

SPARKS

THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTIONS

APRIL/MAY 2026
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



OFFICIAL NOTICE of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 90th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 2, 2026
9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
2411 West Bridge Street,
Owatonna, MN

SWCE HIGHLIGHTS

Don't skip page 4—you might spot something with your name on it, along with helpful updates, savings, and a few surprises.

IMPORTANT NOTICE



Members who had their billing from the 12th of the previous month to the 12th of the current month will see their billing period change to the 1st of the month to the last day of the calendar month starting May 1, 2026. **FOR ALL MEMBERS:** SWCE bills will be due on the 1st starting in June 2026, unless you're on auto pay, which remains the same.

Steele-Waseca annual meeting details, voting with the mail-in ballot

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will be conducting their annual meeting Tuesday, June 2, at their headquarters in Owatonna.

The co-op's 90th annual meeting will be starting at 10:30 a.m., at 2411 West Bridge Street, Owatonna. The meeting is open to Steele-Waseca member-owners, and their guests. The doors will open at 9 a.m., with display and informational booths open until 10:15 a.m.

Parking will be available on the property surrounding the co-op's headquarters. TC Custom Carts of Owatonna will be supplying several golf carts to shuttle members and their guests from their vehicle to and from the meeting.

Registration cards for the annual meeting will be mailed to members during the week of May 18. There won't be any preregistration requirements. Please bring the registration card with you if you are planning to attend in person or using the drive-thru option. To be eligible to receive giveaways from Steele-Waseca at the annual meeting, the name on the registration card must match the person submitting it. You can't have someone else present your registration card. If you are unable to attend due to illness (if you are not feeling well, please stay home) or other priorities, you are not eligible to receive the giveaways as this is a thank you for those able to attend.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will be collecting non-perishable items for an area food shelf prior to the official start of the annual meeting. Members with a donation, whether monetary or a non-perishable item, will receive an LED lightbulb.

There will be two early bird drawings for prizes taking place prior to the start of the annual meeting. The business portion of the meeting will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m., with the Presentation of Colors.

There will be no in-person voting at the annual meeting. Members will receive their mail-in ballots the week of April 27. Survey & Ballot Systems (SBS)

is conducting the mail-in ballot process, including tabulation and auditing the election on behalf of Steele-Waseca.

Mail-in ballot materials will include:

- Ballot with voting instructions.
- Candidate biographies.
- Ballot envelope (the completed ballot must be inserted in the ballot envelope to be counted; only one ballot per envelope is allowed). 19676
- Postage-paid yellow return envelope (ballot envelope is inserted into the yellow return envelope) and mailed.

Important voting notes:

- Individual members, meaning residents, will not need to sign the yellow return envelope.
- Entity members, meaning businesses, corporations, clubs, organizations, trusts, estates, or identified farms [i.e. XYZ Farm(s)] must fill out the authorization section, including signature, on the yellow return envelope for the ballot to be counted.

Mail-in ballots must be received in SBS's post office box (printed on the yellow return envelope) by 10 a.m., Friday, May 29, to be counted. **DO NOT** bring your ballot to the Steele-Waseca office. Be sure to mail your postage-paid yellow return envelope early.

Election results will be announced at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting, as in past years, will have the same treats, gift drawings, and meal. If you have questions, please call the Steele-Waseca office during regular business hours.



#swceAPPRECIATION
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By SWCE General Manager
Syd Briggs

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is preparing for its 90th annual meeting Tuesday, June 2, at our headquarters in Owatonna.

It's a great opportunity for myself, the co-op's board of directors, and employees to chat with our member-owners about their membership and the annual meeting.

We hope you'll join us as we'll open the doors at 9 that morning at 2411 W. Bridge St., with designated parking on the grounds, and golf car shuttles to and from the meeting, which will start promptly at 10:30.

It's the third year for the mail-in ballot for electing directors. The mail-in ballot will be arriving the week of April 27, and they need to be received by Survey & Ballot Systems by 10 a.m., Friday, May 29, to be counted. There won't be any in-person voting at the annual meeting, but the results will be announced at the meeting. You may learn more about the candidates on Page 3 of this month's Sparks newsletter.

Prior to the start of the annual meeting, co-op employees will be registering members with the postcards being mailed the week of May 18. While members may bring a guest, only members will be eligible for prizes and giveaways. If you are a member who can't attend, you may not have someone else submit your postcard for prizes given to those members able to attend.

The co-op will continue our practice of collecting non-perishable items for an area food shelf. Donors will receive an LED lightbulb in appreciation for their generosity. 1094986

If you can't stay for the annual meeting, members may register that morning, prior to 10:30, in person or by utilizing the drive-thru option, and receive the giveaways for members. Non-perishables for a local food shelf will also be collected at the drive-thru location at Steele-Waseca.

The meeting will also share a few brief business updates and recognize our two Youth Tour delegates who will be representing Steele-Waseca during the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour, June 15-20.

Spending time with you and hearing your take on our energy future is important to us. Consumer needs and changing technology impact how we manage and deliver energy to local homes, schools, businesses and farms.

As we navigate through changes in the coming years, we need to hear from you and your neighbors to best plan to meet the long-term needs of all member-owners.

Our board of directors are comprised of nine members who live and work in our service area, so they are in the best position to know where community investments are most needed. Our board members come from all areas of our territory and care about our communities.

Every year, Steele-Waseca invest funds to make updates to our local system, which helps maintain reliability and grid resilience.

We're a co-op and our business model is meant to serve the members and the communities in which it operates.

Our core purpose and mission is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power. We hope you'll exercise the benefits of your co-op membership and join us for our 90th annual meeting. We're looking forward to seeing you!



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SPARKS

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: swce.coop
Email: info@swce.coop



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Board of Directors

- Rodney Krell,**
President District 5
- PJ Duchene,**
Vice President District 1
- Ron Sommers,**
Secretary/Treasurer. District 8
- Scott Carlson,**
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer District 9
- Tony Seykora.** District 2
- Neil Schlaak.** District 3
- Dennis Ringhofer.** District 4
- Weston Wilson.** District 6
- John Beal** District 7

Management

Syd Briggs, General Manager

Division Managers

- Steve Nordahl,**
Member Services & Business Development
- Jon Stelter,** Finance
- Dan Meier,** Operations

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MEMBER CONNECTION



The 2026 Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees for the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors. Committee members include: Matt LaCanne, Faribault; Daniel/Stacy Maas, Faribault; Casey/Natalie Roeker, New Richland; Bert Wiersma, Ellendale; Ralph/Leann Miller, Owatonna; Douglas Starks, Owatonna; Lonna Selkirk, Faribault, and Bruce Rumpza, Blooming Prairie. Steele-Waseca members will be receiving mail-in ballots the week of April 27. They need to be received in Survey & Ballot Systems post office box by 10 a.m., Friday, May 29, in order to be counted. Results of the mail-in ballot election of directors will be announced at Steele-Waseca's 90th annual meeting, Tuesday, June 2, at the co-op's headquarters, 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna. 1055316



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Daniel J. Maas District 7

Lives in rural Faribault with his wife of 39 years, Stacy. They have four children and nine grandchildren. Daniel owns his own business and has been in the carpentry and home building industry for 39 years. He's a lifelong member of Christ the King Church in Medford and has served on the church board for six years. Daniel has been a Knights of Columbus member for 39 years and held various officer positions including Grand Knight for two years and currently serves as co-chair director of the Medford Resurrection Cemetery. "My family and I have been on Steele Waseca co-op power for 38 years," wrote Daniel. "I have been interested in the member owned co-op business model how we produce and distribute needed power to the members. In my past I have taken time to visit Great River Energy power production sites in North Dakota." Adding, "We continue to see changes in power demand and methods of producing power. I would like to be part of the planning process to continue to provide affordable and reliable electricity to our members." As for what he would bring to the board if elected, "I feel that I can bring good listening skills, common sense and reasoning to the Board," wrote Daniel. He stated that owning his own business will allow him "to attend all meetings required both at and away from the board table." Daniel noted decisions for the future of Steele-Waseca should be made with information that is well researched, sensible, and good for the future of the co-op and its members. "I would appreciate your vote to be the next director for District 7," stated Daniel.



Ronald D. Sommers District 8

Incumbent, is secretary/treasurer of SWCE's board of directors. He and his wife, Ruth, live on the farm where he grew up in Northfield Township. They have a daughter and son, both married and each with two children. Ronald graduated from the University of Minnesota with bachelors and masters degrees in agriculture. His career included over 20 years as an agricultural educator in southern Minnesota, and nearly 20 years with Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., where he served as sales accounting manager for their Central Division and later sales coordinator for Minnesota. He has been honored as Rice County 4-H Alumnus of the Year, Rice County Soil Conservationist of the Year, and received the Honorary Minnesota and Honorary American FFA Degrees. In 2022, Ronald was inducted into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame. He believes in the cooperative business model and is familiar with the vital role cooperatives played in bringing modern electric power to rural areas. "Today our industry faces new challenges as we address changing technology, environmental concerns and increasing costs," wrote Ronald. "I would like to be part of planning our cooperative's future by continuing to serve on the SWCE board of directors."



Scott J. Carlson District 9

Incumbent, and his wife, Lisa, live in rural Faribault. They have two grown children, Grant and Grace. Scott holds a bachelor's degree in meteorology and currently serves as a weather observer, providing data to the Minnesota State Climate Office. He is a retired air traffic controller and has lived in District 9 for the past 26 years. Scott wrote he has enjoyed his first three years on the SWCE board, "and is honored to work alongside management and his fellow board members to help ensure a reliable safe energy system while maintaining the lowest possible rates for cooperative members."

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers and cyber criminals look for weak points to exploit before software companies can fix them. Update software programs on your computer, tablet and mobile phone as soon as possible when a newer version becomes available. Software updates often contain critical patches and protections against security threats. Turn on automatic updates to automatically update your security software, internet browser, operating system and mobile apps.

Source: consumer.ftc.org



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SCAN OR CLICK THE QR CODE TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD

Or visit our website at:
swce.coop/classifieds

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) will no longer be publishing classified ads in the Sparks newsletter. Please place your ads on SWCE's website, www.swce.coop/classifieds.

Once approved, the ad will remain on the website for 45 days, unless you contact SWCE to have the ad removed earlier. This month's classified ads are inserted with your statement. 1001947

Annual Cogeneration Notification to Membership

In compliance with Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's (SWCE's) adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, SWCE is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. SWCE is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the SWCE Board. Interested members should contact SWCE, 2411 W. Bridge St., P.O. Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060-0485, or call 507.451.7340.

COOKIN' CONNECTION

Grandma's Applesauce Muffins



Marti Cox
New Richland

Plan your next meal with member recipes or submit your recipe at swce.coop/recipes

SWCE SPARKS IN BRIEF...

- Need a new water heater? For information about our controlled Electric Water Heater Program, contact us between 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., or at rebates@swce.coop.
- For average temperatures per day, check your SmartHub app.
- ENERGY STAR® Rebates – For a complete list of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural rebates, and their respective rebate form, visit swce.coop/rebates.

**TO REPORT A TREE CONCERN
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**STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE
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Was your account number in Sparks?

Look for your account number each month in the Sparks newsletter to win a bill credit! When you find your number, contact our office no later than the 1st day of the month following receipt of the Sparks or the amount will be forfeited. Learn more by going to swce.coop/sparks



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HEALTH & SAFETY CONNECTION

SWCE linemen are trying out a new visual safety system. It's called pi-lit Sequential safety flares. These flares will replace the safety triangle and can be used under the safety cones, on top of the safety cones, on the ground by themselves and can even be used on the trucks. We are currently testing a 6 pack and a 10 pack to see how well they fit into our company's needs.

There is also a grant that is available through the Department of Labor and has a qualifying match up to \$10,000 that SWCE will be pursuing.



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FLARES IN ACTION**

 **#swceINNOVATION**

