

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Barb Gross, Adele Enright
and Jean Tehle have all
worked hard to facilitate
free and fair elections
for registered voters
in Dewey County

Poll tenders rock the vote

Election workers are
dedicated to the task
Pages 8-9

Freshman Impact teaches sound decision making

Pages 12-13

Maintaining reliable and affordable electric prices

Inflation is something that everyone is experiencing, and your electric cooperative is no different. Everything that we purchase is more expensive than last year and the lead times to receive the material is definitely longer than what we were experiencing last year. This is something that will show up in the 2023 budget and we will look for ways to limit the impact they have on our electric rates. We are in the middle of a cost of service and rate study that will look at these impacts and provide us with rate options as we look towards the future. The study should be completed by the end of the year, and we will share the results in an upcoming newsletter.

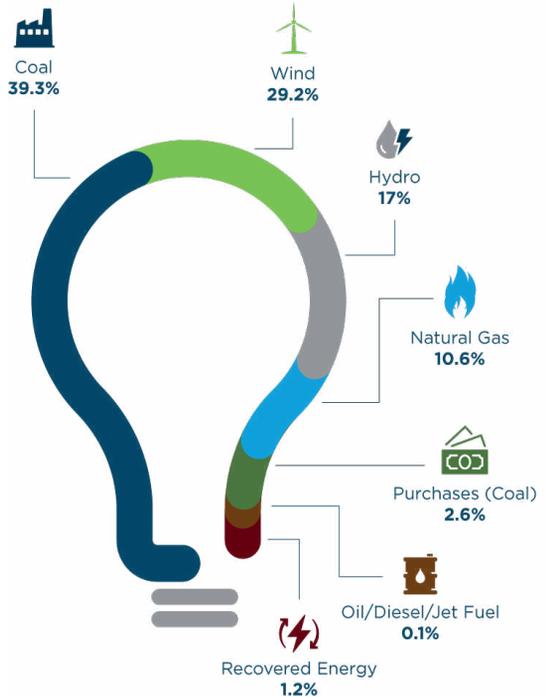


Tim O'Leary
General Manager

Lyon-Lincoln Electric is not the only utility that is dealing with these issues. The Energy Information Administration (EIA), the federal organization that tracks everything to do with all forms of energy, has indicated residential electric prices are up 7.5% from 2021 as the average price in 2022 reaches \$0.148/kwh. For 2023, EIA is projecting an increase to \$0.1524/kwh for the average rate. If the EIA's projection is accurate, that would indicate an increase of 16% in electric prices over the last four years. Locally, our rates have been the same since January 1, 2017.

The article indicated that one of the largest factors in the increase was the cost of natural gas. Natural gas generates 37% of electricity across the U.S. The electric generation mix will continue to change as more renewable energy projects are developed and coal fired generation is retired.

In 2021, our power supply came from the following resources: 39.3% coal, 29.2% wind, 17% large hydro, 10.6% natural gas, 2.6% coal purchases, .1% oil/diesel/jet fuel, and 1.2% from recovered energy.



Our power comes from a number of different resources, and we will continue to advocate for an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to electric generation. We feel that this is the best way to maintain reliable and affordable electric prices for our member-owners.

Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP)- Creating a Culture of Safety

The RESAP program is an ongoing process and consists of leadership commitment to safety, review of performance measurements, a safety health check, verification and observation and a safety improvement plan. Every 3 years, we have an outside group of cooperative employees come in and look at our facilities and verify our safety documents/programs.

An unannounced visit took place on August 24th where the group completed their onsite observation and verification. Once the visit was complete the group met to discuss what they had observed and rated us on 16 categories. I am happy to report that LLEC had a very positive report. We received a strong performance in 6 categories and satisfactory performance in the other 10. In the report, we were provided with examples of where we exceeded the standards and areas that we met the performance standards, but we could improve with making some changes. We were very happy with the results with the understanding that we must continue to make decisions that reflect a fundamental and unwavering commitment to safety at all levels of the cooperative.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

LYON-LINCOLN ELECTRIC

(ISSN 1540-6989)

Board of Directors

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 Kathleen Schreurs, Tyler – Sec./Treas.
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 Galen Grant, Russell
 Mary Gunnink, Lake Benton
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 Sam Rohde – Apprentice Lineman
 Wade Thooft – Operations Staff Assistant
 Alan Fischer – Warehouse Coordinator/Work Order Clerk

www.llec.coop

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Jessica Gums, Editor

SMALL CHANGE THAT CHANGES LIVES

Operation RoundUp



The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Trust, Inc. was held Aug. 30th, 2022. The board reviewed applications and the following grant requests were approved. The next meeting will be held Nov. 29th, 2022. Applications for grants can be found at www.llec.coop under the “Your Cooperative” tab. The next round of applications will be due Nov. 21st, 2022.

Women’s Rural Advocacy Programs, Inc.

\$1,000 towards the Safe Home Support Grant



Child Care and Nutrition, Inc.

\$1,500 towards the Weekend Winners Backpack Program

Tracy Area Elementary School

\$600 towards The Robotics & Engineering Program



Balaton Area Historical Society

\$200 towards the purchase of a public address system

What is Operation RoundUp?

Operation RoundUp® is a program made possible by Lyon-Lincoln Electric members who round up their monthly electric bill to the next dollar. The extra cents go directly into a Trust that is administered quarterly in grants to community organizations. A board of trustees adheres to specific guidelines to ensure your dollars are spent wisely.

A heaping helping of holiday home safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays for cooking, decorating and heating.

Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some helpful tips:

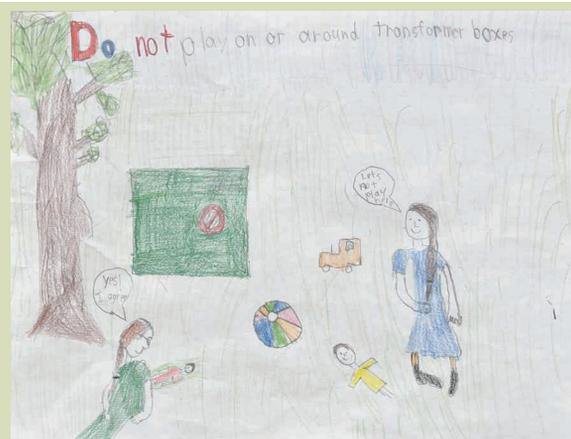
- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet. Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least 3 feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least 3 feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

LINEMEN PARTICIPATE IN RUBBER GLOVING SCHOOL



Roughly 50 electric cooperative linemen from across the state recently participated in a Rubber Gloving School at the Mitchell Technical College training facility. The program included simulating maintenance and repair work on energized power lines, awareness of proper safety procedures, grounding and insulation of vehicles, operation of aerial lift devices and more.

To see a video of this event 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

Traci Tschetter

Traci, 11, warns readers to stay away from transformer boxes, which contain high-voltage underground electrical equipment inside. Traci is the child of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter and they are members of Whetstone Valley Electric.

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.

CROCKPOT CREATIONS

SLOW COOKER CHILI

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 pkg. McCormick Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning
- 2 cans (14.4 ozs. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cans (16 ozs. each) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15.5 ozs.) tomato sauce

METHOD

Brown ground beef or turkey in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Place cooked beef, Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, beans and tomato sauce in slow cooker. Stir until well mixed. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high. Stir before serving. For best results, do not remove cover during cooking.

McCormick.com

SLOW COOKER TURKEY BREAST

Ingredients:

- 2 tsps. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 2 tsps. McCormick Paprika
- 2 tsps. McCormick Rubbed Sage
- 2 tsps. Sicilian Sea Salt
- 1 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1 tsp. McCormick Whole Thyme Leaves
- 1 turkey breast, (about 6 lbs.) fresh or frozen, thawed
- 3 tsps. butter, melted

METHOD

Mix seasonings in small bowl; set aside. Rinse turkey and pat dry. Brush turkey with melted butter. Sprinkle seasoning mixture over entire surface and under skin of turkey. Place turkey breast in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 1 hour on high. Reduce heat to low; cook 7 hours longer or until turkey is cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165 degrees). Transfer to platter or carving board and slice.

McCormick.com

SLOW COOKER MASHED POTATOES

Ingredients:

- 5 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 1 c. chicken stock
- 2 McCormick Bay Leaves
- 1/2 c. (1 stick) butter, cut into chunks
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp. McCormick Garlic Powder
- 1/2 -1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. McCormick Parsley Flakes

METHOD

Spray inside of 6-quart slow cooker with no-stick cooking spray. Add potatoes, stock and bay leaves. Cover. Cook 4 hours on high or until potatoes are tender, stirring after each hour. Remove bay leaves. Stir in butter, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Cover. Let stand 5 minutes. Beat potatoes with electric mixer on medium-high speed or mash with potato masher, gradually adding milk, until smooth. Stir in parsley. Top with additional butter, if desired. Serve with McCormick Brown Gravy or Perfect Brown Gravy.

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.

August Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, August 22, 2022. Directors present were James Rokeh, Kathy Schreurs, Jared Dritz, Galen Grant, Scott Johnson, Mary Gunnink, Sandy Ludeman, and Dale Fier. Also present at the meeting were General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, Finance Manager, Kristi Jensen, and Attorney, Michael W. Cable. Absent was Mike Longtin.

The Board and others in attendance stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance before the meeting was called to order.

President Ludeman then called the meeting to order and routine business was conducted including approval of the July 25, 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 June 30, 2022. The Board was also advised on the 2022 Capital Credit Retirements provided by East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc., a report concerning the Marketing Pool Total for renewable energy credits proceeds that were paid to Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc., and information received from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange

concerning the Minnesota Worker's Compensation Group retention results.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, reviewed with the Board the July Outage Report and advised the Board of a July Safety Meeting that was held on July 7, 2022 concerning the topic of Pole and Bucket Rescue and Emergency Action/Mayday conducted by Shawn Marthaler, MERA Safety Instructor. Mr. Lamote also indicated that the linemen were presently working on replacing 3 phase underground lines and cabinets within 5 miles of the Lynd Substation.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, was not present and therefore General Manager, Timothy O'Leary, reviewed his written report with the Board and it was as follows: The Annual Farm Fest agricultural showcase was held on August 2nd thru August 4th, 2022 in Redwood County. The Cooperative once again participated in the event and shared a booth with other regional cooperatives. Mr. Jeremiason's report also included rebates processed in the year 2022 with 11 LED lighting rebates and 14 heat pump rebates to date. There was then discussion about an increase in bulk postage rates and how it directly effects the cost increase for the Cooperative Connections Newsletter.

General Manager Timothy O'Leary then gave his manager's report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: The Board reviewed the July power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts, looked at line loss for the system, discussed EV vehicles & tax rebates, and discussed the Disaster Declaration given for the May 30th storm in which Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative has filled out the Request for Assistance Form to cover damages sustained in Lyon County. Mr. O'Leary then reviewed with the board upcoming meetings, events, and notices.

The Board reviewed the May Cyber Security Program Report dated August 3, 2022. There was discussion concerning the CFC election and the delegate being elected for CFC District 6, as well as a mail ballot for 2022 CoBank Election for the central region. The directors reported on training sessions and meetings attended and reviewed and discussed upcoming meetings and educational workshops to be held. The Board then watched the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Monthly Video Report which included the Basin Summary.

With there being no further business to come before the board, a motion was made and carried to adjourn at 12:07 o'clock P.M.

Welcoming a new face to LLEC

Trent Skjefte joined the Lyon-Lincoln team in early September, 2022 as a new Lineman. Trent grew up in Granite Falls with his parents and one older brother and graduated college from MN West-Jackson. Prior to taking the new lineman position here, he worked for the City of Redwood Falls in their utility department. When asked what led him to work in this field, he stated “I have family involved in the industry and love being outside and working with a hands-on approach. Trent appreciates working with people that like their job and added “I am looking forward to the variety of jobs that there is to do at the Co-op.” We at Lyon-Lincoln Electric are happy to welcome Trent to the cooperative family.



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, Joe Sudtelgte and Dave Nielsen spotted their names and will receive an energy credit. Once again, there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck!

Statement of Ownership

Each year, as part of maintaining our periodicals mailing privileges, Lyon-Lincoln Electric must file a completed copy of the Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (PS Form 3526) with our local U.S. Postmaster by October 1st. We also publish this form in the first issue of our Co-op Connections after the October 1st deadline, which is why you are seeing it in our November issue.

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Energy Saving Tip

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days.

If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean regularly to boost efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



Jamalia Franzen, auditor deputy in Dewey County, encourages all eligible citizens to register to vote. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Poll workers urge voters to stay active in the election process

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

About 10 years ago, Michele Moore was newly retired and looking for something interesting to occupy her time. Out of the blue, she received a call from the Clay County elections auditor.

“She wanted to know if I was interested in working the elections and I told her I’d do it. It’s been very rewarding and it feels like I’m doing something important and worthwhile,” Moore said.

When she’s not facilitating the election process, Moore takes care of the bookkeeping for the family’s welding and manufacturing business operated by her husband, David.

While election work isn’t a full-time gig, poll tenders put in long hours on voting day. They typically report to the local precinct at 6 a.m. before the polls open an hour later. The shift goes straight through to 7 p.m. when the polls close, although any voters still

standing in line at that time are allowed to cast their ballots. Workers have to stay on duty the entire time and often pack their own lunch and dinner.

After the last voter is done, all the sealed ballots and accompanying paperwork are brought to the auditor’s office for verification and certification to ensure the election is “free and fair.”

Moore said all the workers at her precinct located at the National Guard Armory in Vermillion are diligent, dependable, thorough and conscientious. She said they take their jobs very seriously and are careful not to be “political” in any way, a guideline contained in the orientation and training process that workers go through before each election regardless of one’s years of service.

The training material requires that workers be professional, punctual, respectful to voters, team-oriented and “leave partisan leanings at the door.” Anyone concerned about the validity of the election process can appear at



the precinct as a “poll watcher” or “poll observer,” however, those individuals must adhere to a separate set of guidelines as set forth by the Secretary of State’s Office.

“We’re not here to change anyone’s mind or influence how anyone votes,” Moore said. “We’re just here to do anything we can to help them vote as quickly and smoothly as possible and make sure the process goes well. We try to make it easy for them.”

That doesn’t mean everything always goes according to plan. As the political passions and divisions have grown more intense over recent years, Moore said she’s encountered some fairly tense situations. But she said she generally



Poll workers are on the job from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time. If the polls close while you are in line, you will still be permitted to vote.

Here is a breakdown of party identification as of Sept. 1, 2022:

- Republican - 291,956
- Democrat - 150,760
- No party/Ind. - 142,538
- Libertarian - 2,733
- Other - 1,376

Total - 589,363

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Election poll workers see themselves as doing something helpful to support and facilitate the democratic process.

feels safe while doing her work inside the armory.

Some voters can get upset when they try to make requests that violate the voting rules, such as attempting to change their party affiliation on voting day or not providing the proper identification. She said tensions can run high during contentious presidential or mid-term elections.



“Sometimes people get angry and you just try to calm them down. They don’t know how things work and what’s required because they’re not paying attention,” she said. “Social media and TV stirs up their passion and they don’t always know how to control that.”

She recalled one particular fellow who insisted on voting without presenting the proper identification. When he was

told he would have to use a provisional ballot, he became agitated and stormed out of the precinct. Moore was “a little nervous” about the man returning and what he might do, but she took comfort in the fact that the National Guard soldiers were right there in the building.

Cris Sichmeller, a resident of Webster, signed on to join her local precinct in Roslyn six years ago and enjoys the



Michele Moore

social aspects of the assignment. A self-described “farm wife,” Sichmeller said she doesn’t often have an opportunity to sit down and visit with friends, but being at the polling place means visiting with folks and catching up on current events.

“People used to spend time just visiting with one another, going to houses and having coffee and playing cards, but that doesn’t happen a lot these days,” she said. “There’s a lot of camaraderie that comes with being around people you know in the community that you have something in common with.”

She said at her precinct things normally proceed “without a lot of drama,” but she remembers that the Covid pandemic did cause a few wrinkles. Several workers contracted the virus, along with the precinct deputy.

The workers had to wear face shields, and Plexiglas was set up in the voting area and at the registration tables.

“I remember a man who had just retired from the military and he came in and saw the face shields and just laughed,” Sichmeller recalled. “He said that wasn’t going to keep us from getting the virus or passing it on to others. He said we needed a hazmat suit for that. I guess he was right.”

Barb Gross recently retired after tending the polls in Dewey County since the 1980s. She describes herself as a stickler for adhering to the rules and buttoning everything down.

“We always made sure everything tallied up because we knew we were going to be audited and we invited that because it was a challenge to see if we could pull it off without a hitch and without anything slipping through the cracks,” she said.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett emphasized the fact that poll workers serve a very valuable role in society.

“They’re on the front lines of the election process. You couldn’t run an election without them,” he said.

Barnett stressed importance of voters meeting their obligation to stay actively involved and make sure they are familiar with the rules and regulations. To find out more about voting rights and responsibilities, visit www.sdsos.gov.

No- and low-cost tips to save money at home

Saving money on your monthly electric bill doesn't have to involve a high upfront cost for you. Although smart thermostats and appliances seem to be attracting all the attention, there are many no- and low-cost, do-it-yourself projects that can make a major impact on your home's energy use and your monthly bill. Use the tips below to take your energy efficiency to a new level.

Take advantage of air circulation from ceiling fans.

Circulating the air in a room can make a major difference in comfort while limiting energy use. In the summer, use the switch on your fan to rotate the blades counterclockwise and push cool air down. In the winter, switch to clockwise to push the warmer air near the ceiling down along the walls into the main area of the room. Also, turn the ceiling fan off when you leave a room to save energy; you can only feel the effect when you're in the room.

Stop the draft with weather-stripping and caulking.

A drafty home can cause your heating and cooling costs to skyrocket, but fortunately, there's a lot you can do to improve the situation. Weather-stripping and caulk can be purchased at any home improvement store for a quick, inexpensive weekend project. Use weatherstripping on any movable part of your home (windows, doors, etc.) and caulk for filling cracks and gaps. According to the Department of Energy, air sealing a drafty home can save you 20 percent or more on heating and cooling!

Use curtains, blinds and shades to your advantage.

Did you know that about three-quarters of the sunlight that hits the standard double-pane window enters the home as heat? In colder months, open curtains or blinds on windows that receive a lot of sunlight each day to heat your home. During the warmer months, keep them closed to reduce the amount you spend on cooling.

Make better energy-related buying decisions.

When you need to replace an appliance around your home, like a washing machine, water heater or TV, avoid making an energy-inefficient purchase. By using an online tool to compare products, you can find the most energy-efficient appliance for your needs. Doug Maeyaert - 831902 Even if it costs a little more upfront, you'll likely save quite a bit over the appliance's lifetime. You can also look for the ENERGY STAR® label, that lets you know a product is more energy efficient than others you might choose.



Turn off your lights and unplug unused appliances.

The old adage "Turn off the lights when you leave a room" is great advice for being more energy efficient, but did you know that appliances like coffee makers and gaming consoles can also be major sources of wasted energy? Many appliances, like your cable box or TV, still draw some power while turned off or in standby mode. Standby power on these devices are estimated to account for 5 to 10 percent of a home's total energy use! Consider adding appliances and devices to a power strip to conveniently turn them on and off, and you should start seeing a decrease in your bill.

Ditch your old lightbulbs for energy-saving LEDs.

The standard household lightbulb has come a long way over the past decade. Once a major source of energy use, lighting now only uses about 6 percent of total household electricity. This is mainly due to the growth of LEDs, which use about 80 to 90 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs—and they've also decreased in price by 85 percent in recent years.

Take control of your thermostat.

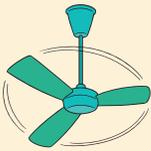
Even if you don't have the latest smart thermostat, how you operate your home's thermostat can still make a major impact on your home's energy use. According to the Department of Energy, turning back your thermostat 7°F to 10°F for eight hours a day from its normal setting can save you 10 percent or more on heating and cooling. If you have a programmable thermostat, you can create settings for when you wake up, leave for work, get home, etc., and the adjustments will be automatically made. A smart thermostat can learn your schedule and preferences and adjust the temperature accordingly.

Using these tips, you can take your energy efficiency to a new level with little or no financial investment. If you want to make sure you're making the biggest energy-saving impact, a thorough review of the energy use of your home is a good way to improve your energy efficiency and comfort.

SAVE ENERGY AT HOME

There are many no- and low-cost, do-it-yourself projects that can make a major impact on your home's energy use and your monthly bill.

USE THE TIPS BELOW TO TAKE YOUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO A NEW LEVEL



Take advantage of air circulation from ceiling fans- In warmer months, use the switch on your fan to spin the blades counterclockwise pushing cool air down. In colder months, spin the blades clockwise blowing the rising hot air down.

Stop the draft with weather-stripping & caulking- Consider sealing your doors & windows to keep air from escaping your home to help retain its temperature. Up to 25% of your home's heating & cooling is lost through small cracks & holes throughout your home.



Use curtains, blinds, & shades to your advantage- In colder months, open your curtains during the day to naturally heat your home. During the warmer months, keep them closed to reduce the amount you spend on cooling.

Take control of your thermostat- Use a programmable or "Smart" thermostat to set your heating & cooling back while you're away or asleep



Turn off your lights & unplug unused appliances- Consider adding "stand-by" appliances & devices to a power strip to conveniently turn them on & off to save on energy use.



Ditch your old lightbulbs for energy-saving LEDs- LED lightbulbs use about 80-90% less energy and last 10 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.



Make smart, energy-efficient purchases- When it's time to purchase new appliances, look for models with the ENERGY STAR® label, which lets you know a product is more energy-efficient than others you might choose.



YEAR-TO-DATE COMPARISON

	June- 2021	June- 2022
Total Revenue	\$4,336,342	\$4,671,180
Cost of Power	\$2,469,360	\$2,387,677
Operating Expenses	\$1,944,833	\$1,990,235
Operating Margins	\$(77,851)	\$293,268
KWH's Purchased	41,233,139	45,372,516
Services in Place	4,130	4,133
Miles of Line	1,670	1,670
Revenue per Mile	\$2,597	\$2,797

August 2022 Outage Report

(10 or more consumers)

8/2/22 - 34 consumers were off 1 hour and 55 minutes in Lynd & Lake Marshall Townships. The cause was an open OCR from lightning.

8/30/22 - 153 consumers were off 3 hours and 5 minutes in Fairview, Grandview, and Lake Marshall Townships. The cause was an underground fault.

SOUND DECISIONS

Central Electric lineman Cody Riggs uses a hot stick to simulate de-energizing a power line during a Freshman Impact emergency exercise at Hanson High School in Alexandria. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Freshman Impact program promotes sound safety practices for students

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The students at Hanson High School were stunned and aghast at the horrific scene unfolding right before their eyes.

There were two wrecked sedans, a downed utility pole and tangled wires strewn across the road. Emergency responders were swarming everywhere as a fire truck barreled onto the scene with its sirens blaring. And the most unsettling sight of all: four of their fellow students lying in the crumpled cars with massive wounds and barely clinging to life.

Fortunately, it turns out the accident scene was just a drill staged by a group known as Freshman Impact: Caught in the Moment, and coordinated as part of Cornbelt Program Day at the school located in Alexandria.

Nearly 200 students came from surrounding schools for a full slate of

learning opportunities centered around vehicle safety, first aid, emergency response, drug abuse awareness and much more. Participating schools were Hanson High School, Armour, Bridgewater-Emery, Ethan, Marion, McCook Central, Plankinton and Wessington Springs.

Local organizers Yolanda Price and Don Huber worked with Freshman Impact Executive Director Rick McPherson, local school officials and emergency response agencies to plan the event.

The morning session included seven separate stations scattered throughout the school's parking lot and in the gymnasium. The learning stations focused on the following subjects: teen mental health; healthy relationships; jaws of life and ambulance demonstration; seatbelt awareness; drug dog; social media dangers; and a distracted driving course where the



West River Electric is one of several electric cooperatives that support the Freshman Impact program.

students wore goggles simulating drug and alcohol impaired vision and attempted to navigate a short course behind the wheel of an ATV.

Taking part in the program was Central Electric Cooperative, which provided the downed power pole and wires. Once the emergency exercise was set into motion, two co-op linemen promptly arrived on the scene to de-energize the lines and worked with other responders to secure the area and form a safe perimeter.

Central Electric's Manager of Communications Tara Miller helped



A Hanson High School student takes on the role of an accident victim during a recent mock emergency scenario. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

facilitate the partnership while working alongside local organizers.

“This is an incredible opportunity for area students to learn about good decision-making, safety and the real dangers that are out there,” Miller said. “Concern for community is one of our guiding principles as a cooperative. This experience serves to educate first responders and students. It aligns with our values, and we are pleased to support it.”

The day’s program covered just about all the bases. The schedule included a poignant perspective of loss and grief from LeAnn Moe, who lost her teenage daughter to an automobile accident. During the mock accident response, one of the crash victims was carried away in a hearse furnished by a local funeral

home. And after all the activity settled down outside, the students returned to the gymnasium to observe a mock legal trial and sentencing hearing over the car accident they had witnessed.

The day ended with the distribution of educational materials by CORE (Community Organized Resources for Educating), the parent organization of Freshman Impact.

McPherson said he has found that the teaching method employed by Freshman Impact is successful in driving the message home to students, and they also develop a rapport with local

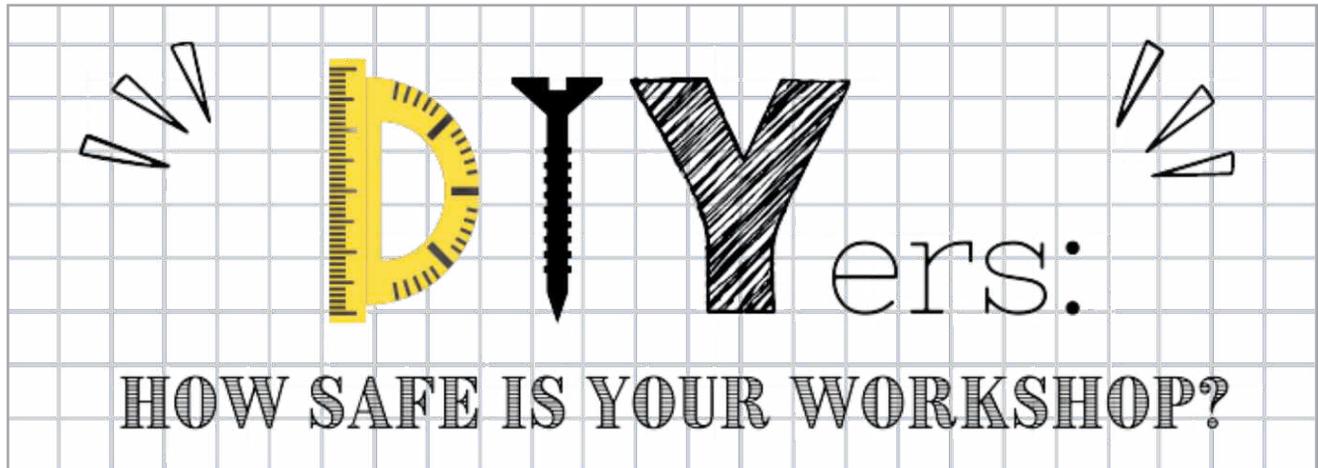
agencies and emergency responders.

“The students see up close and learn through hands-on activities the possible consequences of wrong choices and the lasting effects physically and emotionally on their bodies, their families and friends and their community,” he said, noting that West River Electric based in Wall is also an event sponsor. “It’s all about making safe choices and preventing destructive behaviors, and it’s important our teens learn the life-long skills and values to help them make the best possible decisions.”

Visit www.freshmanimpact.com.

Central Electric Cooperative of Mitchell presented CORE with a \$2,500 Operation Round Up grant to help fund the local program. Pictured left to right are Freshman Impact founder Rick McPherson, CORE Coordinator Yolanda Price, CORE Coordinator Don Huber, Operation Round-Up Trustee LeAnn Moe, Central Electric Director Merl Bechen and Hanson County Chief Deputy Mike Brown. *Photo by Tara Miller*





Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster. You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware and materials, but if you do not put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of a new set of shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen or a trendy shiplap accent wall in the bedroom. Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

Wear safety gear, glasses and gloves

The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Roll up your sleeves or choose ones that are tight against your skin. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended.

Safety glasses are necessary 100% of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. Before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw, however, take the gloves off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.

Observe electrical safety

Before you start any DIY project, inspect all your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around, such as sawdust.

If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.

Keep your workshop clean

Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it. Janelle Gawarecki - 1103200. The byproducts of do-it-yourself work, such as sawdust, cast-off nails and screws, and rags or brushes with potentially combustible or hazardous fluids on them, increase the risk of fires and projectiles.

Keep tools in good condition

Besides inspecting the cords and plugs for electrical safety, everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use. Use appropriate lubrication, such as WD-40 or others specifically created for power tools.

Know your limits

If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

DIYers:



Make these tips standard practice in your workshop.



Inspect tools for damage before using them



Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear



Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault/circuit interrupters)



Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible



Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard



Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on



Use the right tool for the job



Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry



Make sure your work area is well-lit



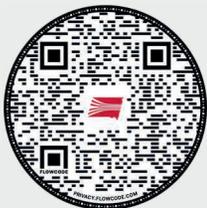
Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords



NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival
& Bird Dog Challenge
 Huron, 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.

OCT. 28-30

ZooBoo
 Great Plains Zoo
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-7003

OCT. 31
Halloween Parade
 Belle Fourche, SD

NOV. 3-5
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Downtown, Yankton, SD

NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge
 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

NOV. 4-6
Girlfriends' Weekend
 Hill City, SD

NOV. 5-20
Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
 Ethan, SD
 605-770-2411

NOV. 5
Fairburn Community Center Bazaar
 Fairburn, SD

NOV. 11-13
Christmas at the Barn
 Front Porch 605
 Groton, SD
 605-216-4202

NOV. 12
Black Hills Meat Festival
 Black Hills Harley Davidson
 2820 Harley Dr.
 Rapid City, SD
 605-390-7917

NOV. 12
Holiday Extravaganza
 Sisseton, SD
 605-698-7425

NOV. 13
Lutefisk, Lefse, Meatball Supper
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-234-6698

NOV. 18-20
Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

NOV. 19
Fall Craft Show
 Minneluzahan Senior Center
 Rapid City, SD
 605-394-1887

NOV. 19
Lille Norge Fest
 Canyon Lake Activity Center
 Rapid City, SD
 605-342-4226

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

NOV. 25
Trap Shoot
 Izaak Walton League
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-9527

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

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

DEC. 2-3
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
60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale
 Central States Fair Grounds,
 Rapid City, SD
 605-343-0710

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

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