

youth tour connection

SWCE accepting applications 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. 1053330

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.



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 2017 Youth Tour delegates, Hannah Singh (front row crouched third from right) and Brant Wieber (back row second from right) joined Minnesota's Youth Tour delegation in meeting with First District Congressman Tim Walz.

munity. 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.

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

Name _____ M or F _____ Phone _____

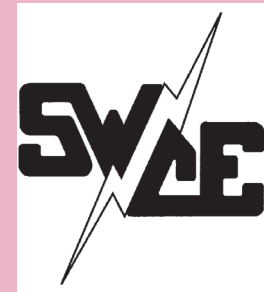
Address _____ street _____ city _____ state _____ zip _____ county _____

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

February 2018

Coal Creek Tour update

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has a limited number of openings available for the 2018 Coal Creek Tour, June 12-14. For more information, visit swce.coop, move your cursor over "OPPORTUNITIES," then click on "Coal Creek Tour," or contact Katie Nelson by emailing, marketing@swce.coop, or call 507-451-7340 or toll-free 800-526-3514. Travel in the comfort of a motor coach from Steele-Waseca to Bismarck, North Dakota, then stay at the Country Inn & Suites, which has a water park for the kids. Member parents and/or grandparents may bring up to three students between the ages of 10 and 18 at NO CHARGE.

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calendar of events

February

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 4 Super Bowl LII
- 12 Abraham Lincoln's birthday
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 16 SWCE's application due date for 2018 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. 25779
- 19 Presidents' Day
- 22 George Washington's birthday

Steele-Waseca details residential rebates available in 2018

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric member-owners seeking to maximize their energy dollar may utilize rebates offered by the co-op in 2018.

Rebates for central air conditioners and air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are listed below, and require a quality installation. To find a qualified installer, visit Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop, click on "Residential Rebates," then "Qualified Installers List," listed under "Quick Links."

	A/C	ASHP
14.5-14.9 SEER	\$50	\$200
15.0-15.9 SEER	\$50	\$300
16.0+ SEER	\$50	\$400

Rebates for Energy Star® labeled ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) are \$100 per ton in 2018.

For members interested in electric thermal storage (ETS) heat, Steele-Waseca offers a \$50 per kW (kilowatt) rebate up to 100 kW.

Steele-Waseca is offering a \$50 rebate for residential HVAC electronically commutated motors (ECMs), which offer a higher efficiency rating than typical electric blowers or condenser fan motors.

Ductless ASHPs with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate if your primary heat is delivered fuel, and \$200 if your primary heat is electric.

Energy Star labeled refrigerators and freezers are eligible for a \$50 rebate only if you recycle your old unit.

Dehumidifiers with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$25 rebate.

Steele-Waseca members purchasing any Energy Star labeled appliances during the year are encouraged to call Cindy Butterfield at Steele-Waseca weekdays to report their purchase. Energy Star purchases by member-owners help Steele-Waseca reach their Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) goal mandated in Minnesota's 2007 Next

Member-owners who hire a contractor to conduct a home energy check are



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

Generation Conservation Act. The statute sets an energy conservation goal for every gas and electric utility in the state equivalent to 1.5 percent of their annual retail energy sales.

Residential lighting rebates in 2018 will only be for LED (light emitting diode) lightbulbs with the Energy Star label. The rebate is \$2 per bulb with a limit of five bulbs. There are no longer lighting rebates for LED holiday lights, and compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs).

Steele-Waseca members who install a LED yard light fixture that is Energy Star or DLC (Design Lights Consortium) rated, are eligible for a \$30 rebate; central air conditioning tune-ups conducted in 2018 are eligible for a \$25 rebate; Wi-Fi smart thermostats are eligible for a \$25 rebate; members purchasing an electric clothes dryer with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$25 rebate; variable speed pool pumps with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate; pool ASHPs are eligible for a \$200 rebate.

Member-owners who hire a contractor to conduct a home energy check are

(Residential rebates continued on Page 3)

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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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- 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

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric supports programs intended for our young people within our service territory.

I believe it is important to support our youth, not only to enrich their lives, but also instill the value of cooperative membership. They will, after all, become our future community and co-op leaders.

The Washington, D.C. Youth Tour allows eligible sophomores and juniors to submit an application (details are on Page 8 of this month's Sparks newsletter) to Steele-Waseca. A panel of judges will evaluate the entries submitted and determine the recipients who will represent Steele-Waseca on the Youth Tour.

The tour is coordinated through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), and hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

In 2017, 39 delegates from Minnesota participated in the Youth Tour. They joined over 1,800 students from across the country who participated in their state's Youth Tour program.

While in Washington, D.C., delegates have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss issues that are important back home. They'll have an opportunity to learn about the cooperative business model, and enjoy sightseeing in the nation's capital.

The Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young people an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Steele-Waseca's board of directors have been so impressed with the young men and women who have represented the co-op on the Youth Tour, they approved sending two delegates in 2016 to represent Steele-Waseca on the Youth Tour, and have continued that commitment for the tour in 2018.

The co-op in recent years has made last year's Youth Tour delegates a part of the annual meeting. Many of you have com-

mented on how much you enjoy hearing from our youth and the appreciation they have of their Youth Tour experience. At this year's annual meeting on Tuesday, June 5, Brant Wieber and Hannah Singh, both of Northfield, are scheduled to highlight their Washington, D.C. Youth Tour experiences in 2017. They will also introduce this year's yet to be determined delegates.

For high school seniors graduating in 2018, Steele-Waseca offers \$500 scholarships to those planning to continue their education on a full-time basis at a two- or four-year technical school or college. 27490

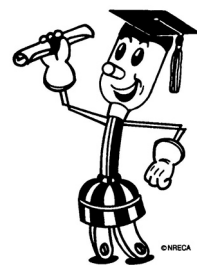
One scholarship is awarded at each participating school. Scholarship applicants must be a dependent of a Steele-Waseca member. All eligible high school seniors should contact their guidance counselor or scholarship administrator for more information. Each participating school is responsible for administering any other eligibility requirements, and for selecting their eligible recipient.

Steele-Waseca has awarded \$159,250 since the program was established in 1954. Today, a portion of the funds to support these scholarships comes from unclaimed capital credit equity.

In last month's Sparks newsletter, details regarding the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference, March 5-6, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin were shared. Steele-Waseca is sponsoring up to three students who may be sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

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.

Outreach with youth in the communities we serve is just one more way Steele-Waseca seeks to provide and enhance the quality of life in rural southern Minnesota.



Syd

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

REEFER AIR DRYER, \$100; FLUOR. LIGHTS, 4000K, \$25/ea.; 12' FIBERGLASS BOAT w/trailer, \$100; EVINRUDE OUTBOARD MOTOR, 15 hp, runs, \$100. 271-6592.

GASOLINE TANK, 200-300 gal., sealed, no stand or hose, \$150; STEEL BARRELS, 55-gal., empty, \$10/each. 213-8823.

FARMALL H for repair or parts, \$650; JOHNSON O/B MOTOR, older, 5.5 hp, \$300. 612-221-1408.

YARD MACHINE SNOWBLOWER, 22", 8-hp, elec. start, mint cond. 833-4259.

YAMAHA ALTO SAX, exc. cond., hard case, neck strap, used vry little, great for new band student, cheaper than renting, \$800. 271-1414/Nfld area.

'88 WEERES PONTOON, 20' w/25-hp Evin., fish loc., swim laddr, trlr, vry gd cond., \$3500; 50' ROLL-OUT DOCK w/8x12 platform w/bench, steel w/wood decking, crank adjust, gd shape, \$500. 612-910-0041.

TREADMILL, exc. cond., has speed control & misc. setting, \$75; RED WING WESTERN BOOTS, never worn, buckskin color, size 8.5. 451-1749.

SNOWMOBILE TRAILER, 8.5'x10', gd cond., has tilt. 334-2673.

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 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. 127315

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| Ahern, Tom | Medford |
| Alberts, Robert F./Sylvia | Lonsdale |
| Anderson, Bruce | Faribault |
| Anderson, LaMarr D. | Waterville |
| Anderson, Russell | Faribault |
| Backes, Larry or Kathryn | Faribault |
| Bakken, Maynard P./Bonnie L. | New Richland |
| Bonnerup, Mr. & Mrs. Norman | Albert Lea |
| Bos, Wessel/Patricia | Blooming Prairie |
| Budahl, Barbara J. | Faribault |
| Busch, Timothy E. | Northfield |
| Canterbury, John | Faribault |
| Christensen, Kent N./Eileen | Claremont |
| Christiansen, Gary A./Mary S. | Blooming Pr. |
| Dale, Joshua J./Holly L. | Ellendale |
| Dalen, Mr. & Mrs. Richard D. | Owat. |
| DeGroot, Lois | Dundas |
| Dinse, Bill | Owatonna |
| Dunford or Bottke, Charles or Jean | Faribault |
| Esparza, Kimberly Frenke | Owatonna |
| Evenson, Donald W. | New Richland |
| Fierst, Cindy | Faribault |
| Fuchs, Everett C. | Faribault |
| Groeneweg, Tom/Kathie | Albert Lea |
| Gustafson, Dannie H. | Northfield |
| Hagen, Leslie A. | New Richland |
| Hagenson, Richard & Peggy | Nrthfield |
| Harlow, Janet/Lydia J. | New Richland |
| Holmseth, Greg or Linda | Dodge Cntr |
| Hruby, Annette M. | Lonsdale |
| Huerkamp, Michael R. | Otisco |
| Iverson, Arthur C. & Coral | Northfield |
| Jacobsen, Mr. & Mrs. Curtis C. | Owat. |
| Jensen, Dale R./Tammy R. | Dodge Cntr |
| Jensen-Paquin or Adams, Gay or David H. | Fbo |
| Johnson, Adrian H./Eleanor L. | Fbo |
| Johnson, Donald J. | Waseca |
| Johnson, Karen | Ellendale |
| Johnson, Russell/Brenda | Dundas |
| Jones, Heidi K. | Faribault |
| Juaire, James/Sharon | Blooming Prairie |
| Kapitzke, James A./Michele G. | Northfield |
| Kimmes, Donna J. | Cannon Falls |
| Krause, Joel V. | Waseca |
| Langeslag, Kenneth D./Carrie | Northfield |
| Leitzen, Bernard | Faribault |
| Lindstrom, Al/Gladys | Blooming Pr. |
| Lynch, Kenneth E. | Northfield |
| Maas, Patricia | Medford |
| Malecha, Lawrence D. | Faribault |
| Meyer, Carmen O. | Owatonna |
| Miller, Richard J. | Northfield |
| Mueller, Bob | Northfield |
| Mutch, Lavon | Mankato |
| Nelson, Kenneth C. | New Richland |
| Oachs, Orval | Minnesota Lake |
| O'Rourke, Michael | Minnesota Lake |
| Pomije, Virginia/Jeffery | Medford |
| Porter, Tom G. & Gloria | Northfield |
| Reichl, Duane | Blooming Prairie |
| Reyes, Rosa | Medford |
| Reynolds, Jeff D. | Owatonna |
| Rogness, Byford D. | Faribault |
| Schmitz/Moore, Anthony J/Shannon R. | Fbo |
| Schommer, Brenda L. | Northfield |
| Sibenaller, Mr. & Mrs. Gregory | Blooming Pr. |
| Skuzacek, Daniel P. | Faribault |
| Sorgatz, Dale C. or Vicki L. | Faribault |
| Truebenbach, Laura R. | New Richland |
| Twedt, Mark | Faribault |
| Ulrich, Holly K. | Faribault |
| Voegel, Larry J. | Faribault |
| Wangerin, L. Charles | Burnsville |
| Willie, Allan W. | Faribault |
| Wright, Frank I. | Northfield |

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.

Owatonna Eagles announce scholarship opportunity

The Owatonna Eagles is inviting all traditional and non-traditional students to apply for (2) \$1,000 scholarships that will be awarded in May 2018.

Additional information and an application is available at www.eagles1791.com.

The funding for the award is from the Don Tuerk endowment. Don was a community-minded Owatonna native, long-time Eagles member, and Owatonna fireman. The scholarship will be targeted, but not limited, to students with goals of public service, pursuing two- or four-year degrees. Scholarships will be used for improving our communities and helping others.

The deadline to apply is March 31, 2018.

ad connection

give away

PIANO, you haul, good condition, wood upright. 952-994-1092.

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

wanted

FARMLAND TO RENT in the Owa. area. 213-6979.

OLD POSTAGE STAMPS, issued before 1950, \$ paid per book value, free estimates. 676-0970.

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

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

USED 40-GAL. WATER HEATER, elec., LP, or nat. gas in good condition. 465-8566.

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

OLD OR ANTIQUE COLTS. 301-9053.

FARMLAND, cash rent, 2018 season & beyond, Steele/Waseca county. 456-5703.

USED TUBA in gd cond. 239-2288.

USED MOTOR OIL. 456-4199.

for sale

HARDWOOD, aged 2 yrs, 2' or less, dry enough for newer stoves, near Owat., would deliver. 273-3587.

ALKOTA 2102 H-WTR PR. WSHR, used, 2 gpm @1000 psi, 115V, 1-ph., \$1600; **REZNR RA140 WASTE OIL HEATR**, used, \$3000; **VAL 6 KBE5L RADIANT HTR**, diesel fired, 115V, \$2395. 583-2703.

TREE TRIMMING, REMOVL & STUMP GRINDING, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; **FRONT CHROME BUMPER** for an F-650, new. 456-1609.

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

GAMO .177-CAL. PELLET GUN, "bone collector series," 4-cans of pellets & 4-pwr scope, like new, \$125. 612-805-8546.

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **February 5** to ensure being printed in the March 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 5th will be printed in the April 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.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

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

2006 REDBALL 570 SPRAYER, 80', 1200-gal., 46" tires, excellent condition. 381-8079.

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

HOUSE in Medford, 304 SW 2nd Ave., \$175,000. 838-8129.

(1) PAIR OF LAWN TRACTOR CHAINS from JD 318, 1-yr-old, like new, \$50. 581-6950.

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

2006 SATURN VUE. 210-1826.

ALF/GRASS MIX, full size sm. sq. hay bales, great quality, no rain. 451-2978.

ATV EAGLE SNOWPLOW, like new, \$250. 363-1274.

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

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Ellendale. 456-1460.

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

ALKOTA 4182 H-WTR PR. WASHER, 4 gpm@1800 psi, 220V, 1-ph., \$1999; **ALKOTA 420X4 H-WTR PR. WASHER**, 4 gpm@2000 psi, 220V, 1-ph., like new, \$2499. 456-3584.

TIME-SHARE UNIT FOR RENT, thinking about vacation? Could sleep up to (8) depending on location, text me your dates & location options. 226-3004.

HOTSY 770B H-WTR PR. WASHER, 3 gpm@1500 psi, 220V, 1-ph., \$1550; **CUDA 2836 AQUEOUS PARTS WASHER**, 28" turntable, 36" opening, \$3500. 475-2656.

PLASTIC BARRELS & PALLETS; FISH HOUSE, 4x8; **ICE AUGERS**, 4-8"; **OTHER FISHING ITEMS**. 664-9426.

AGRI-FAB SNOWBLOWER, new, never used, fits most garden tractors, best offer, located at Roberds Lk (Fbo). 491-6658.

ENGINE STAND; (16) PLAYER PIANO ROLLS; HORSE HAMES & LEVELERS; HANDMADE 4' SNOWSHOES; ANTIQUE ROUND OAK C20 STOVE. 446-8866.

USED ENGINES, TRANSMISSIONS & AUTO PARTS, best prices, 30-day warranty. 332-2300.

BRANSON TIME-SHARE, 1-wk in '18, New England cott., Stormy Pt Resort, 2-br., sleeps-5, \$700; **ELECT. DARTBOARD** w/3-sets of darts, \$50; **ROADMASTER 26" MT. CLIMBER BIKE**, \$75. 334-5961.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, never shear sheep again, super mothers, fast growing, great for beginners, organic & grazers, reserve yours now. 451-2722.

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

CAB DOOR KIT for NH skids, no glass in door only the metal pieces, fits LS, LX, L skids, \$500; **TIRE CHAINS**, new, for 9.5x28 & 11.2x24; **TRUCK TIRE CHAINS** for 16.5" & 17" tires, bst offr. 952-652-2473.

(2) PEERLESS NAT. GAS UNIT HEATERS, 125K & 150K Btu respectively, \$300/each. 456-8689/Rick.

TREK MT. TRACK 200, 21-spd, 24x175 F.S. Fork, \$100; **GIANT ESCAPE**, 21-spd, men's, hybrid, 700x35c, nice, \$200. 330-3178.

CABIN, French Lk, seasonal, leased land, 80' shoreline, \$65,000. 334-6362.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods, 1/4 cord/\$65, 1/2 cord/\$120, full cord/\$220. 645-4158.

1999 LEXUS RX 300, AWD, loaded, exc. cond., new tires, mechanically sound, no rust, all options, \$3500. 649-0019.

PURE POLARIS SNOWMOBILE COAT & PANTS w/suspenders, XL, soft blk leather, \$295; **SKI-DOO COAT**, gray, XL, \$150 (both like new). 491-4565.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

MN TWINS SPRING TRAINING IN FLORIDA, March 15-25, '18. Deluxe motor coach, 10 nights, 18 meals, incl. Best of Nashville guided tour, Coca Cola factory in Atlanta, Ga. \$1,799 pp dbl occ.

PANAMA CANAL CRUISE, March 23-April 9. Round trip Delta flights from Mpls, (2) full-day guided tours of D.C., WWII, Lincoln, & Korean War Memorials, Capitol Hill & more! \$1,499 pp dbl occ. \$4,679 per person double occupancy.

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C., April 27-May 1. Round trip flights from Mpls, (2) full-day guided tours of D.C., WWII, Lincoln, & Korean War Memorials, Capitol Hill & more! \$1,499 pp dbl occ.

NEW ORLEANS & BATON ROUGE, May 10-15. Round trip Delta flight from Mpls, 3 nights in New Orleans, 2 nights in Baton Rouge, city tours, dinner & show in the French Qtr. \$1,899 pp dbl occ.

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



member connection

(Residential rebates continued from Page 1)

eligible for \$0.05 per kWh (kilowatt hour) savings for following through with the suggested recommendations offered as a result of the home energy check. The maximum rebate is \$100 for 2,000+ kWh.

Steele-Waseca is offering up to \$500 for members participating in the ChargeWise program. This is a voluntary program offered by participating electric cooperatives for qualified members who own a plug-in (PEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) electric vehicle.

The program allows members to charge their PEV/PHEV in their garage or carport using electricity from a specially installed 20-amp ChargeWise outlet. This ChargeWise outlet only provides energy during the off-peak hours

of 11 p.m.-7 a.m. Members simply plug in their PEV in the evening and their vehicle is charged during those overnight hours at a reduced rate. They wake up to a fully-charged electric vehicle.

If you have a question or wish to request a rebate form, please call Cindy Butterfield at Steele-Waseca weekdays between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Rebate forms are available at Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop, by clicking on "Residential Rebates." Please visit energystar.gov to check the model numbers of qualifying products. 1004542

Completed rebate forms must be accompanied with a copy of the receipt and submitted within 90 days of purchase. Please allow 6-8 weeks for processing. The rebate will appear as a credit on your Steele-Waseca bill.

Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

Visit Great River Energy's website at www.greatriverenergy.com and click on "Load Management"

Need a history of controls? Click on "History" on the "Load Management" page



Why is my bill higher in the winter?

In our region, November through March is typically when members use the most electricity due to cold weather. Here are other factors that cause energy use to increase:

- Shorter days and longer nights mean more time indoors. That typically means more lights, TVs, appliances and video games in use.
- Heating systems run more. Even if you have a propane furnace, your electric use increases because electricity powers the blower motor in the furnace.
- Holidays mean more guests, more hot showers, more cooking – all using electricity.
- Block heaters use between 500 to 1,500 watts depending on the vehicle. So a car using a 500-watt heater would use 150 kWh a month plugged in at 10 hours a day.
- Portable plug-in space heaters can dramatically increase your monthly bill as well. A 1,500-watt space heater used for 10 hours a day will use 450 kWh a month.



Invest in Efficiency

The benefits of some home efficiency investments aren't seen as quickly as others. Here's how a few upgrades compare over time:



Set Water Heater to 120°
No Cost; Save \$73/yr

Open Window Blinds in Winter; Close in Summer
No Cost; Save \$35/yr

Adjust Thermostat 1° Down in Winter, 1° Up in Summer
No Cost; Save \$82/yr



ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer
Costs \$194 extra; Save \$140/yr

ENERGY STAR Refrigerator
Costs \$97 extra; Save \$100/yr

Wrap Hot Water Tank
Costs \$85; Save \$23/yr

Find more ways to save at **TogetherWeSave.com**.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Saver, Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. Based on national average savings; actual savings will vary by climate.

Instant Benefit

1-5 Year Payback

cookin' connection

Homemade Tomato Soup

Carol Larimore

Blooming Prairie

4 ripe tomatoes
2 c. whole milk
1/8 tsp. baking soda
salt (season to taste)
pepper (season to taste)
2 or 3 Tbsp. butter

Wash, peel, and slice tomatoes. Place in a pan over low heat, stirring constantly. Cook for 10 minutes. Add baking soda (to avoid curdling). In another pan, heat milk (do not boil milk). Remove both pans from heat. Add tomatoes to milk. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and butter. Serve piping hot.

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 9 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during December 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.

January issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Mr. & Mrs. Ben Manderfeld
Marvin Spindler

Numbers not found:

Richard Hoehn
James Zielske
Kristina Dillon



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.

• **December temps** – The average high temperature for December was 25° F, while the average low was 10° F. They compare to last year's average high of 26° F and average low of 13° 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) bulbs purchased (limit 5) 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

Six steps to a warmer basement

Does your basement leave you cold in the winter?

If you're like many homeowners, your lower level doesn't get much use until the weather gets warm. Heat loss in your basement may be adding to your energy bills as well.

Fortunately, things may be looking up. Here are six ways to make your basement a more inviting place to spend time and reduce heating costs.

1. Add insulation. A well-insulated basement reduces heating costs and makes for a comfortable living space. A variety of insulation types are available. Fiberglass batt insulation is a good choice for unfinished basements, while blow-in products can be used to add insulation to a finished space.

2. Seal air leaks. Warm air can leak out of gaps and cracks in the rim joists, where the wall meets the ceiling, as well as plumbing and wiring holes on outside walls. Caulk is best for sealing gaps or cracks that are one-quarter inch or smaller. Use spray foam insulation to fill gaps up to three inches. Fill larger gaps by cutting and stuffing pieces of insulation.

3. Check crawl space. If you have a crawl space, make sure it is properly sealed and insulated. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Energy's website, energy.gov/energysaver/where-insulate-home.

4. Install carpet. Basements often have cement or tile-covered floors. If you do not have moisture problems, consider installing carpet in basement living areas. It will make the floor feel warmer and cozier beneath your feet. For work rooms, and laundry rooms, consider putting a rug down with a pad underneath.

5. Replace windows. If you have older single pane windows in your basement, it's highly likely they are reducing comfort and increasing your energy bills. Install glass block or Energy Star® certified high-performance windows.

If you choose not to replace your older windows, seal them from the outside with caulk, and winterize them from the inside using a window insulation kit available at your local hardware or do-it-yourself retailer.



Be safe Stay 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.

6. Stay warm with extra heat. While it won't reduce your energy bill, tapping into your existing ductwork and installing a vent can add central heating to your basement, making it more comfortable.

A space heater or electric fireplace can provide supplemental heating to a

small space, such as a laundry room or play room.

With a little extra effort, you can lower your energy costs and create a comfortable space for your family to find refuge on cold winter days.