

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

The Mission

of Steele-Waseca
Cooperative Electric is
to provide competitive,
reliable, high quality service
to our membership.

The Vision

of Steele-Waseca
Cooperative Electric is to be
the electrical provider of choice
in our service area.

This Mission

shall be accomplished by

- striving for excellence through continual improvement,
- applying prudent leadership,
- partnering, and
- following cooperative principles.

We Shall Be

- a good listener to our customers,
- a competitive player in our industry, and
- a valued member of our community.



W Welcome



Dear Member,

Welcome to the family of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric. Our cooperative has been serving the rural areas of southern Minnesota for over 86 years and we look forward to serving you and your electrical needs for many years to come.

We pride ourselves in personal service and power quality. We have extremely low incidents of outages except for the occasional severe storm, and believe in cooperative principles that emphasize service and community involvement. We also work hard to provide the latest technological advancements that enable us to improve our system when dealing with meter readings, voltage, conservation, and ample capacity.

Steele-Waseca is not owned by stockholders or any individual investor. It is owned by the members who are currently receiving power. As a cooperative member, you are represented by nine residential board members who you have the privilege of electing at annual meetings. Our annual meetings also provide an opportunity for reviewing and asking questions about any actions or decisions for the past year or the upcoming year. There is time for information on the industry along with hearing directly from director candidates placed in nomination. In addition, members have a chance to receive one of many door prizes along with a meal. Overall, the annual meeting is a great time for me and the family of employees to meet and visit with so many of our members and hear about your needs, concerns, or just how you are doing.

At Steele-Waseca we are very involved in the community that we serve. We have been privileged to provide scholarships and rebates to a huge portion of our members such as you. We will be sending a monthly newsletter, **Sparks**, that will announce the timing of our programs for the annual meeting, scholarships, rebates, and other information that can assist you in your daily life. A long-time favorite for many of our members is the popular classified section that is provided without cost to those who have something to sell, give away, or are seeking something they want.

Again, welcome to your new cooperative family at Steele-Waseca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Syd Briggs". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Syd Briggs
General Manager

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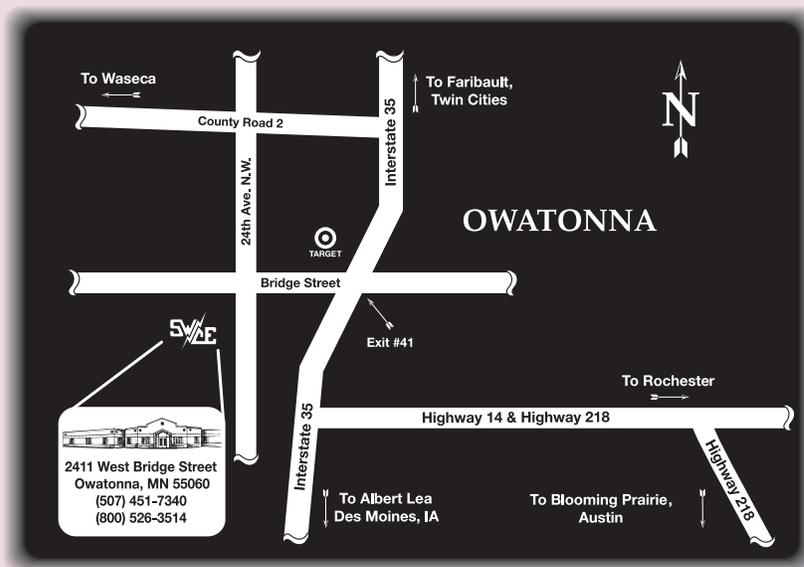
Contact us:

Phone(507) 451-7340 or (800) 526-3514
 Email.....info@swce.coop
 Internet.....www.swce.coop
 24-hour outage reporting(507) 451-7340 or (800) 526-3514



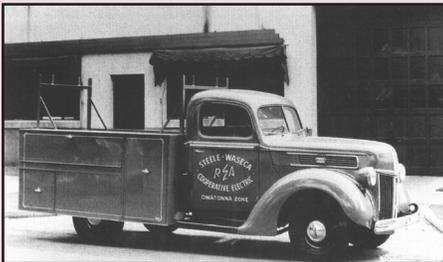
Steele-Waseca’s headquarters is conveniently located at 2411 West Bridge Street, Owatonna, Minn. Office business hours Monday–Friday are: member services - 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; operations - 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. You’re welcome to stop by and visit with us whenever you’re in Owatonna. After all, this is **your** cooperative.

Whichever method of communication you use to reach us, be assured, we’re here to help you! We value all your comments, questions, and suggestions.



History

Prior to 1935, electric service in the rural areas of the United States was extremely sparse. Almost everyone living in the rural areas was a farmer. Without electricity, the farmers had to pump water by hand and use wood or coal stoves to cook food and heat their homes, which made their lives labor intensive. Privately-owned power companies refused to build lines to most of the rural areas because there was not enough money to be made by serving farmers.



Then, on May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration to encourage rural electrification and to lend low-interest money to any group or company willing to undertake the task. When private companies still wouldn't get involved, the farmers formed cooperatives to do the job themselves.



The seed that grew into Steele-Waseca's network of rural electric lines was planted at a Havana Farm Bureau meeting on Oct. 5, 1935. One year later, Steele-Waseca was formed when Waseca Cooperative Electric and Steele County Cooperative Electric voted to consolidate on

Oct. 10, 1936. At that time, there were 860 members.

In March 1937, the Rice County REA, known as Cannon Valley Cooperative Power and Light Association, merged with Steele-Waseca. The merge added another 443 members to Steele-Waseca's growing membership.

On July 5, 1937, several thousand people witnessed the first pole setting ceremony at the Beaver Lake picnic grounds. Later that year, about 350 members attended Steele-Waseca's first annual meeting on Oct. 15, 1937. By that time, paid membership in the cooperative numbered 1,650.

After two and one-half years of concentrated efforts, the first part of Steele-Waseca's line was energized in February 1938. When completed, the first project consisted of 350 miles of line.

Today, Steele-Waseca has 19 substations, over 2,200 miles of overhead and underground lines; more than 11,000 service locations.

Keeping you informed

Sparks, a newsletter published monthly by Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) and mailed to every member, communicates timely information about your cooperative. Each issue includes informative articles about SWCE events and programs, health and safety, and energy concerns.

Reading **Sparks** monthly keeps you informed and helps you take full advantage of your membership benefits.

Another opportunity for you to learn more about your cooperative is by becoming a member of the Member Advisory Council. The group will have one informational meeting that provide them with educational opportunities and prepares them for their service on the Nominating Committee. Advisory Council members become informed SWCE members and serve to promote and support the objectives of their cooperative. They will be encouraged to participate in tours and other informational meetings. If you are interested in becoming an Advisory Council member, contact our office for more information.

the power of human connections

SWCE sparks

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric August 2022

inside connections

2 Manager Connection
Seykora, Kindseth reflect on Youth Tour experience; Duchless air source heat pump promotion extended to Aug. 31

4 Cookin' Connection:
SWCE community solar update; Sparks in brief; Who found their account number in the July issue of Sparks? Steele County To Line

5 Lightning safety reminders; ASHP advancements

6 Ad Connection;
4-Seasons Vacations

7 Ad Connection;
Air source heat pump promotion extended to Aug. 31

8 SWCE has a hanging scale for sale

calendar of events

August

5-7 Claremont Hogfest
13 Lonsdale Community Day
16-21 Steele County Free Fair
25 Minnesota State Fair starts
27 Caleb Erickson Memorial Event in Waseca
National Wellness Month

Litomysl Summer Festival
Holy Trinity Catholic Church
9946 SE 24th Ave., Owatonna
Sunday, July 31
Polka Mass - 10 a.m.
Festival 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Food, games & prizes for all ages
Live Music
Prune, Poppyseed, & Apricot "Bucky" Silent Auction & Used-a-Bit sale
Everyone welcome!
www.litomysl.webs.com

Lundberg retires after 49 years with Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Finance Division Manager Dave Lundberg retired Thursday, June 30, following a 49-year career with the co-op.

"I'm 70 and it's time to pass the baton on," said Dave.

Lundberg joined Steele-Waseca on June 1, 1973, as an accountant after being recruited while attending Willmar Technical Institute. "I was recruited—yes," said Dave. "They drove up to Willmar," referring to Steele-Waseca General Manager Don Larson and Accountant Stan Larson, based on the school's reputation of having a quality accounting program.

Dave recalled the school's placement director asked him if he wanted to interview for the position as the director said it looked like a "pretty good job opening." "I think they interviewed 10 students," said Dave, who recalled going to a second interview at Steele-Waseca, and interviewing for another position in Bloomington, before deciding Steele-Waseca was a better opportunity. In addition, Dave also had an emphasis on finance and previously attended Moorhead State University, and completed the USDA/REA accounting course.

During his years at Steele-Waseca, Dave was promoted to staff accountant in June 1979, and business analyst in January 1980, before being promoted to finance division manager. His early years worked in the areas of capital credit equity and plant accounting.

"Overall, I think one of the nice things we've been able to do is hold the line on retail rates," said Dave, noting legacy members have not had a rate change since 2013, 2017.

Lundberg credited the REA and later RUS loan program with keeping interest rates low for rural electric cooperatives.

"I like the business model," said Dave referring to cooperatives. Noting after expenses are subtracted from revenues, the excess goes to the members in capital credit equity. "It's a good honest form of business," said Dave, with yearly audits and pride with his years of clean audits. "You've got a good board, good employees, and everybody works together," said Dave referencing his view of the efficient operation at Steele-Waseca.

Prior to 1991, Lundberg said he didn't have experience with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), but that would change following the Halloween ice storm in 1991. Dave reflected on how General Manager Don Larson directed him to go into a room and try to figure how Steele-Waseca was

(Lundberg retirement continued on Page 8)

The screenshot shows the website header with the SWCE logo and navigation links: REPORT OUTAGE, PAY ONLINE, OUTAGE. Below the header are download links for mobile apps (App Store, Google Play) and the address: 507-41 2411 W. Br Owatonna, MN. A main navigation bar includes: MEMBERS, CLASSIFIEDS, SERVICES, NEWS, CO-OP, OPPORTUNITIES, PARTNERS, ECONOMICS. The main content area features a large photo of utility workers in safety gear working on a truck. Text overlay on the photo reads: STEELE-WASECA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC - YOUR TOUCHSTONE ENERGY PARTNER. Below the photo is a row of smaller images: a family, a hand plugging a cord into a wall outlet, power lines, and a worker in a hard hat.

At Steele-Waseca, we strive to make our website more user friendly for those with mobile devices and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The website has many services and resources available at www.swce.coop.

Where your power comes from

Steele-Waseca is a distribution cooperative. We purchase power from Great River Energy, Alliant Energy and local renewable resources. The power is transmitted to Steele-Waseca substations through transmission lines for distribution to our members. Power purchases from Alliant Energy are in accordance with the purchase agreement Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) completed July 31, 2015. Steele-Waseca was among the 12 co-ops of SMEC who purchased Alliant's Minnesota service territory. The power purchase agreement with Alliant Energy is for up to 10 years.



Who reads your meter?

Steele-Waseca has been utilizing automated meter reading technology since the late 1990s. The first units automatically read the meters and transmitted the readings over power lines to receivers at our substations. After being received at the substations, the readings traveled via phone lines to a computer modem at our office. The second generation units provided two-way communication between the meter and our office and read the meter similar to the first generation units. Steele-Waseca started implementing radio frequency (RF) meters in 2015, which sends the meter readings from routers to collectors before received at our office. Feel free to occasionally read your meter and compare the reading with the one on your billing statement. Please report any problems you may notice to our office.

Y outh education



Your co-op cares about the education of today's youth.

That's why we sponsor an all-expense paid trip for either high school sophomore(s) or junior(s) to Washington, D.C., during the NRECA Youth Tour in June.

Steele-Waseca also offer scholarships each year for post-secondary education. Watch our **Sparks** newsletter for more information about these important youth opportunities.

Throughout the year we also present several electrical safety and information programs for schools and other community organizations.

To schedule one of these programs, just phone our office!



Who represents you?

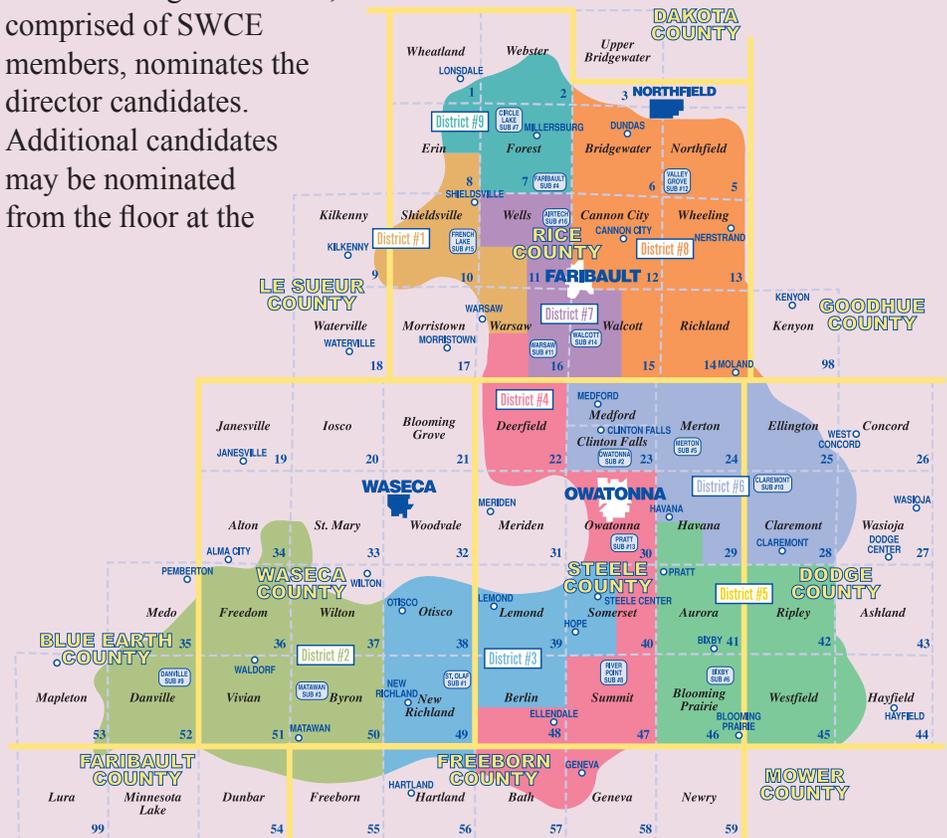
Steele-Waseca is organized under the seven cooperative principles of enterprise and is owned by the members it serves. Under the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws of the cooperative, SWCE members elect directors to represent them for three-year terms on the board of directors. As a member of SWCE, this gives you a direct voice in the operation of the cooperative.

SWCE's service territory consists of nine districts with one director representing each district. Directors are elected at annual meetings. The districts are rotated so that one-third of the directors are elected each year.

annual meeting. Notification of the meeting date, time, and the nominated candidates is published in the **Sparks** newsletter prior to each annual meeting.

Responsibilities of the board of directors include establishing cooperative policy, setting rates, and approving work plans and expenditures. The board also selects the general manager who is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of SWCE and its employees.

A Nominating Committee, comprised of SWCE members, nominates the director candidates. Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the



The 7 Cooperative Principles

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

2 Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as electric representatives are accountable to the membership.

3 Economic Participation: Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

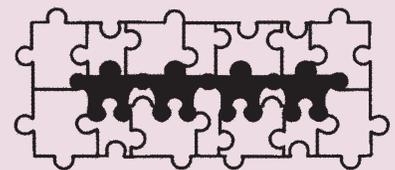
4 Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

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

6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7 Concern for Community: While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

COOPERATIVES



Businesses People Trust

Organizations helping us help you

Steele-Waseca holds memberships in several associations at local, state, and national levels which protect your interests as a consumer.

Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is a service organization for Minnesota electric cooperatives. It provides its member cooperatives with safety and loss control services, legislative research and lobbying, and industry education programs. (www.mrea.org)

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) is a national service organization dedicated to representing the national interest of over 900 electric cooperatives and the consumers they serve. The association provides national leadership and member assistance through legislative representation

before the U.S. Congress and the executive branch; representation in legal and regulatory proceedings affecting electric service and the environment. NRECA is an advocate for member-owned cooperatives on energy and operational issues as well as rural community and economic development. (www.nreca.coop)



Touchstone Energy® is a national alliance of local, cooperatively-owned utilities providing high standards of service to all members, large and small, and their communities. Its values are the same as the ones cooperative members have come to rely on since the beginning of rural electric cooperatives—accountability, integrity, innovation, and longstanding commitment to communities. (www.touchstoneenergy.com)

Area Chambers of Commerce are organizations that encourage businesses, professional firms and individuals to coordinate their efforts to maintain a healthy local economic climate. They organize programs and strategies which help enhance local business development and prosperity.

American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE) is a non-profit membership association devoted to promoting the increased production and use of ethanol. The coalition promotes ethanol as beneficial for the environment and the economy. They have members who can design and build ethanol plants as well as supply a variety of products and services to ethanol plants. (www.ethanol.org)

Environmentally sound

Steele-Waseca does all it can to protect the environment:

- Promote employee health and wellness, and have a smoke-free work environment
- Support production and encourage the use of ethanol and vehicle fuel efficiency
- Promote oil spill prevention
- Promote vegetation control
- Promote time management control
- Recycle batteries, lightbulbs, oil, paper, newspaper, cardboard and metal
- Use a ground water heating system in our building
- Encourage members to use energy conservation measures whenever possible

Water heater program



Need a new water heater?

For information about our water heater program, phone our office at 507-451-7340 or 1-800-526-3514.

You may also subscribe to Steele-Waseca's community solar program, The Sunna Project, through the water heater program. Call for details.



What determines rates?

Steele-Waseca's rates are based on the cost of providing electric service to members. Revenue from the monthly cost of service charge helps finance the capital investments Steele-Waseca must make in order to get electricity from our power supplier to you. These large, long-term investments pay for wire, power poles, substations, transformers, and line equipment. They are separate from

monthly operating costs, such as power cost, depreciation, taxes, insurance, and labor, which are recovered through the actual sale of electricity charge, not the cost of service charge. Whether you buy a lot of electricity or very little, Steele-Waseca must pay off the loans that are secured to build the substations and lines which serve you. We are also required by our lending agency

to keep our equipment in tip-top shape, regardless of the wear and tear Mother Nature hands us.

SWCE operates on a not-for-profit basis. Any revenues collected in excess of the actual costs of operation are returned to members through rate rebates and capital credits. Rate schedules are available upon request.

Capital equity ownership

Every cooperative in the United States depends on its members as owners to provide necessary funding or capital equity for operation and to maintain

a revenue margin that assures financial stability. Each member's capital equity ownership is the dollar value of his/her contribution in the cooperative.

permit. Under current law, no part of the allocated equity is taxable until it's actually paid in cash. And at that time, it's subject to taxation only to the extent that your electric costs were deducted as an expense on your income tax return for the year the equity was allocated.

When refunded, usually in December each year, capital credit equity is applied to all active account energy bills. Members who move away and no longer have active accounts continue to receive their equity refunds as checks. That's why it's important for past members to notify us whenever their address changes.

At the end of each year, any money paid by members which is not spent on the operating expenses of the cooperative is credited to its members' equity accounts. The amount of money allocated to each member is based on his/her energy purchases for the year. Each member annually receives notification of money allocated to him/her. This money, called capital credit equity, is periodically refunded to the members as the cooperative's financial conditions

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$19 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.5 billion in 2020 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

\$19 BILLION SINCE 1988

\$1.5 BILLION IN 2020

Security deposits

Steele-Waseca requires all new members to pay a security deposit. Each deposit earns interest which is applied to the member's monthly bills at a rate specified by Minnesota Statute 325E.02 (b).

Deposit requirements

Residential: Two (2) months of estimated usage or \$250, whichever is greater.

Seasonal or cabins: Two (2) months of estimated usage or \$150, whichever is greater.

The deposit will be added to your bill if it is not accompanied with your application form.

A residential or seasonal deposit may be waived under the following

circumstances by:

- Submitting a letter of credit from your previous utility showing a good 12-month payment record.
- Previously establishing (within the past two years) a good payment record with SWCE.
- Participating in Steele-Waseca's auto pay program until good credit is established.

A deposit may be required whenever an account is in a disconnect situation for nonpayment.

Commercial: Two (2) months estimated usage. This will be retained until thirty-six (36) consecutive monthly billing payments have been

received by the Steele-Waseca office by the due date every month.

Deposit Refunds

Once you've established good credit with SWCE, your deposit will be applied to your bill. Good credit for residential and seasonal accounts is accomplished when we receive 12 consecutive monthly payments in our office by the due date each month. Regardless if you have a residential, seasonal or commercial account, if you end service with Steele-Waseca before your deposit is applied to your account, the deposit will be applied to your final bill.

Payment options



- Mail your payment using the return envelope included with your billing statement. If you lose or prefer not to use the return envelope, you may mail your payment to:

SWCE
PO Box 485
Owatonna MN 55060-0485

- Have your payments electronically transferred from your checking or savings account by using EnergyPay Plus, our automatic payment plan.
- Pay 6-12 months in advance using our EnergyPrepay Discount plan.

- Pay at our office, located at 2411 West Bridge Street, Owatonna, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or pay by check or money order using our 24-hour payment box located in front of our office building.



- Use your Visa®, MasterCard® or Discover® by calling or stopping at our office. Or, you may pay online at our website, www.swce.coop, by either registering your account, or utilizing the quick pay option at the top of the website's home page. If you prefer, you may complete an authorization form and send it to

our office to automatically pay your bill each month by credit/debit card, checking or savings account.

After you have established a 12-month billing history with Steele-Waseca, you'll have the option to use our budget billing program, which will allow you to pay the same amount each month.

SWCE also has gift certificates available for purchase when you need a thank you gift or an idea for that person who has everything.

Yours, mine, or ours?

Questions about the ownership of transformer poles, meter loops, wires, and breaker or fuse panels are usually answered during new construction. But, when existing equipment is damaged by storms, old age, or overload, who owns what? In most cases, on an overhead service all wires beyond the top of the meter pole belong to the member.



Overhead electric service

Steele-Waseca is responsible for:

- Wires coming onto the yard to the transformer.
- The transformer/meter pole.
- The meter.
- Connections of wires to the transformer.

Member is responsible for:

- The meter loop (service on the pole including the meter socket, pipe, wire, and disconnect switch) and the connections of the wires.
- Wires leaving the meter pole to other locations and the connections for those wires.



Underground electric service

Steele-Waseca is responsible for:

- The transformer and meter.

Member is responsible for:

- The meter post and meter socket.
- The pipe and wire from the transformer to the meter socket (non-development). In developments, Steele-Waseca owns the wires up to the meter socket on the house.
- Wires leaving the meter location to other locations and the connections for those wires.
- Any disconnect switches, fuses, or breaker panels at the meter site.

Steele-Waseca recommends that you have your portion of the service done by a qualified licensed electrical contractor, unless you are qualified to perform this work. We have a Master Electrician employed at Steele-Waseca who can assist you with your complete electrical wiring needs. If you have any questions or would like to speak with our electrician, please phone our office.

Security yard lights

Light-emitting diode (LED) security yard lights are available for rent from Steele-Waseca. All rental lights are weatherproof fixtures with built-in photo-electric controls.

These LED lights have 41-watt bulbs.

Lights rented from Steele-Waseca can only be mounted on existing transformer or meter poles. Installation and maintenance of rental lights are done during normal business hours. Contact the Steele-Waseca office for more information.

If your power goes off, phone: 1-800-526-3514

Steele-Waseca does everything possible to keep your lights on, but sometimes Mother Nature has other ideas. It doesn't happen often, but there may be times when your electric service is interrupted.

If your power goes off, use the following steps to check your system before phoning Steele-Waseca:

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your home or whichever building is without power. If they're OK, check the fuses or circuit breakers on the meter pole or by the meter.
2. If the problem isn't with your electric service, phone your neighbors to see if they have

power. Knowing if it's a single or multiple outage can be helpful to our line technicians.

3. Look for possible causes such as a tree branch on wires, a broken pole, twisted wires, etc.

After you've verified your own equipment is OK, and you've checked with your neighbors, you should phone Steele-Waseca at 507-451-7340, for Owatonna area residents, or 800-526-3514, if long distance. Both numbers are answered 24 hours a day, every day of the year. If the lines are busy, there is most likely a high volume of outages, so please be patient when calling. When phoning, be ready to provide your account name and number, service location number and address, phone number, and what the problem is, if known. Any information you can provide could help shorten the length of time you are out of power.

Outages may also be reported at swce.coop, as that alerts co-op personnel. Please DO NOT use social media to report an outage, as that is NOT associated with the co-op's outage management software.



Standby generators

Investing in a standby generator is like paying for an insurance policy—you hope you'll never need it, but if you do, it's there. A safe, standby power system requires two elements:

1. A double throw transfer switch to isolate your electrical system from Steele-Waseca's system.
2. A power-driven generator or alternator to produce the proper amount of electricity you'll need.

Generators must be sized to the amount of items you want to run during an outage situation. You can size them to run your entire electrical system, only your house and well, or just a few electrical circuits in your house. After deciding what you'll need to run during an outage, use your electrician's help to determine how and what size double throw switch to install.

Proper installation of a double throw switch is critical and requires an inspection from a state wiring inspector. Improper installation of a standby generator can be deadly. The National Electric Code, as well as Steele-Waseca,

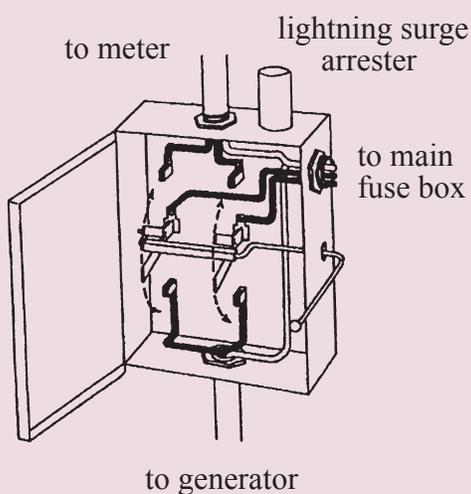
requires proper switch installation. A double throw switch will prevent your generator's electricity from flowing back to your transformer and, in turn, back into the power lines.

Without a double throw switch, the electricity your generator produces could feed back to the transformer, which would step up the 240 volts to 7,200 volts. This voltage could be deadly to a lineman who is assuming the line is off. A double throw switch will also protect your generator if you're still operating it when the power comes back on.

Even though there may not be any outages for several months, it's a wise idea to operate your double throw switch and generator several times a year to make sure they're both operating properly—before you need them.

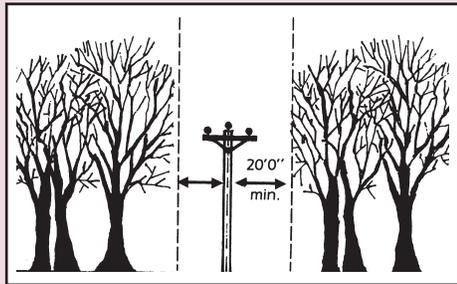
If you have any questions about purchasing or connecting a standby generator, please contact your electrician or phone the Steele-Waseca office.

Double Throw



Power line rights-of-way

To help maintain safe, reliable electric service, power line rights-of-way (see illustration) must be maintained on a regular basis. Many outages are caused by branches rubbing on power lines or by tree limbs falling across them. To reduce these outages, Steele-Waseca



uses a systematic tree trimming, spraying, and cutting program throughout its over 2,200 miles of power lines.

Planting trees or shrubs in a power line right-of-way can hinder maintenance and repair of the power line. SWCE encourages you to help keep rights-of-way clear by always looking up before planting trees.

Also, if you notice a tree problem at your location, please phone our office to report it before it causes an outage. Your cooperation

with this program results in reduced rights-of-way maintenance costs, fewer outages, and more reliable service.

Call before you dig. It's the law!



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

**GOPHER STATE
ONE CALL**



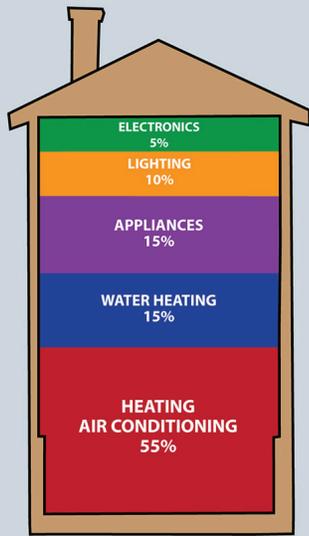
**1-800-252-1166
or 811**

According to Minnesota state law, anyone planning to dig more than 12 inches deep must notify Gopher State One Call (GSOC) at least two (2) working days before the scheduled digging.

For emergencies, GSOC is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; non-emergency calls should be made weekdays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. GSOC can also be notified online at: www.gopherstateonecall.org.

What determines your electrical usage?

Typical Minnesota Residential Energy Use



A number of different factors make up the total electrical usage for your home. Your family's size and lifestyle will affect the number of kilowatt hours you use each month. Here are a few factors to consider when determining what makes up your family's total usage.

Family size

The number of people living in a home, their ages, and the number of hours they spend at home relates

directly to the amount of energy used. Taking showers, washing and drying clothes, cooking meals, even how many times a day the refrigerator door is opened, will add to the number of kilowatts used daily. When guests visit, you can expect that usage to increase.

Seasonal fluctuations

Heating and cooling your home accounts for a major portion of your total home energy usage. Any month with extremely hot or cold temperatures will cause usage to fluctuate. Each home's type of heating and cooling systems, along with its temperature settings, will also cause differences in energy usage.

Appliances

While home appliances are huge labor savers, they're also significant energy users. Appliances and lighting account for about one-quarter of the total home energy use. The number of appliances and how much

energy they use can differ greatly from home to home. The good news is appliances and lighting are becoming more energy efficient every year.

Water heating

Water heating is often the second largest energy expense in a Minnesota home and may account for up to 33 percent of the household's annual energy costs. You can reduce hot water expenses by using a high-efficiency water heater. Phone our office to learn more about how you can participate in our energy-efficient Westinghouse® Water Heater Program.

Your home is unique

Different families, different equipment, and different lifestyles—it's easy to see how each home is unique and will have its own energy usage pattern. If you're interested in understanding "what uses watts" in your home, use the calculation guide on the following pages to estimate your monthly kWh usage.

Kill A Watt™

Steele-Waseca also has a "Kill a Watt™" electronic watts meter that you can rent with the payment of a refundable deposit to check the usage of your electric appliances. The meter has a display that shows the amount of electricity being consumed by whatever is plugged into it and the cost of that electricity.

How much does it use?

You can figure the usage of any home appliance if you know its wattage (or amps) and how long you use it. Here are the formulas:

Convert amps to watts: $\text{amps} \times 120 \text{ volts} = \text{watts}$

$\text{Watts} \times \text{hours used} = \text{watt hours}$

$\text{Watt hours} \div 1,000 = \text{kilowatt hours (kWh)}$

If you use a 100 watt lightbulb for 10 hours, you would use 1 kWh

Home Energy Use Calculation Guide

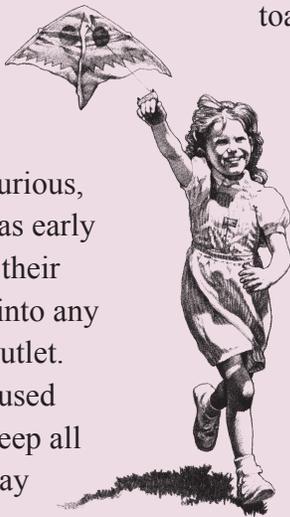
Appliance	Average Wattage	Monthly kWh	Your Monthly kWh Est
Air Conditioner (window)	825-1500	165-300	<input type="text"/>
Air Conditioner (central)	2500-3500 (varies)	2.5-3.5 kWh/hour of use	<input type="text"/>
Attic Fan	400	28	<input type="text"/>
Automatic Clothes Washer	512	8	<input type="text"/>
Audio Entertainment System	250	15	<input type="text"/>
Car Engine Heater	1000	1 kWh/hour of use	<input type="text"/>
Ceiling Fan	80	7-30	<input type="text"/>
Clock	3	2	<input type="text"/>
Clothes Dryer	3000	83	<input type="text"/>
Coffee Maker	1000	10	<input type="text"/>
Computer, Monitor & Printer	365	27	<input type="text"/>
Dehumidifier	280-450	81-690	<input type="text"/>
Dishwasher (washing)	250	9	<input type="text"/>
Dishwasher (drying)	1200	30	<input type="text"/>
Electric Blanket	175	32	<input type="text"/>
Electric Range (oven)	2000	45	<input type="text"/>
Fan, Furnace	800	100-500	<input type="text"/>
Fan, Window	125	13	<input type="text"/>
Freezer, chest/upright (15 cu. ft.)	360/413	29-56	<input type="text"/>
Freezer, frost-free (12-15 cu. ft.)	440	147	<input type="text"/>

Food Mixer or Blender	385	1	<input type="text"/>
Frying Pan	1200	12	<input type="text"/>
Garbage Disposal	420	25	<input type="text"/>
Hair Dryer (portable)	1500	7.5	<input type="text"/>
Heater, portable	1500	1.5 kWh/hour of use	<input type="text"/>
Home Lighting (varies widely)	9-100/bulb	1.1-12.4/bulb/hr of use	<input type="text"/>
Humidifier (Winter)	177	41	<input type="text"/>
Iron (hand)	1000	5	<input type="text"/>
Microwave oven	1100	17	<input type="text"/>
Pool Pump (1 hp)	746	66-540	<input type="text"/>
Radio	71	7	<input type="text"/>
Refrigerator/Freezer	250-470	38-91	<input type="text"/>
Spa/Hot Tub	varies	200-500	<input type="text"/>
Television (4 hrs/day)	150-200	15-38	<input type="text"/>
Water Heater (varies with family size)	4500	400	<input type="text"/>
Water Bed Heater	375	100-200	<input type="text"/>
Water Pump (varies with depth)	750-1000	7-108	<input type="text"/>
		Total kWh	<input type="text"/>
	kWh Cost	0.13024	
		Total Cost	<input type="text"/>

Electricity — handle with care

We at SWCE want you to be careful near electricity. Although this important product cannot be seen, smelled or heard, it can be felt. One touch can be deadly. Enjoy electricity's benefits, but please be careful.

- Children are naturally curious, so begin teaching them as early as possible to never put their fingers or other objects into any electrical appliance or outlet. Keep plug covers on unused outlets, and be sure to keep all electrical appliances away from children, bathtubs, and sinks.
- Electricity can travel down the strings of kites or balloons that touch power lines, and can cause shock or fire. Always use kites and balloons in open areas, away from overhead lines. Keep metallic balloons indoors, as they are highly conductive. Teach children that when a toy gets into power lines or a substation, they should tell an adult to call Steele-Waseca and should never attempt to retrieve it themselves.



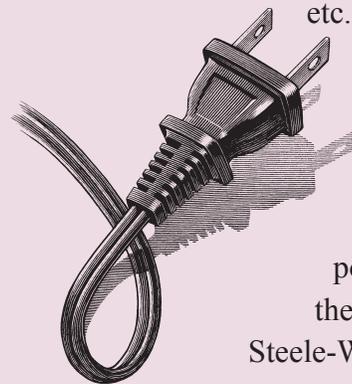
- If you have ever touched an illuminated lightbulb, you know how hot it can get—hot enough to cause burns and start fires. Electric heaters and toasters get much hotter.

So, keep anything that can burn away from lightbulbs, heaters, toasters, or any other appliance with a heating element.

- Electricity and water do not mix. Always unplug small electrical appliances after using them. Even when the switches say “off”, power is still present, and can electrocute you if they contact water.
- Don't overload outlets. If you must use an extension cord, match the amperage or wattage limits marked on the cord and appliance.
- Repair or replace worn and frayed electrical cords. Pull cords out of outlets by the plug head; never pull on the cord. Never carry an appliance by its cord, and don't run a cord under a rug or furniture.



- Please phone our office immediately if you observe any hazardous power line situations, such as downed lines, sagging or broken wires, trees or fallen branches entangled in power lines, unsecured electrical equipment (such as: transformers, substations, loose guy wires etc.), TV antennas entangled in power lines, and cracked, damaged, or leaning utility poles. Reporting these problems to Steele-Waseca will help prevent power outages.



Sales tax exemption

Farmers and corporations who qualify for exemption of Minnesota sales tax on electricity used in agricultural or industrial production should contact our office. By completing a Fuels and Energy Exemption Certificate and filing it with the

cooperative, only the non-exempt amount of sales tax will be calculated on your energy statement each month. More information can be obtained at the Minnesota Department of Revenue's website: www.revenue.state.mn.us.

Glossary

We hope you find this glossary useful in sorting out the sometimes complicated terminology of electricity.

All-requirements power contract – A contract primarily used by municipal electric and rural electric systems that describes a formal agreement entered into by a power supply system and its member distribution systems. In this contract the distribution systems agree to purchase all their wholesale power needs from the power supply system at rates prescribed in the agreement and adjusted periodically to meet the power supply system's costs of providing the power.

Cooperative electric utility – A system in which consumers of electricity own their own distribution system, which in turn owns the wholesale power supplier.

Cost of service – The total amount required to provide a member consumer with electric service, not including the cost of energy used.

Demand – The total amount of electricity being used by consumers varies from hour to hour, day to day, and season to season. This usage, which is expressed in kilowatts and is called the “demand” on the system. Seasonal demands are affected by the number of daylight hours, temperature extremes, and activities such as agricultural processes.

Distribution lines – The high-voltage lines, typically 7,200 volts, that deliver power from the substation to the service transformers.

Distribution system – An electric system with poles, wire and transformers used to deliver electric energy from a bulk power supplier to the consumers.

Dual Fuels – A heating system that combines two fuel sources—electricity as a primary and propane, oil or other fuel as a secondary source (or vice versa). This is accomplished by either adding an electric heating unit to a gas furnace or adding propane or oil appliances as a backup system to an electric appliance.

Grid – A system of high-voltage transmission and power generating facilities that is interconnected with a number of bulk power supply agencies on a regional basis. A grid enables power to be transmitted from areas having a surplus to areas experiencing a shortage.

Heat pump – A system supplying both space heating and cooling. The heat pump removes heat from the outside air and pumps it indoors. The heat pump can also function as an air conditioner, absorbing heat from indoors and releasing it to the outside.

Investor-owned utility (IOU) – Utilities that generate and distribute electrical energy for a profit. The IOUs are owned by stockholders who are not necessarily the users of the electric power they produce.

Kilowatt (kW) – The basic unit of electric demand, equal to 1,000 watts. The average household demand is 10 to 20 kilowatts.

Kilowatt-hour (kWh) – The basic measure of electric energy generation or use. One kilowatt-hour is the amount of electric energy required to operate a 100-watt bulb for 10 hours.

Load management – A program by which an electric system seeks to control its customers' use of electricity so as to reduce the system's total demand at a time of maximum usage.

Mill – One tenth of a cent; a common utility industry monetary measure.

Municipal Utility (muni) – Refers to a municipality that has its own electrical generating and distribution systems and/or purchases electricity at wholesale from another electrical supplier.

Ripple control – The remote control of switching devices which uses power lines as signal carriers. A coded audio frequency "ripple" is superimposed onto the power lines at one or more injection point(s). This signal is detected by receivers situated at the loads to be controlled. Generally used for load management purposes.

Single-phase power – An electric circuit that consists of one alternating current, typically used for household power.

Substation – An electrical facility containing equipment for controlling the flow of electricity from supplier to user.

Three-phase service – Generally has four wires from the power pole to the meter - three "hot" wires and a neutral wire. Even when a three-phase power line is available to a consumer, it does not necessarily mean that consumer has three-phase service. Single-phase service is often supplied from three-phase lines.

Three-phase power – An electric circuit that consists of three separate currents delivered at one-third cycle intervals by means of a three-wire circuit; typically used to power large industrial motors.

Transformer – A device used to raise or lower voltage in electric distribution or transmission lines. Transformers are used to increase voltage at the generating plant for transmission to the substation. The substation transformers reduce voltage to distribution level.

Moving? Don't forget to notify us!

It's important for you to contact us in advance with instructions to close your account. Please don't rely on a future owner or tenant to change the service name, because if the service continues in your name after you move, you're responsible for the power used.

You'll want to provide us with a forwarding address. Your deposit, if not previously refunded, will be applied to your final bill, and any remaining credit will be refunded to you. You'll also want to make sure we have your forwarding address so you can receive capital credit retirement checks as they're issued.

Electric Energy Consumer Bill of Rights

We, the consumer-owned, not-for-profit members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, endorse the following Electric Energy Consumer Bill of Rights. We believe it to be the standard against which electric utility restructuring proposals at the state and federal legislatures should be measured:

1. The right to have access to reliable, affordable and safe electric power.
2. The right to join together to establish and operate a consumer-owned, not-for-profit business.
3. The right of consumer-owned, not-for-profit systems to be treated fairly and to be recognized as a unique form of business.
4. The right to elect representatives to manage their consumer-owned form of business to best meet their needs.
5. The individual right to privacy that assures information about consumers will not be re-leased without their prior express consent.
6. The right to determine the scope of energy services to be furnished through their consumer owned, not-for-profit utilities.
7. The right to use consumer-owned, not-for-profit utilities to provide additional services that meet the needs of their consumers and communities.
8. The right to work in cooperation with other consumer-owned entities with common goals.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is the recipient of Rural Development funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.