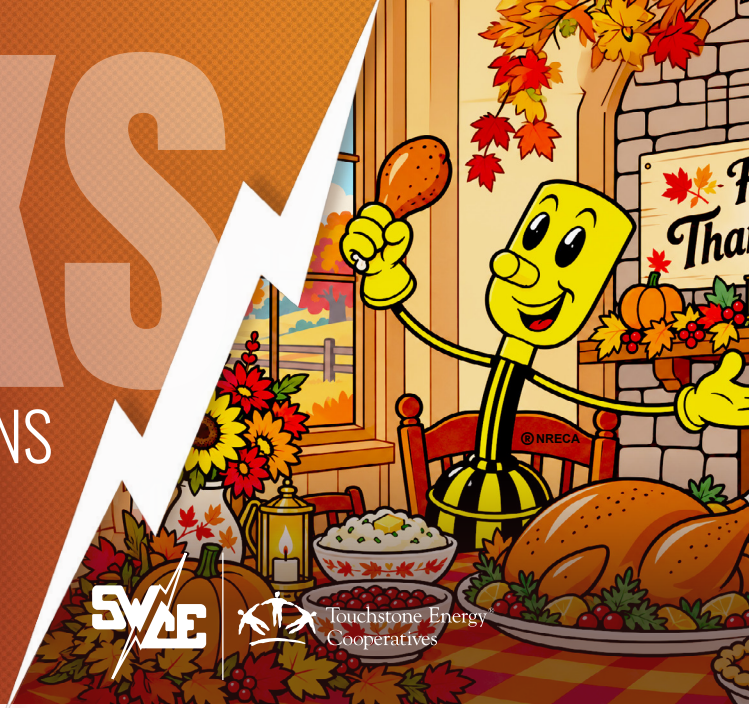
SPARKS

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NOVEMBER 2026

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



SWCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Nominating Committee: Members Needed
- New Hire Adam Solum: Apprentice Line Technician
- General Manager: Town Hall Recap

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Youth Tour 2027
June 17 – 22

Apply at: swce.coop/youth-tour



Powering Your Harvest: Grain Drying Use and Costs

When the combines start rolling and grain begins moving from field to bin, electricity use across our countryside can climb quickly. Fans, augers, conveyors and heaters often run for long hours—and many farms may be using them at the same time. Your cooperative plans carefully for this important season so reliable power is there when you need it. We also know that crop moisture, weather and the pace of harvest can make a big difference in what it costs to dry and store your grain.

Why Drying Uses More Energy

Drying grain means moving large volumes of air through the crop and, in many systems, adding heat. The wetter your grain is, the more energy it takes to reach a safe storage moisture level. A cool, damp fall can mean longer drying times and more fuel, while warm, dry weather may let the crop do some of that work in the field. Electricity runs the motors that keep air and grain moving, while propane or natural gas often supplies the heat. Fuel may be the larger part of the drying bill, but the electricity used by fans and motors is still an important part of your total cost. 16518

What Goes Into Your Electric Bill

Two things shape your grain-drying electricity cost: how much energy the equipment uses and when it uses that energy. Kilowatt-hours measure the electricity used over time. Demand, measured in kilowatts, reflects your highest rate of use during a billing interval. If several large motors start or run together, they can create a higher peak than if they are started one at a time. Your bill may include both energy and demand charges. Because rates and farm setups vary, please give us a call when you are considering equipment changes or a new drying system. We can review the rate with you and help estimate operating costs.

Harvest peaks matter to the cooperative, too. Our system must have enough capacity to serve homes, farms and local businesses safely during the busiest hours. The cooperative may also pay more for wholesale power when overall demand is highest. Because those costs are shared through cooperative rates, avoiding unnecessary peaks can benefit all member-owners. Still, we understand that harvest revolves around crop and weather conditions. Shifting drying to another time is not always practical, and our team is here to help you consider options that fit your operation.

Simple Ways to Manage Use

A good place to start is with what you already know best: your crop and your equipment. When field conditions allow, harvesting at the right moisture level can reduce the number of moisture points you need to remove. Preventative Maintenance can help reduce operating costs.

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General Manager Kelly Hovel

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric hosted four town hall meetings in September, and I want to start with a simple thank you.

You came out in great numbers: nearly 560 members and guests joined us for a strong turnout throughout the series. Every night, the room was full of good questions and conversation, the kind of engagement that makes a cooperative work.

One of the best parts of these evenings for me was the chance to meet so many of you in person. Before and after each presentation, I got to shake hands, hear your stories and answer your questions one-on-one, which left me with a better understanding of what matters most to you. So, what did we talk about?

Consolidation with Goodhue

After introducing some new faces in key roles, including Operations Division Manager Bret Wobschall and Line Superintendent Kevin Kjersten, we turned to the topic that drew the most questions: our proposed consolidation with Goodhue County Cooperative Electric Association. 66677

Cost pressures are rising across the electric industry, and combining two strong, neighboring cooperatives offers real benefits: efficiency, financial stability, better reliability, more robust emergency response, improved member service, operational resilience, and greater bargaining power. But members wondered about how capital credits and votes might be impacted, and what types of loads does Goodhue serve, or even what tree service will we be using in the future?

Your cooperative will remain member-owned, not-for-profit, and focused on community. Your elected board remains, our local offices and employees remain, capital credits will not be reduced or lost – they have been allocated to you and cannot be taken away. Your vote would become one of 17,000 versus one of 12,000. Your capital credits moving forward would be divided among more members, but the allocation would continue to be based on your contribution to the margin. There are more members to share, but there are also more margins.

As for loads, when we look at the Steele-Waseca load make-up today, we have a significant portion of kWh sales that come from commercial loads. Goodhue has well over 90% of their load going to residential services. When combined, this becomes almost a 50/50 split between commercial and residential. Is that good? Typically, yes! Residential loads are steady and don't carry as much risk as a commercial load does. We want all our local businesses and commercial loads to be successful, but in reality, there is always a risk that they could leave. Being more balanced helps alleviate some of that risk.

The Regional Grid, MISO, and Transmission

Midcontinent Independent System Operator, or MISO—think of them as the air traffic controller of the grid across 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. It doesn't own the power plants or the lines, but it manages the flow of high-voltage electricity from where it is produced to where it is needed, 24 hours a day.

MISO also plans for the future through long-range transmission planning, including new lines proposed in southern Minnesota. After learning a bit about MISO, members had questions about generation sources, renewables, and nuclear power. How much of our electricity comes from renewables? We purchase all of our energy from Great River Energy (GRE) and from our members with solar or wind. GRE is currently sourcing 26% of its energy from wind but also purchases 35% of its power from the energy market which has a significant contribution from wind and solar. As for nuclear, we currently have a moratorium here in Minnesota, but it is being studied for future use as demand rises and the need for baseload, always on generation, rises across the region.

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SWCE SPARKS

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Nominating Committee responsible for finding director candidates

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors have approved appointments to the 2027 Nominating Committee.

It is the nominating committee's responsibility to prepare the list of director candidates and post it at the cooperative's office at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting scheduled Tuesday, June 8, 2027. 1067370

All Steele-Waseca members are eligible to serve as board directors. The governance role of directors can be summarized as being responsible for setting the overall policy and monitoring the business affairs of the cooperative.

If you are interested in becoming a director, you may call Executive Assistant Jenifer Shimpach at Steele-Waseca, and a director's nomination form will be sent to you.

Or, if you know another member who would make a good director, and you want him or her to be considered, please contact the nominating committee member (listed below) nearest you. However, before you make the request, be certain the person will accept the position if nominated.

The Nominating Committee is conducting two in-person meetings. The first was Nov. 19; the second meeting is scheduled Jan. 14, 2027. The committee would appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping them select director candidates.

All Steele-Waseca members are eligible to vote each year for all expiring board director positions.

The districts with directors up for election in 2027 include the following:

- District 1: Kilkenny Township in Le Sueur County; and Shieldsville, Morristown, Warsaw Townships, and the Southwest Quarter (SW 1/4) of Wells Township in Rice County. (Represented by PJ Duchene)
- District 3: New Richland Township in Waseca County; and Berlin and Summit Townships in Steele County. (Represented by Neil Schlaak)
- District 5: Newry and Geneva Townships in Freeborn County; and Blooming Prairie Township in Steele County; and Westfield, Ripley, Ashland, Hayfield, Claremont, Wasioja, Ellington, and Concord Townships in Dodge County; and Kenyon Township in Goodhue County; and Richland Township in Rice County. (Represented by Rodney Krell)

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Meet Adam Solum: Bringing Experience and Curiosity to Service



When Adam Solum joined SWCE as an apprentice line technician, he brought several years of line work experience, a strong troubleshooting mindset and an appreciation for the variety that comes with serving members. He also brought something especially meaningful: the opportunity to return closer to home after more than five years away.

Adam grew up in Austin, Minnesota, and his route to the electric utility industry was anything but automatic. Before becoming a lineworker, he worked at Hormel. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the demanding schedule prompted him to consider a different future. A conversation with a family friend who worked as a lineman gave him a practical starting point: earn a commercial driver's license and look into line school.

Adam followed that advice. He enrolled in the two-year lineworker program in Wadena, MN. While waiting for the program to begin, he worked on his stepfamily's dairy farm, milking cows and helping with feeding and bedding. That experience gave him firsthand familiarity with agricultural life that many cooperative members know well.

During a summer break from line school, Adam also worked for Austin Public Utilities. After graduation, he joined Cass County Electric Cooperative.



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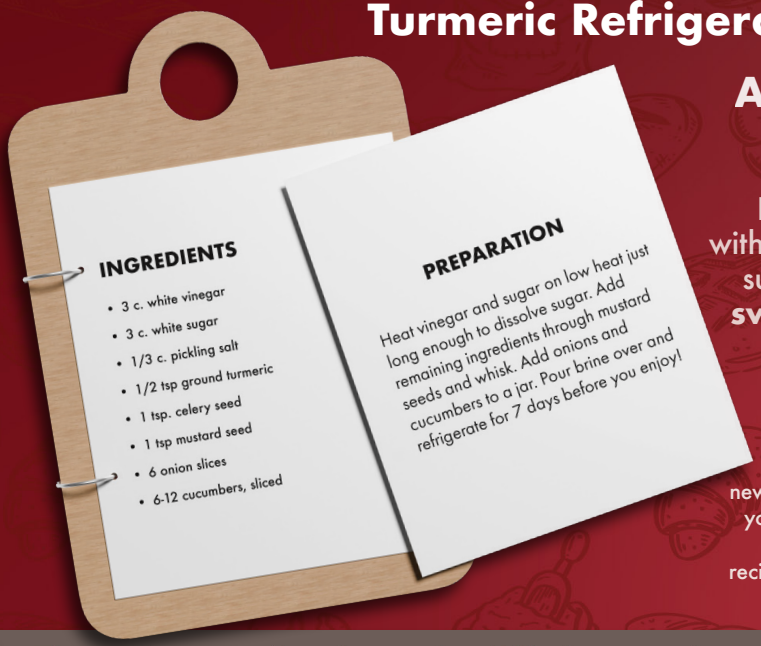
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Alison Kollos
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Plan your next meal with member recipes or submit your recipe at **swce.coop/recipes**

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.
- ENERGY STAR® Rebates – For a complete list of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural rebates, and their respective rebate form, visit swce.coop/rebates. 1102330

OFFICE HOURS:
M-Th: 8 AM – 4:30 PM
Friday: 8 AM – 3:30 PM

Boost comfort and efficiency in every season with a heat pump tune-up



For the remainder of 2026, receive a rebate of $125 on a qualifying air source heat pump tune-up and help your system perform at its best when you need it most. A tune-up ensures efficient **heating and cooling**, improves year-round comfort, and helps catch small issues before they become costly repairs.

Don't wait for extreme weather to find out your heat pump needs attention.

Schedule your tune-up today and enjoy reliable comfort all season long.

ENERGY WISE MN

This offer is available for a limited time. Please contact SWCE for more details.

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SWCE Linemen Complete Vital Fall Protection Training

SWCE linemen recently completed critical Fall Protection training with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA). This specialized program ensures that utility crews remain fully compliant with OSHA and ANSI safety requirements. The training focused on strict safety protocols required whenever lineworkers operate at heights of 6 feet or more above the ground. 1098713

The Crucial Height Triggers

Safety regulations specify exactly when fall protection must be used. The guidelines depend directly on the work environment:

- Construction Environments: Fall protection is mandatory at 6 feet or higher.
- General Industry: Rules tighten, requiring protection starting at 4 feet.

Scan or click the code to learn more!

