

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



CAPACITY  
290 TONS  
NET WT. 20-TON

## River Power Renewed

**Fort Randall Renovations**  
Pages 8-9

**Pick, Sloan & the Missouri**  
Pages 12-13

The Fort Randall Dam is retrofitted  
with new generating units.  
Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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# Annual Report to the Membership

Please join us for our 81st Annual Membership Meeting in Hot Springs on Thursday, June 4th. In the midst of continued challenges of increasing wholesale power costs, wildfire mitigation planning and implementation, and a very windy few days in December, 2025 was a strong year for your cooperative.

## RATES AND FINANCIALS

In spite of a 1.3 million dollar windstorm in December, your co-op had a sound year financially, and we are pleased to report that the independent auditing firm, Ketel Thorstenson, issued an unqualified audit opinion. All 2025 financial goals were met, and targets for the first quarter of 2026 are on budget.

Because we are a cooperative, any revenue that exceeds the needs of the cooperative is returned to its members. Once again, strong margins in 2025 allowed your board to return over \$2,000,000 to present and former members without bringing in any deferred revenue. The cooperative allocated almost \$1.7 million for future returns. Over \$760 thousand of this allocation is capital credits allocated to Black Hills Electric Cooperative from our power supplier and other vendors. Capital credit allocations are not cash. Your individual allocation is an investment in the cooperative. This investment is used for lines, poles, substations, and maintaining the system (and paying for windstorms) to bring electrical service to you and your neighbors.

The amount you, our members, have in your capital credit account is your ownership in the cooperative. Your equity (ownership) amounts to over 45%. The rest of the financing comes from our lenders.

The decision regarding whether to retire capital credits and how much to retire is based on the financial condition of your cooperative. For the past several years, your board has set goals of strengthening the financial condition of the co-op, decreasing the capital credit retirement cycle to get your allocated capital credits back to each member sooner, and structuring the retirement in a manner that lessens the impact for future years as a result of those years that have high margins. Your board is accomplishing those goals.

While increasing the financial strength of your co-op, in just the past eight years, your board has decreased the capital credit retirement cycle by over one-third, from 30 years to under 19 years. During those eight years, the board has retired over 16 million dollars. That is truly significant

considering Black Hills Electric Cooperative has returned 23.2 million dollars to its members since its inception.

Weather and more services resulted in an increase of 3% in kilowatt-hour sales over 2024. Wholesale power costs were 13% higher in 2025 than in 2024.

Maintaining fiscal responsibility by controlling costs while balancing employee development and system improvements is a priority of your board of directors. Controllable costs have increased due to the resources allocated for contracted pole inspections, wildfire mitigation strategies, rights-of-way inspections, tree cutting, record keeping, maintenance, and a competitive employee salary and benefit package. However, even with a competitive salary/benefits package, the total amount of employee salaries per member and the administrative and general expenses per member continue to be among the lowest of all the cooperatives in the state.

Maintaining fiscal responsibility also includes prudent rate increases when necessary. Basin's wholesale rate increases of over 21% over the past year and a half, added to the increased expenses of energy infrastructure and materials, insurance, wages, taxes, and fuel resulted in an overall average rate increase this May of 9.7%.

## OPERATIONS & ENGINEERING

Providing safe and reliable electric service is the primary purpose of your cooperative. Reliability improvements and meeting the needs of future growth continue to be the focus of the Operations and Engineering departments.

In 2025, several major system improvements were completed. A significant renovation of the Moon Meadows Substation, located south of Rapid City, included structural upgrades, new state-of-the-art equipment, and higher-capacity underground cables to support future load growth. In the Deerfield Lake area, four miles of outdated single-phase line was replaced with a new three-phase line, increasing both capacity and reliability. Additionally, the Angostura Substation transformer was upgraded from 5 MVA to 10 MVA to meet increasing demand and future growth in the southern portion of the system.

Ongoing system maintenance remains a priority. All 2,700 miles of distribution and transmission rights-of-way are inspected annually, and pole inspections are conducted on a ten-year cycle to minimize failures. In 2026, over 5,200 poles are scheduled for testing in the Hermosa and Spring Creek areas.

Storms continue to present significant challenges. On December 18, 2025, Black Hills Electric Cooperative

experienced the largest outage in its 81-year history due to extreme straight-line winds exceeding 100 mph. Approximately 96 percent of the system, or nearly 11,000 meters, lost power as trees damaged both transmission and distribution lines.

After the storm damage was assessed, it was clear that we needed help to restore power to our members. A call was made to the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) to request help. We had crews from five different cooperatives answer the call. The responding co-ops included: West River Electric Association – Wall/Rapid City; Butte Electric Cooperative – Newell/Spearfish; LaCreek Electric Cooperative – Martin; Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative – Mission; and West Central Electric Cooperative – Murdo. We also had a local contractor, Kainz Powerlines of Custer, help with the restoration. In total, we had about 60 extra lineworkers and a significant amount of equipment at our disposal. Through an enormous, around-the-clock effort and strong commitment from both our crews and outside crews, power was restored to non-seasonal residential accounts by the afternoon of Christmas Eve, allowing outside crews to return home for the holiday.

Restoration efforts have continued beyond the storm, including ongoing tree removal and system repairs to reduce future risk.

We sincerely thank our members for their patience and extend our appreciation to the line crews, staff, assisting cooperatives, local, state, and federal agencies, and volunteer fire departments for their dedication during this significant restoration effort.

**MEMBER SERVICES**

As we reflect on 2025, the Member Service Department is proud of the progress we’ve made in engaging and supporting our members. Throughout the year, we focused on enhancing communication, strengthening member relationships, and providing valuable programs and services that meet the evolving needs of our membership.

A major highlight was the continued success of our redesigned website, which offers improved accessibility, functionality, and a more user-friendly experience. This platform ensures members can easily access essential information, tools, and resources.

Our commitment to community engagement remained strong as our team maintained a visible presence at numerous events, including Area Meetings, the Black Hills Stock Show, the Black Hills Home Builders Home Show, local fairs, and other gatherings across our service territory. While we did not participate in Co-op Day in 2025, we continued to prioritize meaningful, in-person engagement throughout the year. These interactions play an important role in strengthening our connection with members.

In addition, we continued to support our communities through initiatives such as our bottled water donation program, which benefits schools and local organizations across our service area.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on increasing awareness of energy management strategies, enhancing member services, and identifying new opportunities to provide value to our membership.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

In 2025, we implemented outage management software that enables us to identify affected meters more quickly. This advancement significantly improves our operational efficiency by allowing us to dispatch crews to outages promptly and enhances our system reliability by detecting electrical anomalies on distribution lines.

Cybersecurity remains a top priority for your cooperative. We continue to partner with Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative (REPC), our Generation & Transmission cooperative, to reduce costs while expanding our technical resources for incident response and troubleshooting. This partnership proved invaluable during our Microsoft Office 365 email implementation, a complex undertaking that required additional expertise to ensure seamless deployment and minimize disruptions to employee productivity.

The partnership has delivered additional benefits, including more timely security patches for our computers and servers, along with meaningful cost savings. Looking ahead, we will leverage our combined purchasing power to identify further opportunities for operational streamlining and cost reduction.

**CLOSING**

Your board president and CEO appreciate the dedication of the board of directors and employees for their efforts in meeting the cooperative’s mission. We also thank each of our members; it is an honor to serve you. We hope to see you at the annual meeting!



WALKER WITT - CEO



DAVE LINDBLOM- PRESIDENT

## NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH: PLUG INTO WHAT MATTERS

Safety is a word that shows up in mission statements, meetings and job sites across every industry. At its best, it reflects preparation, awareness and responsibility.

That's where the difference shows.

Electricity doesn't leave room for shortcuts. It demands attention, consistency and respect every day. For your local cooperative, that responsibility is built into the work.

The job goes beyond delivering power. It protects the people who build and maintain the system and the communities who rely on it. Reliable and affordable electricity matters, and so does making sure every crew member goes home at the end of the day.

That outcome takes focus, repetition and a culture where doing things right matters more than doing them fast.

### Built on the Right Habits

Linework is demanding and, at times, dangerous. It's also highly structured. Crews follow national standards designed for utility work. Protective equipment isn't optional. Procedures aren't suggestions.

Before a job begins, it's planned. Crews walk through the work, identify risks and make sure everyone is aligned. Communication stays constant.

What happens after the job matters just as much. Near-misses are tracked, reviewed and discussed to understand what happened and prevent it from happening again. Over time, those lessons build a stronger, more prepared workforce.

Everyone is expected to look out for each other. If something doesn't look right, it gets said. That accountability turns policies into habits.

Contractors working alongside cooperative crews are held to those same expectations.

### Extending Beyond the Jobsite

The work doesn't stop at the edge of a right-of-way. Because crews live in the communities they serve, that responsibility carries beyond the job.

Your local cooperative shares electrical safety information through schools, events and outreach. It's simple advice that helps prevent accidents.

June is National Safety Month. Most electrical injuries are preventable, and small decisions matter.

Leave electrical work to qualified professionals. Don't overload outlets. Stay clear of downed power lines and report them. If something looks off, whether it's a damaged transformer or an open substation, say something.

### Take the Extra Moment

Electricity is easy to take for granted. But the systems behind it, and the people maintaining them, depend on careful decisions.

When a task involves electricity, take a moment. Look twice. Think it through.

That pause can make all the difference.



### "Be safe, lineman!"

#### Renn Ronning, age 8

Renn urges the line crew to stay safe on the job. Thank you for sharing your picture, Renn! Renn's parents are Justin and Katrina Ronning from Elk Point, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Easy & Delicious FAMILY MEALS

## TACO SOUP

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. hamburger, cooked and drained
- 1 28 oz. can red or kidney beans
- 1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes
- 1 14 oz. can corn
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning

### Method

Put all ingredients into bean pot. Microwave for 20 minutes. Serve with shredded cheese and corn chips. Do not drain liquids.

**Marla Gilbert**  
Southeastern Electric

## QUICK PORK CHOP DINNER

### Ingredients:

- 4 pork chops
- 2 tps. prepared mustard
- 2 tps. flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt or Mrs. Dash
- Dash of pepper
- 2 tps. fat or oil
- 1 10 oz. can of chicken rice soup or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup water
- Add onion, potatoes, carrots, garlic powder to taste

### Method

Spread mustard over pork chops and sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper. Brown thoroughly in fat or oil in pressure cooker. Add chicken soup and water. Add vegetables and cover. Set control at 10 and cook 12 minutes or 35 minutes if you add vegetables. Cool pan for 5 minutes, then reduce pressure.

**Ruth Konechne**  
Central Electric

## CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

### Ingredients:

- 12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
- 1/4 cup horseradish sauce, optional
- 12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
- 6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you have 24 squares of cheese)

### Sauce

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 2 tps. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tps. poppy seeds
- 1-1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder

### Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese, replace roll tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. \*These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

**Jerald and Virginia Jensen**  
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Picture by Shutterstock.

## Official Notice of BHEC's 81st Annual Meeting

The 81st Annual Meeting of the Members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be at the Mueller Center, 801 South Sixth Street, City of Hot Springs, County of Fall River, State of South Dakota.

Registration will open at 5:00 p.m. MDT on Thursday, June 4th, 2026. The business meeting will start immediately after the meal on said day to take action on the following matters:

1. Action on the 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes
2. Reports from the Board and CEO/General Manager
3. Election of three directors according to the Bylaws

Pertaining to the election of directors, the following persons have been nominated by the Nominating Committee:

**For the geographical area of** Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties:

**Thad Wasson**  
10251 Echo Valley Ct.  
Rapid City, SD 57702

**Richard Soulek**  
3351 Pinewood Dr.  
Rapid City, SD 57702

**For the geographical area of** Custer & Oglala Lakota Counties:

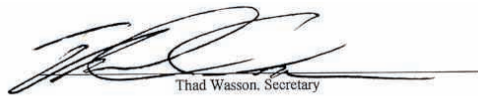
**Alan Bishop**  
14416 SD Highway 40  
Hermosa, SD 57744

**For the geographical area of** Fall River County:

**Dennis Quivey**  
13800 Old Highway 79  
Oelrichs, SD 57763

**Gregory Huus**  
12834 County View Rd.  
Hot Springs, SD 57747

Dated this 17th day of March, 2026:



Thad Wasson, Secretary

## 2026 Annual Meeting

Registration Opens **5:00 p.m.** | Dinner **6:00 p.m.** | Business Meeting **Following Dinner**

**Pre-register by Thursday, May 28th for a chance to win \$100!**

### Ways to pre-register:

**Online at:** [bhec.coop/annual-meeting-pre-registration](https://bhec.coop/annual-meeting-pre-registration)

**Send e-mail to:** [bhec@bhec.coop](mailto:bhec@bhec.coop)

**Call:** 800-742-0085 or 605-673-4461

Each membership will receive a \$20 bill credit and be entered for a chance to win prizes—including a grand prize of one year of customer charges waived.

**A \$540 value!**

## ATTENTION JUNIORS & SENIORS!

We will be drawing for TWO \$500 scholarships for a junior or senior who is a dependent of a BHEC member. Simply attend the BHEC Annual Meeting with your parent or guardian.

The 80th Annual Membership Meeting of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held on May 29, 2025, at the Ramkota Convention Center II in Rapid City, South Dakota. Registration began at 5:00 p.m., followed by the evening meal at 6:00 p.m. All directors were present except Jim Preston. Directors in attendance included Don Andersen, Alan Bishop, Gary Kluthe, Dave Lindblom, Dennis Quivey, and Thad Wasson. The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m. by Vice President Dave Lindblom, who presided in place of President Jim Preston due to a health matter. The membership joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Veterans and active-duty service members were then recognized for their service.

Vice President Lindblom called on Board Secretary Thad Wasson to address the membership and read the Summary of Annual Meeting Notices. Mr. Wasson announced there was a quorum with 161 members registered for the 2025 Annual Meeting out of a total membership of 8,929.

Mr. Lindblom requested a motion to approve the 2024 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes which were mailed to each member on May 8 from Aberdeen, South Dakota. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the printed 2024 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Lindblom introduced members of the Board of Directors, CEO Walker Witt, and General Counsel Tracy Kelley. Special guests, including former directors, past employees, and cooperative leaders, were recognized for their contributions and continued support. Vice President Lindblom addressed the membership, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. He reported that 2024 was a financially strong year, noting that nearly \$2.4 million in capital credits had been returned to members. The capital credit retirement cycle has been reduced from more than 30 years to under 19 years. All financial targets were met or exceeded. The cooperative maintained low controllable costs and high reliability, achieving 99.9995% uptime. Additionally, there were no lost-time accidents or reportable incidents in 2024 or year-to-date in 2025. Mr. Lindblom concluded by thanking the employees, directors, and members for their dedication to the cooperative.

Vice President Lindblom introduced CEO and General Manager Walker Witt to give his report to the membership.

Walker Witt addressed wildfire risk mitigation as the cooperative's top safety concern. He highlighted the cooperative's extensive wildfire mitigation efforts, including proactive inspections, vegetation management, and line patrols. Although some utilities have begun Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), BHEC has chosen not to implement PSPS at this time.

Mr. Witt discussed rates and financial and operational strategies to help stabilize rates and lessen the impact of wholesale power cost and inflation increases. He also highlighted operational efficiencies, record-low bad debt write-offs (just 0.005% of revenue), and strong member engagement. He closed by thanking the directors, employees, and members for their continued support.

General Counsel Tracy Kelley explained the director elections. Ms. Kelley explained that the board of directors had appointed the nominating committee to nominate candidates for the ballot. Ms. Kelley informed the membership that two director positions were up for election. Ms. Kelley reported that postcards were sent to all eligible members in the geographical areas with director positions up for election. One representing Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties, and one representing Custer & Oglala/Lakota Counties. Ms. Kelley explained the appointment of the Nominating Committee and introduced Committee Chairman Robert Hovey. Mr. Hovey explained that the Nominating Committee met on March 7 to consider nominees for the directorships for both geographical areas. He stated that the committee nominated incumbent director Dave Lindblom and candidate Luis del Valle for the position representing the geographical areas of Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties, and Jim Preston and Penny Svenkeson for the director position representing the Custer & Oglala/Lakota geographical areas.

Mr. Hovey thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for their participation, which included Delia Johnson, Ray Summers, Brad Slater, & Lindsay Luper.

Ms. Kelley introduced the nominees and invited each to address the membership. She spoke briefly on behalf of Jim Preston. Luis del Valle, Dave Lindblom, and Penny Svenkeson each shared their remarks with the membership. Following the candidate statements, Ms. Kelley called for the casting of ballots and asked the Credentials and Elections Committee to collect them.

Ms. Kelley then introduced Michelle Fischer, Director of Communications and Member Services. Ms. Fischer gave a presentation celebrating the cooperative's 80-year history. She highlighted key milestones from BHEC's founding to present day. She presented the \$1,000 Basin/BHEC scholarship to Lauren Knapp from Rapid City. Ms. Knapp drew for two additional \$500 scholarships. The winners were Henry Hovde and Madilyn Baker. Ms. Fischer announced that Holly Nielsen had been selected as BHEC's 2025 Washington, D.C., Youth Tour participant. She also encouraged members to sign up for the 2025 Bus Tour, scheduled for September 10.

Ms. Kelley returned to the podium to announce the election results. Incumbent Dave Lindblom was elected to represent Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties. Incumbent Jim Preston was elected to represent Custer and Oglala/Lakota Counties.

Vice President Lindblom asked if there was any old or new business. Hearing none, he entertained a motion for adjournment. The motion was made, seconded, and passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Following the meeting, cooperative personnel awarded several door prizes.



The rotor is lifted out of the generator unit using two cranes. This component of the generator will be reused once other parts are replaced.  
Photo Submitted by USACE

# RENEWING RIVER POWER

## Fort Randall Dam Undergoes Multiyear Renovation

Jacob Boyko

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

A 72-year old hydropower dam in southeast South Dakota is the first of the state's four mainstream Missouri River dams to undergo a substantial retrofit to improve the facility's efficiency and reliability.

Fort Randall Dam, which began operating in 1954, was built near Pickstown, South Dakota, through the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program. The program was included in the Flood Control Act of 1944 by Congress to dam the Missouri River at multiple points to improve the region's water management, irrigation, flood control and navigation while also generating much-needed hydropower. (See Pages 12-13 for more on how the program came to be.) A marvel at the time of its construction, the two-mile-long rolled-earth dam holds back 5.4 million acre-feet of water in Lake Francis Case. The dam's eight turbine generators have a maximum generating capacity of 320 megawatts – enough electricity to power about 245,000 homes.

Now, more than seven decades later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is looking to boost those numbers and revitalize the aging dam with state-of-the-art, 21st-century technology to ensure the facility keeps up with the region's modern energy demands.

Overseeing the multi-year project is Maintenance and Operations Manager Michael Schenkel, who's spent the last 14 years at the Fort Randall Project overseeing the facility's maintenance, operation and planning. Schenkel says while the dam's eight original 72-year-old generators and turbines have served reliably, a renewal will improve the project's operation.

"Like many aging public assets, it's time for reinvestment," Schenkel said. "The turbine-generator units were installed in the

1950s and are beyond their expected service life. We're replacing them to ensure long-term energy and infrastructure resilience."

He pointed out that the USACE got its money's worth with the original generators, saying how rare it is for a generator to last over 70 years without needing a rewind – referring to the process of replacing the stators, or the copper windings and insulation that help convert the turbine's rotation into electricity. Over time, heat, vibration and age can weaken that insulation and increase the risk of failure. Schenkel noted that Fort Randall is the only Missouri River dam in South Dakota that has retained its original stators up to this point.

The scale of the units pose a significant challenge – each unit is 40 feet tall and weighs more than 400 tons, necessitating piece-by-piece transport, assembly and installation. Voith Hydro North America, the company awarded the contract to manufacture and install the new turbine runners and generator stators, began the decommissioning and replacement of the first generator in July of 2025. USACE expects that generator to be offline until November 2026 after installation is complete and engineers can inspect it for any issues. Once the first unit is back online and clears inspection, engineers will give the contractor the green light to proceed. To keep up with hydropower demand and allow adequate flow downstream, USACE's goal is to keep six units operating and two units offline for renovation at a time until the project is wrapped up in 2031.

Schenkel explained how the upgrade solves two problems at once: it replaces aging components in the dam and provides the opportunity to install new, highly efficient generators and turbines to produce more power with the same amount of water.

Fort Randall's original turbines generate hydropower most efficiently with 103 feet of head – the vertical distance between the water levels above and below the dam, determining the pressure at which water moves through the turbine. At 103 feet of head, each generator will produce about 31 megawatts of electricity.

However, due to the region's fluctuating power demands, water

management and other factors, operating in the efficient middle ground isn't always ideal. Schenkel says USACE often operates Fort Randall at 40 megawatts and 119 feet of head – about 4% below peak efficiency.

To solve this problem of lost efficiency, the new turbines being installed are highly-efficient, rated for 52 megawatts at 119 feet of head. This change raises the facility's total generating capacity from 320 megawatts to about 400 megawatts – enough electricity to power more than 300,000 homes.

“We expect to recover roughly 10% more energy output from the same water volume,” Schenkel said. “Essentially free power beyond the capital investment once the upgrade is complete.”

As part of the renovation, USACE also completed as-needed updates to the switch yard, which is the infrastructure that routes power to transmission lines for transport across the region.

Electricity generated at the Fort Randall Dam is managed, transported and sold by the Western Area Power Administration under the U.S. Department of Energy.

As a co-op member, part of your utility's energy mix is hydropower from the Missouri River dams, including Fort Randall, “so this work directly affects co-op members,” Schenkel added.

Looking at the dam's age and efficiency profile – and also being the only dam in South Dakota possessing its original stator windings – Schenkel said Fort Randall was the clear priority. The USACE has begun planning a similar renovation project for the Oahe Dam.

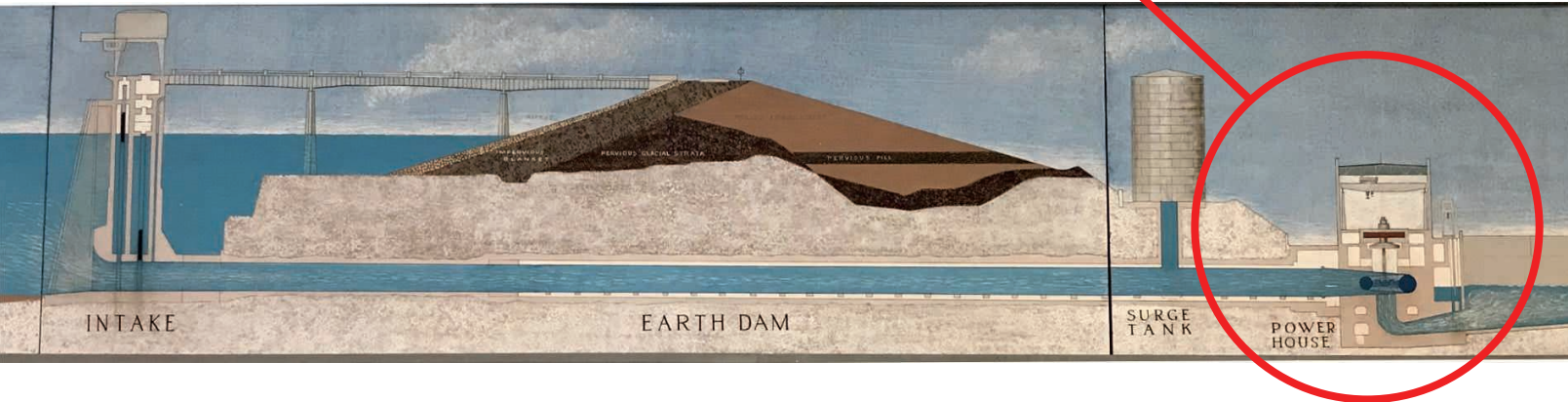
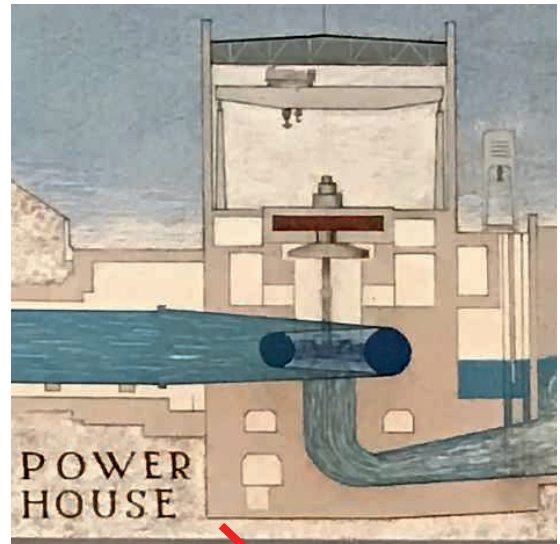
Work at the Fort Randall Project is scheduled to wrap up in 2031 once all eight generating units are replaced.



Above: The Fort Randall Dam is equipped with eight turbines. Unit 6 turbine is shown being removed for the first time since it went online in 1955.

Below & Right: A visual of Fort Randall Dam. Water flows into the powerhouse via the intake tunnel. As the water passes through, it spins the turbine. The rotor, connected to the turbine, spins inside the stator. As the rotor spins inside the stator, its magnetic field passes through copper windings and produces electricity.

Photos Submitted by USACE



# Meet your Candidates

## Lawrence, Meade & Pennington Counties



**Richard Soulek** is a longtime member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative with more than 40 years of leadership experience in finance, operations, budgeting, and customer service. He recently retired as Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Rapid

City, where he modernized financial systems, strengthened budgeting processes, and oversaw multiple operational departments. Rick also held senior roles with Black Hills Corporation and Assurant Solutions, managing large teams and complex financial operations.

Rick has been actively involved in his community, serving on finance councils, school system boards, and nonprofit committees. He has also spent more than 30 years presenting Engaged Encounter marriage preparation programs. Rick holds an MBA from the University of South Dakota, is a CPA (inactive), and has completed extensive leadership and regulatory training.

Rick brings a steady, analytical approach, a strong commitment to integrity, and a deep respect for member-driven governance. He looks forward to contributing to the continued success of Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

**Thad Wasson** was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, including time stationed in Hawaii and a tour in Okinawa, Japan. He was honorably discharged and went on to build his career with CenturyLink, where he continues



to work. His military and professional experience have shaped his strong work ethic, commitment to service, and understanding of reliable infrastructure.

Thad has been a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative for more than thirteen years. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 2020 and now serves as Board Secretary. During his time on the board, he has focused on responsible leadership,

transparency, and representing the best interests of the membership. He also earned his Board Leadership Certificate, which has strengthened his understanding of cooperative governance and fiduciary responsibility.

He and his wife, Michelle, live in the Nemo area and are raising their children there. As a neighbor, veteran, and director, Thad remains focused on ensuring reliable, affordable power and a strong future for the cooperative and its members.



# Meet your Candidates

## Fall River County



**Gregory Huus** and his wife, Joan, have been members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative since 2020. Originally from eastern South Dakota, they later lived in Sidney, Nebraska, where they raised their three children while Gregory built a 42-

year career in the electric utility industry. In retirement, they returned to South Dakota and now reside south of Hot Springs in the Black Hills.

Gregory worked for East River Electric Cooperative in Madison, SD and Tri-State G&T in Sidney, NE, gaining extensive experience in substation construction and renewable energy, including wind and solar. Both organizations served member systems similar to BHEC and were part of the Basin Electric network, guided by cooperative principles focused on reliable service at the lowest cost consistent with sound business practices.

He is active in St. Anthony's Church, the Elks Club, and the Sons of the American Legion. Gregory seeks to serve as a BHEC Director to give back to his community and apply his cooperative experience while representing the members of the Fall River area.

**Dennis Quivey** has served on the Black Hills Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since his initial election in 2014, bringing over a decade of steady leadership and experience to the cooperative.



He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from North Dakota State University and has a strong professional background in agriculture and finance. His career includes serving as assistant county supervisor for the Farmers Home Administration, a loan officer with the Bank of North Dakota in Bismarck, and later vice president of Dakota Community Bank in Mandan. In 2008, Dennis returned to Oelrichs to operate the family ranch, where he continues to be actively involved in agriculture and rural life.

Dennis has a long history of community involvement, including past service on the Oelrichs School Board, Oelrichs Fire Department, Fall River Water Users District Board, and as treasurer of the Oelrichs Rodeo Association. He is also a past member of the Mandan Kiwanis Club and Bismarck Elks Club. His background in agriculture, finance, and rural infrastructure continues to support his contributions to the cooperative's mission of reliable, affordable service for its members.



### ATTENTION BUSINESSES, CHURCHES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND OTHER MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

Member Organizations of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc., such as school districts, towns, churches, corporations, and LLCs wishing to vote at the Annual Meeting must complete this form and present it at the registration desks on **June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026**.

All of these organizational members are entitled to representation and a vote.

Each entity should designate a representative who is an officer, owner, or member of the organization.

### Authorization to Vote

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby designated the delegate to the Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc., Annual Meeting on June 4th, 2026.

from \_\_\_\_\_ whose account number is \_\_\_\_\_.

*Named delegate is authorized to vote on all issues that may come before the meeting including election of directors.*

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE PICK-SLOAN PLAN

## Taming North America's Longest Waterway

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyok@sdrea.coop

In the 1930s, both the upper Missouri River and its home in rural America looked notably different than they do today.

That was a period in which electricity was still a luxury enjoyed by townsfolk lucky enough to have a municipal or investor-owned utility serving the community. As rural neighbors founded electric cooperatives to serve their homes, the once-primitive prairie quickly began to light up. And with that step into the modern age came the growing need for more electricity.

At this same time, the 2,300-mile-long Missouri River passing through seven states in the region was proving to be an untamable, destructive force for the communities and agriculture producers on its banks.

The floods would wreak havoc on riverside cities like Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Mississippi River communities like Memphis and New Orleans during swells, disrupting economic activity and trade. During low-flow years and toward the end of summer, the low water levels made navigation extremely difficult for barge traffic.

These problems had been ongoing. All the way back in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal constructed the Fort Peck Dam near Glasgow, Mont. There, the nearly 4-mile-



long and 250-foot high rolled-earth dam created Fort Peck Lake, stretching 134 miles across eastern Montana and generating up to 185 MW of electricity. Even so, the federal government understood more work was needed to fully rein in the power of the Missouri.

### Competing Visions: Pick vs. Sloan

Lewis A. Pick, an officer with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and William G. Sloan, an official with the Bureau of Reclamation, each had a vision for the future of the Missouri River Basin.

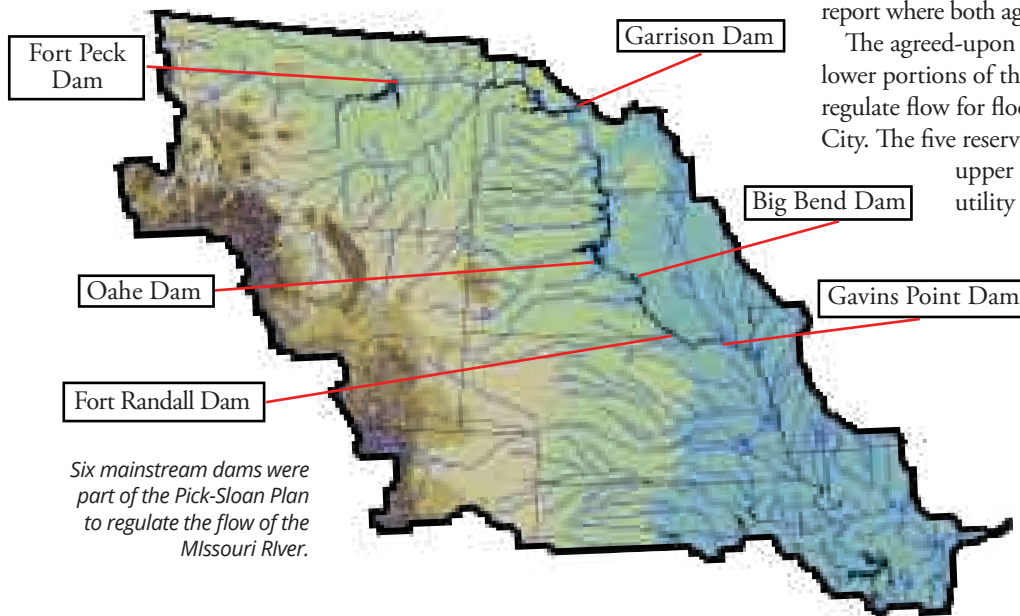
Pick envisioned large dams on the main channel of the Missouri River with a focus on flood control and navigation downstream in the lower Missouri River basin. His plan included five main-channel dams with levees from Sioux City, Iowa, to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sloan, on the other hand, wanted the projects to benefit the upper Missouri River basin, with a focus on water storage for irrigation and agricultural development. Sloan recommended dozens of smaller dams with hydro-electric power plants.

The battle between the USACE and DOR was contentious, but it became clear that no side could garner enough support on its own to pass a project with price tags of about \$1 billion each.

Finally, in 1944, USACE and DOR released a joint engineering report where both agencies' goals for the basin were represented.

The agreed-upon plan would benefit both the upper and lower portions of the basin, with five hydro-power dams to regulate flow for flood control and navigation past Sioux City. The five reservoirs would store water for uses in the upper basin, including irrigation, recreation, utility systems and hydropower generation.



Six mainstream dams were part of the Pick-Sloan Plan to regulate the flow of the Missouri River.



Oahe Dam during construction in 1958. Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

## Fort Randall Dam (1946-1954)

**Location:** Pickstown, S.D.

**Length:** 10,700 feet long – over 2 miles!

**Height:** 165 feet at highest point

**Generating Capacity:** 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 320 MW. (See pp. 8-9)

Completed in the 1950s, Fort Randall was the first of South Dakota's mainstream Missouri River dams to come online, generating hydropower for the region and changing the river from a threat into a resource. The Fort Randall Dam creates Lake Francis Case, named for South Dakota's US Senator and Pick-Sloan advocate Francis Higbee Case. The reservoir can store about 5.3 million acre-feet of water (enough water to flood 5.3 million acres at a depth of 1 foot).

## Garrison Dam (1947-1955)

**Location:** Riverdale, N.D.

**Length:** 11,300 feet long – over 2 miles!

**Height:** 210 feet at highest point

**Generating Capacity:** 5 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 583 MW.

Garrison Dam creates lake Sakakawea, which stretches across western and central North Dakota. The reservoir is the largest on the Missouri River, holding more than 23.5 million acre-feet of water. The dam is named after the nearby town, Garrison. Controversially, the lake flooded the homes of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal nations.

## Oahe Dam (1948-1963)

**Location:** Pierre/Fort Pierre, S.D.

**Length:** 9,360 feet long – about 1.8 miles!

**Height:** 245 feet at highest point

**Generating Capacity:** 7 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 786 MW.

Oahe Dam sits north of Pierre and Fort Pierre, forming Lake Oahe. The reservoir can hold about 23 million acre-feet of water. Oahe Dam has the highest generation capacity, producing enough electricity to power about 600,000 homes.

The dam and lake's name came from the Oahe Indian Mission established more than 70 years before. The mission's site, as well as other communities and tribal lands, were submerged beneath the reservoir.

## Gavin's Point Dam (1952-1957)

**Location:** Yankton, S.D.

**Length:** 8,700 feet long – about 1.6 miles.

**Height:** 74 feet at highest point

**Generating Capacity:** 3 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 132 MW.

The farthest downriver dam on the Missouri, Gavin's Point is a dam essential for controlling the water levels for downstream barge traffic starting at Sioux City on the Missouri River and all the way down to New Orleans on the Mississippi River. The dam creates Lewis and Clark Lake on the South Dakota-Nebraska border, with a storage capacity of 492,000 acre-feet of water.

## Big Bend Dam (1959-1966)

**Location:** Fort Thompson, S.D.

**Length:** 10,570 feet long – about 2 miles.

**Height:** 95 feet at highest point

**Generating Capacity:** 8 hydroelectric generating unites producing up to 439 MW.

The final mainstream Pick-Sloan dam to be completed on the Missouri River, Big Bend Dam creates Lake Sharpe, holding about 1.7 million acre-feet of water.

## The Good and the Bad

A lot of good came from the Pick-Sloan Plan: affordable hydropower for communities throughout the region and water storage to mitigate drought and reduce flooding.

However, a project of such magnitude will also naturally have downsides. University of South Dakota Professor David Swanson says the disruption of

natural patterns has affected ecology for riverside habitats.

Cottonwood seedlings need wet, sandy soil to germinate – without spring floods, it's hard for new trees to establish. Today, there are fewer young cottonwoods growing.

In addition, birds like the least tern that nest on sand bars struggle to find suitable ground, affecting populations.

The reservoirs also flooded more than 1 million acres of land along the Missouri River, some held by private landowners and tribes, and displaced about 6,000 people from land where their families had lived for generations.

In South Dakota, several former communities lay beneath Lake Oahe, including parts of Polluck and Forest City.

Between Chamberlain and Oacoma, American Island was once a statewide destination for boy scouts, with its miles of forest, camp with cabins and bathhouse, racetrack. Today, it sits below dozens of feet of water in Lake Francis Case.



American Island's locally-famous animal statues were moved before Lake Francis Case flooded the island. Photo Courtesy of the Cozard Memorial Library



Tribal leader George Gillette wipes tears as land is seized for the Garrison Dam. Photo Courtesy of National Archives

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## YOUR CO-OP: BY THE NUMBERS

CO-OP STATISTICS	2024	2025
Total Miles of Line	2,754	2,762
Overhead	2,318	2,319
Underground	348	355
Transmission	88	88
Active Services per Mile of Line	4.14	4.17
Number of Active Services	11,396	11,506
Total Number of Employees	27	28

KWH ENERGY SALES	2024	2025
Residential	109,992,218	113,227,382
Seasonal	13,892,317	14,829,934
Irrigation	2,179,721	2,201,900
Small Commercial	23,342,064	23,871,993
Large Commercial & Industrial	10,181,896	10,474,020
Public & Resale	1,486,313	1,509,379
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>161,074,529</b>	<b>166,114,608</b>

# FINANCIALS

CURRENT ASSETS - WHAT WE OWN		2024	2025
Electric Plant		\$95,296,774	\$99,131,638
Accumulated Depreciation		(\$39,891,547)	(\$43,247,406)
Other Property & Investments		\$11,091,083	\$16,670,660
Cash & Cash Equivalents		\$7,559,893	\$2,314,243
Accounts Receivable		\$3,147,541	\$2,999,370
Material & Supplies		\$4,947,080	\$5,337,662
Other Current & Accrued Assets		\$168,510	\$157,999
Deferred Debits		\$76,955	\$72,508
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>\$82,396,289</b>	<b>\$83,436,674</b>
CURRENT LIABILITIES - WHAT WE OWE		2024	2025
Long-Term Debt		\$35,160,671	\$35,019,673
Accounts Payable		\$1,363,973	\$2,633,760
Accrued Taxes		\$475,263	\$453,564
Other Current Liabilities		\$1,004,601	\$1,454,377
Member Deposits, Prepayments & Advances for Construction		\$2,572,361	\$2,168,913
Unclaimed Capital Credits		\$1,038,756	\$1,131,959
Deferred Credit		\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000
Our Equities - Patronage Capital		\$38,080,664	\$37,874,428
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>\$82,396,289</b>	<b>\$83,436,674</b>
REVENUES - WHAT WE TOOK IN		2024	2025
Residential		\$15,784,994	\$16,270,617
Seasonal		\$2,672,550	\$2,829,517
Irrigation		\$352,163	\$363,606
Small Commercial		\$3,152,011	\$3,247,753
Large Commercial & Industrial		\$1,506,425	\$1,576,769
Public & Resale		\$240,490	\$248,261
Other		\$766,991	\$1,077,875
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$24,475,624</b>	<b>\$25,614,398</b>
EXPENSES - WHAT WE SPENT		2024	2025
Power & Transmission		\$11,352,208	\$12,835,245
Maintenance & Operation		\$3,093,676	\$4,362,342
Member Accounts, Services & Information		\$1,100,790	\$1,075,491
General & Administrative		\$1,499,249	\$1,782,148
Depreciation		\$3,092,037	\$3,223,289
Interest		\$1,153,758	\$1,140,818
Taxes & Other Deductions		\$282,863	\$260,373
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$21,574,581</b>	<b>\$24,679,706</b>
MARGINS - WHAT WE HAVE LEFT		2024	2025
Operating Margins		\$2,901,043	\$934,692
Non-Operating Margins		\$424,802	\$343,861
Capital Credits		\$881,045	\$758,740
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>		<b>\$4,206,890</b>	<b>\$2,037,293</b>



**JUNE 19-20**  
**77th Annual Tabor**  
**Czech Days**  
 Food, Dancing, Parade  
 Tabor, SD  
[taborczechdays.com](http://taborczechdays.com)

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.

**JUNE 4-6**  
**Black Hills Quilt Show**  
 Thurs. 5-8 p.m.  
 Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Rushmore Hall  
 at the Monument  
 Rapid City, SD

**JUNE 5**  
**Northern Bull Riding Tour**  
 Prairie Village  
 Madison, SD

**JUNE 6**  
**Bulls 'n' Pulls**  
**Antique Tractor Pull**  
 Prairie Village  
 Madison, SD

**JUNE 6**  
**Sportsman's Bash**  
 Social: 3:30 p.m.  
 Dinner: 6 p.m.  
 Auction: 6:45 p.m.  
 Weston Cty. Senior Center  
 627 Pine St.  
 Newcastle, WY

**JUNE 12-14**  
**South Shore 125th**  
**Anniversary Celebration**  
 South Shore, SD  
 605-756-4130  
[www.southshore-sd.com](http://www.southshore-sd.com)

**JUNE 13**  
**Journey Into Uncovering**  
**Historic Pickstown**  
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Pickstown, SD  
 605-487-7299

**JUNE 13**  
**SGT Colton Levi Derr Foundation**  
**Charity Golf Tournament**  
 7:30 a.m. registration  
 8:30 a.m. start  
 Elks Golf Course  
 Rapid City, SD  
[www.sergeantderrfoundation.org](http://www.sergeantderrfoundation.org)

**JUNE 13**  
**Luce Pioneer Day**  
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Rope & Candle Making, Butter  
 Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking  
 Lake Herman State Park  
 Madison, SD  
 605-880-5077

**JUNE 19-20**  
**Estelline Rodeo Days**  
 5:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin'  
 6 p.m. Rodeo (Both Days)  
 Estelline, SD  
[www.estellinerodeo.com](http://www.estellinerodeo.com)

**JUNE 20**  
**Grace's Gas Guzzlers**  
 Car Show & Vendor Fair  
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 202 Second St. SE  
 Watertown, SD  
 605-237-8005

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Bruce Honey Days**  
 Bruce, SD  
 605-627-5671

**JUNE 24-27**  
**Crystal Springs Rodeo**  
 Clear Lake, SD  
 605-874-2996

**JUNE 26-27**  
**Buckhorn Rodeo**  
 Britton, SD  
 Pickstown, SD  
 605-880-5077

**JULY 2-4**  
**USA 250th Celebration**  
**at Mount Rushmore**  
 Rapid City, SD  
[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

**JULY 11**  
**40th Annual Spearfish Canyon**  
**Half Marathon & 5K**  
 Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD  
 End: City Park, Spearfish, SD  
 Register: [www.nhcasa.org](http://www.nhcasa.org)

**JULY 25**  
**Evergreen Garden Club**  
**Flower Show**  
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Hill City Center  
 227 Walnut Ave.  
 Hill City, SD

**JULY 25**  
**Disability Awareness &**  
**Accessibility Committees**  
**Resource Fair (DAAC)**  
 11 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Minneluzahan Senior Center  
 315 North 4th St.  
 Rapid City, SD

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