

COMMUNITY

APRIL 2021

VOL 01

# BR IG HT

MAGAZINE

## Community CONNECTION

Partnering For COVID Relief

- | #Sustainable Solar
- | Keeping Firefighters Safe
- | Huckleberry Pie Recipe
- | Community Growth

A PUBLICATION OF  
NORTHWESTERN ENERGY





# Our people make the difference.

The real power behind this company comes from its people. Heroes who brave all elements to make sure we have the service we need when we need it. Neighbors who are committed to the safety of our customers and our communities. Friends who are focused on protecting our resources today and for the next generation. We work hard together – because together, we have the power to deliver a bright future. Together, we are NorthWestern Energy.



*This photo was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic.*

View our powerfustories at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/BrightFuture](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com/BrightFuture)



NorthWestern Energy CEO Bob Rowe enjoys the pancakes at Campfire Lodge Resort Cafe near West Yellowstone, Montana.

With summer on the way and COVID-19 vaccines becoming available, we're all looking forward to getting out and "putting some gravel in our travel."

We're also reflecting on what we learned during the pandemic, and how important it is to support our neighbors and communities. The people I am grateful to work with at NorthWestern Energy did just that over the last year.

When I travel across the country we serve in Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska and Yellowstone National Park, I love to stop at the unique places – independent hotels, mom and pop restaurants, small-town stores and bakeries with fresh, warm cookies. Supporting local businesses, and visiting with the folks who own and work in them, I learn so much about the communities served by NorthWestern Energy.

A fresh-baked muffin, a great cup of coffee poured by a friendly server, tips from an innkeeper about can't-miss sites – that's one of the best parts of traveling across NorthWestern Energy's service territory. The people invested in their hometowns provide the best insight about the communities we serve.

I'm amazed by the stories you can find just walking down Main Street. NorthWestern Energy is privileged to serve the most incredible areas of the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains. Our communities are vibrant, and the people who live there are proud to call them home.

NorthWestern Energy has so many stories to share – about our employees, our customers, our communities, our commitment to sustainability and about our company itself. That's what inspired us to launch Bright magazine. Bright showcases the incredible people who make NorthWestern what it is – a committed member of the communities and states we serve.

## THE BRIGHT SIDE /

This first edition of Bright magazine, the Community Edition, replaces our annual Community Report. Every year I look forward to our Community Report, but I'm even more excited to see it transform into this magazine. The community edition of Bright goes deeper than our Community Report could, telling the stories behind our charitable donations statistics. For example, the Community Report included figures for how much we donated each year through our Employee Volunteer Program. Bright magazine offers that same information, along with profiles of some of our employee volunteers. Ricky Nelson, a 30-year veteran, is the face of NorthWestern in Marion, South Dakota, a town of about 800. He's the acting fire chief, serves on city council, drives the ambulance when needed, is a past school board member and former youth softball coach. Ricky is dedicated to giving back to his community. He knows there are many important jobs to do in a small town and few people to do them. Ricky is inspiring. He helps make his community a better place to live, work and raise a family. He's one example of the amazing employees who make up NorthWestern Energy.

If you've never visited Fort Benton, Montana, you should plan to get there, less than an hour north of Great Falls. Fort Benton has a deep history, and the pride in that history shows – everywhere from the Shep statue to the Golden Triangle Brew Co. ([goldentrianglebrews.com](https://goldentrianglebrews.com)), serving the Last Best Ale and Meagher's Last Swim. A town of about 1,500 residents boasts four museums and one of Montana's favorite hotels and restaurants – the Grand Union ([www.grandunionhotel.com](https://www.grandunionhotel.com)). Fort Benton is an amazing community with incredible stories, and is one example of the many amazing communities we are proud to serve. We'll tell you about others in coming editions.

We look forward to sharing future editions of Bright, which will publish quarterly. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the new magazine. Email us at [bright@northwestern.com](mailto:bright@northwestern.com). You can also find the magazine online and subscribe at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/Bright](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com/Bright).

The people featured in Bright are making our energy more dependable and affordable. They're committed to our customers, devoted to our communities and unwavering in their dedication to create a future that is undeniably, and reliably, bright.

**Bob Rowe**  
Chief Executive Officer





Together we are working to  
deliver a bright future.



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Sunrise from Swords Park  
by Andy Austin

"Every morning there is an incredible transition from night to day and the best place to watch it is from above downtown Billings. Lights turn on as residents prepare to start their day in Montana's largest city."

Check out [@andyaustinphoto](#) on Instagram.

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We welcome all your comments, questions and letters to the editor. We'll edit letters as needed for accuracy, style and length, and we will feature letters in future issues. Write us at Bright Magazine, 11 E. Park St., Butte, MT 59701. Or email us at [bright@northwestern.com](mailto:bright@northwestern.com)

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## \ BRIGHT SPOTS

There's so much to celebrate in our region! Here are some exciting projects, donations and other highlights from across our service territory (shaded in purple).

**Great Falls** – We made a \$2,500 donation to the Great Falls Police Community Foundation to show our appreciation for everything the Great Falls Police Department does and to support the safety and security of our community.

**Missoula** – We partnered with the Missoula Chamber of Commerce to encourage students to consider career opportunities in the trades and apprenticeship programs. For more information, visit [workforceconnections.mt.gov](http://workforceconnections.mt.gov).



**Butte** – We are upgrading the Montana Street substation. A chain-link fence around the substation will be replaced with a stamped brick concrete wall, a design that will be functional and aesthetically pleasing.

"We were approached by several community members about the possibility of changing the chain-link fence to a decorative wall as part of the upgrade," said NorthWestern Energy Project Manager Hannah Haffemann.

The upgrade will enhance reliability for our 6,000 electric customers served by the substation. The upgrades are planned to be completed by the end of October.



**Great Falls** – We donated \$2,500 to the Great Falls Community Food Bank to help with the food bank's increase in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Bridger** – The Friends of the Bridger Public Library asked us for help installing a hand sanitizing station near the entrance of the library. The small town of about 800 people, located south of Billings, wanted its library to meet COVID-19 guidelines issued by the CDC so the library could reopen. Our gift helped them achieve that goal.

**Bozeman** – During the 2020 holiday season, we sponsored a Bozeman eighth-grader's idea to encourage students to send letters to their grandparents, people in long-term care facilities or anyone who might be isolated during the holidays. Mikey Andersen, an eighth-grader at Sacajawea Middle School in Bozeman, created the letter-writing campaign after he found out he might not get to see his grandparents for Christmas due to COVID concerns. NorthWestern supported the effort by paying for postage, envelopes and stationery.



**South Dakota** – We contributed approximately \$100,000 in Workforce Development Grants through Advantage South Dakota over the past two years. Advantage South Dakota is a regional economic development organization that aims to enhance the economic vitality of the James River Valley region by encouraging companies to expand or relocate to the area. These grants help Advantage South Dakota member communities address workforce development by finding innovative solutions for workforce shortages in their communities.

**Chamberlain** – We donated \$10,000 to the St. Joseph's Indian School. The school is building a recreation center and an equine facility. For more information, please visit [www.stjo.org](http://www.stjo.org).



**Yankton** – Our new office located in the northeast area of town is now finished. It combines our office and our shop so that all employees will be based out of the same area.



**Grand Island** – We continue to construct an 8-mile-long, 8-inch steel pressure main along Engleman Road to support the growth and existing customers on the west and southwest side of town.



# ABOVE & BEYOND

By Erin Madison

Ricky Nelson jokes about being the new guy in a small town as the reason he's on the fire department, school board, city council, coaching baseball and his numerous other volunteer activities.

"The new guy in town can't say no," said Ricky, district superintendent for NorthWestern Energy and 30-year employee of the company.

That was 25 years ago, and while Ricky is no longer new to Marion, South Dakota, a small town of about 800 located about 35 miles west of Sioux Falls, he's still deeply involved in his community.

Ricky is currently the acting fire chief at the Marion Volunteer Fire Department. He's served on the fire department, which is an all-volunteer force, since he moved to Marion. Before that he lived in Parker, South Dakota, where he was a gas worker for NorthWestern Energy. As a natural gas worker, Ricky responded to house fires so he could shut off the gas and help ensure the safety of everyone involved. Since he had to respond to fires anyway, Ricky figured he should join the volunteer fire department.

The Marion Fire Department gets about 60 calls a year.

"Some are pretty short, and the next one could take all day," Ricky said.

As the fire chief, Ricky also has to arrange trainings and meetings and attend meetings with other rural fire chiefs.

"It's definitely challenging, a lot of responsibility," he said.

However, Ricky knows someone has to fill the job and the community truly relies on its fire department. Recruiting volunteer fire fighters isn't easy.

"In a small town, it's hard to get active people involved," he said. "And it's getting harder all the time."

In most households, both parents work, and it's hard for either one to leave their jobs and their family if they need to respond to a fire.

Despite that, Marion is typically able to keep a full roster at the fire department, and several local businesses, including NorthWestern Energy, allow employees to respond to fires during the workday.

"We're probably one of the more fortunate towns," Ricky said.

Ricky also feels fortunate that his wife supports his volunteer activities, even when they pull him

away from his responsibilities at home.

"I could not do everything I do without my wife, Linda, picking up the slack at home while I am at meetings and fires," Ricky said.

NorthWestern Energy encourages all its employees to volunteer in their local communities. We offer paid leave for volunteer activities and grants to the organizations our employees serve.

NorthWestern Energy recently donated a truck that was previously used in one of our warehouses to the Marion Fire Department, where it will be retrofitted and used as a water tender.

In addition to his work with the fire department, Ricky has served on city council for about a dozen years, and previously served on the school board. When his kids were younger, he coached softball, baseball, shooting sports and helped with 4-H. Occasionally, he drives the ambulance when they have trouble filling that crew.

"I'm not smart enough to say no," Ricky said with a laugh.

Joking aside, Ricky understands the importance of giving back to his community, and he knows in a small town there are a lot of jobs to do and a limited number of people to do them.

"I do enjoy doing all of this, and it gives back to the community," he said. "My folks did the same thing." ☀

## NorthWestern Energy's Volunteer Programs

NorthWestern Energy encourages all employees to be active members of their community. We sponsor employee volunteerism by offering paid time off for volunteer activities.

When employees volunteer their time with an organization, NorthWestern Energy donates grant funds to that organization.

**Up to \$400** annually to each organization an employee serves

**\$35,400** awarded to nonprofits through the Employee Volunteer Program in 2020

**79 nonprofits** received grants through the Employee Volunteer Program in 2020





# PARTNERING FOR SAFETY

By Jo Dee Black

When the Central Valley Fire District in Belgrade, Montana, asked for help to improve firefighter safety, NorthWestern Energy's answer was an immediate "Yes!"

This spring, three non-energized power poles with lines will be installed at the department's training facility.

Firefighters, both professional and volunteer, use a three-story building at the facility to train on simulated firefighting, including extending ground ladders and setting up an aerial ladder.

The non-energized poles replicate obstructions firefighters and emergency responders must work around safely. The poles add a significant level of realism to the training center.

"Anything we can do to assist with enhanced training for our community's volunteer and career firefighters to be as prepared as possible when they respond to emergencies is a great investment," said NorthWestern

Energy Community Relations Manager Heather Bellamy. "NorthWestern Energy's partnerships with emergency services are a top priority of our company as we provide reliable and safe energy."

"Because NorthWestern Energy donated both the equipment and the installation, Central Valley Fire District is able to use our modest training funds on other opportunities, while at the same time ensure our firefighters are trained to work safely around power lines," said Central Valley Fire District Fire Chief Ron Lindroth.

Ron oversees a progressive "combination" agency of 36 career firefighters and support staff and 20 volunteer firefighters who provide fire, emergency medical and specialty rescue services to approximately 40,000 residents in a 200-square-mile service area.

NorthWestern Energy is proud to partner with Central Valley Fire District, working together for public safety. ☀







\ BRIGHT IDEA

# GROWING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

By Amy Grisak

*Editor's note: In each edition, gardener and writer Amy Grisak will share a Bright Idea that readers can try at home.*

During World War II, we had the Victory Gardens, which encouraged people to utilize unused areas in their yards or neighborhood open spaces to plant gardens. Families, or groups of families, worked together to raise produce at home in order to send more resources to the troops overseas. In today's culture, with more people concerned about food security, as well as a desire to have a better connection with their meals, community gardens — the modern day Victory Gardens — are making a resurgence.

When we moved to Great Falls, Montana, 14 years ago, we found a rental house, but I needed a place to garden. Because I often utilized the community gardens in Kalispell to teach classes for the local college, I thought for certain a town as large as Great Falls would have its own. To my horror, it did not. I was forced to plant celery in flower beds until I connected with the Cascade County



Extension agent and another friend who was a master gardener to remedy the situation. It took more than a year to find properties and set up the necessary insurance and legalities of the organization, but River City Harvest now provides multiple gardening options for residents.

## Food to Table

Community gardens are particularly relevant these days. After a year of not knowing whether we could buy toilet paper, let alone fresh vegetables, more people took notice of the supply chain when it comes to food. A figure commonly used is the average vegetable travels 1,500 miles from farm to table, and while this may not be accurate across the entire country, the fact remains that our food shouldn't travel more than we do.

"Locally grown food is better for everyone," said Cordalie Benoit, vice president of the American Community Gardening Association. Not trucking vegetables across the country, along with the often excessive packaging required, conserves resources. Plus, the food is

fresher, picked at the optimum time, and the gardener is in complete control of what chemicals, if any, are used. When it comes to health, snacking out of the garden is as good as it gets.

## Community Gardens Are For Everyone

Community gardens welcome everyone, whether you're a new gardener or someone who has been raising your own food for years. A common demographic are those who do not have adequate space or optimum growing conditions to create a garden in their backyard, just like us when we first moved to Great Falls. Having a plot in a community garden allows those who don't have yard space to grow what they need.

Even for those who do have room at home, there are a number of factors hampering garden production. The daunting task of removing sod to create a new garden, or building raised beds to mitigate for poor soil often dissuades gardeners, particularly new ones, from delving into the endeavor. Once again, community gardens come to the rescue.

It's also an exceptional opportunity for new gardeners to work along veteran growers

who are typically more than happy to share their knowledge and tools. By nature, gardeners love to share. Whether it's knowledge, seeds, extra plants or tools, if you need something, another gardener will step up to lend a hand. In addition, many community garden organizations provide basic materials, sometimes even including a rototiller, which allows people to grow their own food with little to no investment.

Gardens are a natural place for kids, and as families garden together, the children gravitate toward the soil and the plants. Cordalie said her experience in the garden is as soon as someone is working, there are kids ready to help. Plus, snacking in the garden is completely acceptable. "Kids will eat what they grow." Knowing where their food comes from, as well as how good it tastes fresh, is another step in creating a healthy society.

Oftentimes community gardens are an important piece in raising fresh food for charitable organizations. It's common for church groups, civic organizations or a handful of friends to garden as a group in order to provide fresh food for local food banks.

What is particularly fascinating about these gardens is the differences in gardening styles, choices of plants and creativity. Walking through a community garden tells a lot about those who tend each plot. Some are very neat and tidy with well-organized rows. Others create elevated beds, utilizing season-extending or weed-



mitigation techniques, while others go all out creating structures on which to grow beans, cucumbers and other vining plants. At times, vegetable choices take center stage alongside beds teeming with flowers to encourage pollinating insects. Many are works of art.

## Community Perks

By its nature, gardening isn't a solitary task. These social benefits, particularly in a time when so many people have stayed close to home, translate

to better overall health.

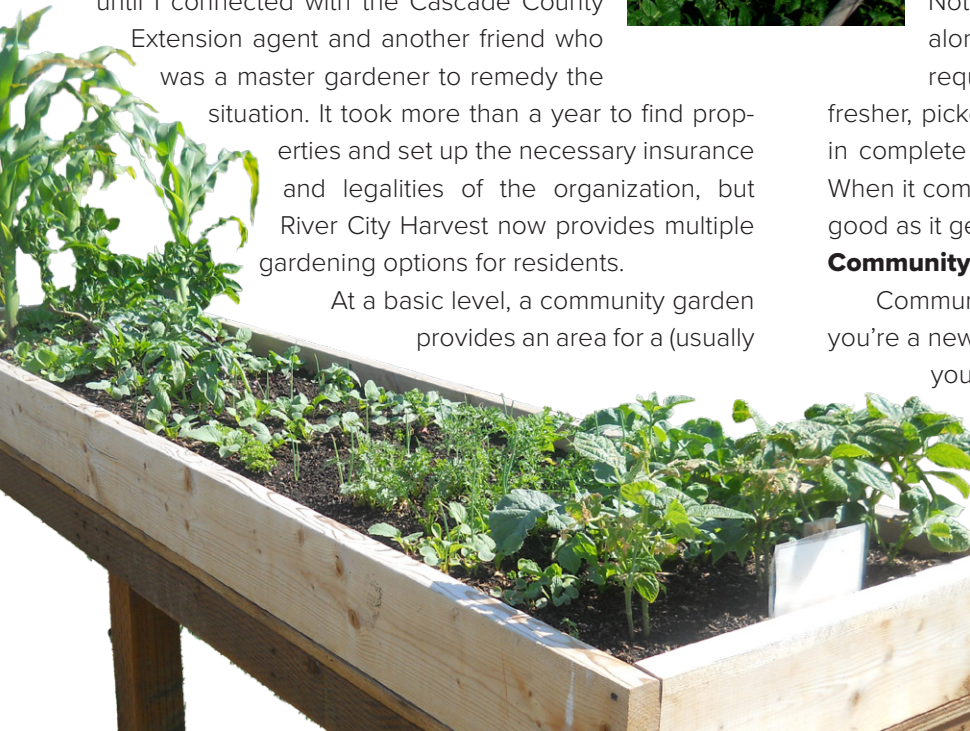
"It's a chance to meet people in your community that you wouldn't otherwise know," Cordalie said. It's also an opportunity to learn gardening techniques from other regions, as well as new ways to prepare fresh produce.

One of the greatest benefits of a community garden is being able to share the work or find someone to fill in for a few days if you have to be gone. Anyone who has a garden at home knows how difficult it is to leave for any length of time.

## Homegrown Community Gardens

The greatest challenge with community gardens is their popularity. Many have waiting lists. The remedy is to garden with friends. If someone has space, it's easy to divide it into individual plots or garden together. Plus, it brings the best of everyone to the party.

If the garden calls, but you don't have space or yearn for guidance, look for a community garden in your area by asking local gardeners, contacting the local Extension office, or searching the American Community Gardening Association at [communitygarden.org](https://communitygarden.org). ☀



**Amy Grisak** is an avid gardener and writer. Her writing appears in everything from the Farmers' Almanac to Popular Mechanics, and her first book, "Nature Guide to Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks," is due out in 2021. Amy lives in Great Falls, Montana, with her two sons and her husband, Grant, who is a biologist with NorthWestern Energy.





Photo by Andy Austin

By Brandy Powers

COMMUNITY

# CONNECTION





The Billings Community Foundation is revitalizing a historic landmark in downtown Billings to become its new Home of Philanthropy.

Photo by Andy Austin

## Our Community Support

In spring 2020, as businesses closed or reduced hours due to the pandemic, we created a community support fund and pledged nearly \$300,000 toward helping our communities overcome the impacts of the coronavirus crisis. A portion of these funds were donated to local COVID-19 relief efforts across our service territories. The remaining money went to hundreds of small businesses that were crippled by the pandemic. The money for small businesses went quickly, so a few months later we announced an additional \$100,000 targeted specifically to small business assistance. These contributions were funded by shareholders, with employees also giving generously to support community members in need.

Our COVID-19 relief funds were in addition to our regular annual giving. In 2020, we contributed \$1.7 million in support of our communities through local charitable donations and sponsorships, economic development opportunities, the United Way, chambers of commerce, scholarships, professional association dues and employee volunteer efforts.

Our giving in 2020:

**\$400,000** for COVID-19 relief

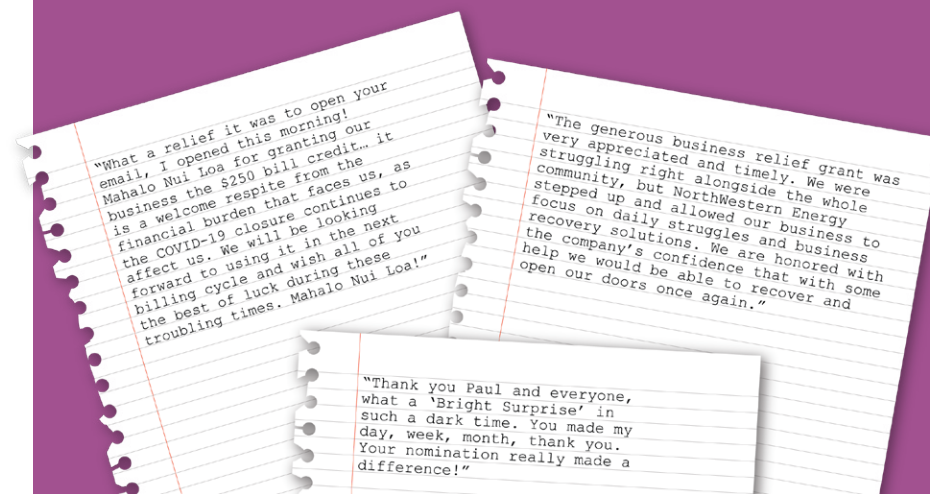
**\$1.7 million** charitable donations/community support

## Delivering a Bright Surprise

As the pandemic wore on, we looked for ways to bring a little happiness to our communities, while also supporting local businesses. We launched the Bright Surprise campaign as a way to recognize educators who were working in new ways to keep students safe and healthy during this pandemic. We asked customers to nominate local schools to receive a treat from a local business. Then we worked with the schools to deliver more than 120 Bright Surprises to selected schools, along with safety messages and energy career information for students.

“2020 was a year of challenges for all of us, and this was a chance for us to say thank you and bring a smile to some of the dedicated educators in our communities,” said NorthWestern Energy Director of Community Connections Rick Edwards.

What better way to highlight the value of the support than in the words of several program recipients:



Dakota Prairie Elementary School in Brookings, South Dakota, was one of the first recipients of a Bright Surprise.

In spring 2020, we all watched as the world came to a screeching halt – businesses closed, workers were laid off and communities struggled.

NorthWestern Energy and the Billings Community Foundation came to the same conclusion – we needed to help.

“As soon as the pandemic hit, we announced that we were doing an additional wave of \$400,000 in giving focused in our employees’ backyards around our service areas that were hurting,” said Lisa Perry, NorthWestern Energy Billings-area community relations manager.

To help distribute those funds, NorthWestern Energy reached out to the Billings Community Foundation.

The Foundation, like many, had to pivot as the pandemic hit. Not able to host its annual Yellowstone Valley Gives celebration, the organization dedicated its resources to launch a new fundraising resource for COVID-19 crisis

relief. The relief program answered the call for partners such as NorthWestern Energy that were looking for a way to make funds available and connecting with the nonprofits to identify the greatest need.

“When it comes to giving, our response is focused on the communities where our employees live and work,” Lisa said. “The Billings Community Foundation is a bridge that connects the Billings community to local nonprofits.”

Since its inception in 2007, the Billings Community Foundation has distributed more than \$3.5 million in grants and distributions for the support of charitable organizations and projects throughout the Yellowstone Valley region. In addition to grant-making





Pre-pandemic, Lauren Wright, left, and Lisa Perry would often join forces to promote the Yellowstone Valley Gives campaign.

activities, the Foundation partners with area nonprofits to provide capacity building workshops, assists clients utilizing the Montana Charitable Endowment Tax Credit, establishes endowments, manages donor-advised funds, creates community funds and much more, while offering consultations upon request. It is a holistic approach to connecting the community donors directly with the recipients.

“The Billings Community Foundation made it easy to get those funds to recipients in an expedited manner,” Lisa said.

The Foundation’s energy is fueled by the vibrancy and passion of Executive Director Lauren Wright. Since joining the Foundation as its first full-time employee, Lauren has worked with NorthWestern Energy.

“In our region alone there are more than 1,200 nonprofits, and that number grows every day,” Lauren said. “Our partners trust us to keep a really good pulse on where the greatest need is in our communities so that we can help direct funds appropriately.”

The Billings Community Foundation continues to grow, with one of its most exciting adventures to date on the horizon.

“We are really looking forward to opening the doors soon to a new hub that will be an added asset to our community,” Lauren said.

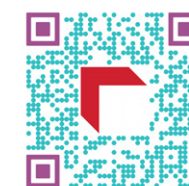
The Billings Community Foundation’s new Home of Philanthropy will offer an innovative and collaborative space designed to meet the needs of the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. It will be housed in a historic landmark and will enhance economic development in downtown Billings through a centralized location that will ultimately cultivate an environment that promotes networking, partnerships and community engagement through philanthropy.

“The Home of Philanthropy will be a first for the City of Billings and was aided by a generous donation from NorthWestern Energy,” Lauren said. ☀️



Follow the site’s progress at: [BillingsCommunityFoundation.org/home-of-philanthropy](https://BillingsCommunityFoundation.org/home-of-philanthropy)

Learn more about our COVID-19 assistance.



Scan this QR code with your phone’s camera to watch a video about our Small Business Assistance Program.





# Celebrating Suffragists THROUGH ART

By Erin Madison

The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation had big plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote.

Then the pandemic hit.

“The project shifted and evolved,” said Catherine Forsch, CEO of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation. “Everything changed.”

The celebration wasn’t canceled, instead the Historical Society found unique ways to commemorate the lives and legacies of South Dakota suffragists.

Early on, NorthWestern Energy signed on as a sponsor of Her Vote. Her Voice. The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation created this project to commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

NorthWestern Community Relations Specialist Angie Christiansen volunteered her artistic talents to create a painting to be auctioned off during one of the three galas planned across the state in 2020. Of course, those galas were never held, but that didn’t stop Angie from fulfilling her commitment.

“It actually ended up turning in to a way bigger project,” Angie said.

In the end, Angie spent 750 hours over seven months creating 14 pieces of original art. Along the way, she mentored a high school student who created another six pieces. All 20 drawings feature leaders (19 women and one man) who helped women gain the right to vote. Fourteen are South Dakotans and six are national figures.

The artwork will be printed on 4-by-6-inch cards that will be distributed to fourth-grade classrooms across South Dakota. The cards will be similar to flashcards but also a sort of playing card. The front will feature Angie’s art, with historical facts on the back.

Angie worked with two historians – one from Black Hills State University and one from the South Dakota State Historical Society – on the project. The historians compiled the information for the back of the cards and also reviewed Angie’s artwork to make sure the buildings, clothes and other details were

historically accurate.

It was important to the Historical Society that Her Vote. Her Voice. had a component focused on young students, Catherine explained. South Dakota history is taught in fourth grade, so they wanted something for that grade level. When they came up with the idea for the cards, Catherine knew they already had an artist on board, so

she reached out to Angie to see whether she’d be willing to do the whole series of drawings.

“We were very fortunate that she said yes,” Catherine said. “It was a blessing.”

Angie has been an artist from a young age. As a kid, her parents often took her with them to the bar and gave her napkins to draw on.

“Art was kind of a babysitter of sorts,” she said. “I didn’t have the best childhood growing up, so I drew a lot to escape.”

In high school, she worked at a restaurant and her manager, knowing she took art classes, asked her to paint the restaurant’s windows. That turned into a side business for Angie.

Her work can still often be seen in the windows of Madison, South Dakota.

Despite her years of experience with art, Angie had never taken on a

**HER  
VOTE.  
HER  
VOICE.**

1920 / SD WOMEN'S VOTE CELEBRATION / 2020







project like the Her Vote. Her Voice, drawings.

“I’ve never done anything like it,” she said.

Angie’s preferred medium is paint, but for Her Vote, she opted to use colored pencils instead. Many of the drawings were created while Angie was on Zoom calls or in between other projects. Colored pencils are a lot easier to set up and clean up, which made them ideal for the short blocks of time Angie had to work on the project.

Before putting pencil to paper, Angie spent two months researching the leaders she would be drawing.

“Just like an actor prepares for a role, this is what you have to do to get to know the person,” she said.

These leaders were willing to take a chance in order to pave the way for future generations. With that came trials and oppression. Angie could relate.

“We all have struggles,” she said. “I know what that is, so I know how to capture it.”

She also knows how to rise above the struggles, which is evident in the vivid colors of the prints that represent the victory many of these women didn’t get to see while they were alive.

While Angie was working on the project, she received

a call asking her to mentor a high school art student. Angie thought the Her Vote. Her Voice. project would be the perfect opportunity for the 17-year-old to get some hands-on experience.

“She was able to experience a lot in a very short amount of time,” Angie said.

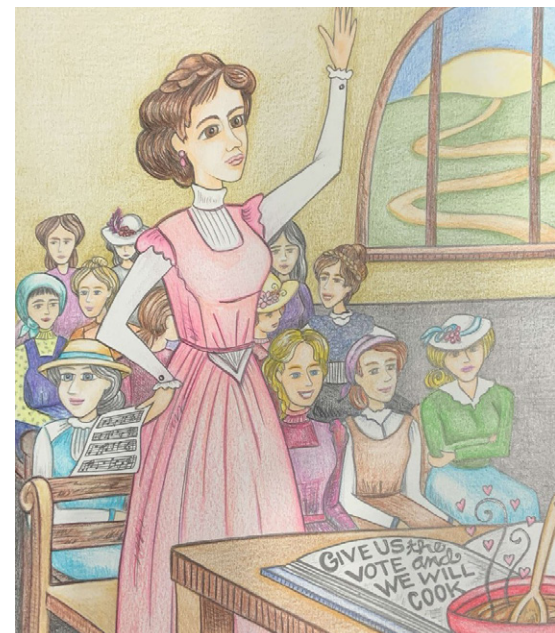
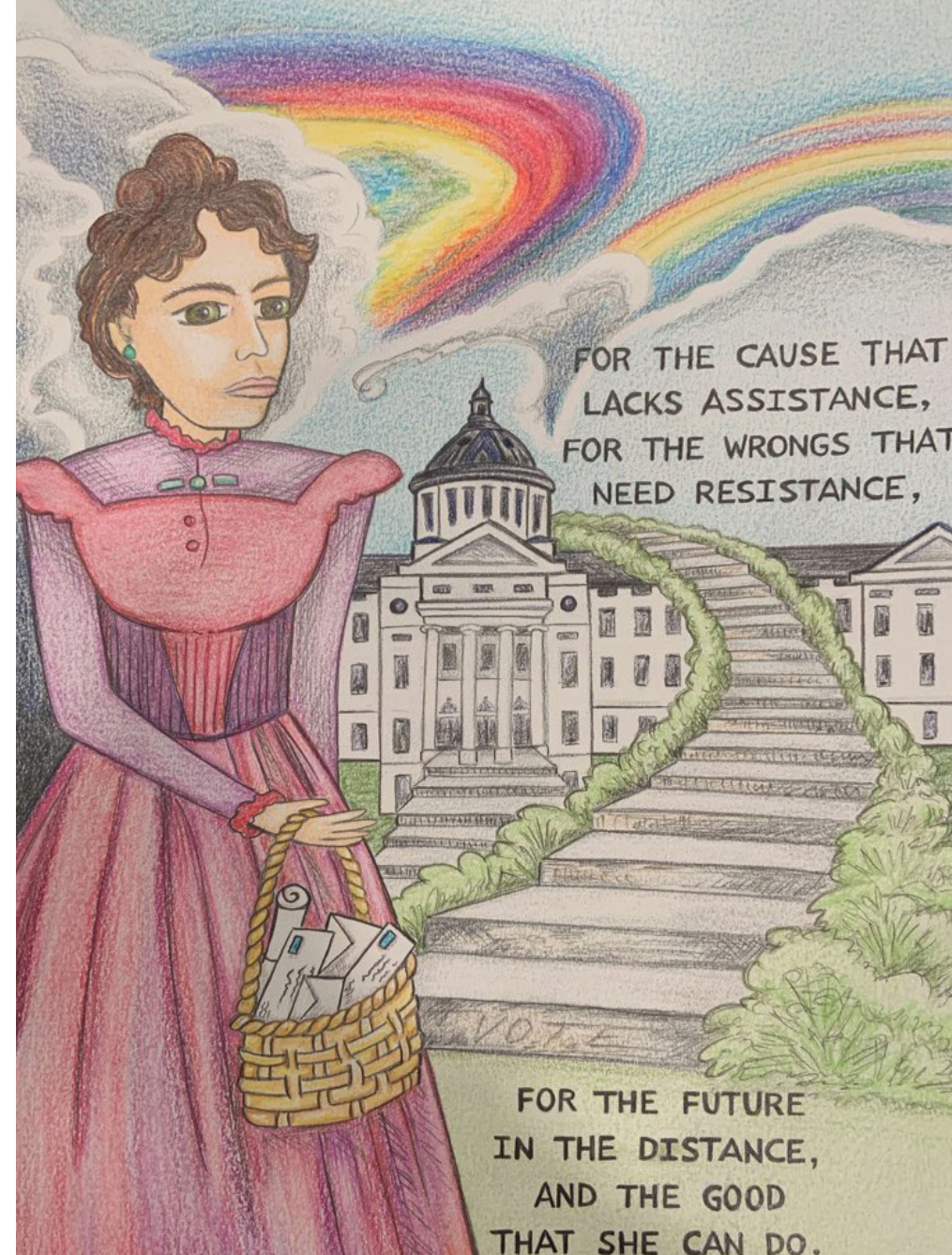
While including the intern, Angie was reminded of the adage, “When you do something great, bring someone along with you.”

That philosophy ties into the women’s suffrage movement as well.

A banner in one of Angie’s drawings reads, “Let us raise up a league of women voters.”

That quote comes from Carrie Chapman Catt, one of the leaders depicted in Angie’s artwork. Carrie Chapman Catt founded the National American Woman Suffrage Association and focused heavily on educating and mentoring future generations.

Angie’s art follows in those footsteps, as it will teach a whole generation of South Dakota fourth graders about some incredible figures from our past. ☀️







# HONORING

## BOB GLANZER

By **Tom Glanzer**  
Photo courtesy of  
**LakeHaus Productions**

When I first heard about the novel coronavirus in about December 2019, I remember laughing it off as another one of those global panic attacks that would never impact me ... or anyone I knew. When we started the “work from home” procedure at NorthWestern Energy in March 2020, I still didn’t really buy into the chance that little old Huron, South Dakota, would be impacted. I was so wrong on so many fronts.

During the first few days of learning how to work from home and ensure our kids were getting homework done, my dad got pretty sick. He went to the doctor and went back home with a prescription usually used for someone with a common cold or the flu. Ten hours later, he was tested for the coronavirus; 32 hours later he was in the hospital in Huron. Eight hours after that, he was on a plane

to Sioux Falls.

The rest of the story is one of the most trying, yet peaceful times I have ever experienced in my adult life.

My mom got sick with COVID-19 while dad was in the hospital. She was hospitalized for 32 hours and released, all while still recovering from breast cancer surgery a little over a week earlier.

In times like this every phone call is a bit unnerving, and when you are waiting from news on a critical patient, you fear the worst on each call. Then on March 28 at 3 in the morning, my cousin called me to tell me the news that would shock us, and is probably still the hardest to accept in all of this mess. My cousin, a 51-year-old, active and healthy school teacher, mother of three, Mari Hofer, had died only a few hours after becoming ill.

## New Generation Station in Huron Will Be Named After Bob Glanzer

The new 58-megawatt natural gas plant currently under construction near Huron, South Dakota, will be named the Bob Glanzer Generating Station in honor of the late South Dakota State Rep. Bob Glanzer.

Bob was a high school teacher and coach before becoming the manager of the South Dakota State Fair in 1975. He went on to a successful banking career, retiring in 2012.

Rep. Glanzer worked quietly in the background for community and economic development in the Huron area, but was willing to accelerate his efforts and visibility when needed, noted NorthWestern Energy CEO Bob Rowe.

“We are proud to be a part of South Dakota, and to invest in the critical infrastructure that will meet South Dakota’s needs for many decades to come,” Bob Rowe said. “It is fitting that the Bob Glanzer Generating Station is a flexible capacity resource that will provide energy as needed 24/7 for NorthWestern Energy’s South Dakota customers for many decades. That reliable, affordable energy is an important economic development tool, one that Rep. Glanzer recognized.”

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**Editor’s note:** Tom Glanzer is NorthWestern’s community relations manager in South Dakota and Nebraska. His father, Bob Glanzer, passed away April 3, 2020, from COVID-19. Bob Glanzer was a South Dakota state representative, although his son describes that as the least impressive thing about him.

We had absolutely no way to enter the hospital to visit my dad so we relied on the medical staff at Avera Health, and they were amazing to us. After a long battle, my dad died on April 3, 2020. He was not surrounded by a single person who had loved him his entire life, not a single family member could hold his hand and whisper in his ear words of comfort. My dad died in the presence of an absolute stranger ... who loved him. That team of nurses was committed to my dad’s health and comforted him to the very end without expecting anything in return.

If you had met my dad you would know that the least impressive thing about him was that he was a South Dakota state representative. My dad was a poor farm boy who climbed his way through school, college and to a host of careers where he impacted lives on almost a daily basis. He was a rodeo cowboy – a bronc rider in his younger days and a calf roper when he got older. He taught me to rock climb in the Ansel Adams Wilderness of

California and snow ski in the Black Hills. He raced sprint cars and built me one when I turned 17. He was friends with Johnny Cash, every governor of South Dakota I can remember, and the 60-year-old Karenic immigrant man who lived down the street. They couldn’t talk to each other, but spoke with loving actions of work and a little made-up sign language.

My dad was a follower of Christ – like the real ones who take care of the orphans, widows and the less fortunate. It defined him and our family. It is still his greatest trait.

My dad was also an old football coach. He coached at Wessington Springs High School. So to say my dad had the ability to motivate and encourage was a given, but it was never in that “yell to get results” mode. It was a soft-spoken expectation that you would do your job to the best of your ability. My dad knew how to make a difference and we will never know the “butterfly effect” of his life, but I see it every day in my own life and the life of my family. ☀



# Zoey & Finn

A Pandemic Child Care Solution

By Jo Dee Black

The COVID-19 pandemic meant NorthWestern Energy Manager of System Innovation Jon Shafer of Bozeman, Montana, and his wife, Whitney, an elementary school teacher, became temporary home office mates in March 2020, along with their son Finn, who was just a couple of months shy of his second birthday at the time. The juggling act of parenting and work instantly became more complicated.

At the same time, one of Whitney's former students, Zoey, suddenly found herself with too much free time after her classes shifted online. Socially distanced from friends and out of her regular routine, boredom was an unwelcomed new reality for the now eighth-grader, whose family was at home but working full time.

Then Whitney reached out to Zoey for help.

Zoey and Finn spent their days together at the Shafers, baking, hanging out outside, reading books, playing in the sprinklers and just enjoying their time together.

"They bonded, for sure, and it has been amazing to watch," said Jon.

Zoey's confidence and child care skills grew.

"She has been incredible; she plans activities for them to do together," said Jon. "She has brought some of her old toys for Finn to play with."

Finn adores her. It isn't unusual for Zoey to tag along on Shafer family outings. The families are now closer than ever and enjoyed a couple of summer camping excursions together.

As classes shifted from online to in person, the schedule changed to some evenings and weekends. But what is unchanged is the certainty that Finn and Zoey are friends for life — and the Shafers are grateful. ☀



Photo courtesy of Jon Shafer



# Good Stewards of Creation

By Erin Madison



St. Paul Lutheran Church in Missoula, Montana, believes in caring for God's creation and in God's calling to be good stewards of the Earth.

It was with that idea in mind the church created its Green Team in 2016. The Green Team looks for ways to minimize the church's environmental impact and to use its resources efficiently. In 2017, the Green Team suggested using the church's expansive roof to install a solar array. The congregation and church leadership both got behind the idea.

"This is what we wanted to do as part of lowering our carbon footprint and also just being good stewards of creation," said Pastor Chris Flohr.

The congregation raised funds to pay for half the cost of the array in six months. The remainder came from a matching incentive from NorthWestern Energy, funded through Universal System Benefits Program funds collected from all NorthWestern electric customers in Montana. In October 2018, St. Paul Lutheran Church installed a 26.2-kilowatt solar array on its roof.

"By the time the grant was approved, we had raised our 50% match through the generosity of about 60 families within our church, plus about three or four outside businesses," said Kim Kaufman, past council president at St. Paul Lutheran and 20-year member of the congregation.

Along with installing solar generation, St. Paul asked NorthWestern Energy to perform an energy efficiency



evaluation on the building. Based on that evaluation, the Green Team and church leadership decided to replace all of the building's incandescent light bulbs and the majority of the fluorescent lights with LED lighting.

Between the lighting project and the solar panels, the church saw about a 50% reduction in energy costs.

Those savings allow the church to increase its outreach work, such as holding clothing drives or helping with Habitat for Humanity.

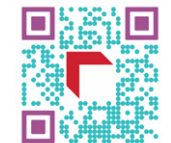
"There's always more need than there are funds," Kim said.

St. Paul Lutheran Church has received a lot support from the greater Missoula community for

taking on this project.

"It's meant a lot to our congregation because it shows leadership within our community," Kim said. "Missoula, overall, is a green community and believes in solar energy. We've been able to take a leadership role within our community."

St. Paul's website features a live feed to the solar panels' generation data, so people can see how much energy the array is generating and how much it has generated over its lifetime. ☀️



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to watch a video about St. Paul Lutheran Church's solar project.

## Our E+ Renewable Energy Program

NorthWestern Energy currently offers incentives for nonprofits, schools, community centers and other organizations to fund renewable generation projects. Funding through this program also provides trainings to more than 40 renewable energy qualified installers within NorthWestern Energy's service territory.

These renewable generation projects and trainings receive funding through Universal System Benefits Program funds collected from all NorthWestern electric customers in Montana.

Since starting the E+ Renewable Energy Program in 1999, NorthWestern Energy and the Universal System Benefits Program has helped more than 1,200 customers across Montana install renewable energy projects.

For more information, [NorthWesternEnergy.com](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com)  
✉️ [E+Programs@northwestern.com](mailto:E+Programs@northwestern.com) ☎️ 888-700-6878

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# FORT BENTON, Montana

By Erin Madison

The small town of Fort Benton, on the banks of the Missouri River, is known as the birthplace of Montana and is steeped in history. Founded in 1846 as a trading post, Fort Benton is one of Montana's oldest towns.



Known as the “Chicago of the Plains,” Fort Benton was the country’s innermost port. Steamboats made their way up the Missouri River to Fort Benton. Farther upstream, the river becomes impassable thanks to the falls for which the city of Great Falls is named. As Montana’s gold rush boomed, steamboats full of goods made their way to Fort Benton and the goods were then dispersed across the territory via wagon. Eventually the railroad was built and the steamboat’s glory days came to an end. Visiting Fort Benton feels

a bit like stepping back in time. Its historic main street is lined with well-preserved store fronts, many dating back to the 1880s. Inside these historic buildings, visitors will find quaint shops, gourmet food and locally brewed beer. Fort Benton is also a great starting place for anyone wishing to explore the Upper Missouri River Breaks.

Spend a day or two in Fort Benton taking in some of Montana’s most interesting history.

**Stay and Dine.** The Grand Union Hotel is one of Fort Benton’s most prominent landmarks. Built in 1882, the Grand Union was known as the “Waldorf of the West,” and was proclaimed the finest hotel between St. Louis and Seattle. It featured a saloon, dining room and even a secret lookout room where guards could supervise gold shipments. Today, the hotel features rooms with a perfect balance of elegant history and modern accommodations. The Grand Union’s restaurant is known as one of the best in Montana, and features a farm-to-table menu that changes seasonally. [grandunionhotel.com](http://grandunionhotel.com)

**Meet the Goodest Boi.** Any dog lover will appreciate the story of Shep, a faithful sheep dog who followed his shepherd to the hospital in Fort Benton. Shep patiently waited outside the hospital door. However, the

herder died, and his body was shipped east via train. Shep followed his casket to the train depot, where he lived for five and a half years, greeting four trains a day, hoping one of them would carry his human. In old age and hard of hearing, Shep was hit by a train and died. A memorial to Shep stands outside the Grand Union hotel, and his grave site can be visited on a bluff north of town.

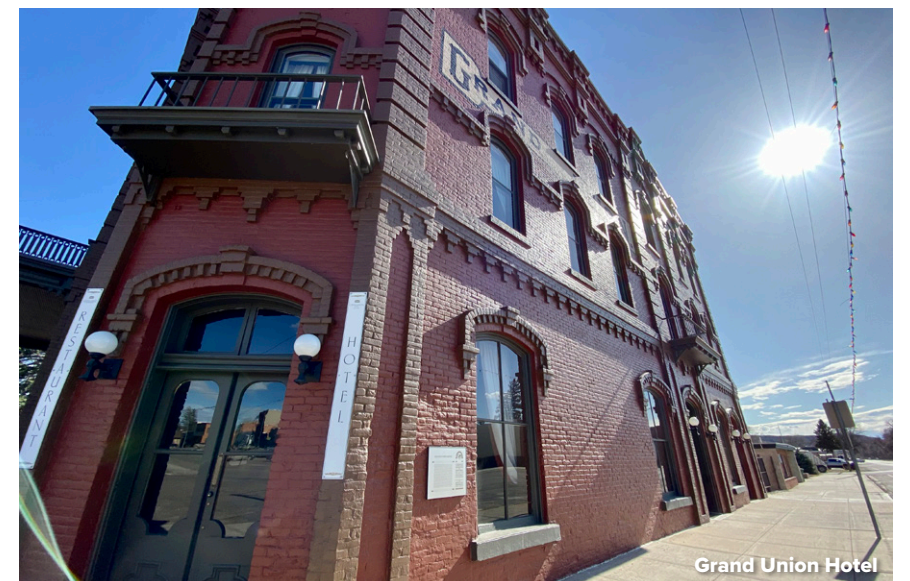
**Shop for Treasures.** Fort Benton has numerous small shops to explore. Stop in to the River Break Basecamp, 808 17th St., to find an eclectic mix of books, antiques, artifacts and outdoor gear. McGraw Antiques, 1512 Front St., features a beautifully curated collection of antiques inside a 107-year-old building.

**Solve Montana’s Greatest Mystery.** Walk along the river and ponder one of Montana’s most notorious unsolved mysteries. In 1867, Thomas Francis Meagher, acting governor of the Montana

Territory, fell, jumped or was pushed off a steamboat in Fort Benton. His body was never found, but he was presumed dead. The mystery remains whether Meagher’s death was a drunken accident, a deranged suicide or a murder, possibly committed by British agents who considered Meagher an escaped felon and fugitive. (Meagher lead a colorful life right up to his death).



River Break Basecamp



Grand Union Hotel





**Visit a Museum or Four.** With its deep history and the rich natural area surrounding it, one museum couldn't cover all the interesting facts about Fort Benton. The small town boasts four museums. Tour the original fort at Historic Old Fort Benton. The Museum of the Northern Great Plains documents the last century of life on the Montana plains. It features an impressive collection of

Western art, as well as 4 acres of outside exhibits showcasing unique farm machinery. The Museum of the Upper Missouri walks visitors through Fort Benton's trading history from its days as a fur trading post to a major steamboat hub. The Missouri Breaks National Monument Interpretive Center highlights the natural history of the area. Visitors can also find information on floating the Wild and Scenic Upper Missouri River. [fortbentonmuseums.com](http://fortbentonmuseums.com)

**Enjoy a Coffee and a Treat.** Stop in to the Wake Cup Coffee House & Restaurant, 1500 Front St., anytime of day and you won't be disappointed. In the morning, you'll find omelets, stuffed French toast and porridge, in addition to gourmet coffee drinks. The lunch menu features salads, sandwiches, burgers and rice bowls. Thursday through Saturday, the Wake Cup is open late with pizza and barbecue, as well as wine and beer. [wakecupcoffeehouse.com](http://wakecupcoffeehouse.com)

**Sip a Local Beer** Golden Triangle Brew Co. specializes in "field-to-glass beers with custom malts and ingredients from family farms only minutes from our brewery." Sample the Innermost Porter or Meagher's Last Swim, a pastry stout. [goldentrianglebrews.com](http://goldentrianglebrews.com)

**Explore the Upper Missouri River Breaks.** Fort Benton sits at the upstream end of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River section and is a great jumping-off point to explore this 149-mile stretch of river. The area offers fishing, camping, hunting and floating. ☀️



# HUCKLEBERRY CREAM PIE

Huckleberries grow wild in the mountains of Montana. They're related to the blueberry, but the many efforts to breed domestic huckleberries have been unsuccessful. Find wild huckleberries in late July and August. You can also usually find huckleberries at farmers markets throughout Montana in the summer months. If you don't have huckleberries, blueberries also work in this recipe.

## INGREDIENTS

### Crust:

- 1 1/3 cup vanilla wafer crumbs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Cream Filling:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 3 large egg yolks, beaten
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar

### Topping:

- 4 cups fresh huckleberries, divided
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

## DIRECTIONS

**1** Preheat oven to 350°. Combine the crust ingredients. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of an ungreased 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until crust just begins to brown. Cool.

**2** In a saucepan, combine sugar, flour and salt. Gradually whisk in half-and-half. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Continue to cook for 2 minutes more, stirring constantly. Gradually whisk half of cream mixture into egg yolks and then return all to pan. Bring to a gentle boil and cook and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla until butter is melted. Return to medium heat and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour into crust and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Chill 30 minutes or until set.

**3** Meanwhile, crush 2 cups of huckleberries in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Press berries through sieve. Set aside 1 cup juice (add water if necessary). Discard pulp.

**4** In a saucepan, combine sugar and cornstarch. Gradually stir in huckleberry juice and bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and let cool 15 minutes. Gently stir in remaining berries. Carefully spoon the berry topping over filling. Chill 3 hours or until set. Store pie in the refrigerator.

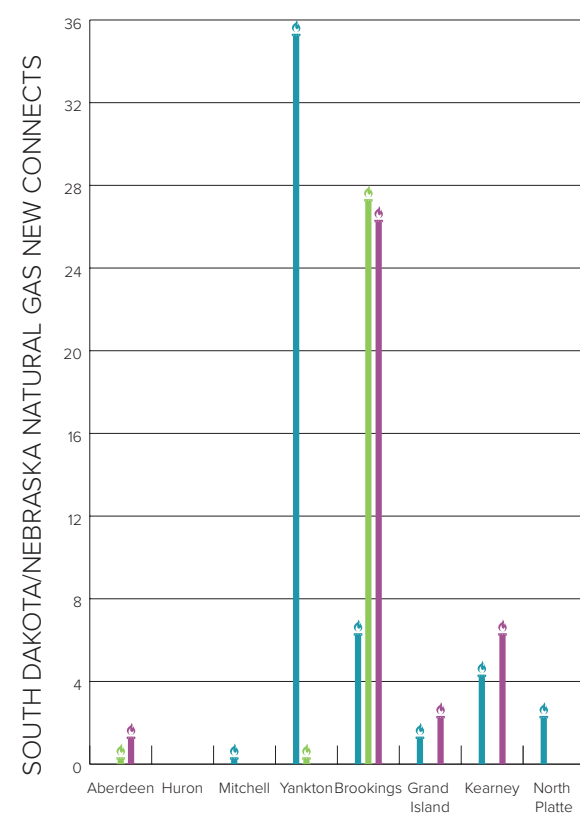
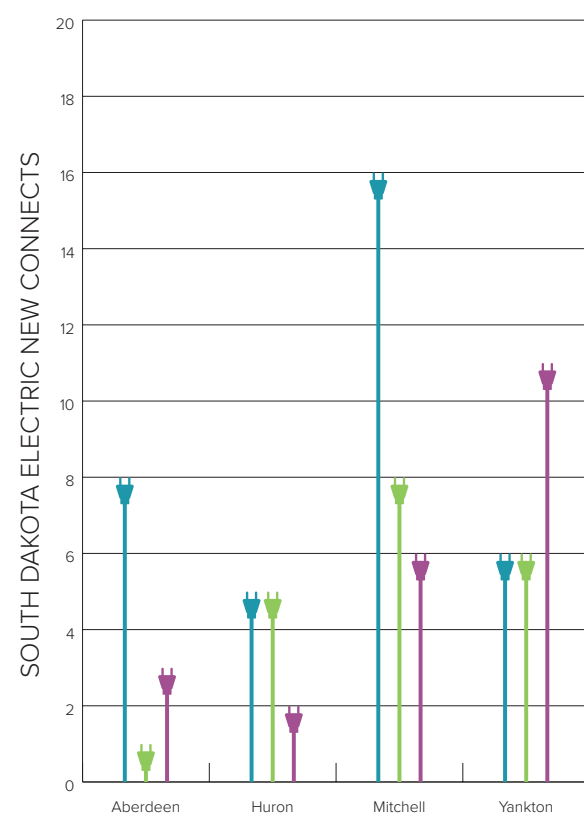
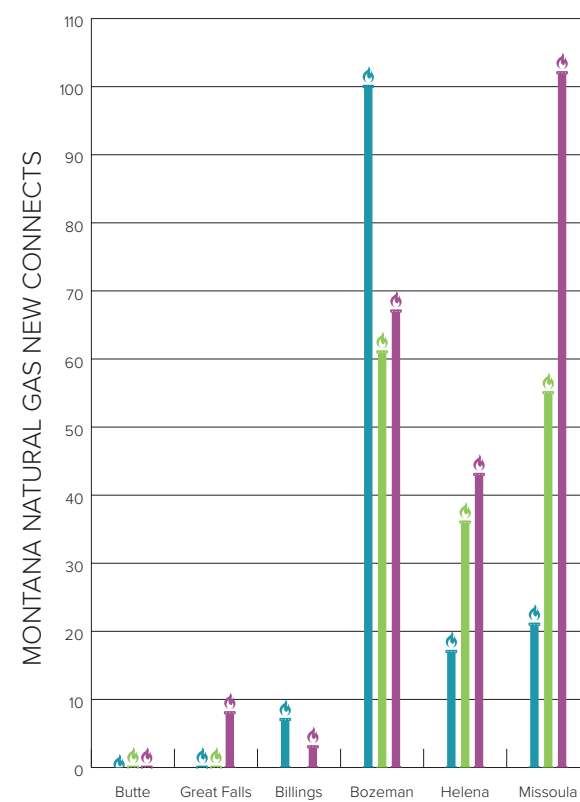
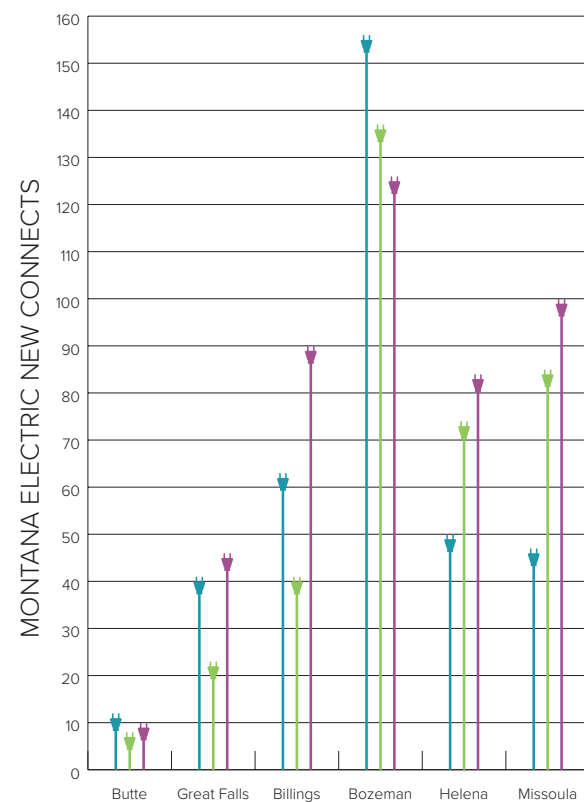


Wake Cup Coffeehouse & Restaurant



## Customer Growth

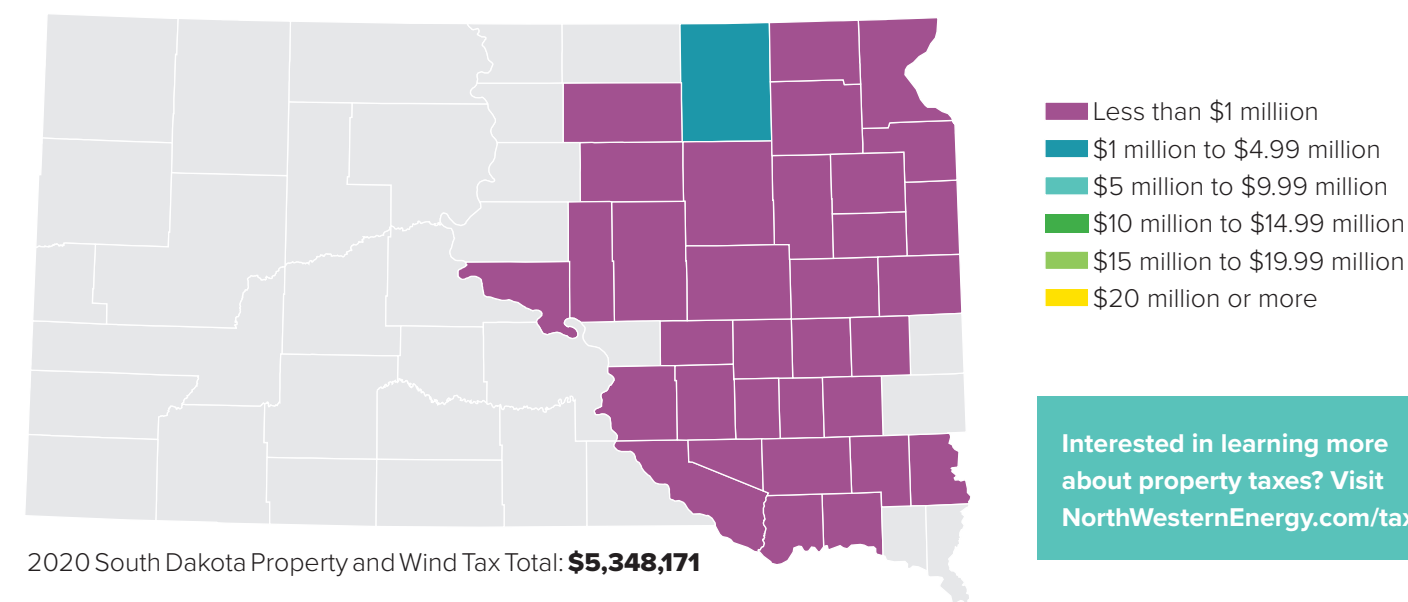
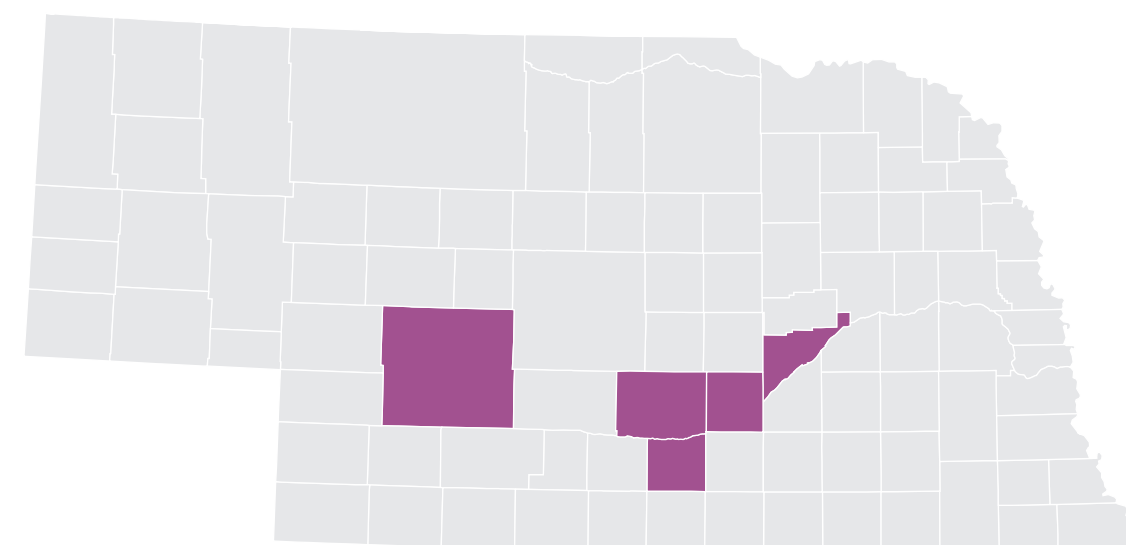
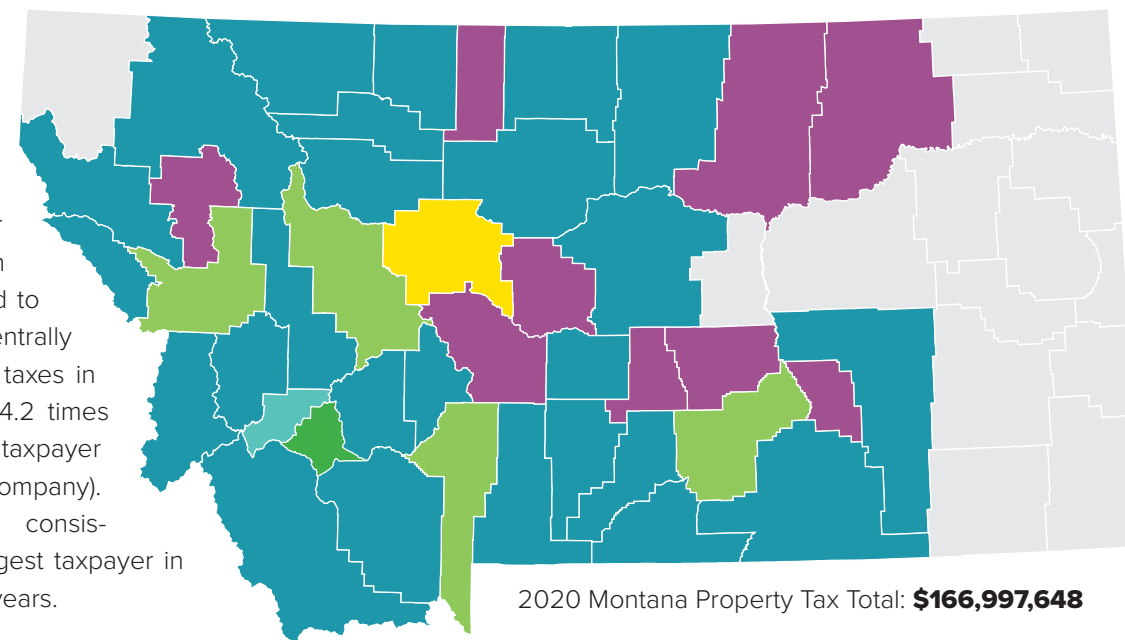
Our data on customer growth offers a glimpse into the population changes and building taking place in communities across our service territory.



2018  
2019  
2020

## Property Taxes

For tax year 2020, NorthWestern Energy is estimated to pay 36.4% of all centrally assessed property taxes in Montana. This is 4.2 times the next largest taxpayer (BNSF Railway Company). NorthWestern has consistently been the largest taxpayer in Montana for many years.



Interested in learning more about property taxes? Visit [NorthWesternEnergy.com/taxes](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com/taxes)





# THE ENDURING VALUE OF HYDRO ELECT RICITY

By Butch Larcombe

*Interested in learning more about the development of water power in Montana? A new book written by Butch Larcombe and published by NorthWestern Energy, titled “Golden Kilowatts: Water Power and the Early Growth of Montana,” will be available soon. Check out the next edition of Bright magazine for details on how to order a copy of Butch’s book.*

The mesmerizing sound of falling water has often fueled the human imagination. In this photograph, date and photographer unknown, two unidentified figures contemplate Rainbow Falls on the Missouri River just a few miles downstream from Great Falls, Montana.

After first seeing the series of falls on the Missouri, entrepreneur Paris Gibson convinced rail tycoon James J. Hill that the tumbling water could be the foundation for an industrious new city, one fueled by hydropower. Hill, Gibson and others formed the Great Falls Water Power and Townsite Company and in 1891 built the first hydroelectric dam on the Missouri in Montana at Black Eagle, supplying power to the nearby Boston and Montana metal smelter and the fledgling city of Great Falls.

After the disastrous 1908 failure of Hauser Dam north of Helena, Hill’s interest in hydropower waned. Spotting opportunity, John D. Ryan, encouraged by associates

John Morony and Max Hebgen, gained control of Great Falls Water Power and bought several potential dam sites near Great Falls from Hill.

Ryan soon launched the construction of a hydroelectric dam at Rainbow Falls. Rainbow Dam was completed in 1910, after just 20 months of construction at a price of \$3.5 million, which included two transmission lines that ferried electricity to mines and smelters in Butte and Anaconda, operations also controlled by Ryan and others.

Brimming with enthusiasm and seeking money for more dam projects, Ryan told potential investors that Rainbow Dam was producing “golden kilowatts” and hydroelectric development could be a financial mother lode, noting “There is more gold in the water in the Missouri River than in many mines.”

The construction of Rainbow Dam was the first in a spree of dam building undertaken by Ryan, and soon, the Montana

Power Company, which was formed in 1912. Between 1910 and 1930, seven dams were built in Montana, in addition to the reconstruction of Hauser, completed in 1911.

Fast forward nearly a century and those dams, now owned by NorthWestern Energy, continue to crank out reliable electricity for the company’s Montana customers. The dams are testament to the enduring value of hydroelectric generation, which has been enhanced by significant investment over the years at many of the dams.

At Rainbow, the original wooden-and-rock dam was replaced by concrete in 1990 and a rubber dam added in 1999. The most ambitious project came in 2009 as PPL Montana began work to install a single-unit, 60-megawatt generating unit and powerhouse and make upgrades

to the nearby transmission system. The redevelopment project, which boosted Rainbow’s production capacity by 70%, was completed in 2013 at a cost of \$215 million.

More than 110 years after Ryan gushed about the potential of water power in Montana, Rainbow Dam serves as the generation control center for NorthWestern’s hydroelectric system, which will help serve Montana homes and businesses for decades to come. ☀



**Butch Larcombe worked as a newspaper reporter and editor in Montana for nearly 30 years and was also the editor and general manager of Montana Magazine. He worked in corporate communications at NorthWestern Energy for six years before leaving the company in 2018. Originally from Malta, Montana, he now lives near Bigfork.**





\ CAN YOU FIND IT?

Do you recognize the location of any of these photos? Send us your guesses to be placed in the drawing for a prize. Guesses should be specific, such as naming a feature in the photo or giving the exact location.

Send your guesses to [bright@northwestern.com](mailto:bright@northwestern.com). Be sure to include your name, mailing address and phone number so we can contact you if you're a winner.

NEBRASKA



SOUTH DAKOTA



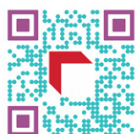
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