

member connection

CoBank sharing

Faribault Middle School Counselor Brent Hawkins (pictured left adjacent photo) accepted a \$1,500 check on behalf of the school, Aug. 16, from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Accountant Jon Stelter. In addition, Owatonna Gold Cross Ambulance Lead Paramedic Rick Ellingson (pictured far right) was presented a \$2,100 check from Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs, Sept. 1, on behalf of the local Search & Rescue Explorer Post. Steele-Waseca participated in CoBank's "Sharing Success" program. CoBank matches contributions from their cooperative customers to the nonprofit organizations of the co-op's choice. CoBank, headquartered near Denver, Col., is a national cooperative bank providing loans and other financial services to rural power, water and communications providers along with agribusinesses in the U.S.



(DIY energy audit continued from Page 1)
closet, porch or garage?



4. Thermostat/indoor temperature—Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is the date and time correct? If they are not, this could throw off automatic settings. Is it set so the temperature for the furnace is lower during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping? Consider lowering the temperature a

few degrees.

5. Appliances and cleaning—Appliances are large energy users, and if yours are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot

water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent isn't blocked—this will not only save energy, it may also prevent a fire. 29534

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions that you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment. Increasing your home's energy efficiency will make your family comfortable while saving you money.

Steele County Ducks Unlimited Annual Fall Duck Bash

Thursday, October 6, 2016
Ritchie Brothers Auction Building
6000 Frontage Road West
Medford, MN 55049

Doors Open At 5:00 PM
Buffet Dinner At 6:00 PM

Exclusive DU Merchandise! Bottomless cups of BEER for only \$10 each! Catering by Torey's! Ticket price includes event, dinner, pop, & DU membership. Wear camo for a chance to win a gun. \$50 Duck Buck packs available. Sponsor ticket INCLUDES SPONSOR DRAWING, 1 DUCK BUCK PACK, & FRAMED PRINT!

Purchase tickets at www.ducks.org/minnesotaevents

Ticket Prices	
\$40 Single	\$300 Sponsor
\$55 Couple	\$315 Sponsor Couple
\$20 Greenwing	\$200 Legacy Greenwing

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS NOW!

For ticket information, call Bob Hoen at 507-456-5046


For more information or to buy tickets online,
visit <http://MN.ducks.org>

Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 13 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow, and forever. For more information on our work, visit www.ducks.org. Connect with us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/ducksunlimited](https://www.facebook.com/ducksunlimited), follow our tweets at twitter.com/ducksunlimited and watch DU videos at [youtube.com/ducksunlimitedinc](https://www.youtube.com/ducksunlimitedinc).



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

October 2016

inside connections

- 2** Manager Connection
- 3** Cold Weather Rule notification
- 4** Cookin' Connection
Sparks in brief
SWCE community solar update
Who found their account number in the September 2016 Sparks?
Stray voltage questions 27079
- 5** Safety around downed lines
St. John Lutheran Oktoberfest
Replacing smoke alarms
- 6** Ad Connection
4-Seasons Vacations
- 7** Ad Connection
- 8** CoBank "Sharing Success"
Steele County Ducks Unlimited
Annual Fall Bash

calendar of events

October

- 3** Child Health Day
- 6** Steele County Ducks Unlimited Annual Fall Bash
- 9** Leif Erikson Day
St. John Lutheran Church
Oktoberfest in Owatonna
- 9-15** Nat'l Fire Prevention Week
- 10** Columbus Day observed
- 10-14** Nat'l School Lunch Week
- 17** Boss's Day
- 31** Halloween

Grandparents for Education

Pancake Breakfast

Supports Grandparents for Education
And OHS Student Council

Sunday, October 16, 2016

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Eagles Club, Owatonna

141 E. Rose St., Owatonna 507-451-3846

Tickets are sold by GFE members, Krotke's and OHS Student Council

Ticket purchase includes a drawing for a 32" TV (winner need not be present). Drawing at 11:45 AM. A Silent Auction and Grandma's Bake sale will be held.

Advance Tickets \$6 at the door \$7

and under FHEE

Sponsors: Target, Kohl's, Kwik Trip, Lowe's



**CO-OPS PROVIDE
2.1 MILLION JOBS
IN THE U.S.**

- ▶ Co-ops create annual wages of over \$75 billion.
- ▶ Co-op farmers provide more than 190,000 jobs and annual wages over \$8 billion.
- ▶ Electric cooperatives employ more than 75,000 Americans and account for more than one third of the U.S. electric utility industry.

CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2016

Start saving with a do-it-yourself home energy audit

by Anne Prince, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

As temperatures begin to drop and your energy focus turns from cooling your home to heating it, consider using this time to increase energy efficiency and cost savings for the colder months ahead. Whether your home is old or new, chances are you are spending more on energy costs than necessary.

Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Remember, the audit itself won't save you money unless you act on your findings.

DIY 101

So, where to start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way down to the first floor or basement.

1. Insulation and air leaks (drafts)—According to the Department of Energy, improving your

home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings containing piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?

2. Electronic devices—Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious "vampire power" users—they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off (or put on a timer).

3. Lighting—Note where you still have incandescent lights. Can you replace them with CFL or LED upgrades? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low use areas, such as a

(DIY energy audit continued on Page 8)

cookin' connection Zucchini Brownies

Tai Tolle

Owatonna

- 1/2 c. oil
- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 c. flour
- 1/2 c. cocoa (special dark preferred)
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 c. shredded zucchini

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes.

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 50 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during August 2016. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, 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 bill; 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.

September issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
Dike E. Deitchler
Thomas D. Sparrow

Numbers not found:
Steven Hjelman
Ronald D. Mead
Gregg A. Rollins



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. 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.

- **August temps** – The average high temperature for August was 80°F, while the average low was 61°F. They compare to last year's average high of 78°F and average low of 59°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. 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

LIVESTOCK OWNERS

If you have questions or concerns regarding stray voltage in your livestock confinement building(s), or are planning an addition, or constructing a new one, call Steele-Waseca at 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514. Steele-Waseca will work with you and your electrician to eliminate potential stray voltage problems.

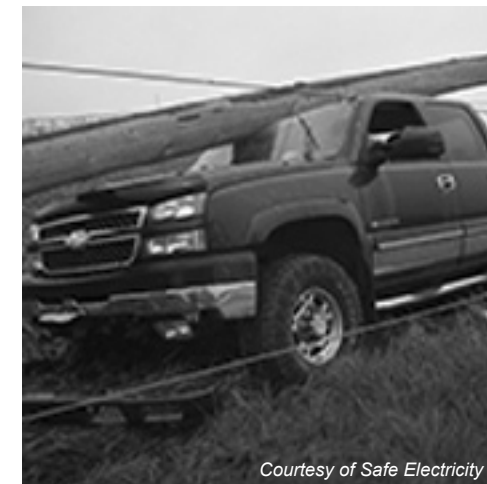
health & safety connection

Safety tips for students and those who transport them

Students get to school in a variety of ways—riding a bus, being driven by a family member, carpooling, walking, or even driving themselves.

Electricity is not usually the first thing on a student's or driver's mind on the way to school. Yet, it is vitally important to know what to do if there is a downed line or an accident with a power pole along that journey. Safe Electricity® shares tips that can help keep students and those who help transport them to and from school safe.

Severe storms, high winds, and vehicular accidents with power poles can all cause power lines to fall. Just because a power line is down does not mean that it is not carrying electricity. While downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, this is not always the case. Treat all downed lines as though they



Courtesy of Safe Electricity

are energized, and stay far away from them. Call 911 to have first responders and the utility notified of the downed line. 23224

If you are in a vehicle that wrecks with a power pole, the vehicle may be

charged with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. Stay in the vehicle, and tell others to do the same. Call 911 to have emergency and utility services notified. Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe.

The only circumstance when you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire—and those instances are rare. If you must exit, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to “bunny hop” with your feet together to safety. Doing this will ensure that you will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.

If you come upon or witness an accident involving power lines, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay away from the accident until utility professionals and emergency responders have confirmed that there are no electrical dangers.

Proceeds to benefit the heating and air conditioning fund and the parking lot fund

Don't Wait — Check the Date!

Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years

Fire Prevention Week
Oct. 9-15, 2016

Age matters when it comes to your smoke alarms.
Check the manufacture dates on your smoke alarms today!

1. Remove the smoke alarm from the wall or ceiling.
2. Look at the back of the alarm for the date of manufacture.
3. Smoke alarms should be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture.
4. Put the alarm back on the ceiling or wall if it is less than 10 years old.

- A closer call may use the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
- Test smoke alarms w/ back cover or remote to control the wac button.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and in every room of the home, including the basement. Longer term to replace smoke alarms. For the best protection, make sure all smoke alarms are interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Use the fire department from a telephone or a smoke alarm phone. Stay outside until the fire department says it's safe to go back inside.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit www.fema.gov and firepreventionweek.org.

U.S. Fire Administration FEMA