



*In conflict or in peace, there's one thing we all want:  
to make the future a better place for them.*



**Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperatives**

*The power of human connections*

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# Tradition Links Us



**Audry Ricketts**  
General Manager, South Dakota  
Rural Electric Association, Pierre, S.D.

**Thanksgiving is over** and the Christmas season has just begun. Christmas is a time of honoring family traditions like decorating with ornaments that have been in the family for years, singing carols that have been handed down through the generations, baking with recipes that have been mastered over the years, sending Christmas cards to loved ones and selecting gifts that come from the heart.

From generation to generation the holiday traditions link us all together. The miracle of Christmas is that friends and family grow closer. As I began to write this column, an old Elvis Presley song “If everyday could be just like Christmas, what a

wonderful world this would be” came to mind because cooperatives live Christmas everyday.

First, by adhering to the seven cooperative principles – voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community. The cooperative principles drive the high quality of service we deliver and the success we have had in public policy battles.

Second, by operating with our Touchstone Energy core values – accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community.

Accountability – we give to you reliable, high quality service at a competitive price, dedicated staff and board of directors, a futuristic workplan and a vision for the cooperative, customer focus, strength and responsiveness through a strong local presence and consumer-ownership.

Integrity – we live by the cooperative business model, not-for-profit, own and operate some of the nation’s cleanest and most modern generating facilities, co-op leadership and involvement in the political process and a voice in the legislative and regulatory processes.

Innovation – promotion of high-energy efficient appliances, energy audits, marketing rebates and state-of-the-art technology.

Commitment to Community – community development, revitalization projects, job creation, generous donations to local charities, volunteerism and educational programs for students and consumers.

We give to you a cooperative spirit that crosses county lines and state boundaries. We make our own history. The course of history is directed by the choices we make and the choices grow out of the ideas, the beliefs, the values and the dreams of our members. It is not so much the powerful leaders that determined our destiny as the much more powerful influence of the combined voices of our members.

May God decorate your Christmas with joy and give you an abundance of blessings in 2007.

**From generation to generation the holiday traditions link us all together.**