

Did I see you at the fair?

Touchstone Energy® Territory is a column designed to answer the questions of local cooperative members concerning Touchstone Energy, electric cooperatives and utility issues.

This Month's Question:

I've seen the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives logo this summer at fairs and rodeos. What does that have to do with my local co-op?

Dear Co-op Member,

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand was visible this summer (and throughout the rest of the year, too), as local electric cooperatives joined together under its unifying banner at fairs, rodeos, achievement days and other events that are synonymous with summer.

The logo signals that your local electric cooperative is working with neighboring cooperatives at these events to deliver information and support these local community events.

Stop by one of these booths – whether it was at FarmFest, the Sioux Empire Fair, DakotaFest, the South Dakota State Fair or one of dozens of other events – and

you'll find co-op employees who are ready to answer questions about energy efficiency, electrical safety, water heaters, heat pumps and a host of other topics. And, sometimes, they're giving out tasty morsels grilled on electric grills. If your question is something specific to your cooperative, the workers at the booth will be able to give you contact information for the right people to talk to back home.

Often times the booths will also showcase new and innovative electrical products for use at home or around the farm and ranch.

The joint efforts of the cooperatives demonstrates not only their commitment to community and the local events that enrich your life, but also their commitment to work with neighboring cooperatives to develop resources to provide you the best service possible.

The Touchstone Energy Cooperative banner flew over many rodeos held throughout the area this summer. This is part of an on-going partnership cooperatives have with the athletes and spectators at various levels of this sport. The banner serves as a reminder that your local cooperative is committed to its local community and the people who live there.

Be Aware, Be Safe

More homeowners are embarking on more do-it-yourself projects than ever before. But sometimes, that newfound confidence is accompanied by a lack of understanding of the risks inherent in working with electricity.

Increasing electrical safety awareness and the use of electrical safety technology are key factors in reducing deaths, injuries and economic losses due to electrical hazards. Most shocks and fires from electrical systems can be prevented. Have your electrical system inspected by a licensed electrician. Fix dangerous defects, install smoke detectors, arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and check lighting and home appliances for wear and tear.

What To Look Out For:

The following are some of the signs consumers can look for to address home wiring electrical hazards:

- Power outages – circuit breakers that frequently trip or fuses that need replacement
- Dim and flickering lights
- Arcs and sparks – flashes of light or showers of sparks in your electrical system
- Sizzles and buzzes – unusual sounds from your electrical system
- Overheating – overheated wires can give off an odor of hot insulation; switchplates or receptacle covers are hot to the touch or discolored from heat buildup
- Electrical shocks – any shock, even a mild tingle, may be warning of an electrical danger
- Overrated panel – electrical panels with fuses or circuit breakers rated at higher currents than the capacity of their branch circuits
- Damaged wire insulation – cut, broken or cracked

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Be careful of power lines. Call your electric company if you hit one. Don't get out of the tractor."



Jaclyn Ann Laprath, 6 years old

Jaclyn will be in first grade at Colome, S.D., and is the daughter of Tom and Marcia Laprath, Dallas, S.D. They are members of Rosebud Electric Cooperative, Gregory, 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.

Veggie Good Meal

Spaghetti Squash Salad

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 spaghetti squash,
about 2.5 lbs. | 1/2 cup chopped sweet
red pepper |
| 1 large onion, finely chopped | 1/4 cup vegetable oil |
| 1 cup sugar | 1/2 cup vinegar |
| 1 cup diced celery | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 1/2 cup chopped green pepper | |

Cut squash in half lengthwise; scoop out seeds. Place squash, cut side down, in a baking pan. Fill pan with 1/2-inch hot water. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 30 to 40 minutes or until tender. When cool enough to handle, scoop out squash, separating strands with fork. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Add squash and stir well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Margene Paige, Presho
Cooperative Connections

Canned Apple Pie Mix

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5-1/2 to 6 lbs. tart apples | 1 tsp. salt |
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 10 cups water |
| 1 cup cornstarch | 3 T. lemon juice |
| 2 tsp. cinnamon | 2 to 3 drops yellow
food coloring |
| 1/4 tsp. nutmeg | |

Peel, core and slice apples. Blend sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt in a large pan. Add water and cook until bubbly and thick, stirring occasionally. Add lemon juice and food coloring. Pack apples in hot jars. Fill jars with hot syrup, using a rubber spatula to push syrup around the apples. Boil 15 minutes for pints, 20 minutes for quarts. Makes 12 pints or 7 quarts. A quart will fill an 8- or 9-inch pie pan.

Spurs Therapeutic Riding Center, Aberdeen
Cooperative Connections

Zucchini Boats

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 2 medium zucchini | 1 small onion, chopped |
| 3/4 lb. ground beef | 1/2 cup chopped green pepper |
| 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms | 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese, divided |
| 1/2 cup chopped sweet red pepper | 2 T. ketchup |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

Trim the ends off zucchini. Cut in half lengthwise; scoop out pulp, leaving a 1/2-inch shell. Finely chop pulp. In a skillet, cook beef, zucchini pulp, onion, mushrooms and peppers over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Remove from heat. Add 1/2 cup cheese, ketchup, salt and pepper; mix well. Spoon into zucchini shells. Place in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 25 to 30 minutes or until zucchini is tender.

Sue Hove, Beresford, SD
Cooperative Connections

Vegetable Jumble

- 3 cups peeled and diced raw potatoes, new ones are very good in this
- 2 cups peeled and sliced raw carrots, from the garden, of course
- 1 cup sliced onions
- 1/4 cup diced celery
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup cold water

Grease a large casserole with butter. Layer vegetables in casserole. Dot butter over vegetables. Dissolve salt in water; pour over vegetables. Bake, covered, at 350°F. for 2 hours.

Joy Hagen, Webster, SD

Zucchini Fries

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup flour | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 tsp. onion salt | 1 T. olive oil |
| 1/2 tsp. oregano | 3 medium zucchini |
| 1/4 tsp. garlic powder | 4 cups corn Chex, crushed
to 1 cup |
| 1 egg, slightly beaten | |

In a medium bowl, combine flour and seasonings. Add egg, milk and oil; mix until smooth. Cut zucchini in half crosswise, cut each half into 8 wedges, remove seeds. Dip each fry into flour mixture, drain excess, then roll in crumbs. Fry in hot oil for about 2 minutes, drain on paper towel.

Carole South-Winter, Lennox, SD
Cooperative Connections

Watermelon Pickles

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Melons | Brine: |
| Dill | 2 tsp. sugar |
| Garlic | 1 tsp. salt |
| Red peppers | 1/4 cup vinegar |
| | 2 cups water |

Peel and slice melons; pack in jars with dill, garlic and red peppers. Combine brine ingredients; boil. Pour hot brine over melons; seal jars. Set jars in water and bring to a good boil; take off burner. Let them set until cold. I usually use white winter melons, but regular melons also work.

Sophia Hoff, Tripp, SD
Cooperative Connections

Please send your favorite pasta 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 2007. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.