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JULY 2026

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



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SWCE HIGHLIGHTS

Meet the new General Manager. Kelly Hovel began July 1 and is the shared GM along with Goodhue County Co-op...see details inside

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEMBERS: Bills will be due on the 1st starting in June 2026, unless you're on auto pay, which remains the same. 23244

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric scholarships awarded to 18 high school graduates in 2026

SWCE awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 18 high school seniors who graduated this past school year. Follow the QR code link for full details or go to:



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swce.coop/news/2026-scholarship-recipients



Noah Dunlap



Langston Richter



Madelyn Harvey



Fisher Kruckeberg



Malori Prior



Brady Staub



Carly Bronson



Caleb Quast



Lucas Proehl



Reid Wildgrube



Jordan Meyer



Hannah Heusinkveld



Molly Johnson



Kalea Lipins



Keagon Springborg



Claire Berndt



Breanna Erickson



Thomas Hackett





By SWCE General Manager **Kelly Hovel**

Bob Dylan once sang, "...the times they are a changin'". There are plenty of changes happening in the utility world and Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is no exception. This will be the first time in 17 1/2 years that this message has a new voice.

As you read last month, the boards of Steele-Waseca and Goodhue County Cooperative Electric Association (GCCEA) made the decision to share a general manager. Beginning on July 1, I began filling that shared role.

I need to take a quick moment to thank the old voice, Syd, for his friendship over the past nine years and even more for his recent efforts to help make this transition as smooth as possible for me and for the employees, directors, and members of Steele-Waseca. As you read in last month's SPARKS, Syd had a number of accomplishments over his tenure, and he certainly set the standard for excellence in managing an electric cooperative.

I've spent nearly 18 years serving the members of GCCEA in various roles, including as general manager for the past nine. I've managed some complex projects including updating the metering system, implementing all new software across every department in the cooperative, introduced new member-facing platforms and communication channels, and managed through a period where we lost decades of experience to retirement.

Through all those experiences I've learned one important lesson and it's that with great people comes great success. If someone had told me 10 years ago that I'd be managing two electric cooperatives and working with two boards in an effort to consolidate those cooperatives, I'd have thought they'd lost their mind. But here we are and I'm confident we can do this together. The employees of both cooperatives are some of the best. The pride they take in their work is second to none in my

experience. It's because of them and the vision and member-first mentality of both boards that I know this effort can be a huge success and I'm excited and honored to be a part of it.

Along with a change in general manager and our consolidation efforts, we've also seen a recent change in our member service department manager and just this past month we've hired a new operations division manager.

Again, this is where great people shine. This much change in such a short time could overwhelm some, but the membership of Steele-Waseca is blessed with employees that step up, fill voids, and do whatever it takes to meet the needs of the membership.

Change always comes with some nervous excitement. It's new and different, but it opens the door for opportunity. For me it's an opportunity to meet a lot of new members and hear about the cooperative from their perspective. It is a chance to continue and improve upon all the great things this co-op already does. I thank all of you who took the time to introduce yourself and share a story or two with me at the annual meeting last month. I'm looking forward to the town hall meetings this fall where I will have the chance to connect with even more of you and talk about everything that's happening here at the cooperative. There never seems to be a shortage of new things to talk about! 18593

In closing I want to assure you one thing that will not change is the commitment of this co-op to remain in service to its membership. That means always striving to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in a responsible manner.



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Kelly Hovel, General Manager

Division Managers

- Steve Nordahl,**
Member Services & Business Development
- Jon Stelter,** Finance
- Bret Wobschall,** Operations

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underground cable locations

MISO capacity auction finds enough resources to meet demand

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

The regional grid operator, MISO (Mid-continent Independent System Operator - see adjacent map), released results from its Planning Resource Auction for the upcoming Planning Year 2026-27.

The results show MISO has enough generating capacity to meet reliability and reserve requirements in all four seasons, even as electricity demand grows.

This is the second year MISO has used a Reliability-Based Demand Curve auction model, which is intended to better reflect capacity value when the system is getting close to minimum reliability levels. More capacity was offered in this year's auction, about 4% more across the seasons than last year. Overall, the auction cleared above MISO's reserve margin targets in all seasons, which points to stronger reliability throughout the year.

For Great River Energy (GRE), these results were financially positive and support its long-term resource plan. 113125

Most of the auction value came from the summer season, when capacity prices have remained highest because the system demand is greatest. Fall and winter added some value, and spring prices were very low, which is typical.

"These results show the payoff of long-term planning and investment in our generation fleet," said Greg Padden, director of power supply and markets at Great River Energy. "By maintaining a reliable resource mix and registering demand response programs, Great River Energy and its member-owners are supporting regional reliability and returning financial value for our membership."

MISO said new generation added in 2025 and other supply growth helped keep up with rising demand. MISO also warned that continued coordination and new resources will be needed as electrification, data centers and industrial growth add more load to the system.



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At the Capitol: Working to keep your power affordable and reliable

Courtesy: Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

There's plenty for cooperative member-owners to know about following the 2026 Minnesota legislative session affecting the energy that powers your home, farm or business.

It was a session shaped by divided government. With a tied House, a one-seat Senate majority and an election looming in November, every bill needed bipartisan agreement to move. Much of the Legislature's attention went to a supplemental budget, funding for Hennepin County Medical Center, tax conformity and a capital investment package, leaving less room for major policy changes elsewhere.

Even so, Minnesota's electric cooperatives made important progress on the issues that matter most to member-owners. The session delivered a meaningful step forward on nuclear energy and stopped several costly proposals before they could become law.

A step forward on nuclear energy

After three decades of standing still, Minnesota took its first real step forward on nuclear energy.

Lawmakers approved a state nuclear energy study, the most significant movement on the issue since Minnesota's nuclear moratorium was put in place in 1994. The moratorium itself remains on the books, but the study reflects a growing recognition at the Capitol that nuclear power deserves a serious look as the state works toward its carbon-free electricity goals.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives, working through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, helped lead this effort as a founding member of the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance. The Alliance brings together more than 60 organizations spanning utilities, labor, agriculture, business and environmental groups, and its broad reach helped move nuclear into the mainstream of Minnesota's energy conversation.

The study itself will examine the costs, benefits and trade-offs of nuclear energy in Minnesota, including its potential role in supporting affordability, reliability and emissions reductions. Its findings will give lawmakers a stronger founda-

tion for deciding whether to lift the moratorium next year.

Continue with the weblink to read more about costly mandates and looking ahead to 2027 with what changes the November election may bring.



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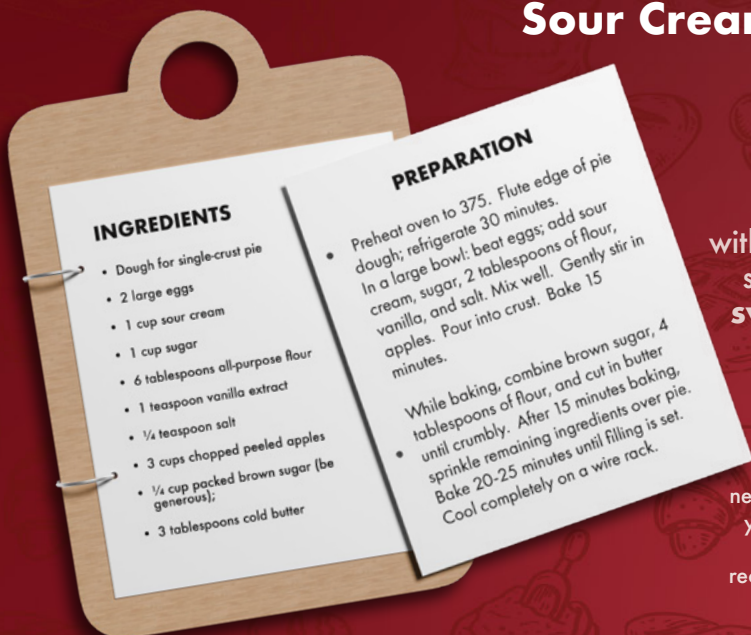
COOKIN' CONNECTION

Sour Cream Apple Pie

Syd Briggs

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

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.**



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. 1092608
- ENERGY STAR® Rebates – For a complete list of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural rebates, and their respective rebate form, visit swce.coop/rebates.

VIEW WHO OWNS WHAT: CO-OP AND MEMBER-OWNED EQUIPMENT

Learn more about Who Own What for electric equipment, the member or SWCE. If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, SWCE is responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.

Own Your Power-Controlled Thermostat Program

The Own Your Power program is a control program for qualifying smart thermostats. Members can sign up for SWCE to control the AC during peak hours for three months in the summer. We pre-cool your home before entering the control period. We also offer sign-up incentives, as well as annual incentives.

Click or scan the QR code to View the qualifying smart thermostats



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STRAY VOLTAGE QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns regarding the stray voltage call Steele-Waseca at: **507-451-7340**
SWCE will work with you and your electrician to eliminate potential stray voltage problems. You may also visit:



Heat Exhaustion

ACT FAST

- Move to a cooler area
- Loosen clothing
- Sip cool water
- Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve

Dizziness
Thirst
Heavy Sweating
Nausea
Weakness



Heat Stroke

ACT FAST

CALL 911

- Move person to a cooler area
- Loosen clothing and remove extra layers
- Cool with water or ice

Confusion
Dizziness
Becomes Unconscious

The Heat is On

SWCE's crew is reviewing ways to prevent heat disorders and what the symptoms are for dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. 1028300



Click or scan the QR code to learn more!



Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!

