

youth tour connection

Applications accepted at Steele-Waseca for 2018 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Steele-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 2018 Youth Tour, June 9-14.

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

2018, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 16, 2018. The two Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 16, 2018.

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 2018? 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 less.

School and Community Information (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 9, at 9 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the orientation session. ^{SWCE}



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric sponsored two Youth Tour delegates in 2017, Brant Wieber and Hannah Singh, both of Northfield. The co-op is again sponsoring two delegates in 2018.

Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2018 — June 9-14 — Theme for 2018: Commitment to Community

Name _____ M or F _____ Phone _____

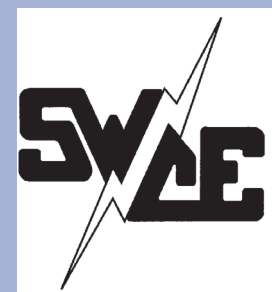
Address _____ street _____ city _____ state _____ zip _____ county _____

Email address _____ Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____

I am currently a high school _____ sophomore _____ junior at _____

Parent/Guardian consent: I/we hereby give my/our dependent high school son/daughter permission to enter the Rural Electric Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2018 Contest. I/we understand if he/she wins, I/we will be responsible for providing his/her own transportation to the Crowne Plaza Airport in Bloomington and from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

Name(s) _____ SWCE account # _____



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

January 2018

Capital Credit Refund

Please check this month's billing statement for your 2017 capital credit refund. If you have any questions regarding your refund, please call Teresa Hertle at Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric offering scholarships to high school graduates in 2018

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will award scholarships to qualified high school seniors graduating in 2018.

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 responsible for administering any other eligibility requirements, the selection of

Eby preparing for retirement after nearly 21 years with Steele-Waseca

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Executive Assistant Debbie Eby is retiring Jan. 31, 2018, after a 20-plus year career with the co-op.

"I have made the comment over the years that this is the best job I have ever had," said Debbie. "I love Steele-Waseca. I love the job, employees, directors, and most of all, our members."

Debbie started with Steele-Waseca on June 2, 1997, as a cashier/receptionist. "My first thought was 'What have I gotten myself into?' Then as I settled in, I noticed how nice everyone was, and how willing they were to help and answer my questions," stated Debbie. "It was fun learning a new job and learning about electricity. I had no idea of all the 'behind the scenes' things that happen to bring electricity to that switch on the wall."

On June 1, the following year, Debbie's position with the co-op became a customer service representative. "I pro-

cessed all the monthly bills, keyed meter readings, answered phones, and did whatever needed to be done," explained Debbie.

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

In 2017, Steele-Waseca awarded scholarships to 18 high school senior graduates (one recipient was unable to comply with eligibility requirements and their scholarship was returned to the co-op). Steele-Waseca's scholarship program has awarded \$159,250 since the program was established in 1954. A portion of the funds to support these scholarships come from unclaimed capital credit equity. ^{SWCE}



inside connections

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- 4 Cookin' Connection SWCE community solar update Stray voltage questions
- 5 Space heater safety tips Metal thefts still a problem
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- 8 2018 Washington D.C. Youth Tour application

calendar of events

January

- 1 New Year's Day 15247 **SWCE office is closed**
- 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 17 Benjamin Franklin's b-day



Debbie Eby

cessed all the monthly bills, keyed meter readings, answered phones, and did whatever needed to be done," explained Debbie.

(Eby retirement continued on Page 3)

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- Duane Edvardson, *Chaplain* . District 3
- Dennis Ringhofer District 4
- Rodney Krell District 5
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- Douglas Hughes *Marketing*
- David Lundberg *Finance*
- Kim Huxford *Operations*

Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages

Phone:
507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

Before calling to report an outage

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

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

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

Call Before You Dig
Gopher State One Call
811 or 800-252-1166
48-hour notice required for **ALL** underground cable locations

manager connection



By Syd Briggs,
General Manager

One of the most attractive features of cooperatives is that we answer the popular question, “What’s in it for me?” with “What’s in it for we!”

Cooperatives are formed when the market fails to offer a good or service, with decent quality, at an affordable price. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric was formed in 1936 because, when investor-owned utilities realized there was not enough profit to be made in our community, they refused to offer electricity for rural residents.

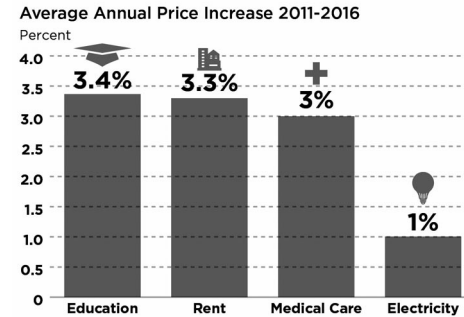
The founding members of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric went door-to-door to collect \$2 membership fees in order to raise a portion of the original investment the co-op needed. Those “go-getters” realized the only way to get electricity for *me* was to get it for *we*, the whole rural community.

Cooperative ownership is in the hands of the people who use the co-op’s goods and services (not investors), so not only do co-ops start out answering the question of “What’s in it for we?”—they continue to answer that question for as long as they exist.

These days, we often hear about companies that abandon their local communities and move to places in search of cheaper labor. This negatively impacts the community through job loss, decline

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index; AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

in housing values, and school closures. Because local residents own a majority of cooperatives, they are less likely to leave their community. In fact, it would be impossible for Steele-Waseca to leave our nine-county service area. The co-op is a critical part of what makes the community a community. 17095

The way co-ops continue to answer the question, “What’s in it for we?” is critical to their survival. It is imperative that we keep you—our member owners—as the primary focus. Keeping rates as low as possible is one major part of that focus, but ensuring that we provide real value as your trusted energy advisor is also extremely important.

By maintaining that focus with your help and support, we will continue to be able to serve the “me” and the “we” in our community long into the future.

We're Proud to Power YOU.

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity.
For all the ways you live.



sparks • january 2018

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)
FIREWOOD, dry, cut your own; LP TANKS; ELEC. SPACE HEATERS; FISH HOUSE, 4x8. 664-9426.

2000 ENCLOSED TRAILER, 16', swing doors on rear & (1) on side, gd tires, brakes, current lic., \$2000. 391-2485.

OLD KW SLEEPER HIGH RISE, gd for fish house, \$200; 63" SLEEPER off a '05 Pete, gd shape, \$1000; CHEVY TRUCK, single axle w/hoist, \$1200; '93 CHEVY PKUP, 2T, 4x4, runs exc., \$1500. 456-1181.

JK LALANNE'S PWR JUICER; ROCKNG CHAIR w/ leathr seat & bk; DIN. TBL, 3'x5' w/chairs; 5' TOOL-BX for trk bed; KEROSENE HTR, new; EXT. DOOR, 35"x80"; FULL-SZ SOFA w/match. chair. 332-0294.

ALKOTA 4182 HOT WATER PR. WASHER, 4 gpm @ 1800 psi, 220V, single phase, \$1999; ALKOTA 420X4 HOT WATER PR. WASHER, 4 gpm @ 2000 psi, 220V, single phase, like new, \$2499. 456-3584.

HOTSY 770B HOT WATER PRESS. WASHER, 3 gpm, 1500 psi, 220V, single phase, \$1550; CUDA 2836 AQUEOUS PARTS WASHER, 28" turntable, 36" opening, \$3500. 475-2656.

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.

Be part of the 2018 Coal Creek Tour

Reservations are being accepted for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric’s annual Coal Creek Station Tour to Underwood, North Dakota.

If you’re seeking ideas for a three-day getaway, this mini-vacation lets you get away and leaves the planning to us. Have you ever thought it would be fun to take the kids or grandkids on an outing where everything is planned out, meals included, 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. 29744

The three-day tour is scheduled Tuesday, June 12, through Thursday, June 14. Travel in the comfort of a motor coach from Steele-Waseca to Bismarck, North Dakota, then stay at the Country Inn & Suites, which also has a water park for

1996 FORD F-150, 4x4, 180,000 mi., runs gd, some rust, exc. tires + 2-sets of tires. \$2000. 381-1160.

WINCHESTER 24-GUN SAFE on wheels, never been used, \$650/obo. 952-652-2239.

DINING ROOM TABLE & CHAIRS, 7' long w/(2) leaves, 40" wide, (6) chairs, (2) w/arms, \$150; MATCHING CART, \$50 (all in gd cond.). 645-6894.

SCHWINN HOLLYWOOD, women's, 1-spd, \$100; TREK 930 MTB, 26x175, 21-spd, \$100. 330-3178.

8' LOFTNESS SNOWBLOWER, \$1400; WINCO ALTERNATOR on cart, 18 kW, PTO, \$800; 12" PTO POST AUGER, \$350; TRANSPORT AUGER, 8"x35' w/5 hp motor & cord. 475-1008/Kevin.

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

'12 WHITE ALUM. CONTRACTR PKUP TOPPER, fits 6.5' bed, side doors & toolboxes, \$300/obo. 465-8503.

GEHL 3825 SKID STEER, 2370 hrs, used lightly, fairly clean, \$6900. 451-2307/Mike.

BRANSON TIMESHARE, 1-wk in '18, New England cottage, 2-BR, slips-5, Stormy Pt Resort, \$700; DESA PROPANE CONV. HEATR, thermostat, 30-80,000 Btu/hr, compact, gd cond., wrks grt, \$75. 334-5961.

'97 FORD F-250 w/7.3 diest eng., 215,xxx mi., lots of extras, new tires, Xtra Cab, vry gd cond. 451-9614.

HONDA PRESSURE WASHER, 5.5 hp, pump needs seals, \$50/obo; WRANGLER TIRE on rim, new, P265/70R17, \$50/obo; (12) BEARCAT FLAIL KNIVES, new, \$30/obo. 334-5412.

1997 IH TRUCK w/16' box, \$10,000; JD 5520 TRACTOR, 4WD w/new tires & loader, \$29,000; SKID LOADER PALLET FORKS, \$500. 330-3945.

FULL-SIZE BED, BOOKSHELF & FOOT BOARD, real wood, metal sides, gd shape, other things, \$100. 583-6679.

AQUARIUM, 42-gal., bow front, filter, heater, hood, gravel & accessories, exc. cond., \$200. 456-2340.

SNOW REMOVAL SERVICE, Nfld area, trusted since 2000. 271-9129.

(Metal theft problem continued from Page 5)

theft have helped, including measures requiring sellers to show identification and receive payments by checks (this also holds true in Minnesota under Statute 325E.21).

“Some states and local governments have increased the penalties associated with metal theft or are charging thieves with additional crimes if the theft caused damage to infrastructure or created a hazard to the public,” the report noted. As co-ops can attest, fixing the damage is often far more expensive than replacing the copper.

But laws aren’t a foolproof solution. “Identifying stolen metal is not always possible, and opposition to these laws has made it difficult to get effective measures passed in some areas,” NICB said. “Even in areas where such laws exist, some unscrupulous scrap dealers may not abide by them, and enforcement of the laws has not always been a major priority until recent years when increases in metal thefts brought more attention to the problem.”

And it is a problem, because as the report points out, “thieves have been willing to go to almost any length to obtain the metal.” Co-ops are among the victims, with NICB noting that “electrical substations are frequently targeted, and some thieves have been electrocuted trying to steal live electrical wiring.”

The five states having the most metal theft claims from 2014 through 2016 were: Ohio, 3,060; New Jersey, 2,661; Pennsylvania, 2,435; New York, 2,005; and Illinois, 1,448.



SWCE utility truck for sale

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is accepting sealed bids on a 2006 Chevy 3500 Extended Cab (pictured above), which has 233,000 miles. The minimum bid is \$4,500. All sealed bids must be received at the co-op, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, by 3 p.m., Friday, Jan. 12, 2018. For more information, please call Dan Meier at 507-446-4214 or Kim Huxford at 507-446-4217.

sparks • january 2018

cookin' connection

Amazing Cracker Candy Bars

Candi Feil

Faribault

Soda crackers to layer a 9 x 13 pan twice

1 c. crushed graham crackers

1/2 c. butter (1 stick)

1/2 c. granulated sugar

2/3 c. brown sugar

1/4 c. milk

Frosting:

1/2 c. chocolate chips

1/2 c. butterscotch chips

2/3 c. peanut butter

In a 9 x 13 pan, layer one thickness soda crackers. Cook to boil the crushed graham crackers, butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and milk. Boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly, and pour the filling over the layer of soda crackers. Cover the pan with another layer of soda crackers. Melt the frosting ingredients of chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, and peanut butter, then pour over the top layer of soda crackers.

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

December issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

No member found their acct #

Numbers not found:

Ryan/Edna Callahan
J. David Green
Casey Roeker
David/Lisa Larson
Curtis/Mary Wilker



sparks • january 2018

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.

• **November temps** – The average high temperature for November was 43° F, while the average low was 24° F. They compare to last year's average high of 52° F and average low of 34° F.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2018, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), electric clothes dryers, dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, 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

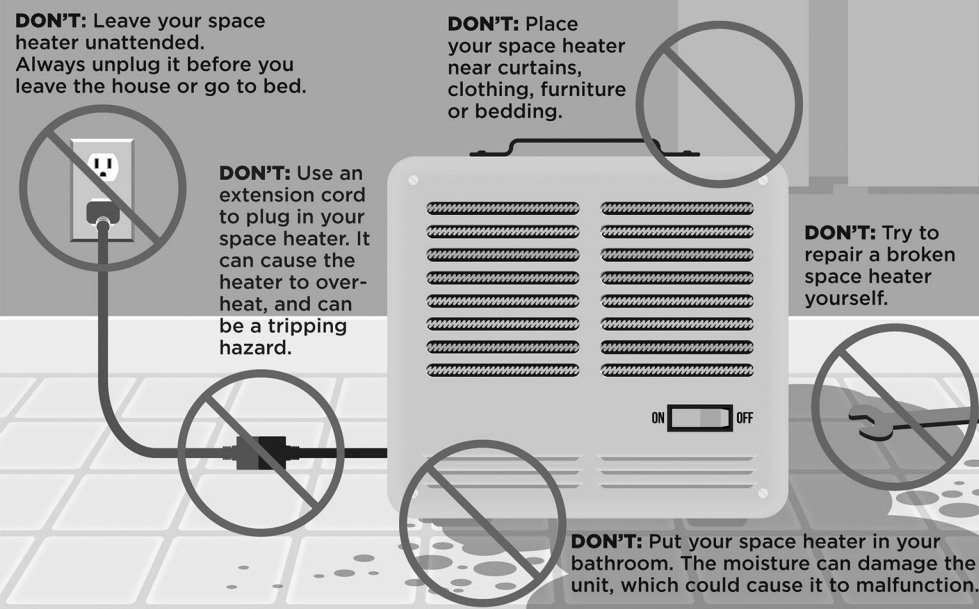
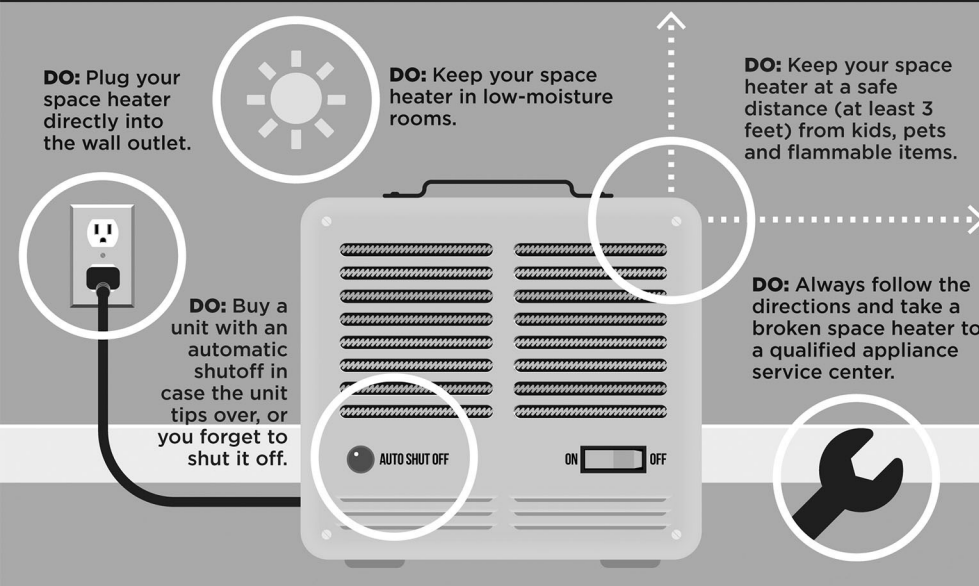
LIVESTOCK OWNERS

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. You may also visit: www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com.

health & safety connection

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.



Cooking Efficiency Tip

Every time you open the oven door to check on a dish, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, increasing cooking time - and energy use! Try using the oven light instead.



If you wish to reduce clutter and add convenience, you may elect to receive an email that your Steele-Waseca 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 mail. 1006906

Metal thefts still a problem despite drop

by Michael W. Kahn, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

Insurance claims for metal theft continue to fall, but the problem is far from over for electric cooperatives and others, a new report shows.

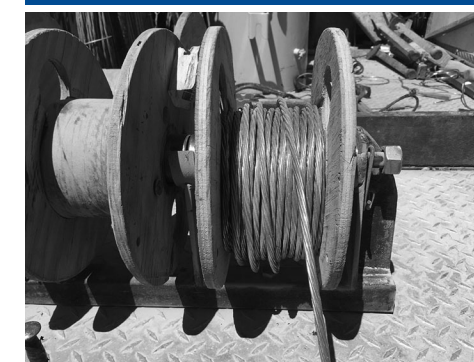
The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) said 28,040 claims were processed from 2014 through 2016. That's down 22 percent from the period of 2013 through 2015.

Throughout all four years, copper accounted for 98 percent of the metals reported stolen and, for the most part, copper prices fell over that time—meaning thieves got less for their efforts.

"When the number of metal theft claims and copper prices are compared, a statistically significant positive correlation was found to exist," the NICB report said.

According to Bloomberg, COMEX copper prices went from \$3.69 per pound on Jan. 4, 2013, to \$2.50 per pound on Dec. 30, 2016. However, prices have been rising this year, and on Nov. 24, 2017, copper closed at \$3.19 a pound.

NICB also said laws targeting metal (Metal theft problem continued on Page 7)



Despite a decrease in thefts, copper, like this on the back of a co-op truck, remains a temptation for thieves. If you notice suspicious activity along Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's power lines and/or substations, please call local authorities. (Photo by: Michael W. Kahn)

sparks • january 2018