

Join our 2017 Coal Creek Tour

If you're seeking ideas for a three-day getaway this year, reservations are being accepted for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's annual Coal Creek Station Tour to Underwood, N.D.

This mini-vacation lets you get away and leaves the planning to us. Mom and/or Dad or Grandma and/or Grandpa, have you ever thought it would be fun to take the kids or grandkids on an outing where everything is planned out, including meals, where you can have fun, learn and be worry free?

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

The three-day tour is scheduled Tuesday, June 13, through Thursday, June 15. Travel in the comfort of a motor coach from Steele-Waseca to Bismarck, N.D., then stay at the Country Inn & Suites, which also has a water park for the kids. Each morning the hotel provides a full buffet breakfast.

During the trip to North Dakota, short educational DVDs will be played on the motor coach to give travelers a preview about what they'll see during the tours. There are fun on-the-bus games with questions and answers about information in each DVD throughout the trip for great prizes.

The tour on Wednesday, June 14, will include the Coal Creek Station to learn about the process of utilizing coal to generate electricity. Then 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) electricity.

From the 21st floor of Coal Creek Station, you will be able to view the Blue Flint Ethanol Plant. The plant generates over 65 million gallons of ethanol per year by using steam from the Coal Creek power plant, rather than utilizing additional boilers and burning natural gas, making Blue Flint a high efficiency ethanol plant.

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 farmland crop production levels after the coal is mined. If weather permits, tour participants will be able to walk in the coal field and pick their own coal.

The tour price per Steele-Waseca member and their guest is \$310 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




Participants in Steele-Waseca's 2016 Coal Creek Tour had the opportunity to get a close-up view of the drag line that uncovers the lignite coal at Falkirk Mine used for electrical production at the power plant.

students may attend for a minimal additional charge of \$150 per student. Students must be accompanied by an adult. 68825

For non-member adults, who are not guests of a Steele-Waseca member traveling on the tour, the cost is \$620 per adult.

Members wishing to travel on the tour for a second or additional time, the cost is \$620. However, if you bring a guest who is a Steele-Waseca member and has not previously been on the tour, the price will remain at \$310 per adult to encourage promotion of the tour.

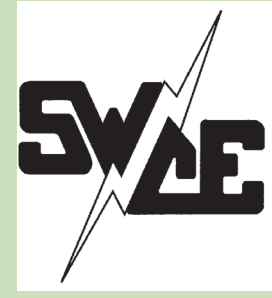
To pre-register or obtain additional information, contact Marketing Division Manager Doug Hughes by emailing mktg@swce.coop, or calling 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514. You may also obtain more information by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop (click on MENU, then OPPORTUNITIES). 



Coal Creek Station personnel escort small groups of tour participants through an informational program regarding the power plant.



Weather allowed participants on the Coal Creek Tour to get an up-close view of the coal at Falkirk Mine.



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

March 2017

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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
- 12 Daylight saving time starts
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 First day of spring

Grandparents for Education KC Lenten Fish Dinner

(Supports Grandparents for Education program)

Friday, March 10, 2017
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Owatonna KC Hall & Lounge
located at 820 South Elm

Dinner includes baked & fried fish, whipped potatoes with country gravy, vegetable, coleslaw, roll, coffee and milk.

Tickets are sold by GFE members (call 507-390-4468), or may be purchased at Kottke's:

Advance tickets: \$10
Tickets at the door: \$11
Kids under 6 eat FREE

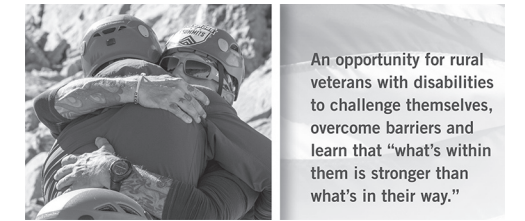
Steele-Waseca seeking nominations for CoBank "No Barriers" program for veterans with disabilities

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors have approved the co-op's participation in a lender's program providing an expedition for veterans with disabilities.

The program is a partnership between CoBank and No Barriers USA. It allows eligible customers of the bank, like Steele-Waseca, to nominate a veteran with disabilities to participate in a five-day No Barriers Warriors expedition.

The expedition Steele-Waseca is seeking nominations takes place Sept. 7-11, 2017, in Colorado and is designed to help veterans with disabilities to transform their lives through curriculum-based experiences in challenging environments.

Veterans who are unable to take part in an expedition due to physical limitations or other reasons may attend the



An opportunity for rural veterans with disabilities to challenge themselves, overcome barriers and learn that "what's within them is stronger than what's in their way."

annual No Barriers Summit as an alternative. CoBank will cover the full cost of the program for each veteran, including meals, gear, and travel expenses.

Steele-Waseca will randomly select the nomination of a veteran received at the co-op's office by no later than 3 p.m., Friday, April 21, 2017. The recipient must be a member of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric. Members may wish to nominate themselves or have a family member, friend or loved one nominate them on their behalf (see form on Page 3).

The program is open to veterans from *(No Barriers continued on Page 3)*


Auditions being conducted for national anthem singer at co-op's 81st 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 6, at the co-op's headquarters in Owatonna.

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 28, 2017. 24400

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. 



Local men's choral group, Just Friends, was selected to sing, "The Star-Spangled Banner," during Steele-Waseca's 80th annual meeting in 2016.

Published monthly by
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric
2411 W Bridge Street, PO Box 485
Owatonna MN 55060-0485

Website: www.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 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

On occasion, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric receives a call from a member-owner on why it costs more for electricity than from larger municipal or investor-owned utilities.

The short answer is that rural electric cooperatives have fewer members per mile of line than do municipalities and investor-owned utilities. Thus, they can divide their costs among more customers than co-ops can with their members. The chart at the bottom of this article is a good graphic to illustrate how big a difference the density is from one type of utility to another. However, the full answer requires more detail.

All electric utilities receive federal assistance or subsidies in one form or another as confirmed by the Congressional Research Service. Calculations based on federal government financial reports show that rural electric cooperatives receive the least amount of subsidy per customer according to the latest available federal data.

Investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs), on average serve 34 customers per mile of line, charge electric rates that also include amounts for presumed federal tax liabilities. Prior to 1987, IOUs collected taxes based on the 46 percent corporate tax rate. But due to available tax breaks, such as investment tax credits and accelerated depreciation, IOUs were permitted to retain much of the funds they collected for federal taxes.

The amount of these retained tax dol-

lars is substantial: approximately \$142 billion according to the U.S. Department of Energy based on official reports filed by investor-owned utilities. Federal studies have referred to this amount as an "interest-free loan." The annual value of this major federal assistance to investor-owned utilities is estimated at \$4.9 billion, making the subsidy to IOUs about \$47 per customer.

Municipal (city-owned) electric utilities, on average, serve 48 customers per mile of line, and issue tax-exempt bonds. The federal government loses revenue because the interest income to owners of these tax-exempt bonds is not taxed. The federal subsidy to city-owned utilities in 2003 (last year available) was \$909 million or \$55 per customer. 1006128

There used to be a time when the cost of money to the government was higher than the interest received from cooperatives for loans. However, that is no longer the case. The cooperative loan program has become one of the few non-taxpayer subsidized programs in existence today. Rural electric cooperatives, on average, serve 7.4 members per mile of line (Steele-Waseca is approximately 5.2 members), and receive loans from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The federal assistance is the interest subsidy (federal borrowing rate minus the RUS rate) on outstanding RUS loans. According to the last available data, the cost of money to the government during 2013 was 3.45 percent. The average interest rate on RUS loans outstanding during the year was 4.13 percent. Interest paid by RUS borrowers during the year therefore exceeded the cost to the government of carrying those loans, thus the government made money on their investment in those loans.

The difference in federal subsidies for each type of utility becomes even more distinct after considering rural electric cooperatives serve sparsely populated areas across the countryside.

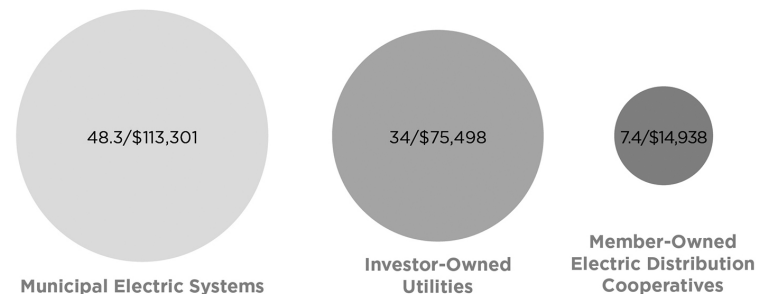
At Steele-Waseca, we strive to keep our members well informed in addition to providing safe, dependable electricity at the lowest possible cost.

Syd

Revenue in Review

Because of higher population densities (more consumers served per mile of line), municipal electric systems and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) receive more revenue per mile of line than electric cooperatives. Even though electric co-ops maintain more miles of line per consumer and acquire less revenue than IOUs and municipal systems, they continue to maintain a tried-and-true record of delivering affordable electric service to the members they serve.

Consumers served/revenue per mile of line for different utilities:



Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 2013



ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

HONDA EU 1000-WATT GENERATOR, \$500; **HOMELITE 4400-WATT GENERATOR**, 8 hp Briggs & Stratton engine, \$300. 744-4449.

OSTER COUNTERTOP MICROWAVE, used 1-yr, like new, blk, 1100-watt, capacity 1.1 cu. ft, size 12x22x17, \$59. 456-2060.

2005 YAMAHA VECTOR SNOWMOBILE, 988cc, \$3600; **2000 YAMAHA SXR 500 SNOWMOBILE**, 2300 mi., \$1250; **2001 ROLL-IN 2-PLACE ALUM. TILT TRAILER**, \$1250. 213-0384.

50-BU. H&S MANURE SPREADER, grnd drive, gd cond., \$2700. 612-598-6230.

1998 SYLVAN SPORT TROLLER, nice boat, live well, depth finder, front mount trolling motor, nice 25 hp Yamaha 4-stroke. 213-6979.

1987 SANPAN 20' PONTOON w/1994 60 hp Merc., bunk trailer, lift w/12V winch; **3600# VIBO BOAT LIFT** w/12V winch. 334-8783.

AMI JUKEBOX, 1950s model, red w/45-rpm records; **HAMMOND ORGAN** w/full pedal board. 684-2212 or 402-2251.

GRASS HAY & STRAW, large rounds; **ALF. & GRASS HAY**, no rain, sm. sq., stored just west of Millersburg. 451-7489 or 414-2245/cell.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, reserve your Feb.-born ewe & ram lambs now for spring delivery, great for beginners, hobby farms & organic, never need shearing. 451-2722.

JD 4230 TRACTOR w/JD 158 loader (will separate). 330-2820.

2003 BUICK CENTURY, 154,000 mi., 3.1, \$2500. 456-4407.

2002 CHEVY Z71 PICKUP, incl. topper; **TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL & STUMP GRINDING**, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; **FRONT CHROME BUMPER** for an F-650, new. 456-1609.

OZARK TRAIL BOOTS, size 10, 3M Thinsulate™ insulation, rated -40° F, new (tags on). 451-1359.

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.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric seeking assistance in locating 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.

If you know any of the following former members and can provide information about them, please call Teresa Hertle at the Steele-Waseca office during regular business hours.

- Ambrose, Michael B/Linda S Faribault
- Aronson, David G/Sherry Kenyon
- Beaudette, James D/Susan Northfield
- Berg, Daniel J Owatonna
- Bullard, Michael/Joan Faribault
- Burns, Cynthia A Northfield
- Casey, Mr/Mrs Allen L Owatonna
- Cecere, Thomas A/Tracy L Northfield
- Clark, Audrey J/Gerald A New Richland
- Cliner, Deborah M West Concord
- Corl, Steve M Faribault
- Crooks, Clifford S Faribault

COLD STORAGE in Fbo, 6x8, \$49/mth. 332-4638.

TRI-AXLE DUMP TRUCK AVAIL. for delivery of rock, gravel, dirt, etc., 15-ton capacity. 456-7774.

GARY FISHER MARLIN MTB, F.S. Fork, 21-spd, 26x175, \$150; **SCHWINN LE TOUR**, men's, 10-spd, 27x1-1/4 alloy wheels, \$100. 330-3178.

SHINGLING for home, farm & business, licensed & insured, trusted since 2000. 271-9129.

STRAW & CANARY GRASS; SHIRLEY TEMPLE MUGS; MAYTAG GAS ENGINE. 744-2871.

NH 54A BALE THROWER, fits 268, 269, 273 & 275 balers, \$300/obo; **CRAFTSMAN 12" TABLE SAW**, older, blades included, \$150. 744-2118.

DURANGO COWBOY BOOTS, blk, size 10.5, email bloodgas5@yahoo.com for pictures. 390-1137.

2007 BOBCAT S175 HIGH FLOW w/cab, heat, forks & backup camera, 1535 hrs, wrks perfectly, \$18,500. 651-357-8191.

TENN. WALKER HORSE, gelding, vry gd gentle horse for anyone, never kicks or bites, 15 yrs, trained to pull buggy or ride, was show horse in younger yrs, gd for farrier, no bad habits, \$2500. 527-2909.

WALL &/OR DOOR MIRROR, 16"x56", new, still in box, \$65. 451-7404.

SHIPPING CONTAINERS, store your stuff on your property, 20' & 40', moisture & rodent proof, free delivery within 50 miles of Owat. 612-418-4375.

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

5000-LB BULLDOG JACK for trailer or implement, like new, \$20; **HVY DUTY 12,000-LB FLOOR JACK**, gd shape, \$75. 456-7614.

25' WIL-RICH FIELD CULTIVATOR, 4-bar mulcher, field ready, \$2500; **INT 720 PLOW**, 5-18, auto reset, field ready, \$2000. 451-3501 or 390-5508/cell.

1955 DODGE 5-WINDOW PICKUP, beautiful, re-stored, \$12,500. 451-3462.

- Faribault Morphey, Alan D Lakeville
- Faribault Neal, Michael M/Angie Faribault
- Lonsdale Nordstrom, Charles Northfield
- Faribault Passe, J Ward Faribault
- Dundas Pavek, Christine A Northfield
- Albert Lea Pelzl, Lorry L Owatonna
- Faribault Piepho, James L Owatonna
- Faribault Pierce, Patrick R Faribault
- Northfield Pisch, Emil F Waldorf
- Owatonna Popovic, David J Faribault
- Faribault Prince, Teresha Owatonna
- Wells Rasmussen, Jeremy M Faribault
- Faribault Reuvers, Adrian/Kristine K Faribault
- Medford Robinson, Jane M Johnson Faribault
- Northfield Schletty, Tammy J West Concord
- Faribault Schreiber, Richard/Janice Lonsdale
- Kilkenny Scott, Eunice R Faribault
- Kenyon Seedorf, Gary W/Sharon K Ellendale
- Kenyon Sime, John or Pamela K Blmg Prairie
- Faribault Simonette, Denis P/Susan L Faribault
- Morristown Stencil, Frank L/Gloria J Waseca
- Janesville Woener, Dana A Claremont
- Kenyon

ad connection

give away

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

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

CATTLE OR PIG WIRE PANELS; OVERHEAD RAILING/TRACK for sliding doors for machine shed. 213-1466.

ESTATES, COLLECTIONS, FISHING OR HUNTING EQUIP., willing to purchase your collection/estate or setup an online auction. 279-0431/Mark.

LOOKING FOR FARMLAND TO RENT in the Owat. area. 213-6979.

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

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

1996-2000 ARCTIC CAT PANTHER SNOWMOBILE for parts, also accessories, Cat Cutter or extra parts, covers. 446-0377 or 456-0609/cell.

DEER ANTLERS/RACKS. 952-292-1352.

JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES: cars, trucks, most farm & const. equip, top \$ pd for junkers. 332-2300.

(2) ROUND SPOKE FRONT WHEELS (1 set) for a JD B tractor. 373-3550.

PERSONS LOOKING FOR HELP IN HOME: house-keeping, meal prep, gardening, current local ref. 412-7045.

REAR-TINE TILLER, like a Troy-Bilt, larger series. 685-4372.

LOOKING TO RENT FARMLAND for 2017 & beyond. 456-6521.

for sale

SONY CAR STEREO w/speaker, AM/FM/CD/MP3, remote control, (4) speakers, new, \$150; **TV CONVERTER BOX**, \$50; **FLARE BOX**, \$675. 455-3881.

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

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

JD 7000 6RN PLANTER, no fert., \$3000; **JD 40' SPIKE TOOTH DRAG**, \$600; **CATERPILLAR D4 DOZER** w/blade & loader att., \$6000; **HYDRAULIC CYLINDER**, 4x24, JD brand, \$100. 330-3945.

(15) OLD WINDOWS, various sizes, \$1/each. 451-5456 after 5 p.m.

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

5# WOOL BATT for queen-sized quilt, \$30; **2# WOOL BATT** for twin-sized quilt, \$20/obo. 461-5541.

MAKITA 6217D DRILL, 3/8 drive, 12V, wks great, newer rechargeable battery (NIMH), no correct working charger, metal carrying case w/foam inside, \$25/obo; **GRASS HAY**, round bales, \$37/obo. 451-5131.

YAMAHA ALTO SAXOPHONE, exc. cond., hard case, neck strap, \$650. 271-1414/Nfld.

CONCERTINAS: Triple C Stradivarius & Quad B# Star, vry gd cond. 455-2270.

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

1995 FORD F-150, 4WD, fiberglass top, chrome rims, ext. cab; **1989 YAMAHA MOTO 4 ATV**, 200cc. **SHINGLING, LIGHT CONSTRUCTION, TREE REMOVAL**, free estimates. 456-0296.

UNUSED PORTABLE SOLAR OVEN, \$10; **PET RING-NECKED DOVE & CAGE**, \$15; **EDDIE BAUER CAMPING SCREEN HOUSE**, lightly used, \$25. 451-0988.

JD GATOR 825i, low hours, power lift, \$10,500. 456-5703.

CABIN at 17436 Gary Trl #24, French Lk, fully furnished, new roof, dock, (2) storage sheds, leased land, \$74,900. 789-5395.

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

LINCOLN WELD-PAK MIG GAS WIRE FEED WELDER, 115V, port., \$450; **DELTA BENCH BAND SAW**, 11.5 x 11.5 table, 6.5 throat, 7.5 cutting depth, (3) extra cutting blades (metal/wd), \$70. 685-4126.

'96 19' CRESTLINR w/115 hp Johnson mtr, (2) troll. motors & Shorelandr trlr, \$9000; **'97 17' BAYLINR 1750 CAPRI** w/Merc. 130 hp I/B mtr (nds wrk) & Escorts trlr, \$1800; **'00 UTIL. TRLR**, \$400. 213-0225.

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

(4) GOODYEAR WRANGLER TIRES, only used (3) mths, size 31x10.50R15LT, \$500. 835-7652.

2- & 3-LB. CALIFORNIA CARNOLIAN PACKAGE BEES, early April delivery to Owat. 456-0753.

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

FISH HOUSE, customized trailer house, crank up & down, 8x16, insulated, thermostat-controlled furnace w/stove & oven, \$3500. 210-1826.

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

SEASONAL CABIN on SW side of French Lake, leased land, recently remodeled, (2) bdrm, fully furnished, \$72,000/obo (may consider financing). 612-499-0144.

AALADIN HOT WATER PRESSURE WASHER, used, 4 gpm @ 2300 psi, 230V, LP, temp control, single phase, \$2495; **VAL 6 KBE5L RADIANT HEATER**, \$2395. 583-2703.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

2010 CADILLAC CTS4 PREMIUM, AWD, 31,500 mi., exc. cond., \$18,000. 323-5750.

FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000. 838-5033/John.

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

CERTAINTED LANDMRK 25 DRIFTWOOD SHINGLES, 21-bundles; **DOG KENNEL**, 48"x32"x35"; **FOLDING SADDLE STAND**; **BLK PADDED GIRTH**; **HOBBY HORSE CHAPS**, tan, XL. 676-1141.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. (AIR INCLUDED), March 31-April 4. Five days, 8 meals incl., D.C. tour, Memorials, Mount Vernon, Arlington. \$1,399 per person based on 2 per room.

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

HEART OF ALASKA (AIR INCLUDED), July 14-21. Eight days, 12 meals included, Anchorage, Denali Park, Fairbanks, Valdez, 1-day Glacier cruise & more. \$3,299 per person based on 2 per room.

ALASKA TOUR & CRUISE (AIR INCLUDED), Aug. 4-16; 13 days, all sightseeing/entrance fees, 7 night southbound cruise on the Island Princess. Starting at \$4,299 per person double occupancy.

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



no barriers connection

(No Barriers continued from Page 1)

all eras and branches, combat and non-combat, with visible and invisible injuries. Participating veterans must have a VA disability rating. 1019678

What does a No Barriers Warriors expedition involve?

No Barriers Warriors' expeditions are described as "one part adventure, one part curriculum, and one part physical challenge." Each expedition is designed to push participants mentally and physically to help them connect with fellow veterans and break through barriers in their lives. The CoBank-sponsored expedition series will take place at the No Barriers facility in the Red Feather Lakes region of Colorado. It will include activities such as mountaineering, rafting and rock climbing. Activities are specifically designed to accommodate participation by veterans with disabilities.

Why should a disabled veteran participate in this program?

Each No Barriers Warriors expedition is designed to push veterans mentally and physically in some of nature's most incredible wilderness settings. No Barriers creates a safe space for veterans to reflect on their past, recognize where they are in the present and then look with positivity to the future. They do so in a spirit of camaraderie; where veterans with a shared background come together to encourage and inspire each other. The No Barriers experience serves as both an opportunity for growth and a catalyst for change as the veterans stretch their boundaries, innovate through adversity and step up to serve others.

Why is CoBank offering this program?

For generations, rural America has produced a disproportionate share of our armed forces. As a mission-based organization with a focus on agriculture and rural communities, CoBank wanted to create a program in a substantive way, in partnership with its customers.

Once a nomination is submitted, what happens next?

CoBank will conduct an initial review

of the nomination to ensure all the necessary information has been provided. After that, CoBank will forward the nomination to the No Barriers organization. No Barriers will review each nomination and contact nominated veterans directly to provide further information and encourage them to complete a formal application. Remember, a nomination does not guarantee acceptance to the program which will be limited to the first 50 nominees who meet the program requirements. Steele-Waseca is only allowed to nominate one veteran with a disability to participate in the program. Because of the specific requirements of the program and to respect the privacy of nominated veterans, CoBank will not participate in the application/acceptance process. Once a veteran has been accepted by No Barriers into the program, CoBank will be notified and will, in turn, notify the nominating customer (Steele-Waseca).

What does the application process look like?

The application process includes completing an online form, interview, and medical screening. Once a nominee decides to apply, the veteran must complete the No Barriers online application. Once the application is complete, the veteran will be contacted for a phone interview conducted by a member of the No Barriers staff to ensure he or she meets eligibility requirements, understands the expedition format, and is prepared for the physical and mental challenges involved with the expedition.

The next step in the process is a medical screening conducted by a doctor trained in high altitude, back-country medicine. Once an applicant has completed these steps, they will be placed on a specific expedition team.

Selected veterans who are unable to participate in the expedition due to

Nomination Information:

Person you would like to nominate:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Please describe why you feel this veteran or service member would be a good fit for the CoBank/No Barriers program?

Nominator Information: Who are you?

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Organization Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Please note: Nomination does not guarantee acceptance to the program

physical or other limitations will be offered the opportunity to attend the No Barriers Summit, June 1-4, 2017, at the Resort at Squaw Creek, North Lake Tahoe, Calif.

How long does the application/selection process take?

The application process takes about a month from the time the veteran completes the application.

Is the Summit open to non-veterans?

Yes. The Summit is open to all and, in fact, many participants bring their family with them so that they too can benefit from the experience. While the event is not specifically geared toward veterans, it does offer a special "veterans track," that will replicate much of the curriculum and experiences of the No Barriers Warriors expeditions—in a more accessible way—to accommodate veterans whose level of disability prevents them from participating in an expedition.

Can family members of veterans participate in the Summit?

Yes. Selected veterans who are unable to participate in an expedition will receive a scholarship allowing them and a caregiver/family member to attend the 2017 No Barriers Summit. Veterans who wish to include additional family members in the experience may do so at their own cost.

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **March 6** 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 6th 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.

cookin' connection

Chicken Crescent Rolls

Kathy Dodds

Lonsdale

3 chicken breasts	1/2 c. milk
1/2 onion (chopped)	1/2 c. chicken broth
1 1/2 sticks of oleo	1 c. grated cheddar cheese
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 can cream of mushroom soup
3 stalks celery (chopped)	2 cans crescent rolls

Boil chicken breasts and tear into small pieces. Sauté chicken, onion, celery, a stick of oleo and set aside. Mix cream of chicken soup, cream of mushroom soup, milk, 1/4 c. oleo, chicken broth and heat until combined. Then add cheddar cheese to this mixture and pour 1/3 of this mixture into a 13x9 baking dish. Using 16 crescent rolls (2 cans), separate and put chicken mixture evenly onto each and roll up. Place them on top of the sauce mixture. Pour remaining 2/3 of sauce on top of rolls and bake at 350° for 30 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 14 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during January 2017. 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. 28151

February issue of Sparks

Numbers found:
(None)

Numbers not found:
Richard E. Arnold
Randy/Shannon Edel
David H./Melissa Iverson
Wesley D./Lori A. Nelson
Terrance C. Traynor



sparks • march 2017

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 Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Butterfield at our office between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **January temps** – The average high temperature for January was 27° F, while the average low was 13° F. They compare to last year's average high of 22° F and average low of 9° F.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2017, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), electric clothes dryers, 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 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

Safety tips for home buyers

From choosing a realtor and touring homes, to applying for a loan and signing many documents, buying a home can be a nerve-racking experience.

The Safe Electricity® program wants to help make the process a little less stressful and share tips for home buyers to help them take note of the safety of a home.

Many homes sold every year have already been lived in and have the natural wear and tear of age and use. Safe Electricity provides the following checklist to help you evaluate potential hazards:

• **Outlets**—note the location and the number of outlets in each room. If the outlets only have two prongs and are missing the third hole for the grounding pin, the home is not grounded. You will want to consider having the electrical system updated.

• **Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)**—GFCIs provide protection against shock from an electrified appliance in contact with water. It is important that GFCI outlets are installed in areas where water and electricity may meet. This would include bathrooms, kitchens, garages, basements, outdoors, etc. If GFCIs are not in the home, you will want to plan on having them installed for your safety.

• **Lighting**—flip on lights, and listen for any popping or sizzling sounds. If there are, there may be an electrical issue.

• **Appliances**—check the age and status of appliances that will come with the house. This could include: furnace, HVAC, water heater, refrigerator, oven, etc. Will these appliances need to be replaced in the near future? Are they working properly?

• **Faucets**—turn on faucets to make sure they are running and draining properly, and that there are no leaks.

• **Sump pump/drainage**—if the home has a basement, check for a sump

If your outlets are warm, cracked or sparking, your home is sending you a message.



pump or proper drainage. A basement susceptible to flooding can be dangerous and costly.

• **Insulation**—check to see if the home is properly insulated. Insulated areas should include attics, ducts, crawlspace walls, and floors and walls that are adjacent to unheated spaces.

• **Roof**—note the condition and the age of the roof, and the material it is made of. An old roof may leak and cause damage to the structure of the home.

• **Detectors**—check if smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in the home.

Keep in mind, you likely won't be able to check every detail of the home yourself. A home inspector will examine all parts of the home, and will provide you with a full report. Anything that is wrong with the house, you can choose to negotiate with the seller to fix the issues, fix the problems yourself after purchase, or back out of the deal.

For more information on home electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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.

If you are planning...
Let us know in advance!



If you are planning a home addition, a new or expanded outbuilding, a new grain storage facility or maybe a wind or solar system, please contact us. This allows us to prepare for the change in your electric service, and offer assistance.

- I. Home Addition (involving electric heating or cooling system changes).
- II. New building, barn or grain facility
- III. Alternate Energy (wind or solar electric)

If you are planning any of these projects, we may need to make changes and upgrades to your electric service and the equipment that provides power to your prospective project. Without sufficient lead-time to accomplish this, you may experience a delay in the completion of your project.

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

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