

member connection

Energy saving water kits available at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



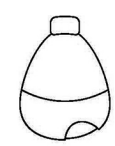
more
than just
water

is slipping through your fingers

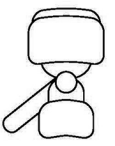
Your home wastes more water than you might realize and that's costing you money. The energy it takes to heat that water is literally washed down the drain, but there is something you can do to take control of your water usage and energy costs.

FOR JUST
\$5

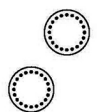
Get your Energy Saving Water Kit from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric while supplies last.



Earth™ Massage Showerhead (1.5 GPM)
Your new showerhead saves 40 percent more water and energy than a standard showerhead without sacrificing performance, and actually enhances water pressure.



Kitchen Swivel Aerator (1.5 GPM)
This aerator saves 30 percent more energy and water than a standard aerator. It attaches to your current faucet and allows a wide-spray radius and swivel. The unique "pause" action halts flow, yet keeps a consistent temperature.



Two Bathroom Faucet Aerators (1.0 GPM)
The two bathroom faucet aerators maintain great water pressure while saving 55 percent more water and energy than standard aerators. A high-pressure needle spray makes cleaning a breeze.



Hot Water Temperature Card
This credit card-sized device measures the temperature of hot tap water to see if your current water temperature is in an efficient range. Lowering your water temperature just 10 degrees can save you three to five percent in energy costs.



Plumber's Tape
The tape creates a tight seal between connections when installing showerheads and aerators. It helps prevent damage and wasteful leaking.

Each water kit contains the items listed above. For those with electric water heaters, a kit represents a yearly savings of 1,013 kWh. The water kits have a retail value of \$40, however co-op members may purchase a kit for \$5. The \$5 purchase price is limited to one per member household. However, the cost for additional kits are \$25, which is still a \$15 savings from the retail cost of the kit. The kits, while supplies last, may only be purchased at Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

(Products to avoid continued from Page 5)

dramatically reduces the promised savings. Here's my solution: I set my dehumidifier to 60 percent and run a hose to my floor drain. This resolves the water emptying hassle and really reduces the power use while keeping my basement acceptably dry.

I will close with a **non-technology warning**. Scammers love to call or

stop by claiming they represent the local power company. Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be a Steele-Waseca employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number from the caller, then check with Steele-Waseca. Ask the door-to-door person for a valid Steele-Waseca ID. If they really are a co-op

employee, they'll be able to prove it.

Most of us want to save energy and keep our bills manageable. Technology can help do this, but be careful. Call Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric at 507-451-7340 or toll-free at 800-526-3514 before making any investments in technology that seem too good to be true. You'll be glad you did.

(Internet usage continued from Page 7)

on the Internet rely on those or similar messaging apps. And 10 percent of Internet-savvy rural Americans use discussion forums like reddit.

The annual study might overstate the case for social media in rural America, since it only studied adults who are online. Rural Americans typically participate on the Internet in lesser numbers than urban or suburban adults.

Pew surveyed 1,907 adults in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Would you like to sing our national anthem?

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members or their dependents are eligible to audition for the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Auditions need to be completed by Friday, April 29, 2016. The person selected will sing the national anthem "live" at Steele-Waseca's 80th annual meeting on Tuesday, June 7, at the co-op's headquarters in Owatonna. To schedule an audition, please call Debbie Eby at Steele-Waseca. The person selected will receive \$100 following their performance of the national anthem. 49714





the power of human connections

SWCE sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric April 2016

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- 11 National Lineman Appreciation Day
 - 14 Tornado Drill Day
 - 18 Income tax filing deadline
 - 22 Earth Day
 - 27 Administrative Professionals Day
 - 29 Arbor Day
 - 30 Vietnam War ended on this date in 1975

Coal Creek Tour update

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has a limited number of openings yet available for the 2016 Coal Creek Tour, June 14-16. For more information, contact Marketing Division Manager Doug Hughes by emailing, mktg@swce.coop, or calling 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514. Member parents and/or grandparents are reminded they may bring up to three students between the ages of 10 and 18 at NO CHARGE!!!

Steele-Waseca 2016 board of director candidates announced by Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has announced their selection of candidates for the board of director seats up for election in Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8 at this year's annual meeting, June 7.

The committee met on Nov. 10, 2015, at Steele-Waseca's headquarters in Owatonna. Steele-Waseca Attorney Eric Mattison reviewed the duties of the Nominating Committee as stated in the bylaws. He also detailed policies regarding the activities and conduct of individual board members, and the qualifications for eligibility for service on the board.

General Manager Syd Briggs explained the Nominating Committee Policy and the rotation system of keeping six experienced members on the committee and adding three new members each year.

A list of members in each district was handed out and reviewed. It was suggested the committee members from each district meet together to search for candidates and review the information given to them. With the resignation of Don Kolb in District 8, the committee also needed to find a candidate(s) from the district to be placed into nomination at the January committee meeting.

The Nominating Committee conducted their second meeting on Jan. 26 at the co-op's headquarters in Owatonna.

Briggs reviewed the director position description, highlighting director responsibilities, board/manager relations, board/cooperative member relations, and board/community relations.

Mattison reviewed the director duties and Standard of Conduct Policy, and the qualifications for eligibility for service on the Board of Directors Policy.


The Nominating Committee announced the following candidates will be on the election ballot for Steele-Waseca's 80th Annual Meeting, June 7,

2016, at the cooperative's headquarters located at 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna:

- **District 2:** Incumbent Geraldine G. Lienke, Janesville.
- **District 4:** Dean W. Jirousek, Ellendale; and Incumbent Dennis C. Ringhofer, Owatonna.
- **District 6:** Philip J. Heim, Medford; and Incumbent Gary W. Wilson, Owatonna.
- **District 8:** Incumbent Ronald D. Sommers, Northfield.

The seat in District 8 is up for election since Steele-Waseca's bylaws state the board of directors can appoint a member to fulfill the remaining one-year term of a director. Since the District 8 seat isn't up for election until 2017, board-appointed incumbent Ronald Sommers (who replaced Don Kolb) decided to run for election at this year's annual meeting. The seat will be up for its regular election turn at the annual meeting in 2017.

A profile of each candidate will appear in the May 2016 Sparks newsletter. Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor during the annual meeting with nominations closing at that time. 26907

This year's Nominating Committee consisted of the following Steele-Waseca members: District 2—Jerome/Diane Stenzel, New Richland; Gene/Joyce Wertheimer, Faribault; and Jeff/Nola Karow, Faribault; Districts 4 & 8—Kendall/Laura Strawmatt, Owatonna; Ron/Pat Brey, New Richland; and Pat/Tori Jirik, Nerstrand; District 6—Jane Middlestadt, Owatonna; Lowell/Kathleen Miller, Owatonna; and Mike Herman/Diana Lobo, Owatonna. 

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Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric
2411 W Bridge Street, PO Box 485
Owatonna MN 55060-0485

Website: www.swce.coop Find us on
Email: swce@swce.coop Facebook
Fax: 507-446-4242

Board of Directors

P.J. Duchene District 1
Geraldine Lienke District 2
Secretary/Treasurer
Duane Edwardson, *Chaplain* . District 3
Dennis Ringhofer District 4
Rodney Krell District 5
Gary Wilson, *President*,
GRE Director..... District 6
John Beal, *Vice President* . . . District 7
Ronald Sommers District 8
Renee Malecha District 9
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Management

Syd Briggs *General Manager*

Division Managers

Darla DeVries *Office*
Douglas Hughes *Marketing*
David Lundberg *Finance*
Kim Huxford *Operations*

Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages Phone:

507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

Before calling to report an outage

1. Check fuses and circuit breakers in your home and on meter pole.
2. Check with your neighbors to see if they have power.
3. Look for possible causes such as a tree branch on wires, a broken pole, twisted wires, etc.

To leave a non-emergency message whenever SWCE's Office is closed:

Phone 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514
Press "2" and leave message including name, account #, and phone # you can be reached at the following business day.

Call *Before* You Dig
Gopher State One Call
811 or 800-252-1166
48-hour notice required for **ALL**
underground cable locations

manager connection



By Syd Briggs,
General Manager

As of March 1, 2016, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has expanded the ways our members may pay their statement.

Whether you call Steele-Waseca's office during regular business hours, or if you access your account through the co-op's website, swce.coop, Steele-Waseca is now able to accept payments by check, from your savings account, or with the use of a Discover® debit or credit card. 15064

If you are paying by check or from your savings account, you will need to have the routing and account number to complete the payment.

For those paying with Visa®, MasterCard® or Discover, additional information is being requested. They include the name that appears on the card you are using and the ZIP code where your card statement is mailed to you.

Allow me to highlight the other ways you may pay your monthly Steele-Waseca electric bill.

1. Utilize the return envelope enclosed with your monthly statement. A popular option with our members as it allows them to send a check by mail in the envelope provided by Steele-Waseca.

2. Sign up for automatic payments from a checking or savings account or through a debit or credit card. In order to participate, Steele-Waseca needs to have written authorization to draft from any of the aforementioned options. Forms are available by call-

ing Steele-Waseca to mail to you, or you may download a form through the co-op's website. If you sign up for auto pay, you'll still receive a hard copy of your statement and the Sparks newsletter, but near the top of your statement it will specify details regarding your automatic payment. This is certainly a great option if you want to save on postage or if you wish to avoid delinquent payments.

3. Utilize the co-op's drop box at it's headquarters in Owatonna. The drop box is located near the flagpole at the main entrance of Steele-Waseca. The drop box is checked multiple times daily. If you work late shifts in Owatonna, or if you have other business in town, it's a good opportunity to take care of multiple tasks in one visit.

4. Stop by Steele-Waseca's office during regular business hours. Our employees are here to serve you, our member-owners, so please feel free to stop by weekdays, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

The changes implemented are in response to member requests for additional options in paying their Steele-Waseca bill. Matter of fact, in last month's Sparks newsletter, Steele-Waseca detailed options through the co-op's website to obtain bill notification via email, and save on the resources utilized to produce a hard copy of your statement. The diversity of today's world is reflected in the wants and needs of our members, so it's the co-op's opportunity to find workable solutions to meet the desires and expectations of our members.



ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

12-ROW NOBLE CULTIVATOR, Danish tine, hydraulic flat fold; **CASE 23' DISC**. 456-7633.

HAY, sm. sq., some as low as \$2 a bale; **HAY**, round bales; **STRAW**, round bales. 451-7489 or 414-2245.

BRANSON TIMESHARE FOR RENT, (1) wk any-time in 2016, (2) bdrm, sleeps (5), close to main strip, \$750. 334-5961/Joanne.

PANEL & DRYWALL ADHESIVE, 29 oz., (12) tubes, new, \$30; **LARGE GEORGE FOREMAN GRILL** w/ bun warmer, new, \$40. 334-3804.

ALF/GRASS MIX HAY BALES, gd quality, no rain. 451-2978.

1982 20' ALUM. KENNEDY PONTOON w/trailer, canopy & cover, 40 hp motor w/low hrs. 456-8521.

HAY, round bales, 5x5, 1st & 2nd cutting grass hay, stored inside, \$30. 334-6334.

JD 1100 24.5' MTD FIELD CULTIVATOR w/mulcher hd folding wings, \$2000. 475-2118.

LA-Z-BOY RECLINER/ROCKER, brown, only 7-mths-old, vry gd cond., \$250. 334-0105.

BLK ANGUS BEEF, qtrs, halves or whole avail., semi-organically & locally raised. 330-2452/Matt.

HERITAGE RASPBERRY PLANTS, mow canes after frost, \$2/ea. or \$20/dozen; **LIVE BUNNIES**, \$10; **BROWN EGG LAYERS**, \$5. 465-8593.

6 X 8 COLD STORAGE in Fbo, \$39/mth. 332-4638.

RED TONNEAU COVER for 2004-06 GMC or Chevy Crew Cab, \$100. 465-8566.

1967 JD 2020 UTILITY TRACTOR, 53 hp, dual hyd., 3-point, gd tires, runs great, gas, Owat., \$6400/obo. 446-0377.

FOR HIRE: landscaping, retaining walls, shrubs, edging, decorative rock, spring cleaning & more, free quote. 475-1352/Noah.

D.K. GRAIN VAC, 18" pump, 6" pipe, JD 6414T motor, over 150' 6" alum pipe, 3000-4000 bph capacity, \$12,000. 421-1447.

NAT'L GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINES, 1985-88, incl. the silver 100th magazine, \$100/obo. 528-2252.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) assumes no liability for the content of, or reply to, any item posted. The party posting any advertisement assumes complete liability for the content of, and all replies to, any advertisement and for any claims against SWCE as a result thereof, and agrees to indemnify and hold SWCE harmless from all costs, expenses, liabilities and damages resulting from, or caused by, any advertisement or reply thereto.

What's rural America clicking on?

by Steven Johnson, Electric Co-op Today

Rural America likes Facebook, but it's not as ready to follow on Twitter or post to Instagram.

Those are some of the conclusions of a study that found rural adults who use the Internet are generally more reluctant to embrace social media than their urban or suburban counterparts.

"Mobile Messaging and Social Media 2015," conducted by the Pew Research Center, found that Facebook use is 67 percent among rural adults who turn to the Internet.

That is slightly below the 74 percent

GRASS HAY & STRAW, small squares. 744-2871.

(2) **DOG KENNELS**, 12'x12'x6', \$100/ea.; **DOG-HOUSE**, vry nice, custom made for sm. to med. size dog, \$40. 323-5447.

TREK 850, 21-spd, men's, \$50; **GIANT RINCON**, 21-spd, men's, \$50. 330-3178.

1983 16' PALM BEACH PONTOON, 15 hp Evin-rude, elec. bimini top, Minn Kota 55 lb. thrust trolling motor fish finder, \$1650. 339-4972.

VISTAR CANDY MACHINES; WELDING SUPPLIES & EQUIP., new; **RELOADS & SHELL CASINGS; 2001 SEBRING CONVERTIBLE**. 332-7624.

RESTORED JD L, new tires; **JD M**, older restoration, gd tires. 456-5703.

GRAVITY WAGON w/fertilizer auger, nice, \$1300. 456-8461.

HJC IS-MAX BTE SNOWMOBILE HELMET, blk, XL, opening chin bar, elec. shield, Bluetooth ready, new, \$150. 461-2085.

ANTIQUE VANITY, \$100. 583-6679.

(5) **PEAFOWL**: (1) cock (blue), (3) hens, (1) peachick; **HIGHLANDER CATTLE**: (3) bulls, (3) cows, (3) heifers. 715-205-0411.

1974 SEARS LT/10 RIDING LAWN MOWER, exc. cond., runs & operates, 36" cut, \$275/obo. 838-8870.

LARGE 2-BDRM APARTMENT FOR RENT, Ellendale, all util. & garage incl. in rent. 383-4707.

300-GAL. DIESEL TANK on stand; **1979 MOTOBE-CANE MOPED**. 334-7756.

2004 SUZUKI MARAUDER MOTORCYCLE, 800cc, blk, lots of chrome, many extras, 6600 mi., \$3600/obo. 952-500-0808.

LAWN SWING; 3-ROOM TENT; MUSCOVY DUCKS; SWING SET w/slide. 213-9170.

(55) **8' CROSSARMS**, vry gd cond, \$10/ea.; **CHERRY WOOD**, home sawed, 625 board ft., 8' long, \$2/ board ft; **BLK WALNUT**, 200 board ft. 451-8744.

SUMMER STORAGE in Owat.: cars, boats, trailers, snowmobiles, fish houses. 363-2249/Derek.

10' CASE GRAIN DRILL w/grass seed hopper, rubber tires; **16' JD FIELD CULTIVATOR**, c-shank (all in gd shape). 744-2792.

use among urban adults and 72 percent use among suburban adults. But it still represents, by far, the biggest social media tool employed in rural America.

In second place is Pinterest, the bulletin board collection tool. Pinterest is the only social media platform more popular among rural adult Internet users than among urban adults—31 percent versus 26 percent.

Other social media tools have gained only a limited foothold in rural America, according to the data, which was presented without interpretation.

JD 856 CULT., like new, 12-row 22". 451-7626.

VILLAGE WEST TIMESHARE, Okoboji, Iowa, rent/buy Week 25 (June 19-26), reas. 952-652-2929.

ARTSWAY 6' ROTARY MOWR, like new. 239-2327.

BUMPER POOL TABLE made of solid oak, has cover top. 451-0653.

NH 1465 HAYBINE, exc. cond.; **CATTLE HEAD GATE**, used, exc. cond., \$500/obo. 744-5266.

BIBS, BURP CLOTHS, TABLE RUNNERS & other handmade items; CUSTOM QUILTING, www.GinaMarieCrafts.etsy.com or 380-5130 for items/services currently avail.

CHAIN-LINK FENCE, 4' high, 56' + 4' gate, posts, top rail, some fasteners, \$50. 612-598-6230.

HI-GEST 360 LOW LIGNIN ALF. SEED avail. for Spring 2016 planting. Non-GMO variety w/lower lignin levels & improved digestibility. 676-7767.

2-WHEEL TRAILERS; PLASTIC BARRELS; (2) RIDING MOWERS, Toro & Troy-Bilt. 664-9426.

SHINGLING, TREE CARE, SIDING, free estimates. 271-9129.

POULAN PRO RIDING MOWER, 25 hp twin cyl. engine, 42" cut w/bagger, \$795. 334-8613.

25' GOOSENECK 3-HORSE TRAILER w/living qtrs, \$5000; **JD 3010 G** w/loader, \$7000; **14.9 X 28 TIRES & AC RIMS**, \$800. 330-3945.

JD 980 FIELD CULT., 24.5' w/3-bar harrow, single point depth control, exc. cond., \$14,500. 383-0121.

GRASS HAY BALES, small square. 612-756-1131.

2002 FORD FOCUS ZX3, 129k mi., 2.0 engine, runs & drives great, \$2700. 332-2300.

FAINTING COUCH, upholstery in exc. cond., wood carvings adorn bottom of couch, rolls on casters, beautiful—must see! \$499. 213-8823.

220 AIR COMPRESSR; TIRE CHANGR. 528-2422.

HOUSE CLEANING: dust, vacuum, wash floors, do windows in spring & fall, wash laundry, dishes, etc. 461-9422.

METAL WELDING CART; 14' FISHING BOAT; 25 HP JOHNSON O/B; (3) DH ROSSIGNOL SKIS (all vry well priced to sell). 470-262-7696.

Only 18 percent of rural Internet users are on Instagram, well below the national average of 28 percent.

And you'll likely find more tweets from birds than smartphones in rural America. Just 15 percent of online rural adults use Twitter, compared with 21 percent in suburban areas and 30 percent in urban areas.

Rural Americans also are markedly less active in mobile messaging apps like WhatsApp, Kik or iMessage. Only 22 percent of rural smartphone users

(Internet usage continued on Page 8)

ad connection

give away

FARM CATS, good mousers. 612-247-7781.

wanted

TO PURCHASE 5 TO 25 BEEF CALVES, 300- to 400-lb. 444-9347 or 213-8670.

DEAD/ALIVE GARDEN TRACTORS, will pay \$; GARDEN TRACTOR LOADER, attachments, weights & misc. 256-7299, eves/451-0546.

BUCKET for a JD 148 loader in gd shp. 456-9468.

LAND FOR RENT FOR 2016 & beyond. 456-6521.

PONTOON-STYLE PADDLE BOAT w/bench seat. 684-9665.

WESTERN SNOWPLOW MOUNTING BRACKETS to fit 1990 Chevy pickup. 649-7216/Scott.

FARMLAND TO RENT in the Owat. area. 213-6979.

PUPPY OR YOUNG DOG that will grow to be big, prefer either a Rottweiler or German Shepherd, will accept a mixed breed. 332-0294.

WILL DO: garden tilling, post-hole drilling, lawn grading, seeding, rolling, lawn mowing, thatching, aerating, erosion control, dirt leveling, seed & fertilizer broadcasting. 390-1567/cell.

CAST IRON KETTLE OR SCALDING POT in gd cond. 528-2856.

JUNK & UNWANTED APPLIANCES, no TVs or plastic dishwashers, free drop off. 210-6728.

GOOD RUNNING OLDER TRACTOR, 40-80 hp?, wide front, cab a plus; SM. O/B MOTOR. 451-6695.

OLD ANTIQUE RUNNER-STYLE CHILD'S SLED. 339-2144.

GOATS; CALVES; PARTS for NH 55 sprdr; BOT-TOM OF A BIN to go in auger and motor. 451-3678.

UNWANTED BIKES & LAWN MOWERS, \$ paid on delivered. 330-3178.

PERSONS LOOKING FOR HELP IN HOME: meal prep, housekeeping, gardening, local references. 412-7045.

OLIVER WHEEL WEIGHTS. 715-205-0411.

TO TRADE PADDLE BOAT FOR KAYAK. 339-2003.

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by April 5 to ensure being printed in the May Sparks. Please print neatly or type your ad of 20 words or less on this form. We reserve the right to edit ad copy to allow space for more ads. Ads received after the 5th will be printed in the June issue.

For Sale Wanted Give Away

Phone # Account #

Name

Clip and mail to: SWCE, PO Box 485, Owatonna MN 55060-0485, or fax to: (507) 446-4242 or email your ad to: sparks@swce.coop.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES: cars, trucks, pickups, most farm & constr. equip., top \$ paid. 332-2300.

OLD 3-WHEELER FOR PARTS ONLY, prefer Yamaha. 451-6964.

for sale

FRIGIDAIRE GAS STOVE; GE UPRIGHT FRZR; INFRARED SPACE HEATERS; 20 LB. LP TANKS. 884-5739.

RENTAL, Izaak Walton League Bldg., 4 mi. south of Owat., seats 100, full kitchen, grill, Wi-Fi, \$100. 451-7946.

5' WOODS LAWN MOWER, came off a Farmall A, it may work on others, \$200/cash. 451-3249.

DUMP TRUCK AVAIL. for all of your hauling needs: rock, dirt, etc., 15-ton cap. 456-7774.

BEACHFRONT VACATION CONDOS FOR RENT in Fort Myers Beach, South Padre Island & Mexico, visit www.sandysbeachfrontcondo.com for details & photos. 612-865-9604/Sandy.

SONY CAR STEREO w/(4) speakers, AM/FM/CD/MP3, remote control, new, \$150; TV CONVERTER, new, \$50; FLARE BX, exc. shape, \$600. 455-3881.

SHINGLING, LIGHT CONSTRUCTION & TREE REMOVAL, free estimates. 456-0296.

LAND FOR RENT, about (7) acres, has been soybeans last few years, Walcott Twsp, could be hay, corn, soybeans, \$50 per acre. 319-5082.

CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS for rent, 11'x9' to 16'x10'. 332-4623.

PORTABLE WELDER & GENERATOR, Wisconsin engine, \$500. 334-5759.

STORAGE: vehicles, boats, campers & RVs, Waldorf area. 380-1609/Chad.

FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, the covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000; 7.6 ACRES ON GONVICK AVE., \$79,900. 838-5033/John.

BUCKTHORN CONTROL & WOODLAND HABITAT RESTORATION SERVICES PROVIDED. 210-9461/Scott or email scott@landscape-restoration.com.

STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

GRASS HAY, sm. sq., no rain, hvy bales. 334-6377.

AQUA STRIPPER, cold wtr, on cart, 2 gpm@1500 psi, 115V, \$459; ALKOTA 2102, hot wtr, 2 gpm@1000 psi, 115V, T721 GP Pump, \$1895; FUTURA, hot wtr, 3 gpm@1500 psi, 220V, \$1895. 583-2703.

BODY BUILDING MULTIFUNCTION GYM MACHINE: rowing, bench press, bicep, etc.; (2) FLOOR RUG LOOMS: 1 Union 2 harness loom & 1 Newcomb 4 harness loom. 451-9695.

HOME REPAIRS: plumbing, decks (repair or replacement), window & door installation, drywall (repair or installation) & more, quality wrk, exc. references, affordable prices. 581-6562/John.

ARIENS SNOWBLOWER, 8 hp, 24", elec. start w/ cab, \$300/obo. 390-0013.

PRIEFERT HORSE STALL FRONT; FOLDABLE PICNIC TABLE, hunter green; MIXED FIREWOOD; APPLE TREE FIREWOOD; STORAGE for fish houses. 676-1141.

1985 BUICK RIVIERA, \$5995. 838-5267.

PASTURE FOR RENT, fenced, rural Dundas. 952-270-5562.

MAMA MALIKA'S IRAQI COOKBOOK, \$29.99. Contact www.createspace.com.

BOX OF JODI THOMAS BOOKS, buy all or separately. 451-8888.

JD 520 BEAN DRILL, gd cond., shedded all the time; WHEAT STRAW, large sq., no rain. 451-2687.

ROUND OAK TABLE, 54" diameter w/linoleum top, no seams, (4) screw-on legs incl., exc. card table, \$20. 451-1131.

'93 FLEETWOOD FLAIR MOTOR HM. 351-3854.

2002 CHEVY Z71 PICKUP, incl. topper; TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL & STUMP GRINDING, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; 9 X 7 GARAGE DOOR, insulated, white, w/all hardware. 456-1609. (For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

TULIP TIME, HOLLAND, MICH., May 11-15. Five days, 8 meals, Tulip Time events & sightseeing. \$999 per person based on 2 per room.

NATIONAL PARKS BY MOTOR COACH, May 13-23. Eleven days, 14 meals, Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Zion, Bryce Canyon & much more. \$1,439 per person based on 2 per room.

NEW YORK CITY (AIR INCLUDED), June 22-26. Five days in NYC Times Square, 2 Broadway plays & sightseeing. \$2,399 per person based on 2 per room.

MACKINAC ISLAND & DOOR COUNTY, July 10-16. Seven days, 12 meals, Door County touring, day on Mackinac Island. \$1,099 per person based on 2 per room.

Call 4-Seasons at 800-328-4298 and reserve your space today! Be sure to tell us you are Steele-Waseca members!



member connection

National Lineman Appreciation Day coming April 11

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board in 2014 formally designated the second Monday of each April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

The intent then as it is today is to recognize the contributions of the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on.

According to Electric Co-op Today, there had been on-again, off-again attempts at a lineman appreciation day at state and federal levels.

In 2013, the U.S. Senate passed a one-time resolution designating April 18 as National Lineman Appreciation Day. In 2014, only a House resolution to mark the day was introduced. That lead the NRECA board to approve the formal designation recognized today.

When asked about the enjoyment of being a lineman, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Line Technician Chad Henderson, who has 18 years of lineman experience, and joined the co-op following the Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative purchase of Alliant Energy's Minnesota service territory on July 31, 2015, said, "I like being outdoors. I like seeing the lights come back on after a storm." Line Foreman Jim Wolters concurred and added his enjoyment of being able to see crops planted in the spring, harvested in the fall, and seeing wildlife while on the job. Line Technician Apprentice Jake Jablonski added, "Taking pride in our work and loving the outdoors."

However, the profession does have its challenges, "Being away from family,"



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric wishes to recognize our linemen for the dedication they have toward keeping the lights on for our members. They include (front row standing left to right) the following with their Steele-Waseca experience: Line Technician Ben Hrcnr, May 2012; Line Technician Chad Henderson, July 2015; Line Foreman Don Bos, May 1991; Line Foreman Jack Schwab, November 1992; Assistant Foreman Troy Pederson, June 1999; Line Foreman Jim Wolters, June 1976. On the truck (left to right): Line Technician Kyle Lodermeier, November 2012; Line Technician Pete Hines, October 2012; Line Technician Apprentice Jake Jablonski, September 2013; Assistant Foreman Kevin Kjersten, October 2012; Line Technician Adam Davis, July 2013; Assistant Foreman Matt Rohman, May 2007. Not pictured is Line Foreman Nordean Hartle, June 1992. 18633



Chad Henderson



Jake Jablonski



Jim Wolters

said Jablonski, when duty calls and power needs to be restored day or night, including holidays, and may require long hours to get the job done. "The weather," said Henderson. "The wind is what really gets me," said Wolters referring to wind chill during the winter. "You can always dress for the cold," replied Henderson, noting summertime heat, humidity and mosquitoes creates its own misery. "Humidity is the worst," added Wolters.

Advancements in equipment and technology have allowed linemen to do more work, safer and more efficient, than in the past. Wolters recalled how the co-op only had two bucket trucks when he started. Today, Steele-Waseca is equipped with five bucket trucks. Wolters detailed how crimping wires together is made easier with battery-

powered crimpers. He noted how advancements in cellphone technology have enhanced communication among line crews and the office, which has developed safer and better conditions in the field.

As for recommendations to those considering a career as a lineman, "It's a great job if you enjoy being outdoors and like good friendships," said Henderson. Jablonski agreed and added, "If you enjoy a challenge," which Wolters followed up by saying, "Learning how to do things safely and efficiently."

With the time linemen work together, there is a bond where each is looking out for the other in order to safely get the job done. "Everyone wants everyone to go home at night to their family," said Henderson.

cookin' connection

No Name Hotdish

Roxanne Copp

Claremont

- 1 1/2 lb. hamburger
- 1 medium onion (chopped)
- 1 can chilies (diced)
- 1 can mushroom soup
- 1 can (15 oz.) enchilada sauce (mild or medium)

Brown hamburger and chopped onion. Mix in chillies, mushroom soup and enchilada sauce. Crush taco or corn chips on bottom of 9 x 13 pan, add hamburger mixture and top with cheese. Bake at 350° for 20 to 30 minutes.

Please use a 3 x 5 card when submitting your recipe. The member whose recipe is published will receive a \$7 energy credit.



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's solar subscribers will see a 50 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during February 2016. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop. The latest subscriber is the Izaak Walton League's Owatonna chapter.

Was your account number in Sparks?

Each month five account numbers are printed in *Sparks* and a total of \$35 in energy credits is divided among however many of those numbers are found. For example, if all numbers are found, a credit of \$7 will be applied to the members' following month's electric bill; or, if only one number is found, that member receives the full \$35 credit. Members finding their numbers who have a load management receiver on their dual fuel, electric water heater, air conditioner, or genset will receive an additional \$7 credit. When you find your number, phone our office no later than the 7th of the month following receipt of the *Sparks*, or the amount will be forfeited.

March issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
David B. Billings
Numbers not found:
Renee/James Flaherty
George A./Diana Klecker
Robert A. Panuska
Jay/Michele Voegele



Sparks in brief . . .

• **Want easy energy payments?** Sign up for **EnergyPay Plus**, our automatic payment plan, or **Energy Prepay**, our discounted advance payment plan. Contact our office for details. You may also pay your bill online at www.swce.coop. By entering your Steele-Waseca username and password you can also view a 13-month history of your account.

• **If you have changed or added phone numbers**, please contact SWCE to update your contact information. 18732

• **Need a new water heater?** For information about our Marathon Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Aamot at our office between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **February temps** – The average high temperature for February was 30° F, while the average low was 17° F. They compare to last year's average high of 19° F and average low of 0° F.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2016, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs), light emitting diode (LED) holiday lights and bulbs purchased are eligible to receive rebates (may not be combined with special promotions). Rebate request forms must be submitted within 90 days of purchase. Rebate forms are available at www.swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Aamot between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514.

• **Steele-Waseca's tree service contractor** – Carr's Tree Service, Inc., is contracted to do SWCE's tree trimming. To report a tree concern, phone:

507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514

LIVESTOCK OWNERS

If you have questions or concerns regarding stray voltage in your livestock confinement building(s), or are planning an addition, or constructing a new one, call Steele-Waseca at 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514. Steele-Waseca will work with you and your electrician to eliminate potential stray voltage problems.

health & safety connection

Products to avoid if you're trying to save energy

by Tom Tate, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

When it comes to saving energy, *caveat emptor* is alive and well. We are all bombarded by claims that border on outright falsehoods, so it pays to view savings claims from third parties cautiously. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

Electric space heaters drain energy savings from your home if used incorrectly. Companies make elaborate claims about the amount of money you can save and charge exorbitant sums for their products. The advertisements frequently target those on a fixed income, presenting false hope while extracting precious dollars from their customers. I have seen a number of these space heaters and admit they appear to be well made, but they typically offer no better economy than any other 1,500-watt electric heater. Bottom line, electric space heaters should only be used to heat small spaces—not your entire home.

Black boxes that claim to clean up

power, protect appliances and reduce energy use come and go. These often require an electrician to install and claim to improve power quality, smooth out power fluctuations and store energy so you can reduce your bills. Save your money. The concepts they present are already in use by Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric and require utility-size equipment to deliver them. Something that can fit in a shoebox is not going to deliver any value, at least not in the areas promised. If you are concerned about protecting your sensitive appliances and electronics, talk to Steele-Waseca about surge protection.

When you see the ad that reads, “The power companies don’t want you to know,” skip it. These are generally claims around building your own renewable energy source from parts easily obtained at the local hardware store or a motor that produces limitless “free” electricity. I would equate these with the emails I get from foreign coun-

tries telling me I can receive millions of dollars by simply sending all my banking information. At least in the case of the homemade renewables and limitless motor you get some cool plans and parts lists. You decide if it's worth \$50-\$200. I'd give it a pass.

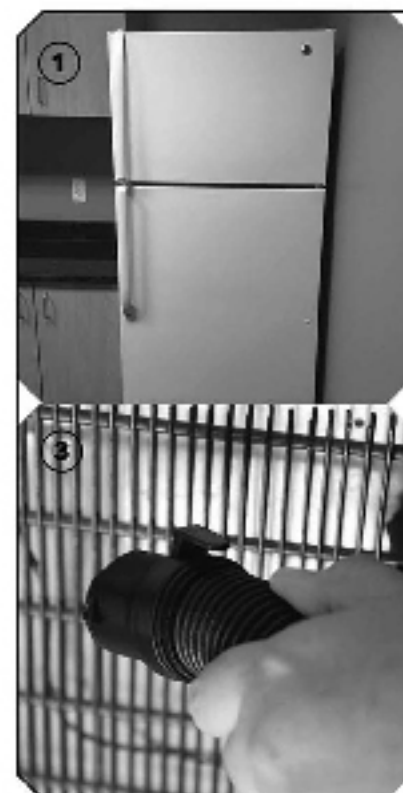
There is a product that claims it will **replace basement dehumidifiers** and save tons of money. It basically is a fan system that vents all the basement air outside. Yes, dehumidifiers can be expensive to run and are a nuisance when you have to empty the water. Knowing that, I asked the Cooperative Research Network (an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) a few years ago if these products delivered on their savings claims. They said no. The problem is that when you blow all the basement air outside, it is replace with conditioned air from other parts of the house. Now your HVAC system works harder and

(Products to avoid continued on Page 8)

HOW TO CLEAN REFRIGERATOR COILS

... AND WHY IT MATTERS!

Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home. It requires only minimal maintenance – just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat. If the coils are covered with dust, gunk or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly and will not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grime coating. This can be an expensive problem. The bottom line? A minor investment in time once a year can save you cold cash down the line.



MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- Vacuum cleaner with hose
- Damp cloth

1. Locate the refrigerator's coil, a grid-like structure, or fan that will likely have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't find them in the front or back, this may be the case with your fridge.
2. If the coil is in the back, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet when possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or icemaker to allow enough room to work.
3. Gently vacuum and clean the coil. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt wherever you see it. If you have pulled the fridge out, vacuum and wipe down the sides and back of the fridge and the floor.
4. Once the floor is dry, plug in the refrigerator and rearrange the power cord and supply lines so they don't get a kink or stuck under the weight of the refrigerator. Slide the refrigerator back into place. Be sure to replace the toe kick panel if this was removed.

