youth tour connection

Steele-Waseca accepting applications for 2017 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Cteele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is accepting applications from eligible high school sophomores or juniors for an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2017 Youth Tour, June 10-15.

The tour is coordinated through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Participating cooperatives sponsor a member student(s) to travel to Washington, D.C., to learn about cooperatives and our government, tour historical sites, and have fun meeting new friends from Minnesota and other delegates from across the nation.

To be eligible, the entrant must meet the following requirements:

- 1. The entrant is currently a high school sophomore or junior, and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) are a Steele-Waseca member. Dependents of Steele-Waseca employees or directors are not eligible to participate.
- 2. All entries must include: a) the completed application form below; b) answers to both essay questions typed on an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper; c) applicant's school and community information typed on a separate sheet of paper; and d) two letters of recommendation (one from an instructor, counselor or administrator, and the other from a church or community leader).
- 3. Return entries to: Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, c/o Youth Tour

2017, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 17, 2017. The two Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 17, 2017.

Each entry will be evaluated by a panel of judges for:

- completeness
- composition
- neatness
- ability to communicate
- school and community activities

Essay Questions:

- 1. Why would you like to be Steele-Waseca's delegate to Youth Tour 2017? What do you hope to gain from the experience? Answer in 150 words or less.
- 2. Write a short essay on what commitment to community means to you. Include how you contribute to your

community. Answer in 300 words or

School and Community Infor**mation** (use a separate sheet of paper to list the following):

- All school activities include letters and honors earned, positions held, etc.
- All community activities include all church, community service and positions held.
- Work experience and any other information.

MREA is requiring that each participating cooperative's delegate(s) report to the Crowne Plaza Airport located at 3 Appletree Square in Bloomington for an orientation session on Saturday, June 10, at 9 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the orientation session.



SWCE account #

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric sponsored two Youth Tour delegates in 2016. They included Abigail Hansen of Owatonna (pictured in the bottom photo, fourth from the left in the second row from the front), and Karsten Singh of Northfield (pictured in the back row, second from the right in sunglasses). The co-op will again sponsor two delegates in 2017.

Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2017 — June 10-15	— Theme f	or 2017: Co	mmitmen	t to Community
Name	M or F	_ Phone		
Addressstreet	city	state	zip	county
Email address	Parent(s) or G	Guardian(s)		
I am currently a high school sophomore junio				
Parent/Guardian consent: I/we hereby give my/our dependent h Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2017 Contest. I/we understand if l transportation to the Crowne Plaza Airport in Bloomington and fr	ne/she wins, I/	we will be res	ponsible for p	providing his/her own

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the power of human connections

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

January 2017



Capital Credit Refund

Please check this month's billing statement for your 2016 capital credit refund. If you have any questions regarding your refund, please call Kathy Friedrichs at Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

\$

inside connections

- 2 Manager Connection
- **3** GRE projects steady rates in '17 Utilities unite against scammers
- Cookin' Connection SWCE community solar update Sparks in brief
- Making a winter driving survival
 - Safety around downed power SWCE town hall meeting in
 - Lonsdale
- Ad Connection
- 4-Seasons Vacations Ad Connection
- How to receive SWCE bills by email only
- 2017 Washington D.C. Youth

calendar of events

January

- New Year's Day
- New Year's holiday 19844 **SWCE** office is closed
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Benjamin Franklin's b-day

Steele-Waseca offering scholarships to high school graduates in 2017

fied high school seniors graduating in 2017.

One \$500 scholarship will be awarded at each participating school. Scholarship eligibility required by Steele-Waseca includes:

- 1. Applicants must currently be high school seniors, who will be continuing their education on a full-time basis at a two- or four-year technical school or college.
- 2. Applicants must be dependents of a Steele-Waseca member.

Each participating school is respon-

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric sible for administering any other eligiblity requirements, the selection of their school's Steele-Waseca scholarship recipient, and the disbursement of the scholarship dollars from Steele-Wase-

> All eligible high school seniors should contact their guidance counselor or scholarship administrator for more information.

> In 2016, Steele-Waseca awarded Ischolarships to 18 high school senior graduates. The co-op's scholarship program has awarded \$150,750 since the program was established in 1954. A portion of the funds to support these scholarships comes from unclaimed capital credit equity.

Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership **Conference scheduled March 6-7**

Steele-Waseca sponsoring two students wishing to attend

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is sponsoring two students seeking to attend the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference, March 6-7, 2017, in Eau Claire, Wis.

Any high school sophomores, juniors and seniors interested in attending may submit their name to Steele-Waseca Executive Assistant Debbie Eby by no later than 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 4. The recipients will be randomly selected on Thursday, Jan. 5.

The conference is a youth-led event for Minnesota and Wisconsin high school students who want to develop their leadership skills and are curious about cooperatives.

- Learn from the experts! Is a co-op career in your future? Take the opportunity to interact with cooperative leaders and business professionals to find out.
- Get motivated! Whether you struggle with peers or simply want to be-



come a better leader, learn life lessons that will hit home and move you to ac-

• Have fun! Work as a team and share some laughs with fellow students from across Minnesota and Wisconsin. There will definitely be a T-shirt and maybe some dancing (or singing) involved.

Those interested will have the chance to run for the Co-ops Yes! youth board. The youth board plans the following

(Co-ops Yes! continued on Page 7)

12/12/2016 12:48:07 PM

the power of human connections

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Email: swce@swce.coop

Find us on
Facebook Email: swce@swce.coop Fax: 507-446-4242

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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 **Ouestions 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

The importance of L education is generally shared by all of us, and it is no accident

we educate children from a very early age while their young minds still absorb information like a dry sponge.

The original seven cooperative principles set forth in 1844 contained the simple phrase, "Promotion of Education." Today, that fifth principle states all co-ops should "provide education and training..." This is

Seven Cooperative Principles

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

MEMBER CONTROL

their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC

PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations lled by their members. If they enter into agreement with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that sure democratic control by their members and maintain

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

COOPERATION AMONG

COOPERATIVES

strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structure

COMMUNITY

the sustainable development of their communities through

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intended for the employees, members and the community at large.

It is based on the simple premise that if people know more about the cooperative business model, they will be in a much better position to understand the benefits and promote better use of the co-op and its resources.

While there are 2.1 million people in this country that work for cooperatives of all types (agriculture, housing, credit unions and many others in addition to electric coops), very few of us learn about cooperatives in school. That creates a real challenge when trying to explain the cooperative difference. 23771

I remember when I learned about cooperatives for the first time in my life; I was a young adult working in my family business

> and came in contact with a small group of cooperative members discussing the annual meeting, rates, and director representation. Initially, I understood very little, but quickly picked up on the value of being involved in the decisions of any business that is such a large part of one's life, and appreciated learning that there are viable forms of business other than those designed to make a profit.

> People understand an investorowned business is designed to make a profit, or that a non-profit, like the American Red Cross, is designed to serve the community. Co-ops have both an economic and social purpose. We operate on a not-for-profit basis so that we can pass along the best price for you, our member-owner.

Due to the fact the co-op business model is normally not taught by teachers, it is up to us at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric through publications like our Sparks newsletter and through our website, www. swce.coop, on the internet, to ensure you know the differences and benefits of being a co-op member.

Consumer surveys by Touchstone Energy® and others consistently affirm people prefer to do business with a cooperative if given a choice.

By knowing more about how cooperatives operate, you are in a better position to participate as memberowners. We always welcome your questions and comments to help us promote the cooperative way of doing business.

ay the reminder of your holiday season be filled with blessings as we prepare to welcome 2017.

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

ATV DRIVETRAIN for making railroad speeder, has 2-cycle JLO gas engine; 10 HP YANMAR DIESEL, 200 hrs. 645-4614.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, reserve your Februaryborn ewe lambs now for spring delivery-they go fast! Great for beginners, hobby farms & organic.

(2) STEEL CLOTHESLINE POLES, \$25; LARGE BATHTUB, new,71"x43"x20"(deep),\$300.744-2818.

FISH HOUSE, portable, 4x6; 2-WHEEL TRAILERS; PLAS. BARRELS; PLAS. PALLET. 664-9426.

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. 438-9503

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

LARGE ROUND CORNSTALK BALES, 6'x5', net wrapped; SUZUKI 500 QUAD RUNNER, 4-wheel drive. exc. cond. 475-1392

COLD STORAGE: 10x20 in Morristown, \$99/ mo.; 10x24 in Fbo, \$125/mo.; 6x8 in Fbo, \$49/mo. 332-4638

QUEEN-SIZE OAK HEADBOARD w/mirror, (2) storage compartments, overhead light for reading & hardware, gd shape, \$95. 412-1246/Terry

SPECIALIZED HARD ROCK F.S. MTB, 21-spd, 26x175, \$100; SCHWINN WORLD, 27x1.25, 10spd, alloy wheel, \$100. 330-3178.

JD 640 RAKE, \$2500; BETTER BUILDT VAC PUMP, \$300. 380-9580.

SHIPPING CONTAINERS, store your stuff on your property, 20' & 40', moisture & rodent proof. 612-418-4375

EZ DUMPER TRAILER, 5x8, 6000-lb. axle weight, works perfectly, \$2000. 651-357-8191.

TOWNHOME, 1-level, 1st floor, security, (2) garages, Edina area, remodeled, 645-6894

2008 PRIUS, silver in color, gray interior, 120,000 mi., backup camera, new tires, 45 mpg, nice car, \$7000. 491-4565.

HVY DUTY LOADER TRAILER. 363-6310.

STRAW & CANARY GRASS. 744-2871

HONDA HS724 SNOWBLOWER, hydrostatic on tracks, \$400. 256-4337.

14.5" WESTERN SADDLE, leather, tooled, like

new condition, \$250; 16" ROPING SADDLE, \$250.

OAK FIREWOOD, you haul, \$175/cord; LP FIRE-PLACE, \$150; 2006 EQUINOX RECEIVER HITCH, \$100; WINTER & SUMMER STORAGE. 451-8740.

H.O. FLUOR. LIGHTS, \$15/ea.; 16 HP BRIGGS ENG., \$100; COMP AIR DRYERS, \$150-\$300; LP TANKS: 30-, 100-, 420-lb., \$20-\$100. 271-6592.

'94 DODGE DAKOTA PICKUP, 4x4, V8. 455-3206.

GRASS HAY & STRAW ROUND BALES; ALF. GRASS HAY, no rain, small square. 451-7489 or 414-2245/cell

(4) TRUCK TIRES, 11.00x20, 90% tread, \$150 for all PHASE CONVERTER, 20 hp, makes single phase into 3-phase, \$200; UPRIGHT AIR COMPRESSOR, 50-gal. tank, Baldor motor, "C" air brand. 330-3945.

(4) BEEF STEERS & (2) BLIND BEEF STEERS.

(10) 5-LB. BAGS OF CLEAN BURN for corn & wood pellet stoves, \$5/ea. 413-3266.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods, qtr cord/\$65, half cord/\$120, full cord/\$220 (you pick up). 645-4158.

HEAT & GLO® FIREPLACE. Model 6000XLT. LP. bought 1999, fan, log set, vent & cap, oak surround & mantel exc cond \$495 456-2060

SWIVELING BLADE, fits a Farmall tractor fast hitch. \$100.612-366-9083

2003 GMC JIMMY, great cond., 158,000 mi., 4x4, \$3000/obo. 475-4289

1981 1-TON FORD TRUCK w/box & hoist, \$2600/

USED AUTO PARTS, ENGINES, TRANS., car & truck parts, 30-day warranty, best prices. 332-2300.

USED GALVANIZED TIN, 8'x36" sheets; FIRE-WOOD, \$75/cord. 451-5887/leave message

CABIN on French Lk, family owned 60 yrs, leased land, 80' shoreline, \$99,500. 334-6362.

KENMORE ELEC. RANGE, exc. cond., white, \$150; OAK DINING TABLE & (4) OAK CHAIRS, like new cond., \$350, 649-7216

LIBERTY LINK SOYBEANS, 1.2RM-2.3RM products for SE Minn., 140k bags or 40-unit boxes, seed treatment avail., 6.5% savings till Jan. 10, cash or JD financing, 676-7767.

MAPLE SYRUP in quarts, made by owner, great Christmas gifts! 685-4372.

EASY ON-OFF 3-SPOT TRAILER, ramp to drive on & again to drive off. 210-0345.

BAILAGE: alf., grass, clover mix. 451-8510.

BI-FOLD CLOSET DOORS, (14) doors, various sizes, \$50/obo. 440-8831

FIREWOOD, mostly oak, split & dry, you load & haul, \$125/pickup load. 684-9418.

(3) DOWNHILL ROSSIGNOL SKIS; (2) ELEC. BASEBOARD HEATERS, 220V. 470-262-7696.

25730

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.

(Scam awareness continued from Page 3)

ply end the conversation and "slam" down the phone.

The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota is closely tracking these type of

Ttilities United Against Scams (UUAS) is a collaborative effort

(Co-ops Yes! continued from Page 1) year's program and will have other leadership development opportunities.

The students randomly selected by ■ Steele-Waseca to attend the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference in March must have a parent or guardian sign a release form that Debbie will mail to you. She will also be chaperoning Steele-Waseca's participants with a departure from the co-op at 6:30 a.m., Monday, March 6, and return to Owatonna at approximately 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 7. Was

among electric, gas and water utility industries to help prevent utility service fraud through education, awareness and customer advocacy initiatives. A primary goal of this collective effort is to help customers learn how to identify and avoid utility-related scams.



If you wish to reduce clutter and add



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric sponsored three area students during the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference in March 2016. They included (left to right) Amber Sobrack, Medford: Karsten Singh, Northfield; and Riley Donkers, Faribault.

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 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

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ad connection

give away

RABBITS: (2) Mini Rex & (1) Blue Dutch. 456-8010.

SEVERAL LARGE TREES FOR USE AS FIRE-**WOOD** by drainage ditch. 456-1562

FREE ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS, you place & remove your own ad on SWCE's website, www.swce.coop, these are separate from Sparks & will not appear in Sparks unless emailed to sparks@swce.coop

wanted

LOOKING FOR ESTATES, COLLECTIONS, FISH-ING OR HUNTING EQUIPMENT, willing to purchase your collection/estate or setup an online auction.

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

SNOWMOBILERS to join Steele County Sno Blazers Club, send name and address to: SCTA, PO Box 146, Hope, MN 56046 for membership form.

DEAD/ALIVE GARDEN TRACTORS, will pay \$; GARDEN TRACTOR LOADER, attachments, weights & misc. 256-7299, eves/451-0546.

STALK CHOPPER. 744-5277.

USED TONGUE & GROOVE OAK HARDWOOD FLOORING, 1"-1.5" wide; CLAW-FOOT TUB.

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

LOOKING TO RENT FARMLAND for 2017 & be-

UNWANTED BIKES & LAWN MOWERS, \$ paid on

delivered, 330-3178 1000-LB. LP TANK; (2) ALUM. PONTOON FLOATS.

JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES: cars, trucks, most

farm & constr. equip., top \$ pd for junkers.332-2300.

PERSON TO SERVE ON THE OWAT. RURAL FIRE ASSOC. BOARD, must live within the service area, 3-vr term 451-9614/Brian

after the 5th will be printed in the March issue.

for sale

For Sale

2007 JD GATOR, gd cond., \$3960. 381-1160.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

AFTER-MARKET 3-PT HITCH for JD 620 tractor, \$250; AUGER TRAILER for feed or bulk seed, gd cond \$1000 835-7652

COLUMBIA OMNITECH WOMEN'S WINTER COAT. blk, size XL, new, \$50; PLAYPEN, \$30; 45-PC. SET OF SANGO 700 INDIAN SUMMER STONEWARE w/matching glassware, \$40. 684-3913.

H-D LADIES TAN JEANS & MATCHING JACKET. clean worn once size 10 tall \$45/obo 451-8979

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

LAKE HOME/COTTAGE, beautiful, Lake Volney 120' lakeshore, 1500 sq. ft., (3) bdrm, (2) ba, 19169 400th St., LeCenter, \$259,000, 952-652-3100.

WHEEL HORSE 418A GARDEN TRACTOR, 18 hp Kohler eng., incl. 42" mower deck, 48" landscaping blade, hydraulic equip. lift, \$1600.952-836-6782/Bil

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

ARIENS SNOWBLOWER, 921 Series, 28", 2-stage, 250cc Briggs, used vry little (like new), elec. start, \$750; BRIGGS 8-HP HORIZ. SHAFT ENGINE, \$125. 227-5750 or 227-2565.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

AALADIN HOT WATER PRESS, WASHER, used, 4 gpm @ 3000 psi, 230V, single phase, LP, \$2450; VAL 6 KBE5L RADIANT HEATER, \$2395. 583-2703.

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

(6) 15,000-BU. GRAIN BINS AVAILABLE TO RENT 3-mi. north of Blmg Prairie (just east of Hwy 218) 202-4089/Chuck.

2009 JD UTILITY TRACTOR, 24 hp, 3-pt., hardtop cab enclosure, 47" snowblower wt. box, loader & bucket, looks new, \$16,500. 461-0765.

FLARE BOX, T & G wood floor, hyd. lift, exc. shape, great wood hauler, \$675. 455-3881

CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS FOR RENT, 11'x9' to 16'x10'. 332-4623.

Give Away

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by January 5 to ensure being printed in the

February 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

Account #

Wanted

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.

2002 CHEVY Z71 PICKUP, incl. topper; TREE TRIM-MING, REMOVAL & STUMP GRINDING, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M quidelines; TABLE HOCKEY GAME, 6'x3'x3'(high). 456-1609.

AB-8B CORN DRYER & HOLDING BIN. 1500-bu... frame on wheels. \$2000: NI BIG MANURE SPRDR. exc. shape \$2000, 451-2531 or 475-0299/cell

1995 FORD F-150, 4WD, fiberglass topper, chrome rims, ext. cab; 1989 YAMAHA MOTO 4 ATV, 200cc.

HAY: 4'x6' large round grass, 4'x4' sm. round alf. & sm. sq. alf.; 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.

CABIN at 17436 Gary Trl #24, French Lk, fully furnished, new roof, dock, (2) storage sheds, leased land. \$74.900. 789-5395.

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

VACATION RENTALS IN CANCUN, MEXICO, (1) wk, Sat. to Sat., avail. through March '17, (1) unit sleeps (2) for \$899, the other unit sleeps (4) for

1996 NORTHWOODS PONTOON-TRAILER, 30 hp Merc., \$7495; 1993 18' PROWLER CAMPER, \$3200; HUMIDIFIER, \$75; VENTED LP FISH HOUSE STOVE, \$125. 383-3871.

LAKE HOME on Cedar Lake, beautiful, updated, year-round w/oversized garage, owned property, must see. 651-380-8672.

EGGS, local free-range chickens & are fed antibiotic-free grain, \$3/doz.; BED FRAME w/metal head & foot board, gueen size, bronze in color w/wooden posts, gd shape, \$50 (must pick up). 676-4386.

JD 71 CORN SHELLER & DRAGLINE, always shedded, 744-5277

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

SAN ANTONIO RIVERWALK, Feb. 19-26, 2017 Eight days, 15 meals, staying 2 nights on River walk, Oklahoma City Memorial, LBJ Ranch & nore. \$1,299 per person based on 2 per room.

MN TWINS SPRING TRAINING IN FLORIDA BY MOTOR COACH, March 2-12, '17; 11 days, 1 neals, 2 Twins games, Nashville tour, Coca-Cola tour & more. \$1,699 pp based on 2 per room.

SAVANNAH & CHARLESTON, March 31-April 9 17. Ten days, 20 meals, city tours of both, Dolphi Discovery, Gospel Dinner Cruise, Biltmore Estate R more. \$1,950 per person based on 2 per room

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. (AIR INCL.), March 31-April 4, 2017. Five days, 8 meals incl.. D.C. tour, Memorials, Mount Vernon, Arling ton. \$1,399 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!



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member connection

Great River Energy budget projects steady rates in 2017 and beyond

I of directors voted to approve the cooperative's 2017 budget and rates at its November meeting.

GRE's revenue requirement for next year is budgeted at \$999.8 million, a slight increase from \$992.1 million budgeted for 2016. Great River Energy's average wholesale rate is projected to increase 1.8 percent over the budgeted rate for 2016.

Minimizing increases to operating costs is especially important during the persistent trend of slow energy sales. Energy sales declined in 2016, year to date, and GRE is projecting slim increases in the coming years. Great River Energy is Steele-Waseca Cooperative sell the plant's output.

The Great River Energy (GRE) board Electric's wholesale energy provider for its legacy members.

> "Our financial decisions in recent years have been focused on keeping costs as stable as possible over the long term," said GRE Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Larry Schmid. "We expect rate increases at or below 2 percent over the next five years."

Great River Energy's Stanton Station power plant will no longer be operated as of May 1, 2017. That decision will reduce the cooperative's expenses for operations and maintenance, fuel costs and ownership costs. GRE also expects a decrease in revenue from the energy market as it will no longer be able to



GRE remains on track to meet its goal of 20 percent equity by 2020.

The 2017 capital budget includes I nearly \$200 million, nearly half of which will be invested in the transmission system. That includes the refurbishment of the high-voltage, directcurrent system between Coal Creek Station and Minnesota, which has been in place since 1978.

Minnesota utilities join first ever national campaign to protect consumers from scammers

as and electric utility companies Jacross the United States and Canada, as well as the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota (BBB), joined forces customer scam attempts when colder Nov. 16 to protect customers from longrunning scams targeting customers of utility service providers.

Reports of phone, email billing, and door-to-door scams are back again and represent thousands of dollars lost by customer victims. "Utilities United Against Scams Day" was designated Nov. 16, as a day focused on exposing tricks scammers use to steal money and how customers can protect themselves.

"These schemes often ramp up with the change in seasons," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota. "Like most scams, it plays on peoples' fears and has proven to be quite effective, unfortunately."

During the phone scam, a customer receives a phone call from an individual who falsely claims to be a utility representative. The scammer warns that the utility will disconnect the customer's electric or natural gas service if the customer fails to make a payment—usually within a short timeframe.

Scammers have even duplicated utilities' telephone messages and automated response systems, so when customers call phone numbers provided by the scammer, it sounds legitimate. Some of these scammers also use caller ID spoofing to replicate utilities' customer

service numbers.

Some Minnesota utilities experience an increase of more than 30 percent in temperatures set in.

Red flags for scam activity

- The scammer tells the customer his or her account is past due and service will be disconnected if a large payment isn't made—usually within less than an hour.
- The scammer instructs the customer to purchase a prepaid debit or credit card—widely available at retail stores—then instructs the customer to call back to supposedly make a payment to the utility.

How to protect yourself

- Utilities never ask or require a customer with a past due account to purchase a prepaid debit card to avoid disconnection.
- Customers with past due accounts receive an advance disconnection notification by mail—not a single notification one hour before disconnection. 115745
- Know which utility providers serve you.



- If you suspect someone is trying to scam you, hang up and call your utility at the phone number listed on your bill and report it to the BBB. Never dial the phone number the scammers provide.
- Customers, who suspect or experience fraud, or feel threatened during contact with one of these scams, should contact local authorities.

The utility companies of Minnesota and the BBB continue to enhance efforts to educate the public. For the first time, in 2014. Minnesota utilities joined forces with the BBB to launch, "Slam the Scam"—a coalition and awareness campaign aimed at warning customers and preventing scams. The coalition is encouraging customers who think they are being targeted by a scammer to sim-

(Scam awareness continued on Page 7)

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cookin' connection

Raspberry-Applesauce Salad

2 pkg. raspberry JELL-O (regular size)

2 c. boiling water

Doris Krause

2 c. unsweetened applesauce

(2) 10 oz. pkg. frozen raspberries or 2 c. fresh raspberries

Thaw berries and drain well. Add enough water to the juice to make two cups. Bring to boiling in a saucepan. Pour in a serving bowl. Stir in JELL-O. Chill until a syrupy consistency, but <u>not</u> set. Stir in applesauce, then berries. Chill until firm. <u>Optional</u>: Decorate top with dollops of Cool Whip. Doris wrote, "Delicious for Christmas or any time."

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 26 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during November 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 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.

December issue of Sparks



Numbers found: Richard K./Sandra Wiles Numbers not found:

Jacqueline Crouch William/Marjorie Gruszewski James J. Lyons Wm R. Rohwer



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Sparks in brief . . .

Owatonna

- 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 Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Butterfield at our office between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.
- November temps The average high temperature for November was 52° F, while the average low was 34° F. They compare to last year's average high of 48° F and average low of 32° F.
- ENERGY STAR® Rebates In 2017, 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 Butterfield between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514. 24178
- 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

Making a Winter Driving Survival Kit

Use an empty three-pound coffee can or any similar container with a plastic cover to store the following items:

- Small candles and matches
- Small, sharp knife and plastic spoons
- Red bandanna or cloth
- Pencil and paper
- Large plastic garbage bag
- Safety pins
- Whistle
- Snacks
- Cell phone adapter to plug into lighter
- Plastic flashlight and spare batteries

Reverse batteries in the flashlight to avoid accidental switching and burnout. Warm batteries before using them. Store safety items in the passenger compartment when severe winter weather threatens in case the trunk is jammed or frozen shut. Choose small packages of food that you can eat hot or cold.

Suggested food items:

- Raisins in small packets
- Semi-sweet chocolate in pieces for sharing
- Miniature candy bars
- Chewing gum
- Wrapped hard candies
- Food bars
- Canned soup, meat and poultry

Store bulky and heavy items in an accessible place:

- 30-foot cord to use as homing line when you must exit the vehicle
- Booster cables
- Basic tools
- Sand, cat litter or other grit in a plastic milk carton
- Shovel
- Tow cables or chain
- Sleeping bag or blankets
- Road flares and reflectors
- Snowmobile suit and heavy boots

Emergency Phone Calls

If you become stranded in any part of Minnesota, and you have a cell phone, call 911 to summon help. In other states, you may be able to dial 911 or 0 to reach an operator. When you talk with authorities:

- Provide information on your location, condition of all persons in the vehicle and the problem you are experiencing
- Follow instructions; you may be told to stay where you are and wait for rescuers
- Do not hang up until you know who you have spoken with and what will happen next
- If you must leave your vehicle, write down your name, address, phone number and destination. Place the piece of paper inside the front windshield for someone to see





Be safeStay clear of downed power lines

NEVER TOUCH A DOWNED POWER LINE. Always assume it is energized and call 911 immediately. POWERFUL STORMS can damage power lines
If you see a downed power line:

- Stay at least 50 feet away from it and assume it is energized. The ground may also be energized making the entire area extremely dangerous.
- Never touch anything that is touching a downed power line. It is as dangerous as the line itself.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside your vehicle until help arrives.



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members wishing to dispose of their unwanted/unusable holiday lights, may drop them in the bins inside the main entrance of the co-op at 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, during regular business hours. The bins will be available through January 2017.

Steele-Waseca
Cooperative Electric
does not sell the
mailing addresses,
phone numbers, or email
addresses of our members

Steele-Waseca conducts town hall meeting in Lonsdale

Over 150 members and spouses were in attendance for a Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric town hall meeting, Nov. 10, at the Lonsdale American Legion.

The members invited were from the northern two-thirds of District 1, the northern halves of Districts 7 and 8, and all of District 9.

Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs was the lead presenter (see adjacent photo) and covered details regarding the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA's) vote. coop website designed to promote rural electric cooperative member participation during this past Election Day.

Briggs explained how personal visits from co-op directors and management with state and federal legislators is important regarding issues impacting Steele-Waseca and its member-owners.

Board Director John Beal presented details regarding ACRE (Action Committee for Rural Electrification) and how participation supports elected officials who approve legislation keeping electricity reliable and affordable for rural electric cooperatives.

The ACRE presentation prompted the following to join: Lowell Anderson, Northfield; Rose Berg, Northfield; Mel Grant, Lonsdale; and Loren Jacobson, Dundas. 122490



nications Specialist Randy Sobrack presented information on the co-op's scholarship program for high school seniors graduating in 2017, as part of Steele-Waseca's commitment toward community involvement.

Town hall attendees were also informed on the co-op's security light program and how changes to Steele-Waseca's website will make for a more user-friendly experience with mobile devices. Attendees questioned Briggs on the water heater program regarding the value of participating.

The next round of town hall meetings will be conducted in early Spring 2017. Specific dates and locations have yet to be finalized. Members are notified by a postcard mailed to their billing address, and a phone call through Steele-Waseca's automated phone messaging system to the number listed on the member's account.

Briggs and Steele-Waseca Commusparks • january 2017

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