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Inductees

Ed Fritzsche

As a leader of the Beadle Electric Cooperative board of directors, Ed Fritzsche of Wessington, S.D., was one of the visionaries who could see the benefits of consolidating two small electric distribution cooperatives in central South Dakota.

The consolidation of Beadle and neighboring Ree Electric Cooperative in Miller resulted in a stronger, more effective cooperative in Dakota Energy Cooperative based in Huron.

Fritzsche was a director for Beadle Electric for 35 years and represented the cooperative at the East River Electric Power Cooperative table where he served for 22 years, including nine years as vice president and president for four years.

As vice president of the East River Electric board, he helped rally opposition to a federal plan to sell the Power Marketing Administrations which operate the mainstem dams and transmission systems in South Dakota. The sale would have resulted in greatly increased wholesale hydro-power costs and threatened the reliable, low-cost power supply of electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, tribes and other non-profit entities.

He also helped lobby board members to invest in a load-management system at East River which has saved more than \$100 million in power costs during the past 20 years.

Fritzsche was awarded East River's Eminent Service Award in 1995.



1923-2005

Dean Rasmussen

Dean Rasmussen of Aberdeen, S.D., began working for the Farmers Union Oil Company in Doland, S.D., as a petroleum salesman in 1960, thus beginning his 40-year partnership and friendship with the company now known as CHS Cooperatives and Land O'Lakes.

In 1985, as district marketing manager in the Aberdeen area, Rasmussen led his district to win the Cenex Big Wheel Award. This contest measured all Cenex districts and compared districts in all other states in the areas of sales, employee training and financial performance. This was the first and only time that one of South Dakota's five districts ever won the contest.

As a co-op leader Rasmussen encouraged his cooperatives to plan for the future.

As a facilitator for local co-op boards, he helped co-op boards conduct long range planning which looked at the cooperative's current status and projections of where they wanted to go. The plan also included discussions on possible mergers, buying out competitors, expanding trade area, employee training, advertising and promotion and how to better serve their customers.

"Dean could look into the future and realize what changes needed to take place at local cooperatives, and in looking ahead, he was able to unify many cooperatives, so that they were more efficient and able to better serve their patrons," wrote Gary French, general manager of Sioux Valley Cooperative and Cenex Convenience Stores.

