

SPARKS

THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTIONS

JUNE 2026

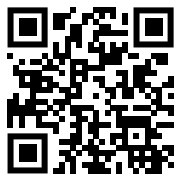
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



Annual Report

The 2025 SWCE Annual Report; including, GRE Report, Annual Meeting Minutes and Financial Report can be viewed through the QR code



Click or Visit:

<https://swce.coop/annual-reports>

Why the Medford substation matters

The new substation in Medford is really about one thing - Making sure the community has the power capacity it needs today and into the future.

Improved reliability for Medford. Right now, power is being delivered from farther away. This substation brings that source closer.

Supporting local growth. Whether it's new homes, expanding farms, or local businesses, this substation provides the capacity needed for Medford to grow without being limited by infrastructure.

Stronger for local businesses and agriculture. Reliable power is critical for grain operations, shops, and small industry. This project helps ensure those operations have the capacity to grow.

Investing in Medford's future. This isn't just about today's needs - It's about making sure Medford is in a position to attract new opportunities and remain a strong, viable community for years to come. This substation is more than infrastructure-it's an investment in Medford's reliability, it's growth, and its future.

Planned timeline for Medford substation: April/May - Feeders inside the sub, conduit, ground grid & Shack; May/June - Finish with conduit ground grid and fence; July - Steel, feeders outside the sub, final grade, and T-Line; September - Energize substation. 1017747

Pictured above in the newsletter banner photo: SWCE Line Superintendent Matt Rohman spoke at the Exchange Club of Medford meeting, May 7, at the Whistle Stop Diner. He addressed the need and benefits of having the new substation in Medford. The new substation is scheduled to be constructed and energized in September 2026.



Follow the substation build as it progresses at swce.coop

Click or Scan the QR code now!

SWCE HIGHLIGHTS

We wish General Manager Syd Briggs well in his retirement and welcome the new shared general manager for SWCE and Goodhue County Cooperative Electric, Kelly Hovel.

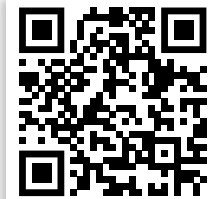
IMPORTANT NOTICE



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.

Annual Meeting Updates

Details regarding the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 90th Annual Meeting may be found at swce.coop or by clicking on the QR code.





This will be my last general manager column as I am retiring on June 30th of this year.

It has been a wonderful 17 1/2 years serving you. I appreciate so many people in my tenure here and in my life; and especially the board of directors in 2009 that gave me a chance to work for and have made excellent decisions over the past 90 years, and there have been equally great directors and employees in the last 17 years.

We have worked together to control costs, increase sales or load, have had very few rate increases, and expanded member opportunities with rebates and renewable programs.

We have been recognized nationally for our community solar program in addition to our work with members joining our lobbying efforts. One of my favorite programs will always be the town hall meetings we did for most of the years ...I was here (see photo above). Being able to discuss particulars of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, industry trends, transmission issues, and hearing what was on your mind was priceless.

Another favorite accomplishment was developing the Power Perks coupon for all our members that attend the annual meeting and helping direct members to businesses owned by our members.

In addition, it was a proud moment when we were able to vote by mail, which greatly increased the number of members involved in electing directors. Doing this for the first time was no small feat, and we had several employees dedicated to researching and testing this.

I even had time to learn ice fishing, and I did work in a few Vikings, Twins, Timberwolves, and Wild games; and then I had the privilege of tasting lutefisk for the first time. An employee decided I needed that experience, and believe it or not, I became a fan. It needed a lot of butter, salt, and pepper, but I began to look forward to lutefisk suppers at the end of each year. 16144

I especially appreciate the board, employees, and members who were cooperative, considerate, and understanding during 2020 and 2021—the COVID years. We dealt with over 100 executive orders from the state along with an initial lack of information, just like everyone across the world. We slowly learned about the disease and how to keep everyone as safe as possible. We have several employees and consultants we relied heavily on to keep us informed, and everyone’s patience was the key to getting through that difficult period.

I am going to miss dealing with new issues and opportunities that there will be in the immediate future; however, I have full confidence in your leadership and employees already here and dedicated to taking care of you.

You may have read in my last column about the board of directors considering a consolidation with our neighboring friends at Goodhue County Cooperative Electric Association. While that is being considered for the next year or so, the two boards have agreed to share the general manager from Goodhue, Mr. Kelly Hovel. Sharing the services of a general manager is a very common practice that is usually done temporarily. There are quite a few examples that have and are occurring across our state. I am very familiar with both boards and with Kelly and have full confidence in the plan.

As always, if anyone has any questions or thoughts you would like to share with me, I will remain available until June 30. Please email or call as so many of you have in the past. I plan on staying in Owatonna and look forward to seeing many of you for years to come. 1120474



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SPARKS

Published monthly by
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SAFETY MESSAGE...

SWCE line workers have begun using grounding flags on junction boxes, switches and transformers for underground lines to serve as **critical high-visibility warnings**. Their primary use is to prevent catastrophic accidents by acting as a “clear reminder” to line crews that the electric



line is physically connected to the earth and must not be re-energized. 1056113

The flags are 16X16 inches and are a bright orange to ensure they are seen from the ground or a bucket truck. They are a visual reminder for line workers to not “energize” (restore power to) a line while ground sets are still attached. Re-energizing a grounded line causes an immediate short circuit, which can blow fuses, trip breakers, or cause explosive equipment failure. Large flags help crews keep track of exactly how many ground sets are in place across a job site, reducing the risk of missing a grounded electric line before energizing.



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Great River Energy charts 15-year path for reliable, affordable power

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

Great River Energy submitted its integrated resource plan (IRP), April 1, to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, outlining a long-term strategy to reliably and affordably serve its 26 member-owner cooperatives (which includes Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric) while adapting to a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

The IRP is a foundational planning document that evaluates how GRE will meet electricity needs over the next 15 years. It reflects extensive analysis of forecasted energy demand, system reliability requirements, fuel and technology costs, policy considerations, and emerging market trends. Together, these inputs help guide investment decisions that support affordable power for member-consumers while maintaining a resilient electric system.

“At its core, this IRP is about balancing reliability, affordability and flexibility in the face of uncertainty,” said Kyle Leier, manager of resource strategy and development at Great River Energy. “We looked closely at a wide range of future scenarios to identify strategies that perform well under many different conditions, so we can continue to serve our members reliably and cost-effectively.”

The plan continues the cooperative’s commitment to a diverse resource mix that

includes renewable energy, dispatchable generation and energy storage, while recognizing the critical role of transmission and operational flexibility. Rigorous modeling evaluated a broad range of potential futures, including varying load growth, resource costs, market conditions and policy drivers, allowing GRE to understand tradeoffs and risks over the planning horizon.

Stakeholder engagement was a key component of the IRP process. The IRP team gathered input from Great River Energy’s member-owner cooperatives and held public meetings to provide transparency into planning assumptions, modeling approaches and preliminary results. Feedback received throughout the process helped inform refinements to the plan ahead of submittal.

Now the IRP will undergo regulatory review, including opportunities for public comment and additional stakeholder engagement. While the IRP does not authorize specific projects, it serves as a roadmap to help guide future resource decisions as conditions evolve.

GRE is working closely with member-owner cooperatives as the IRP moves through the review process and key assumptions are continually evaluated to ensure they remain accurate.




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Please mail, email, drop-off your recipe for the SPARKS newsletter. Make sure it includes your name and SWCE account number. The member whose recipe is published will receive a **\$7 energy credit.**



FREE 115-gallon Stainless Steel Water Heater



How does FREE sound? SWCE has 115-gallon HTP electric water heaters that are FREE for members if they sign up for our control program during off-peak hours through a cell device, called an Aquanta (we provide this device with the water heater). Not only is the water heater free on this program, but you'll also receive a \$10/mo bill credit.

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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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Building a stronger regional grid

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)



An evolving industry landscape is reshaping how electricity is made, moved and used, which means the power grid used to deliver that electricity needs to change, too.

To help maintain a reliable local and regional power grid, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale power provider Great River Energy is making strategic transmission investments to move power efficiently, from where it is generated to where it is needed, and to support the delivery of dependable energy every hour of every day.

The latest major regional project for GRE is PowerOn Midwest, which is a series

of new electric transmission projects anchored by a 765-kV backbone transmission line being developed by Great River Energy, ITC Midwest, Otter Tail Power Company and Xcel Energy.



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SWCE SPARKS IN BRIEF...

- Need a yard security light? For information, contact us between 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., or at info@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.

SCAM ALERTS

There are many products available for purchase on the internet that claim to reduce your electrical usage. Before you purchase anything, please be sure to research the claims of the energy saving product. The most common so-called energy saving device would address the power factor in your home. SWCE's single phase rate only bills member for the kilowatt hours used or the real power. Power factor correction devices improved the reactive component of power, (VARs), which does next to nothing to change the amount of energy you are billed on each month. 25360

VIEW ALL SWCE REBATES

(RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL OR FARM)



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