224 consumers were off 2 hours in Coon Creek, Island Lake, Lyons, & Shelburne Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

9/13/22 - 57 consumers were off 3 hours and 25 minutes in Alta Vista & Marble Townships. The cause was a bad OCR in the Marble Substation.



# Scholarships Available for 2023

Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative and our generation and transmission cooperative, Basin Electric, are once again investing in area youth as we enter the new year. Applications are now being accepted for the Basin Electric and Lyon-Lincoln Electric scholarship programs.

Basin Electric is headquartered in Bismarck, ND, and operates the power plants and generation resources that provide electricity to more than 140 member co-ops across 9 different states, including Lyon Lincoln Electric Co-op. Every year, Basin Electric awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a high school senior or college student from each of its member co-ops. Lyon-Lincoln Electric is a member cooperative of Basin Electric and has been offering this \$1,000 scholarship to students in our service territory for the past 30 years. Basin Electric has awarded more than 5,000 scholarships worth more than \$5 million since the scholarship program began three decades ago.

Lyon-Lincoln Electric has also offered its own scholarship in conjunction with the Basin Electric scholarship program. Lyon-Lincoln Electric offers a \$500 scholarship to

each of the schools in our service area, through our Operation RoundUp Program.

Your local co-ops offer scholarships because it is the cooperative way. Locally owned and operated electric cooperatives were created by members of our local communities to serve our communities. Scholarships are a way for cooperatives to invest



in the students who will be the future leaders of our co-ops and our communities. Applying for both scholarships is easy. Students simply need to complete one Basin Electric scholarship application to be eligible for both scholarships. The scholarship application can be found on the Lyon-Lincoln Electric website by visiting:

<https://llec.coop/llec-scholarships>

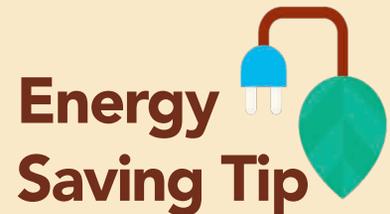
Applications can also be requested from the co-op office or through your high school guidance counselor. The application deadline is February 10th. I would encourage students to consider applying for these scholarship opportunities in 2023. There is no better way to kick off the new year than with some free money from your local electric cooperative!

## Win Money

### Find Your Name & Member Number and Win \$

The tradition of listing member names and numbers in the newsletter continues in the Cooperative Connections. If you find your name and member number, call the office and let us know and you will receive a \$20 energy credit.

In last month's Cooperative Connections, Janelle Gawarecki & Doug Maeyaert spotted their names and will receive an energy credit. Once again, there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck!



## Energy Saving Tip

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: energy.gov

### YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

	August- 2021	August- 2022
Total Revenue	\$6,893,191	\$7,189,865
Cost of Power	\$3,984,290	\$3,892,394
Operating Expenses	\$2,912,499	\$3,010,284
Operating Margins	\$(3,598)	\$287,187
KWH's Purchased	63,851,133	67,295,844
Services in Place	4,130	4,121
Miles of Line	1,670	1,670
Revenue per Mile	\$4,128	\$4,305



LeRoy Iedema, Richard Ringling and Duane Strand crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year from their 12x10-foot workshop in Platte. Photo by Billy Gibson

## Duane Strand gets lots of 'smileage' out of making toy cars for children

**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

Frustrated moms across the ages have been searching for a surefire method for getting an unruly child to simmer down.

Duane Strand is pretty sure he's found a failsafe solution: toy cars.

Several years ago, Strand began building tiny wooden cars in his nondescript backyard shed in Platte. He recalls visiting Pierre one evening and having dinner at a local restaurant when a young boy suddenly started pitching a fit and hollering at the top of his lungs.

Strand just happened to have one of the cars in his pocket. He reached out and handed it to the child and was rather amazed at the result. Not only did the whining stop forthwith, but that boy's frown turned upside down as the

kid started beaming from ear to ear.

"He quit yelling right then and there. His whole attitude changed," Strand recalls. "These cars really have a soothing effect on the kids."

That's the impact Strand is shooting for as he and his three-man team of retirees crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year. They're looking to squeeze all the "smileage" they can get out of the toy cars they build.

The main construction crew includes retired farmer Richard Ringling and retired mechanic LeRoy Iedema. Ringling usually works the drill press to create holes in the wood where the axles will go. Then Iedema follows up by pressing the wheels onto the axles. He came up with a way to make sure the wheels roll straight and stay in place and dares anyone to try and pull off a wheel.

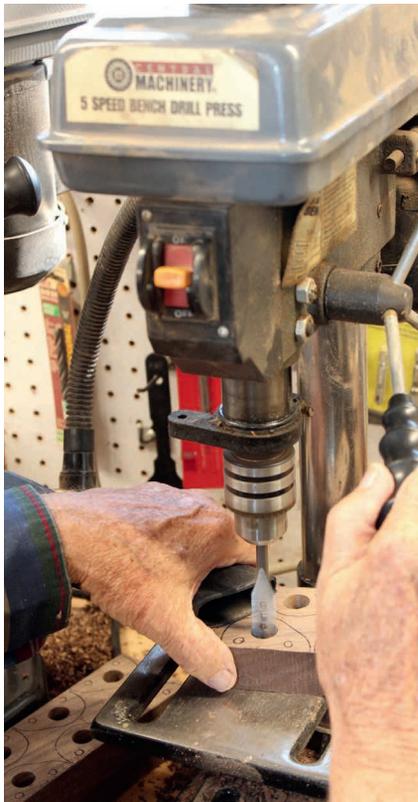
There are others who join in the

process: Justin Kok cuts the wood into manageable blocks; Brett Wynia performs repairs on the drill presses, band saws, sanders, routers and other pieces of equipment when they break down; and Curtis Versteeg helps to sand down the rough surfaces on the cars.



Toy cars are distributed by military personnel serving overseas.

And just down the road from the shop is the Platte Lumber Yard, where many of the material supplies are stored until needed for production. Strand said it was the folks down at the lumber yard who initiated the vital connection with



Dustin Knutson of Boyds Hardwood Gunstock supplies the toy makers with the laminated wood used to create the tiny cars (inset) for worldwide distribution. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Boys Hardwood Gunstock that keeps the operation humming along.

“Without Boyds we wouldn’t be able to do any of this,” Strand said.

Dustin Knutson, a member of Central Electric Cooperative and part owner of the company that bills itself as the largest after-market gun stock maker in the world, is a Shriner with a heart for community service and said he was all-in when Strand approached him about supporting the program by supplying excess wood.

“They’re really easy to work with,” he said, noting that he keeps one of the cars on his desk. “They take whatever they can get and they show up consistently. We started saving off-cut blocks of wood specifically for the cars. The laminated wood works well because it’s colorful and looks good and the kids can pick out their favorite one.”

Strand’s distribution system is a bit scatter shot but he still manages to send them all over the globe. Anyone he knows who is planning a trip gets a supply of cars. Knutson, for instance, takes them with him when he travels for business or pleasure, whether vacationing in Mexico or hunting in Africa.

“People in America may think these are just simple toys, but I’ve been in parts of the world where a toy for a kid is a stick and a rock,” Knutson said. “But these little cars give kids something to smile about. Duane and his guys are just beautiful people doing good things for the good of humanity and we’re happy to help them any way we can.”

The toys also ride along in ambulances, military satchels and police vehicles in the event a child needs to be calmed. They show up in doctor’s offices, churches and other venues.

The operation is affiliated with a group called Toys for God’s Kids, a non-denominational organization based in Denver. Strand is the only affiliated “smile maker” in South Dakota.

While the three-man crew claims they’re working harder than they used to before retiring, Iedema assigns a greater value to his toil beyond the opportunity to put a smile on a kid’s face. He said his heart doctor has informed him that he’s in better shape than before he started woodworking three years ago. He’s slimmer, more active and feels a lot better.

Strand chips in, “...yeah, and he’s



more ornery than ever, too!”

Collectively, the guys crank out about 250 cars a day scrunched inside the 12 x 10-foot shed. Each unit has to be dipped in linseed oil to protect children from any potential toxicity. The toys are boxed and shipped to their destination at the recipient’s expense.

Strand doesn’t know how much longer he’s going to be able to keep cranking out cars. He’ll reach the age of 90 in a few months and his friend Ringling has a plan: “I told him when he turns 90 we’re going to take him up by the interstate and take a picture underneath the sign that says I-90. Get it?”

# 'Tis the season for safety

The days are counting down until family and friends arrive for holiday celebrations. You may have a number of items left on your “to do” list before the decorating is complete and you are ready to entertain guests, but be sure to keep safety at the top of that list at all times.

As you prepare for holiday and family celebrations, look for and eliminate potential threats posed by holiday lighting, decorating, and entertaining. Taking these simple safety tips can help keep you and your family safe this holiday season.

## Decorating with trees and electric lights in your home

As the National Christmas Tree Association points out, real Christmas trees do not spontaneously combust. The association identifies overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires as the most common cause of fires.

Make sure that you:

- Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label.
- Check each light strand for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs; and always be sure to unplug the lights when replacing a bulb.
- Don't string together more than three standard-size sets of lights or you could risk overheating the circuit.
- Match plugs with outlets. Don't force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord, or remove the third prong.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Make sure extension cords are in good condition and are UL- approved cords rated to carry the electrical load you will connect to them.
- Also, place fresh-cut trees away from heat sources such as heat registers, fireplaces, radiators, and televisions; and water a fresh-cut tree frequently.



## Increased traffic—including children and pets—



As foot traffic in your home increases over the holidays the importance of keeping electric cords out of high-traffic areas also raises.

- Do not run cords through doorways; staple, nail, or tack them to the wall; or hide them under rugs or carpets.
- Do not let children or pets play with light strands for electrical decorations.
- Position your tree's lights away from the bottom of the tree where pets can reach them. Some pets climb up or into trees and can even knock them over.



**While you're busy in the kitchen preparing your family's holiday feast, you can also help keep your family safe and your energy bills low.**

According to the National Fire Protection Agency, cooking equipment is the cause of approximately 40 percent of home structure fires. As you prepare to show off your cooking and baking skills this holiday season, remember the following tips to avoid shocks or fires:

- Inspect all small appliances and electric cords to make sure they are in good condition before use. Don't use appliances if cords are cracked or frayed.
- Read the operating instructions of any appliance before use.
- When purchasing new kitchen appliances, look for UL-Listed appliances with automatic shut-off features.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance, such as a blow dryer, microwave or toaster oven, into a single outlet.
- Stay focused and attentive to baking, brewing, and simmering foods.
- Make sure outlets near sinks are equipped with properly tested ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's) to prevent shocks.
- Always know the location of a working fire extinguisher, and know how to operate it.

These steps are easy to follow and come at no extra cost. Making a habit out of them will save you both energy in your whole home and money on your electric bill.

**Holiday LIGHTING Safety**

- Use holiday lights that are certified by a safety testing lab such as UL.
- Before using, check each strand for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs.
- Always unplug lights before leaving your home or going to bed.
- Do not string more strands together than recommended by the manufacturer.



# CHANGING YOUNG LIVES

The Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

## Treatment center helps young people get back on the right path

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

It was a small compliment, but it meant everything to the young lady who wasn't quite accustomed to receiving positive reinforcement. A simple affirmation spoken softly and sincerely into her ear: "You're gorgeous, and you're worthy." And the tears began to flow.

The Indian Health Service Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse and find the support they need to deal with difficult situations.

Acting Clinical Director Charita Dowdell remembers that encounter with the young woman.

"I tell all of our residents how gorgeous they are and that I see the beauty in them and who they are deep down inside," Dowdell said. "I told her she was worthy and that she had value,

and she just broke down. She told me that nobody had ever said that to her."

That's just one of the stories about how the treatment center's staff strive to change the lives of teens who enter the program. There are many others.

Program Director Lavon Booth has been involved with the residential program for 20 years, initially as an administrative officer when she started in 2002. She previously served at the Cheyenne River Service Unit in her hometown of Eagle Butte before starting at the YRTC.

She sees the transformation of residents captured in plain view during graduation ceremonies that take place when the 12-week session concludes.

"We're very fortunate to see the change that happens in our residents from the time they arrive until the time they graduate," she said. "We see them moving in a positive direction and at graduation we get to hear them speak intimately about what they've learned and you see how it all comes together.

They come in very shy and reserved, and they leave here carrying a more positive spirit and more confidence. It's really touching for us and very rewarding."

The treatment center is housed in the old Chief Gall Inn hotel on land leased from the Standing Rock tribe. Youth between the ages of 13 and 17 are referred through tribal alcohol programs, local schools, community service organizations and other agencies.

According to the center's mission statement, the program "is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle restoring balance and harmony in mind, body and spirit to our American Indian youth and their families."

Dowdell said playing a role in watching that mission statement come true to life in the form of changed behaviors and more positive attitudes makes her know she's definitely making a profound difference.

One effective modality is a mentoring program where residents taking part in the rehabilitation process shepherd those who are just entering the facility. Not only do the incumbent residents show the newbies around the physical



The youth treatment center is located in the former Chief Gall Inn hotel near Mobridge. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

space, but they also listen to their concerns, answer questions and try to allay their fears that stem from living in a new environment with certain rules, guidelines and expectations.

“When they start feeling homesick or afraid or stressed and they just need someone near their age to talk to, it helps them make the adjustment so they can settle down and focus on what they need to do to make changes. That bond is something that actually helps both of them get through and graduate successfully,” she said.

Dowdell noted there is a concern among staff about residents returning to a challenging environment. So, upon graduation, the youth receive support through a tracking system where staffers make regular check-in calls after three days, three months, six months and a year. A tele-health network is also

available to the graduates.

Role-playing also helps re-integration, Dowdell said. She added that the residents are taught to anticipate the same kind of challenges they faced before and how to handle them with a different approach.

“They return as a changed person, but everybody else around them will be doing the same things,” she said. “We tell them to stay connected to their support system and manage their emotions; how to be true to yourself while being respectful to others. We prepare them for what life is going to look like when they leave.”

She mentioned one particular youngster who entered the program with a defiant attitude and dealing with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. She knuckled down academically and caught up to her class grade. After

graduation, she returned to juvenile detention for seven months. But in the end, she straightened out her life by applying the things she learned at the center.

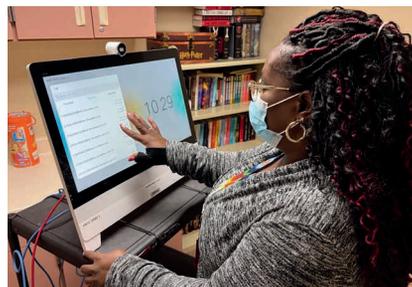
“She struggled with treatment, but she sent us a letter thanking us for what the program did for her,” Dowdell said. “She said she was grateful for giving her the skills to manage the difficult predicament she was going through. She changed her mentality and grew and matured and became a new person.”

Dowdell stressed that parents can play a key role in helping their children navigate through rehabilitation or prevent them from becoming a candidate in the first place.

“Listen to your children,” she emphasized. “They are saying something to you, but often they don’t feel like they’re being heard. Before you shut that door, listen to what they’re saying. You may have to shut the door anyway, but at least take the time to listen to what they have to say.”

Visit [www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities/greatplainsyrct/](http://www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities/greatplainsyrct/).

Lavon Booth, left, and Charita Dowdell, work to provide students the skills they need to change the direction of their lives.



**A Storm is Always Ready**

**ARE YOU?**



When Mother Nature threatens a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

**YOUR KIT SHOULD INCLUDE:**



Bottles of water  
Nonperishable food  
Portable phone charger  
Flashlights  
Batteries  
Can opener



First-aid supplies  
Hand sanitizer  
Prescriptions  
Pain reliever  
Warm clothing  
Blankets



Battery-operated radio  
Toys, books and games  
Important documents  
Money  
Baby supplies  
Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure batteries are fresh and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

Learn more at:



# Stay safe during severe Winter weather

## Ice and other severe winter weather can result in power outages

When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur. Roadways can be dangerous. Do all you can to prepare your pantry, home and car for the next severe winter storm. Once you are ready, watch and listen for weather bulletins mentioning winter storms, blizzard warnings or windchill dangers.

**Supplies for the storm:** At home, have enough nonperishable food, water and medical supplies/medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing one gallon of water per person per day. Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charger sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them as well. Also have these items ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets and warm clothing.

**Readying the house:** Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Gary L. Crowley - 674200. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

**Prepare your vehicle with an emergency kit:** According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs) and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

**Prepare your vehicle:** Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

Know that when the power goes out, we work hard to restore it safely and efficiently.

*For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).*

# Protect Yourself From Cyber Risks

In today's digital world, cyberattacks are nothing new.

When we hear about massive data breaches, it can feel overwhelming and lead us to think we're powerless to stop cyber criminals. Fortunately, there are simple steps we can take to safeguard our devices and data.



## UPDATE SOFTWARE

It may seem obvious, but regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure. Most companies provide automatic updates & will send reminders so you can easily install the update. If you're not receiving automatic software updates, set a reminder to do so quarterly. Remember that updates come from apps & not from emails or social media links. If you get an email saying you have a software update, check the app's website to verify if there is one available. Use good judgement & always think before you click.

## RECOGNIZE & REPORT PHISHING ATTACKS

Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. The signs of a phishing attack can be subtle, so take the extra time to thoroughly inspect emails. Most phishing emails include offers that are too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings & poorly crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from. Most platforms like Outlook, Gmail & Mac Mail allow users to report phishing emails. If you suspect a phishing attempt, take an extra minute to report it.

## ENABLE MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account. This second step could include an extra PIN, answering an extra security question, a code received via email or a secure token. Regardless of the type of authentication, this additional step makes it twice as hard for cyber criminals to access your account. Not every account offers multi-factor authentication, but it's becoming increasingly popular and should be utilized when available.

## USE STRONG PASSWORDS

Remember, passwords are the "keys" to your personal home online. Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex. Never reuse passwords for multiple accounts & use a combo of upper- & lower-case letters, numbers & special characters. A new practice for creating strong passwords includes using a passphrase. A passphrase is usually longer than a typical password & includes at least 14 characters with spaces between words. Since passphrases are longer & composed of more characters, they are stronger than typical passwords. If you have a lot of accounts, consider using a password manager to store them easily and securely in one place.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth in LaCroix Hall at the Black Hills Stock Show to win an electric snow blower!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**December 15-18, 2022**  
**Christmas at the Cathedral**  
521 N Duluth Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-988-3765

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. 25**  
**Olde Tyme Christmas Kick-off and Parade**  
Hill City, SD

**NOV. 25**  
**"Light up the Night" Parade and Fireworks**  
Belle Fourche, SD

**NOV. 25-26**  
**Kris Kringle Kraft Fair**  
Hill City, SD

**NOV. 26**  
**Gregory Mid-Winter Fair**  
Gregory Auditorium  
Gregory, SD  
605-830-9778

**DEC. 2-3**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
Mueller Center  
Hot Springs, SD  
605-745-4140

**DEC. 3**  
**Santa's Thrift Village**  
Minneluzahan Senior Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-1887

**DEC. 3**  
**Tabor's Holiday Light Parade**  
Tabor, SD  
605-660-0274

**DEC. 3**  
**60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale**  
Central States Fair Grounds,  
Rapid City, SD  
605-343-0710

**DEC. 3**  
**Julefest 2022: Scandinavian Christmas Festival & Bazaar**  
8 a.m.-2p.m.  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 4**  
**Sioux Falls Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast**  
8:30 a.m.-noon  
1600 W Russell St.  
Sioux Falls, SD

**DEC. 4**  
**Hartford Hometown Christmas**  
Hartford, SD  
www.hartfordhtc.com

**DEC. 4**  
**Walk Through Bethlehem**  
United Methodist Church  
Webster, SD  
605-345-3747

**DEC. 10**  
**Frontier Christmas**  
Fort Sisseton Historic State Park  
Lake City, SD  
605-448-5474

**DEC. 15-18**  
**Christmas at the Cathedral**  
521 N Duluth Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-988-3765

**DEC. 17**  
**Custer Christmas for Kids**  
Custer High School  
Custer, SD  
custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com

**JAN. 14**  
**Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament**  
Registration Starts at 1 p.m.  
\$80 for a four-person team  
Meadowood Lanes  
Rapid City, SD  
605-393-2081

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