

SVE Solar Project

To be Constructed near Brandon Service Center



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/CEO

Last month in my column, I mentioned a solar array project that will be built in Brandon this spring. This is being constructed as a demonstration for the Sioux Valley Energy membership. Many of our members look for ways to offset their electric use with distributed generation from small renewable sources. They look to us for advice and guidance when it comes to selecting the technology, doing a cost-

benefit analysis and even advice on

installation. This is why the board of directors approved the construction of a small solar project in Brandon.

We will have four separate arrays that will total 24 kW. This output is not significant—only being able to meet the electrical demands of two average homes. If you drive by the Brandon service center this summer after it is built, it will be visible from the road. The arrays will be low-profile so it will not block the view of the building. Two arrays will face the west and two will face south. The reason we are constructing the arrays in different directions is to determine which arrangement works the best during our peak energy use times, which could actually be more valuable.

Some cooperatives have built much larger arrays and offered their members the opportunity to purchase panels. We chose to first do a demonstration project to learn more about solar production ourselves. Our employees will be actively involved in the construction, installation and monitoring of the solar panels and racking. This project is meant to be a learning opportu-

nity for both our employees and members.

Once it's complete, our members will be able to monitor the energy output on the Cooperative website. We can envision this being incorporated into school curriculum and used as a learning tool for students.

A significant amount of work has been put into this project already. An employee committee was formed this past fall to survey the membership, conduct research on technology and funding sources, and then provide a proposal to the Board of Directors. The committee did fantastic work and that work is not done yet. A special thanks to Reggie Gassman, Manager of Customer Electrical Services, Amanda Downs, Manager of Accounting, Ben Pierson, System Engineer, Brenda Schelhaas, Manager of Customer Service, Tim Schoolmeester, Staking Engineer and Sheila Gross, Staff Assistant and Communications Specialist and for the many hours of work on this project! We will keep you informed as the project progresses.

Another project that is nearly complete is the new Pipestone service center. We anticipate its final completion sometime the end of March or beginning of April. The new 11,800 square foot facility will include a warehouse and shop space as well as a customer service area.

We plan to host an 'open house' sometime this spring at the new facility. Once we get it scheduled, we will inform all of our members.





A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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Sioux Valley Energy's headquarters, Colman, S.D.

Rock County Opportunities Receives USDA Grant

by Sheila Gross

Sioux Valley Energy requested a \$300,000 grant from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program to supplement its revolving Rural Electric Economic Development, Inc. loan fund. These funds will be loaned to the nonprofit Rock County Opportunities, Inc. (RCO) at zero percent interest, saving the organization approximately \$80,000 in interest fees. RCO constructed an addition on to their existing facility in Luverne, MN, to increase their space for further work opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and related conditions. They provide training and job coaching to their clients and contract with local employers to provide paid jobs. RCO had employed 80 people and the additional space will now allow them to increase employment to 110. This program promotes business growth, new jobs, and community support for those with developmental disabilities. Beth Bartels, Executive Director of Rock County Opportunities, Inc. said, "We are very grateful for the assistance Sioux Valley Energy has provided our organization in securing the loan for our building addition! I was thoroughly impressed with how smoothly the process went from the start of the grant application all the way through the delivery of the check. We are thrilled with our new space and can't wait to grow our business and provide services for more people with disabilities for many years to come."



Beth Bartels, Executive Director of Rock County Opportunities, Inc., accepts a \$300,000 Rural Economic Development Loan Grant from Tim McCarthy, General Manager/CEO for Sioux Valley Energy. Also pictured in the photo are Rock County Opportunities, Inc. program participants Lori B., Mary S. and Casey V.

District 9 Candidates Seeking Open Board Seat

Four District 9 members have submitted valid petitions and will be on the ballot at the District Meeting in Pipestone at St. Leo's Catholic Church on Thursday, March 19. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m., voting

will commence once the meeting has been called to order. Each candidate will have time to speak to members prior to the vote. Below you will find the candidates' biographies. Only one ballot can be cast



Scott A. Crawford- District 9 Candidate

Residence: Pipestone

Current occupation: Sheep Specialist at the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic (35 Years)

Education: Canby Vocational-Technical School -- Feed and Seed Technology

Why do you want to be a Sioux Valley Energy director? I want to see the growth of Sioux Valley Energy as a leader in solar energy. I think it is very important as a Board we can work at replacing old with new and keeping electric prices at current levels. I feel it's very important to work for the members as a Board. I would like to see members save money where they can. I would like to find ways to work with everyone to make that happen. As a Director, I would really encourage and educate members on district and annual meetings. I want to help ALL members understand our work as a Board at Sioux Valley Energy.

What skills/assets would you bring to the board of directors? I work in an office environment. I have a great ability to work well with others, and make decisions when under pressure. I am honest and very reliable. You can depend, count and trust on me.

Additional Information: I have two grown daughters and two son-in-laws. I also have one 18-month-old granddaughter. I have been married to Lori for 31 years. I live on my family farm which has been in the family since 1876. Our family has been members of Sioux Valley since the beginning.



Robert Fritz- District 9 Candidate

Residence: Pipestone

Current occupation: Retired

Education: Bachelor of Arts and Masters Degrees (South Dakota State University)

Why do you want to be a Sioux Valley Energy director?

- I am retired and have the time to serve.
- I feel my experience and management skills will help me make good, sound decisions.

• Sioux Valley Energy is on the cutting edge of many new and exciting techniques. There are many issues confronting SVE such as EPA carbon pollution emissions guidelines, solar power, overhead and underground power line construction, safety and security. We must strive to continue to offer affordable and cost effective electricity to our customers.

What skills/assets would you bring to the board of directors?

- I have the leadership and experience necessary to be a director.
- My work experience was 10 years as Department Head of Livestock Services and the Lamb and Veal Department for Wilson's Packing Company.
- Twenty years working for the University of Minnesota as County Extension Agricultural Agent and Director in Pipestone County.
- After retiring, I worked for six years for Minnesota West Community and Technical College selling educational training to agricultural based companies.
- During my career I managed the National Lamb and Beef Shows for 10 years for Wilson and Co. I also served on the national Barrow Show Swine Committee for 23 years.
- Served on the Sioux Valley Energy Member Advisory Council from 2007-2012.

Additional Information:

- I have lived in Pipestone County for 35 years. I was involved with the Chamber of Commerce, 4-H, FFA, Pipestone County Fair, Special Needs Kids and was President of the Pipestone County Farm Bureau. I am a member of First Lutheran Church and I continue to raise sheep on our farm. In this capacity I will strive to do my very best. Your vote would be appreciated.



Gregg Johnson- District 9 Candidate

Residence: Pipestone

Current occupation: Owner/Operator of Dandy Acres Angus in partnership with son, Neil. Agricultural Sales with Gorters Clay and Dairy (Pipestone, MN)

Education: Bachelor of Science (South Dakota State University)

Why do you want to be a Sioux Valley Energy director? I think it would be interesting, challenging and rewarding to be involved in the management and planning of an important infrastructure in our rural economy.

What skills/assets would you bring to the board of directors? It is very easy for me to talk to people on a one to one basis as well as large groups when necessary; I feel that I would be able to facilitate communication between the members and Board on issues of importance to the members of Sioux Valley Energy.

As a livestock producer I have run my own business through the highs and lows of our agriculture based economy over the last 40 years. I know that business decisions have a wide ranging effect, not just on the business but also the employees and other dependent on its services.

Other Boards and Community Service:

- Pipestone County Planning and Zoning Commission--3 Years, Chairman
- Pipestone County Extension Committee--2 Years, Chairman
- MN Angus Association Board of Directors--9 Years, Vice President
- Pipestone County Cattlemen--Member since start-up, 4 Years Chairman
- Pipestone FFA Alumni--Organizational leader, 4 Years Chairman
- Pipestone Lions Club--1 Year, Chairman

Additional Information: With wife Nancy, we have three adult children and five grandchildren. Hobbies include fishing and stained glass design. I like to spend quality time with family and I follow youth livestock show activities.



Steven Lange- District 9 Candidate

Residence: Pipestone

Current occupation: Owner, Lange's Cafe and Bakery

Education:

- University of Minnesota-Morris-1 1/2 Years
- U.S. Navy- 3 1/2 Years
Aviation Electronics Technician
Vietnam Veteran
- Southwest State University-Marshall-2 1/2 Years

Why do you want to be a Sioux Valley Energy director? My desire to join the Board of Directors of Sioux Valley Energy stems from being a satisfied member/customer for 41 years. My wife and I really love living in the country, in a safe, all-electric home. We appreciate affordable electricity and the amazingly reliable service provided by Sioux Valley Energy. As a member, we have benefited from a number of their energy/cost saving plans and rebates. As a small business owner that is open 24/7, 365 days a year, most of my time has been dedicated to our business and family. With children no longer at home and a manager at the Cafe, I now have time to devote to other interests as well. As a Director, I plan to give back to this stellar organization by helping to sustain and grow its quality and benefits to ALL Sioux Valley Energy members.

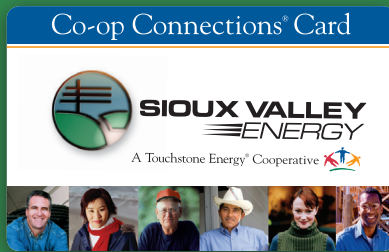
What skills/assets would you bring to the board of directors?

- 41 years as a small business owner of Lange's Cafe and Bakery with 35-40 employees
- Myriad of responsibilities depending on the day, ranging from a dishwasher to a baker to a server and as the accountant for the cafe
- Founding board member and past President of Pipestone Community Foundation--a community partner with the Southwest Initiative Foundation
- Past Board member of the Pipestone Chamber of Commerce
- Founding member and past President of the Pipestone Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Additional Information:

Family: Wife Peg, five children (four daughters and one son), 11 grandchildren (nine boys and two girls ages 3-16)

After accepting the invitation to visit the Sioux Valley Energy Board meeting on January 27, 2015 it was easy to see that the directors play an important role in the decision making process of the Co-op. If elected as your director, I promise to devote time, energy and commitment to the Board. I believe a co-op is owned collectively by ALL members who share not only the benefits, but also in the responsibility of ownership.



Co-op Connections Corner

Madison, South Dakota



Johnson Jewelers, Inc.

Where can you go to find fine jewelry that is affordable? The answer is simple—Johnson Jewelers, Inc. at 108 East Street. You can expect the highest level of service, exceptional quality, and a great value with discounts of 20-30% off regular priced merchandise with the Sioux Valley Energy Co-op Connections Card. Johnson Jewelers is a full-line jewelry store offering repair services, a large selection of bridal sets, and other fine gold-filled, sterling silver and 14-karat gold jewelry. They also have an extensive assortment of costume jewelry. The highly experienced staff can also provide custom design services. Let Greg Johnson, owner of Johnson's Jewelers since 1996, and his staff assist in your next jewelry buying experience for that someone special.



Stan's Men's and Women's Apparel

Do you think you have to travel to the mall to find the perfect outfit? Stop in to Stan's Men's and Women's Apparel located at 105 North Egan—you won't be disappointed! Stan's carries distinctive clothing and accessories for today's professional and casual lifestyle. They also provide tuxedo rentals for your next special event. Purchase any one regular priced item and get the second item half-price with your Co-op Connections Card. Stan's is a family owned business that has served the area since 1946. Owner Dick Fawbush encourages members to shop at Stan's—where service always comes first!



Kolorworks Paint and Decorating

Considering a fresh look to your home for the new year? Let the experts at Kolorworks assist you in your painting and decorating makeover. They carry paint, flooring, window coverings, wallpaper, tile and counter-tops. Serving the area for over 20 years, their experienced and knowledgeable staff offer free color consultations and advice on the best products and tools for the job. Save 10% on paintbrushes or buy four gallons of interior or exterior Benjamin Moore paint and get the fifth gallon half-price when you use your Co-op Connections Card. Owner Kim Ebsen says, "Kolorworks is a one-stop shop that can meet all of your decorating and design needs—big or small."



Nicky's Restaurant and Lounge

Nicky's Restaurant and Lounge, located on West Highway 34, has been family owned and operated since 1975. It has been under the current ownership of Drew and Carol Skinner for 34 years. Nicky's menu offers a wide array of selections to please everyone. They can also accommodate your next party—from company Christmas parties to wedding receptions and dances. Sioux Valley Energy members can satisfy their sweet tooth with a free dish of ice cream when they purchase an entrée and use their Co-op Connections Card. Owner Carol Skinner invites you to stop at Nicky's for your next dining experience. She says, "It's where friends meet friends for lunch and evening specials!"



Power Promotions

Power Promotions, owned by Scott and Deanna Backus, advertises that you've come to the right place if you're looking to promote your business, school, sports team, family reunion, or any event. They have the latest trends and thousands of items that can display a logo or design. Shop their store located at 112 North Egan Avenue to support your favorite local school and athletic team—purchase screen printed or embroidered t-shirts, sweatshirts, stadium chairs and signs. Use your Co-op Connections Card and save \$5.00 on any purchase \$35 or greater.

Additional Participating Businesses

DURING YOUR NEXT VISIT TO MADISON, BE SURE TO SHOP AND SAVE AT THE REST OF THE PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES FOR THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD PROGRAM.

- Always Tan - 15% off all regular priced tanning packages
- Classic Corner - Buy any large pizza at regular price, get a medium thin single topping pizza for \$3
- Dairy Queen - FREE drink with the purchase of a basket meal or salad
- HJN Team Real Estate - \$100 gift card to Montgomery's Furniture at closing-offer to buyer and seller
- Lake Brook, LLC - 5% OFF
- Leader Printing -15% off of your sheet-fed or digital print order
- Madison Chiropractic Center - 10% off charges when paying at the time of service rendered
- Madison Family Dental, LLC - 10% discount. If patient has insurance, 10% discount after insurance pays.
- Madison Instant Printing - Buy one color copy, get one FREE.
- Madison Nursery & Landscape -10% off regular priced products.
- Madison Vision Clinic - 20% off prescription or non-prescription sunwear
- Midway Gas, Oil & Service - 10% off any regular priced service
- Pizza Hut - FREE breadsticks with purchase of \$15 or more
- Pizza Ranch - #1) \$1 off buffet #2) any 2 large pizza carry out only \$9 each
- Prairie Village - With paid admission, buy one train ride ticket, get one FREE
- Salon Etc, Jessica Gross - #1) Free eyebrow wax with haircut #2) Free ambre glitter with longwear polish
- Superior Homes LLC - FREE drafting service with purchase of home
- Wireless World - \$10 off accessories with upgrade or new activations
- Your Peace of Mind Home Inspections -10% off standard house inspection

A special welcome to the newest
Co-op Connection Card Partner:

ARIETIS TAX
&
BUSINESS SERVICES

New clients can show the Sioux Valley Energy Co-op Connections Card and receive **25% off individual tax return preparation** OR **25% off your first months business**. Call Tanya at 605-271-9383 or email tanya@arietistax.com

Co-op Connection Card - Benefiting SVE Members



The Co-op Connections Membership Card can help you save money...

Whether shopping at local businesses or national retail chains, now you too can receive savings on everyday purchases. It's just one more way you benefit from being a member of Sioux Valley Energy, a Touchstone Energy® cooperative.

ATLAS Receives CoBank Grant

by Sheila Gross


L&O Power Cooperative, the Generation and Transmission cooperative providing power to Sioux Valley Energy for Rock and Pipestone counties, submitted a CoBank Sharing Success Matching Grant application for ATLAS of Rock County. CoBank, a member of the Farm Credit System, is a financial lending institution for cooperatives that committed \$3-million in 2014 to match donations by cooperatives to non-profit organizations in their local communities. CoBank's program is designed to partner with their customers to support worthy causes that make a positive impact in communities and fulfill their mission of service to rural America. The grant was approved, and as a result, ATLAS

received a donation of \$10,000 (\$5,000 from L&O and \$5,000 from CoBank). ATLAS is a locally governed, non-profit organization dedicated to providing mentoring, life coaching, and community education for those in need. A recent demographic study found there are over 250 single

parents in Rock County. These funds will be used to establish a program for single parents that includes a curriculum, workbooks, and employment resources in an atmosphere of learning and support. The grant funds will also be used to provide home and auto repair assistance to families. "We are fully invested in the community and we are trying to create a greater awareness of our presence in Rock County," shared Vicki Altena, Manager for ATLAS of Rock County.



Tim McCarthy General Manager/CEO for Sioux Valley Energy presents a \$10,000 check to Vicki Altena of ATLAS of Rock County on behalf of L&O Power Cooperative for the CoBank Sharing Success Grant. Also pictured are ATLAS board of directors (from left to right) Marlen Van Otterloo, Jerry Johnson, and Nancy VanDeBerg. Directors not present are Jean Staeffler, Ken Alons, and Linda Mouw.




SIoux VALLEY ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Sioux Valley Energy 2015 District Meetings

All Members Welcome

Complimentary Meal: 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Meeting: 6:30 p.m.
(District 7 -- Hartford Meeting begins at 7 p.m.)


Menu: Pork chop, potatoes, vegetable, & cookie



Meeting Gift:
\$25 Bill Credit

**Denotes Election Meetings

- Monday, March 2**
- District 4- Location: Madison High School Commons, Madison, SD
- Thursday, March 5**
- District 1- Location: Elkton Community Center, Elkton, SD
- **Monday, March 9**
- District 10- Location: Edgerton Public School, Edgerton, MN
- Tuesday, March 10**
- District 6- Location: Dell Rapids Middle School, Dell Rapids, SD
- Thursday, March 12**
- District 8- Location: Brandon Valley High School, Brandon, SD
- **Monday, March 16**
- District 11- Location: Luverne Elementary School, Luverne, MN
- Tuesday, March 17**
- District 7- Location: West Central School, Hartford, SD (mtg. starts at 7 p.m.)
- **Thursday, March 19**
- District 9- Location: St. Leo's Catholic Church, Pipestone, MN




Want a more efficient lighting solution?

Replace your old lights with LEDs!

Sioux Valley Energy offers a LED Lighting Rebate for members.

\$5/bulb
(*\$100 yearly maximum for each account*)

The LED bulbs must be 60 watt incandescent equivalent or higher and must be purchased and applied for in the current year.



SIoux VALLEY ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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Protect Electronics, Prevent Hazards

Big-ticket electronics, such as televisions, computers, and gaming consoles, are at the top of many holiday wish lists—but safety may not be. Purchasing, installing, and operating these items safely protects not only the expensive equipment, but also your entire home. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following tips, and for more information, visit holidaysafety.org.



Safety tips

- Always purchase electrical devices from a reputable retailer that you trust. Be especially wary when making online purchases.
- Check that all electrical items are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Intertek (ETL).
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before use.
- Send warranty and product registration forms for new items to manufacturers in order to be notified about product recalls. Recall information is also available on the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (<http://www.cpsc.gov>).
- Never install an exterior television or radio antenna close enough to contact power lines if it falls.
- Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit into a two-prong outlet.
- All appliances and cords should be kept in good condition. Examine them regularly for damage, and repair or dispose of damaged items.
- Keep cords out of reach of children and pets.
- Make sure entertainment centers and computer workstations have enough space around them for ventilation of electronic equipment.

- Keep liquids, including drinks, away from electrical devices. Spills can result in dangerous shocks or fires.
- Unplug equipment when not in use to save energy and reduce the risks for shocks or fires. Power strips or surge protectors make a good central turn-off point.
- Always unplug electrical items by grasping the plug firmly rather than pulling on the cord.
- If you receive any kind of shock from a large appliance or any other electrical device, stop using it until an electrician has checked it.
- If an appliance smokes or sparks, or if you feel a tingle or light shock when it's on, stop using it. Discard and replace it or have it repaired by an authorized service provider.

Extension cords

- Extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution. They should not be used as a long-term or permanent electrical circuit.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Only use weather-resistant, heavy gauge extension cords marked "for outdoor use" outside.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords clear of snow and standing water.
- Arrange furniture so that there are outlets available for equipment without the use of extension cords.
- Do not place power cords or extension cords in high traffic areas or under carpets, rugs, or furniture (to avoid overheating and tripping hazards), and never nail or staple them to the wall or baseboard.

Surge protector or power strip?

Although surge protectors and power strips both allow you to plug several devices in one location, it is important for consumers to understand that they are not interchangeable. A true surge protector includes internal components that divert or suppress the extra current from surges, protecting your valuable electronics from electrical spikes, while a power strip simply provides more outlets for a circuit.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International