

## member connection

(Energy users continued from Page 3)

at only 25 percent energy efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star®-certified LEDs can save you \$75 per year. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

### Water heating efficiency

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. For additional efficiency and savings, insulate exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

### Put cold hard cash back in your wallet

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified models and 20 percent less energy than required by current federal standards.

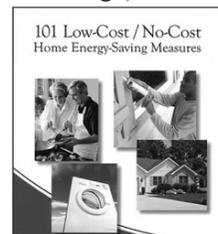
Regardless of the age of your fridge, there are additional steps you can take to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35-38 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for separate freezers (used for long-term storage).

By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.



**ENERGY STAR**

Products with the Energy Star label have met federal government specifications regarding energy efficiency.



Touchstone Energy® brochures to save energy are available at the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric office.

Supporting the Steele County Food Shelf since 1994

# 2016 HOMETOWN Sampler

CONCERT SERIES

STEELE COUNTY FOOD SHELF United Way

Bad Tangerines, The Gogs, Hot "n" Bothered, Mile 5 Band

Encees Dave Otto & John Havelka

Join us for great local music and to support our community by helping restock the Steele County Food Shelf with admission of food or monetary donations.

Friday, March 4 @ 7 PM  
Saturday, March 5 @ 5 PM & 7 PM  
Sunday, March 6 @ 1:30 PM

Little Theatre of Owatonna  
560 Dummell Drive, Owatonna

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors!

Express, FEDERATED INSURANCE, GOPHER SPORT, KENT D. ROSSI LAW OFFICE, LOWE'S, Owatonna US BANK

## STEELE COUNTY FREE FAIR Building Fund Benefit Dinner

HY-VEE CASUAL DINING AREA

### FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016

### 4:00 - 7:00 PM

MENU—\$9.99  
Baked Cod, Pasta Choice, Bay Scallops, Swai Breaded Fish, Hushpuppies, Veggies, Mashed Potatoes, and Cole Slaw

KIDS (10 and under)—\$5.99

A & W Root Beer Floats—\$1.00

Profits go toward the SCFF Building Fund

sparks • march 2016



the power of human connections

# sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

March 2016

### inside connections

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### calendar of events

#### March

- 2 Dr. Suess' birthday  
National Read Across America Day
- 3 "The Star-Spangled Banner" made U.S. national anthem in 1931
- 13 Daylight saving time starts
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 First day of spring  
Palm Sunday
- 25 Good Friday 21371  
**SWCE office closed**
- 27 Easter

If you wish to reduce clutter and add convenience, you may elect to receive an email that your bill is available to view online. Log in to your online account at [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop), click on the "Alerts" tab, and check "Bill Notification," and "Electronic Only." Enter your email address and click "Update" to receive your bill notification by email instead of in the mail.

## Auditions for national anthem singer being conducted for co-op's 80th annual meeting

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will be conducting auditions to feature the singing of, "The Star-Spangled Banner," at this year's annual meeting, June 7, at the co-op's headquarters in Owatonna.



Norrine Jensen of New Richland performed the national anthem during the 2014 annual meeting.

Interested Steele-Waseca members or their dependent child will need to audition before a panel of judges at the co-op.

For those auditioning (whether solo, duet, etc.), you will be judged on your vocal performance, stage presence and

personality. You may schedule an audition by contacting Debbie Eby at Steele-Waseca. Auditions must be completed by Friday, April 29, 2016.

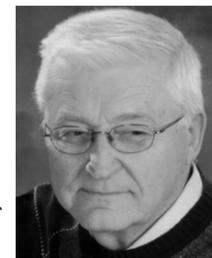
The performer(s) selected will need to be available to sing the national anthem "live" at the annual meeting. The selected recipient will also receive \$100 at this year's annual meeting.



The Medford Men's Choir sang the national anthem at the annual meeting in 2013.

## Former Operations Division Manager, Gordie Schroeder, dies at age 75

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's former Operations Division Manager, Gordon "Gordie" Schroeder died Jan. 8, at the age of 75, at his home in Cannon Falls after a long battle with cancer.



Gordie Schroeder

Gordie started working at Steele-Waseca as a truck driver-groundman in 1968. One year later he became an apprentice lineman and advanced to lineman in 1973.

In 1984, Gordie became the load management coordinator and operations assistant. Two years later, Schroeder was named director of customer services.

In 1991, Gordie became the assistant manager of engineering and remained at that position until 1996 when he accepted the position of operations division manager.

Recalling his years at Steele-Waseca in the December 2001 *Sparks* newsletter, Gordie said, "The transition from

lineman to working in the office was one of my greatest challenges. As load management coordinator, I was responsible for developing SWCE's off-peak program, which was a huge change from lineman work."

Early in Gordie's tenure as operations division manager, Steele-Waseca began a major project called Process Improvement. The project allowed all employees to work together as a team, with each individual having input.

Under Gordie's leadership and with the help of the line crew working as a team, the operations division achieved many accomplishments including the installation of turtle devices for automatic meter reading of all members' meters, flex time for line personnel, and the implementation of one-man maintenance.

Gordie is survived by his wife, Car-Gole, of Cannon Falls; sons, Rick (Mary) of White Bear Lake, Randal (Beth) of Cannon Falls; grandchildren, Leigha (Matt) Lingen, Leslie, Jeremy, Ryan and Anna Schroeder.

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Email: [swce@swce.coop](mailto:swce@swce.coop)  
Fax: 507-446-4242

### Board of Directors

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Kim Huxford . . . . . *Operations*

### Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

### Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

### For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages Phone:

507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

### Before calling to report an outage

1. Check fuses and circuit breakers in your home and on meter pole.
2. Check with your neighbors to see if they have power.
3. Look for possible causes such as a tree branch on wires, a broken pole, twisted wires, etc.

### To leave a non-emergency message whenever SWCE's Office is closed:

Phone 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514  
Press "2" and leave message including name, account #, and phone # you can be reached at the following business day.

Call *Before* You Dig  
Gopher State One Call  
811 or 800-252-1166

48-hour notice required for ALL underground cable locations

## manager connection



By Syd Briggs,  
General Manager

Member-owners, as opposed to customers, benefit from the many areas of involvement that comes with cooperative membership.

A co-op member may vote for directors, they can serve as a director, attend the annual meeting, serve on the nominating committee, attend town hall meetings, and participate in the annual Coal Creek Tour to Underwood, N.D.

The tour includes the Coal Creek Station, Falkirk Mine with side tours of the Blue Flint Ethanol Plant, the High Voltage DC Converter Station, and the Missouri River's Garrison Dam.

The three-day tour is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14, through Thursday, June 16. It's an opportunity to travel in the comfort of a motor coach from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric to Bismarck, N.D., stay at the Country Inn & Suites, which also has a water park for the kids. Each morning the hotel treats the tour group to a full buffet breakfast.

During the trip to North Dakota, short educational DVDs will be played on the motor coach to inform participants about what they'll see during the tour. There is fun with questions and answers about information in each DVD throughout the trip for great prizes.

The tour on Wednesday, June 15, will include the Coal Creek Station to learn about the process of utilizing coal to generate electricity. Next is to observe the HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) Terminal. It's here participants will see the equipment where 22,000 volts of alternating current (AC) from the generators is converted to 400,000 volts of direct current (DC).

From the 21st floor of Coal Creek Station, you will be able to view the Blue Flint Ethanol Plant which generates 50 million gallons of ethanol a year by using excess steam from the Coal Creek power plant rather than utilizing boilers and burning natural gas, making Blue

Flint one of the most efficient ethanol plants.

Participants will also visit the Falkirk Mine to observe the open-pit mining process for lignite coal and the huge drag lines that uncover the coal. You'll learn how the land is restored to its original landscape and original farmland crop production levels after the coal is mined. Weather permitting, tour participants will be able to walk in the coal field and pick their own coal.

The final stop of the day will be a visit to the Garrison Dam where electricity is generated by the water behind the dam in the 178 mile long Lake Sakakawea. Garrison Dam is an earth-filled embankment dam on the Missouri River constructed in 1947-1953 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The dam is the fifth-largest earthen dam in the world.

The final day of the tour is spent traveling back to Owatonna.

The tour price per Steele-Waseca member and their guest is \$305 per adult. One of the cooperative's goals for students is to offer an educational opportunity about the electrical industry to our membership's young people. This is a great way for parents and/or grandparents to bring up to three students between the ages of 10 and 18 on this tour at NO CHARGE! Additional students may attend for a minimal additional charge of \$150 per student. Students must be accompanied by an adult. 26408

For members wishing to travel for a second or additional time, the cost is \$605. However, if you bring a guest who is a member of Steele-Waseca, and has not been on the tour previously, the price will remain at \$305 per adult to encourage promotion of the tour.

To preregister or obtain additional information, contact Steele-Waseca Marketing Division Manager Doug Hughes, who has done an outstanding job with the tour for many years.

Registration forms are also available online. Visit Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), and on the home page move your cursor over, "EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES," then click on "Coal Creek Tour." There are a limited number of seats available, so sign up as soon as possible to ensure your opportunity to participate this year!

## ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

2013 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER, base model, 7000 mi., full-time 4WD, \$27,495. 456-9145.

1-ACRE WOODED LOTS w/lakeshore on Beaver Lk. Gravel cul-de-sac, southern exposure, utilities & common well to lots incl. Ready to build your dream home! [www.beaverlkestates.com](http://www.beaverlkestates.com). 438-9503.

1994 LINCOLN TOWN CAR EXECUTIVE, (4) door, 94,000 mi., \$3900; 3-ACRE HOBBY FARM, Richland Twsp, Rice Co., \$100,000. 612-827-6575.

GRASS HAY BALES, small square. 612-756-1131.

MEYER 7' HYDRAULIC SNOWPLOW; FORD DEARBORN 7' SICKLE MOWER. 334-5344.

LARGE GEORGE FOREMAN GRILL w/bun warmers, new, \$40. 334-3804.

(2) PAIR OF COWBOY BOOTS, new, (1) tan & (1) black, size 10 1/2. 334-5245.

(30) USED CEDAR DOCK INSERT SECTIONS FOR ROLL-IN DOCK, 5/4" x 6" x 4' x 4' sections, \$5/each. 612-419-4231.

(2) BRUNSWICK BOWLING BALLS, 10- & 12-lb., drilled for ladies, used once, incl. 2-ball rolling bag, \$75/obo. 952-652-2929.

(2) BAR STOOLS w/backs, \$50; WHITE CHANDELIER, beautiful, \$50. 456-8329.

CABIN, Roberds Lake, 504 sq. ft, 3723 Chappuis Trl, Fbo, buildable lot, 0.4 acres, pics on Craigslist. 332-0330.

PRIEFERT HORSE STALL FRONT; FOLDABLE PICNIC TABLE, hunter green; MIXED FIREWOOD; APPLE TREE FIREWOOD; STORAGE for fish houses. 676-1141.

MEN'S TREK 7100, 700x35c, F.S. Fork, 21-spd, \$150; TREK 920 MTB, 21-spd, men's, 26x175, \$100. 330-3178.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods, ready to go (seasoned). 332-7739.

ROCK BAND DRUM, (2) GUITARS/STAND, MIC & (2) GAMES for Xbox 360, \$150; BLK ELEC. CAN OPENER, \$10. 279-2463.

25' GOOSENECK 3-HORSE TRAILER w/living qtrs, \$5000; JD 60 TRACTOR, gd runner, \$1800; JD 3020G w/loader & cab, \$7000. 330-3945.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS, Salomon S-Cut Snowscape + (2) Adidas #145 poles + Salomon ski boots/size 11, \$125 for all. 339-1801.

ALF. GRASS HAY: 1st, 2nd & 3rd crop; STRAW BALES. 744-2871.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) assumes no liability for the content of, or reply to, any item posted. The party posting any advertisement assumes complete liability for the content of, and all replies to, any advertisement and for any claims against SWCE as a result thereof, and agrees to indemnify and hold SWCE harmless from all costs, expenses, liabilities and damages resulting from, or caused by, any advertisement or reply thereto.

### Assistance sought by Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric to find former members

Capital credit checks for the following former Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members have been returned to the co-op because their mailing addresses are no longer accurate. 22685

If you know any of the following former members and can provide information about them, please call Kathy Friedrichs at the Steele-Waseca office.

Ambrose, Michael/Linda	Faribault
Arndt, David W.	Owatonna
Banse, Katherine	Lonsdale
Barnett, Scott A.	Bloomington

LP TANKS; PORTABLE FISH HOUSE, \$100; 2-WHEEL TRAILERS; ELEC. & GAS HEATERS; ICE AUGERS, hand. 664-9426.

GLASTRON BOAT & 1994 MERCURY 75HP MOTOR, trim & tilt, Minn Kota 55 lb. autopilot trolling motor, Humminbird 586, trailer & surge brakes, full cover. 663-0959.

'84 VOLVO CAR, 4-door, runs, new brakes & alternator, sunroof, gd gas mileage, \$300; BRANSON TIMESHARE FOR RENT, 1-wk anytime in '16, 2-bdrm, sleeps-5, close to main strip, \$800. 334-5961.

'92 MAXIMA, CA car, \$1000/obo; '96 SONOMA, 4-wheel drive, parts truck, \$400; 2.5-TON BIN, \$200. 838-5467.

ALF/GRASS MIX HAY BALES, gd quality, no rain. 451-2978.

LANDSCAPING; RETAINING WALLS; SHRUBS; EDGING; DECORATIVE ROCK; SPRING CLEANING & more, all for hire, free quote. 475-1352/Noah.

'63 THUNDERBIRD LANDAU, dark green, 390 4-barrel, not running, complete car, rust in floor pans, restoration project, \$2800. 952-652-2933.

OLD JAPANESE PAPER MONEY FOR AMERICAN MONEY (for sale or trade). 528-2443.

LA-Z-BOY RECLINER/ROCKER, brown, only 7-mths-old, vry gd cond., \$250. 334-0105.

BUMPER POOL TABLE made of solid oak, has a cover top. 451-0653.

BABY CRADLE, cherry wood, \$30; MISC. MUSIC BOX COLLECTION, \$5-\$10/ea.; ORGAN MUSIC, "THE ORGANIST" MAGAZINE, dating 1966 & forward, 150+ books, \$100. 304-0903.

(5) RED THEATRE SEATS in exc. cond., bolted together, can be disassembled for moving, great for your TV room, \$100. 491-4565.

10-YR-OLD PAINT GELDING QTR HORSE, has all shots, needs a lot of riding, \$750. 952-200-2280.

'02 CHEVY Z71 incl. topper; '08 TRITON ALUM. SNOW. TRLR, Traxmats, glides & salt shield; TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL & STUMP GRINDING, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines. 456-1609.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods: 1/4 cord/\$65, 1/2 cord/\$120, full cord/\$220 (you pick up). 645-4158.

MULTI-PERIL & HAIL INSURANCE AVAIL. for your crops, knowledgeable agent to help w/your crop insurance needs, March 15 deadline. 676-7767.

'99 DODGE DAKOTA R/T, 5.9, rebuilt tranny, new brakes, rust-free truck, new tires & rims, 2WD, runs & drives like new, \$4500. 384-2362.

JD 1100 MTD FIELD CULT., 21.5', always shedded. 451-8308.

SCHWINN EXERCISE BIKE. 451-8657.

40' KEWANEE BALE ELEVATOR, \$500; 300-GAL. ALUM. WATER TANK on a 2-wheel trailer, \$500; EU3000 HONDA GENERATOR, \$1000. 456-8893.

CLASSIC GUNS: Win., Rem., Ithaca, Ruger & others from the 1950s, '60s, '70s & '80s, most have walnut stocks & in exc. cond.; '84 CUTLASS CIERA, V6, diesel, 98% rust free. 451-0996.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, never shear sheep again, great for beginners & hobby farms, call now to reserve your Feb. born ewe & ram lambs. 451-2722.

'92 SILVERADO w/topper, 1/2 ton, red, 206,000 mi., deluxe interior, always shedded, \$1500. 527-2970.

ALF. HAY, sm. sq., 3rd crop; WHEAT STRAW, sm. sq. 303-3690.

1991 GMC SUBURBAN, 4x4, 118,000 mi., \$3200; 2014 JAZZY SELECT ELITE PWR WHEELCHAIR, used (6) mths, like new, \$1000. 332-7725.

FAINTING COUCH, upholstery in exc. cond., wood carvings adorn bottom of couch, rolls on casters, beautiful—must see! \$499. 213-8823.

HAY, round bales, 5x5, 1st & 2nd cutting grass hay, stored inside, \$30. 334-6334.

ICE CREAM PARLOR TABLE & (4) CHAIRS in exc. shape, \$350. 451-8334.

HOBBY FARM, charming 100-yr-old house, (4) bdrm, (2) ba, new fireplace, hardwood floors throughout, (5) acres, Kenyon, \$230,000. 612-419-4874/Kate.

1996 EVINRUDE 28HP BOAT MOTOR, \$900; ANTIQUE MECHANICAL SLOT MACHINE w/stand, \$2500; LOVE SEAT, \$50; ANTIQUE BUFFET, \$1200. 383-3871.

WHIRLPOOL DISHWASHER & ABOVE-THE-STOVE MICROWAVE, bisque color, incl. manuals, about 12-yr-old, will sell separately, \$125. 213-0059.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods, \$100/pickup load; ROOF VENTS for pole shed, 10' long, \$20/each; SNOW RAKE for roof, \$10. 451-5887.

(2) GRADE SCHOOL DESKS & CHAIRS, hvy duty, \$5/each; CHILDREN'S WOODEN STORAGE RACK w/(12) multi-color bins, \$10. 744-4467.

HAY, square & round bales. 451-5131 after 5 p.m.

BEAUTIFUL ORNATE 4-PIECE SILVER SERVICE, ideal for receptions, \$70/cash. 451-7626.

ANTIQUY VANITY, \$100. 583-6679.

Bass, Terri	Northfield	Meyer, Starr	Morristown
Bullard, Michael/Joan	Faribault	Niesen, Tracy	Janesville
Casey, Mr./Mrs. Allen L.	Owatonna	Paul, Dennis/Pat	Faribault
Cawley, William L.	Owatonna	Petersen, Walter E.	Northfield
Dwinnell, Ross	Faribault	Phillips, Paul	Faribault
Fischer, Elmer A.	Minnesota Lake	Robinson, Jane M. Johnson	Cannon Falls
Gilligan, Robin P./Linda	Northfield	Roush, Patricia A.	Owatonna
Hacker, Carol R.	Albert Lea	Schletty, Tammy J.	Dodge Center
Jacobsen, Mr./Mrs. Charles	Owatonna	Senne, Jane/Lee	Webster
Ketola, Richard L.	Faribault	Stepanek, Jane E.	Owatonna
King, Mr./Mrs. David	Mapleton	Thomas, Todd	Faribault
Korstad, Dean/Cari	Lonsdale	Whitney, Catherine Dusek	Faribault
Lynch, Eunice M.	Northfield	Zvorak, David W.	Owatonna

## ad connection

### give away

**DEAD WOOD TREES**, you cut, you haul. 789-6222.

**UPRIGHT PIANO**, gd cond., been refinished, you haul. 451-4133.

**8-YR-OLD BRITTANY** to a gd home, loves to hunt & hang w/kids. 456-8010.

**FARM CATS**. 213-1466.

### wanted

**FARMLAND TO RENT** in the Owat. area. 213-6979.

**ROUEN MALE DUCKS; GIANT WHITE PEKIN DUCKS**. 451-7091.

**ELECTRIC DEBEAKER**. 583-2017.

**SOMEONE TO FIX TOY TONKA TRKS**. 451-2687.

**LAND FOR RENT FOR 2016 & beyond**. 456-6521.

**LAYING HENS**, prefer brown egg layers. 477-3557.

**JANITORIAL WORKERS**, PT day/evening, needed in Owat. area. \$10/hr. 412-1248/Laura.

**USED OLDER SNOWMOBILE**. 332-7972.

**USED 4 X 4 SIDE-BY-SIDE** in gd cond., will pay \$. 363-6310.

**COMPANION CAREGIVER** for elderly family member in Owat., light meal prep. 475-0138.

**UNWANTED BIKES & LAWN MOWERS**, \$ paid on delivered. 330-3178.

**BANTAM HENS; SMALLER COLORED HENS**. 202-1160.

**PONTOON**, used in gd cond., prefer 20' w/at least a 50 hp motor; **USED ALUM. ROLL-IN DOCK**, 40'+. 451-9614.

**JUNK & UNWANTED APPLIANCES**, no TVs, computers &/or plastic dishwashers, free drop off. 210-6728/Fbo.

**JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES**: cars, trucks, pickups, most farm & constr. equip., top \$ pd. 332-2300.

**USED OIL**, 200-gal. minimum please. 420-7429.

**PERSONS LOOKING FOR HELP IN HOME**: meal prep, housekeeping & more services avail., local ref., 15-yrs exp. 412-7045.

### Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **March 7** to ensure being printed in the April Sparks. Please print neatly or type your ad of **20 words or less** on this form. We reserve the right to edit ad copy to allow space for more ads. Ads received after the 7th will be printed in the May issue.

For Sale  Wanted  Give Away

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to: SWCE, PO Box 485, Owatonna MN 55060-0485, or fax to: (507) 446-4242 or email your ad to: [sparks@swce.coop](mailto:sparks@swce.coop).

## All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

**SMALLR WORKING MANURE SPRDR**. 213-1466.

**DOGHOUSE**. 461-1865.

### for sale

**(2) KEROSENE HEATERS** on wheels; **(1) LARGE MOTOR HOIST**. 528-2422.

**STEGER MUKLUKS**, women's, used vry little, med. size, \$75. 451-1977.

**CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS** for rent, 11'x9' to 16'x10'. 332-4623.

**'03 HOMESTEADR CARGO TRLR**, 14'x7', swinging bck doors, side door, tandm axl, \$1600. 383-3966.

**RENTAL**, Izaak Walton League Bldg., 4 mi. south of Owat., seats 100, full kitchen, grill, Wi-Fi, \$100. 451-7946.

**SONY CAR STEREO** w/speakers, AM/FM/CD/MP3/remote, new in bx, \$150; **TV CONVERTER BX**, new, \$50; **FLARE BX**, exc. shape, \$600. 455-3881.

**HOME REPAIRS**: plumbing, decks (repair or replacement), window & door installation, drywall (repair or installation) & more, quality wrk, exc. references, affordable prices. 581-6562/John.

**(2) 8' WESTERN PRO SNOWPLOWS** w/shock trip; **8' 2" BOSS V-PLOW** w/smart lock cyl.; **8' LZ STAINLESS STEEL BLADE**. 455-3524/Scott or Amy.

**INT. TRUCK**, 15' grain box, tandem axle, works, \$400; **FANNING MILL** w/screens, \$100; **AUGER**, 40' 6", \$250. 676-5917.

**BEACHFRONT VACATION CONDOS FOR RENT** in Fort Myers Beach, South Padre Island & Mexico, visit [www.sandysbeachfrontcondo.com](http://www.sandysbeachfrontcondo.com) for details & photos. 612-865-9604/Sandy.

**SHAPPELL FOLD-UP FISH HOUSE**, 4'x6', nice, \$100/cash. 456-8520.

**MILLER PORTABLE WELDER AC/DC GENERATOR** on wheels, \$1350; **'94 MACK DAY CAB**, \$8750; **'96 VOLVO CONDO**, \$6850; **'96 IH WET KIT**, \$11,200. 456-1181.

**FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS**, the covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000; **7.6 ACRES ON GONVICK AVE.**, \$79,900. 838-5033/John.

**SHINGLING, LIGHT CONSTRUCTION & TREE REMOVAL**, free estimates. 456-0296.

**CARNIOLAN HONEYBEES**, last chance to purchase 2- or 3-lb package bees, the bees will be delivered from Calif. & may be picked up in Owat. in April. 456-0753.

**STORAGE**: vehicles, boats, campers & RVs, Waldorf area. 380-1609/Chad.

**PRONTO M41 ELEC. PWR CHAIR**, exc. cond., \$1800. 475-2322.

**DUMP TRUCK AVAIL. FOR ALL OF YOUR HAULING NEEDS**: rock, dirt, etc., 15-ton cap. 456-7774.

**6 X 8 COLD STORAGE** in Fbo, \$39/mo. 332-4638.

**STORAGE UNITS**, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

**1952 CHEV. 4100 TRUCK**, 1.5 ton, frame off restoration, all new tires, glass (green tint), paint (forest grn) & interior, call for pics, \$13,500. 952-290-4408.

**BLACK ANGUS BEEF**, qtrs, halves or whole avail., semi-organically & locally raised. 330-2452/Matt.

**VAL 6 KBE5L RADIANT HTR**, 115V, 1-ph., \$2395; **EASY KLEEN HOT WTR PR. WSHR**, 4 gpm @ 2000 psi, 15 hp, \$2195; **FUTURA HOT WTR PR. WSHR**, 3 gpm @ 1500 psi, 220V, 1-ph., \$1895. 583-2703.

**MIXED HAY**, large round bales, good quality, \$35. 451-2675.

**BOOK ENTITLED, "EARTH ONCE AGAIN,"** fiction, [www.createspace.com](http://www.createspace.com), \$8.99. 602-1057.

**STORAGE UNITS** in Dennison, 10x22, as low as \$99/mth w/6-mth contract, [www.dennisonstorage.com](http://www.dennisonstorage.com). 403-0033/John.

**CABIN** on south side of Beaver Lk, built in 2008, (2) bdrm, 900 sq. ft. w/covered deck, gas fireplace, a/c w/heater, 53' lakeshore & large south lot. 456-5213.

**PIANO**, exc. cond., \$150. 582-3440.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

### travel

**SAVANNAH, JEKYLL ISLAND & BEAUFORT**, Apr. 9-17. Nine days, deluxe motor coach, 14 meals, sightseeing & tours. \$1,059 per person based on 2 per room.

**TULIP TIME, HOLLAND, MICH.**, May 11-15. Five days, 8 meals, Tulip Time events & sightseeing. \$999 per person based on 2 per room.

**NATIONAL PARKS BY MOTOR COACH**, May 13-23. Eleven days, 14 meals, Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, Zion, Bryce Canyon & much more. \$1,439 per person based on 2 per room.

**NEW YORK CITY (AIR INCLUDED)**, June 22-26. Five days in NYC Times Square, (2) Broadway plays & sightseeing. \$2,399 per person based on 2 per room.

Call 4-Seasons at 800-328-4298 and reserve space today! Be sure to tell us you are Steele-Waseca members!



## member connection

### Co-ops face strict federal robo-calling requirements

by Dan Riedinger, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

At Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, maintaining good communication with you, our member-owner, is top priority.

Advancements in technology offer more options for keeping lines of communication open, but many businesses are required to operate within the boundaries set by law and regulation—such as those issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In particular, FCC regulations control the use of auto-dialed and prerecorded calls—sometimes called “robo-calls”—sent to landlines and cellphones.

The steps Steele-Waseca must take to comply with FCC requirements stem from the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, which was designed

to help consumers avoid unwanted telephone solicitations. Over the years, the FCC has made it clear that this law also applies to robo-calls and texts sent to wireless devices. The bottom line: Steele-Waseca may use robo-calls/texts to communicate with members if the requisite consent was given prior to placing the call or text, or if there is an “emergency purpose.”

This gets tricky when a co-op member discontinues use of a cellphone number that is subsequently assigned to a non-member. How does a caller determine that a number has been re-assigned? Steele-Waseca could face possible violations of \$500 per violation, or \$1,500 if the violation is found to be

(Robo-calling continued on Page 5)

### Top five energy users in your home

by Anne Prince, NRECA

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often it feels overwhelming because many people don't know where to start.

How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs? To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know what the top energy users are in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family. 19878

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

1. Space cooling
2. Space heating
3. Water heating
4. Lighting
5. Refrigeration

#### Adjust the temperature

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least 10 percent savings by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps.

- During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cleaning the filters of your HVAC system can cut costs from five to 15 percent.
- Clean the coils around your electric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors.

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

#### Shine the light on savings

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your lightbulbs are operating

(Energy users continued on Page 8)

## Cogeneration and Small Power Production

In compliance with Minnesota Adopted Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production Chapter 7835, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is required to connect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers which satisfy the conditions of a qualifying facility. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has available and will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements.

An application for interconnection is required for a qualifying facility to interconnect and operate in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system and is subject to approval by the cooperative. Any disputes over interconnection, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Members interested in further information should contact the office of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric.

### Steele-Waseca seeking to sell two bucket trucks



**2003 INTERNATIONAL 7400**, 4x4, Terex—Hi-Ranger, 46' boom, 159,000 miles, 12,336 hours, \$24,900. For more information (maintenance records available), please call Steele-Waseca's Dan Meier at 507-446-4214 or Kim Huxford at 507-446-4217.



**2006 FORD F-550**, 4x4, Versalift 40' (Elbow Squirt) boom, 165,000 miles, 8,445 hours, \$34,900. For more information (maintenance records available), please call Steele-Waseca's Dan Meier at 507-446-4214 or Kim Huxford at 507-446-4217.

## cookin' connection

### Johnnie Cake

Pat Petricka

Medford

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 2 tbsp. margarine or butter                   | 2 tbsp. sugar            |
| 1 c. molasses                                 | 1 tsp. salt              |
| 1 egg   | 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 1/4 c. corn meal                            | 2 c. buttermilk          |
| 1 1/2 tsp. soda dissolved in 1/2 c. hot water |                          |
| 2 c. flour                                    |                          |

Mix ingredients. Bake 40 minutes at 350° in 9 x 13 cake pan. "This is an old family recipe," wrote Pat. "We eat it with butter spread on it."

Please use a 3 x 5 card when submitting your recipe. The member whose recipe is published will receive a \$7 energy credit.



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's solar subscribers will see a 44 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during January 2016. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop).

## Was your account number in Sparks?

Each month five account numbers are printed in *Sparks* and a total of \$35 in energy credits is divided among however many of those numbers are found. For example, if all numbers are found, a credit of \$7 will be applied to the members' following month's electric bills; or, if only one number is found, that member receives the full \$35 credit. Members finding their numbers who have a load management receiver on their dual fuel, electric water heater, air conditioner, or genset will receive an additional \$7 credit. When you find your number, phone our office no later than the 7th of the month following receipt of the *Sparks*, or the amount will be forfeited.

## February issue of Sparks

### Numbers found:

Bert B./Stephanie R. Tesch

### Numbers not found:

Daniel N. Ableman  
Mr./Mrs. Michael S. Erickson  
Mr./Mrs. Curtis J. Jensen  
Michael Niss



## Sparks in brief . . .

• **Want easy energy payments?** Sign up for **EnergyPay Plus**, our automatic payment plan, or **Energy Prepay**, our discounted advance payment plan. Contact our office for details. You may also pay your bill online at [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop). By entering your Steele-Waseca username and password you can also view a 13-month history of your account.

• **If you have changed or added phone numbers, please contact SWCE to update your contact information.**

• **Need a new water heater?** For information about our Marathon Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Aamot at our office between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **January temps** – The average high temperature for January was 22° F, while the average low was 9° F. They compare to last year's average high of 25° F and average low of 9° F.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2016, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs), light emitting diode (LED) holiday lights and bulbs purchased are eligible to receive rebates (may not be combined with special promotions). Rebate request forms must be submitted within 90 days of purchase. Rebate forms are available at [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop). For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Aamot between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514.

• **Steele-Waseca's tree service contractor** – Carr's Tree Service, Inc., is contracted to do SWCE's tree trimming. To report a tree concern, phone:

507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514

### STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE

# 866-878-7964

TO BE USED TO REPORT ANY CRIME OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY ANONYMOUSLY

COVERS ALL OF STEELE COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITIES OF:

OWATONNA ELLENDALE  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD

## health & safety connection

### Take a break from the wind!

by Steele County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Many people go to great lengths to conserve energy in this era of tight budgets and environmental awareness.

Each spring Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Minnesota distribute thousands of trees to homeowners for energy conservation, erosion control, and wildlife habitat. Steele and Waseca SWCDs participate in this annual tree distribution.

Trees on our landscapes provide important benefits to our homes including wind and snow protection, energy conservation, shade, wildlife habitat, and possibly increased property values. Windbreaks can provide all the benefits mentioned above and make a substantial difference in your quality of life and energy savings on your acreage.

A properly planted windbreak on the north and west of your building site helps to save energy and to reduce the cost of heating and cooling by protecting buildings from winter wind and summer sun. Windbreaks can reduce winter heating costs up to 25 percent. The reduction in summer air conditioning costs from windbreaks can be quite dramatic. The cooling effect of one mature deciduous tree is equal to 10 room-sized air conditioners.

Controlling where snow collects around your property can be a major factor in your quality of life. Snow that collects in your driveway can keep you from leaving or entering your property. You can spend many hours and significant amounts of money each year in snow removal. Studies have shown 40 percent of the snow that falls is moved to another location by wind. A shrub row on the outside of your windbreak will start stopping snow in their third year of growth and only get better after that.

(Robo-calling continued from Page 3)

willful. The FCC may issue penalties of \$16,000 for each violation.

So how do the FCC requirements affect you as a co-op member? Important notifications that we use to communicate with you could be considered violations.

Steele-Waseca is working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) on this issue, and comments have been submitted to the FCC. Still pending before the Commis-



When planting around property lines, road right of ways, and power lines it's important to keep in mind setback distances. Shrubs should be planted 10 feet off the property line while trees need to be kept 20 feet off. All trees and shrubs should be planted 25 feet back of road right of way lines.

Always keep in mind the mature height of the tree or shrub when planting around power lines. Trees and shrubs with a mature height of 25 feet or less should be planted 20 feet away from overhead lines. Taller trees should be planted the mature height away from overhead power lines. You should always remember to contact Gopher State One Call when planning to dig or perform excavation in your yard.

The SWCD offers site visits, advice, and plan creation for all types of windbreaks. You may also qualify for cost assistance to offset the establishment of the windbreak or living snow fence. Tree order forms for 2016 and tree descriptions can be found at [steelswcd.org](http://steelswcd.org) and [wasecaswcd.org](http://wasecaswcd.org). Please contact [adam.arndt@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:adam.arndt@mn.nacdnet.net) at the Steele County office, 507-451-6730 ex. 3 or [tyler.polster@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:tyler.polster@mn.nacdnet.net) at the Waseca office, 507-838-4800 ex. 3.

### Power outage sensor options for livestock barns

Loss of electricity to an enclosed livestock or poultry building can cause huge economic consequences for the producer. Particularly during hot summer months, loss of power to ventilation fans quickly causes overheating, elevated levels of manure gases and rapid death of animals.

To guard against such unexpected outages, many producers have installed power outage alarm systems in their buildings. These can be coupled with a standby generator so the producer can quickly respond to an outage and get fans running again.

With today's smartphones and wireless communications, producers can not only be alerted to power outages, but can remotely check other conditions. For example, temperature sensors on dairy refrigeration units can remotely verify that milk is staying cool. Motor sensors can confirm that animal feeding systems or grain driers are working. Among the other conditions that can be monitored: humidity, power usage, airflow, ventilation system failure, water pressure, water leak, wall curtain up/down, and door open/close.

For more information, contact your building manufacturer.

(Courtesy: Rural Electricity Resource Council's *Electric Solutions*, Oct. '15)

**Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's line crews in March and April will be conducting their yearly inspection of the co-op's power lines. The co-op services the lines up to the meter pole on member's residences, so it may be necessary for Steele-Waseca trucks to enter driveways during line inspections. The yearly check is mandated by the co-op's insurance provider. Thank you for your cooperation. 23362**

Waseca will keep you updated on this important issue, but in the meantime, let's keep the lines of communication open. Stop by our office, call or email us, and make sure we have your current contact information on file.