

youth tour connection

Steele-Waseca sponsoring two delegates for 2016 Youth Tour

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is accepting applications from eligible high school sophomores or juniors for an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2016 Youth Tour, June 11-16.

The tour is coordinated through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Participating cooperatives sponsor a member student(s) to travel to Washington, D.C., to learn about cooperatives and our government, tour historical sites, and have fun meeting new friends from Minnesota and other delegates from across the nation.

To be eligible, the entrant must meet the following requirements:

1. The entrant is currently a high school sophomore or junior, and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) are a Steele-Waseca member. Dependents of Steele-Waseca employees or directors are not eligible to participate.
2. All entries must include: a) the completed application form below; b) answers to both essay questions typed on an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper; c) applicant's school and community information typed on a separate sheet of paper; and d) two letters of recommendation (one from an instructor, counselor or administrator, and the other from a church or community leader).
3. Return entries to: Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, c/o Youth Tour

2016, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 18, 2016.

Each entry will be evaluated by a panel of judges for:

- completeness
- composition
- neatness
- ability to communicate
- school and community activities

Essay Questions:

1. Why would you like to be Steele-Waseca's delegate to Youth Tour 2016? What do you hope to gain from the experience? Answer in 150 words or less.
2. Write a short essay on what commitment to community means to you. Include how you contribute to your

community. Answer in 300 words or less. 17583

School and Community Information (use a separate sheet of paper to list the following):

- All school activities – include letters and honors earned, positions held, etc.
- All community activities – include all church, community service and positions held.
- Work experience and any other information.

MREA is requiring that each participating cooperative's delegate(s) report to the Crowne Plaza Airport located at 3 Appletree Square in Bloomington for an orientation session on Saturday, June 11, at 9 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the orientation session. ^{5/16}



Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2016 — June 11-16 — Theme for 2016: Commitment to Community

Name _____ M or F _____ Phone _____

Address _____ street _____ city _____ state _____ zip _____ county _____

Email address _____ Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____

I am currently a high school _____ sophomore _____ junior at _____


Parent/Guardian consent: I/we hereby give my/our dependent high school son/daughter permission to enter the Rural Electric Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2016 Contest. I/we understand if he/she wins, I/we will be responsible for providing his/her own transportation to the Crowne Plaza Airport in Bloomington and from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

Name(s) _____ SWCE account # _____



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

January 2016

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has a limited number of openings available for the 2016 Coal Creek Tour on 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. You may also visit Steele-Waseca's website, www.swce.coop, and move your cursor over "EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES," then click on "Coal Creek Tour." Member parents and/or grandparents are reminded they may bring up to three students between the ages of 10 and 18 at NO CHARGE!

inside connections

- 2 Manager Connection
- 3 Cost Recovery Fee explained
GRE budget and rate forecast
SWCE scholarship program
- 4 Cookin' Connection
Sparks in brief
SWCE community solar update
Stray voltage questions
- 5 Winter storm preparedness
Recycle Your Holidays™
Energy efficiency comparison
between a dishwasher and
washing by hand
- 6 Ad Connection
4-Seasons Vacations
- 7 Ad Connection
- 8 Applications being accepted for
2016 Washington, D.C. Youth
Tour

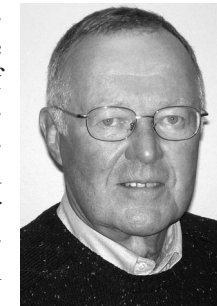
calendar of events

January

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | New Year's Day
SWCE office closed |
| 17 | Benjamin Franklin's b-day |
| 18 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| 28 | Christa McAuliffe Day |

Steele-Waseca board of directors select Sommers to serve as director in District 8

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors have selected Ronald Sommers of Northfield to serve as director of District 8 following the resignation of Donald Kolb on Sept. 24.



Ronald Sommers

The board interviewed six candidates on Nov. 24. They included Sommers, Joe Cina, Northfield; Mark Estrem, Nerstrand; Richard Fetterly, Faribault; Benet Freund, Faribault; and John Zimmerman, Northfield.

A notice of the vacancy was mailed to all members in District 8 with a request of those interested in the position to contact Steele-Waseca's office by Nov. 13. Applicable paperwork was mailed to those expressing interest. Nine Steele-Waseca members initially expressed interest in the position, but three withdrew after further consideration.

Steele-Waseca's bylaws state the

Steele-Waseca to sponsor two students for Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference on March 7-8

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is sponsoring two students seeking to attend the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference, March 7-8, 2016, in Eau Claire, Wis.

Any high school sophomores, juniors and seniors interested in attending may submit their name to Steele-Waseca Executive Assistant Debbie Eby by no later than 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 6. The recipients will be randomly selected on Thursday, Jan. 7. 1012588

The conference brings students from across Minnesota and Wisconsin to collaborate and connect while learning about the cooperative business model. The conference will provide opportunities to develop good leadership skills

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, Sommers will be up for election at the annual meeting on June 7, 2016, if he so chooses to run. Any eligible members may also run for District 8 director.

Ron's family has a history with Steele-Waseca. His father, Donald, served as director from 1938-83.

When asked about some of the important issues facing the board, Sommers responded, "On a local level, continuing to protect, preserve and expand our ability to provide affordable, reliable, electric energy to member-patrons, and planning to assure that future demand for electricity can be met are issues of prime importance to the board."

Sommers is presently retired, but worked over 20 years as an ag educator and nearly 20 years with Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., as a sales accounting manager, and later as sales coordinator. Ron and his wife, Ruth, reside in Northfield Township. ^{5/16}



and work with others.

Attendees will learn from the experts ranging from electric cooperatives to Fortune 100 companies. Students will discover what makes the cooperative business model successful and differ-

(Co-ops Yes! continued on Page 3)

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Board of Directors

P.J. Duchene District 1
Geraldine Lienke District 2
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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
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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*

Congratulations to
our newest Direc-
tor Ron Sommers!

Our front page in Sparks this month has the information about Mr. Sommers being selected last month by our board to fulfill the vacant seat on the board of directors for the remainder of the current cooperative director year. He fulfills the vacant seat that occurred when long-time Director Don Kolb retired from our board of directors.

The process of filling a vacant board seat is a very structured one that starts with our bylaws, which allows the current board to choose a member to fill a vacant board seat until the next annual meeting. Even if there are multiple years left in the current term (three-year terms), the bylaws only allow the board to fill the seat for up to a year. Our cooperative founders believed it was very important to accomplish two things: (1) provide a way to operate with the representation of a full board as much as possible, and (2) have “member chosen” directors to represent our members. The founding principle of having board representatives that come from the desires and decisions of the cooperative members is the basic structure of a co-op and makes us who we are. 59028

It was a privilege for me to witness your board’s attention to details as your directors formed a process to select a new director.

The board had cooperative personnel mail director information to each member in District 8 with personnel listed to contact for questions, and a deadline to file for interviewing with the board. A special day was set aside for the interviews. I am proud to say we received numerous calls, and eventually had six members make plans to meet with the board. The director candidates were all very dedicated, knowledgeable, and motivated individuals; the board had to make a difficult decision picking only one.

After several hours of interviews and discussions, Ron Sommers was selected as the successful candidate, and will serve the remainder of the cooperative year.

The Nominating Committee, which has already convened and is working toward the selection of candidates that will appear on the ballot during the 2016 annual meeting, will take it from here. This next year at the annual meeting in June, we will have four director position elections; the three that are at the end of their terms (Districts 2, 4, 6) and also the last year of the position in District 8.

I have been working for cooperatives for 25 years and I am always proud to witness our cooperative structure in action. It’s a structure that keeps our members rights, desires, and actions as an active platform from which the cooperative operates.



ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

ELM FIREWOOD, dry, no bark, grt for fireplace, \$150/cord (picked up)/will deliver in Owat. area for additional \$25. 612-875-4631.

RIEDELL WOMEN'S FIGURE SKATES, white, size 8N, exc. cond., \$45. 645-4309.

ION ELEC. AUGER, 8", \$400. 456-7542.

ANTIQUE PARLOR WOODSTOVE, totally recondi-
tioned. 456-0296.

GRASS HAY, sm. sq.; **STRAW**, sm. sq.; **ROUND BALES OF STRAW & HAY**. 451-7489 or 414-2245.

RED WING COWBOY BOOTS, new, size 8.5, buck-
skin color. 451-1749.

1999 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX GT, 3.8L, 160,000
mi., \$350. 451-0885.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, never shear sheep again,
great for beginners & hobby farms, exc. disposition.
451-2722.

**2013 QUICK ATTACH SKID STEER SNOWBLOW-
ER**, high flow model, 6' wide, used 10 hrs, like new,
\$6000. 339-9168.

2002 CHEVY Z71 PICKUP, incl. topper; **TOOLBOX**
for small pickup (Ranger, S-10); **TREE TRIMMING,
REMOVAL & STUMP GRINDING**, pro climber &
aerial lift to U of M guidelines. 456-1609.

ALF. GRASS HAY: 1st, 2nd & 3rd crop; **MAYTAG
GAS ENGINE; WWII 50TH ANN. STAMP COLLEC-
TION**, all 5-yrns in wood frame. 744-2871.

**'83 DUALY 1-TON AMBULANCE CUBE TRUCK;
BOSE 6-PC SURROUND SOUND SYSTEM; WOM-
EN'S H-D LEATHR VEST & CLOTHING**. 339-8232.

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.

(Cost recovery fee continued from Page 3)

toward returning to that equitable ap-
proach.

How is the cost recovery fee calculated?

The cost recovery fee seeks to recoup that portion of the fixed costs of serving the distributed generator that are included in the kWh rate. The fee is calculated using a cost of service approach and is different for each electric cooperative based on the true cost of serving the member, the kWh rate, and the current fixed charge. Because the cost shift is different based on the size of the distributed generation facility, the fee is applied per kW of installed distributed generation that exceeds 3.5 kW. The cost of the service calculation is available by contacting Steele-Waseca.

Will the cost recovery fee change?

Yes, the cost recovery fee is based on your local cooperative's rates and will adjust as the rates change. The calculation method will not change, so while

BODY BLDG MULTIFUNCTION GYM MACHINE:
rowing, bench press, bicep, etc. 451-9695.

(2) SQUARE BROWN CARD TABLES, 32x32, \$20.
838-8565.

BREVILLE JUICE FOUNTAIN PLUS, \$120/obo.
210-3738.

AIRDYNE EXERCISE BIKE & FLOOR MAT, \$300.
684-3123.

ROOSTERS: Splash, Black Cochin, MF D'ucelle,
Black Silkie, SL Wyandotte, 26 wks Dec. 1, \$8/each/
obo. 491-6296/leave message.

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

JD 520 BEAN PLANTER, 10" spacing; **TYE 15
GRAIN DRILL** w/grass seeder, 6 2/3 spacing;
STRAW, big square bales. 213-9990.

TABLE w/(2) chairs, drawer in front, can be used as
a desk, solid wood, great shape, \$75. 583-6679.

TREK 920 MEN'S MTB, 21-spd, \$100; **TREK BOY'S
BMX C.B.**, 20x175, \$40. 330-3178.

**CAN HELP REFINISH FLOORS OR FURNITURE;
NEED INSULATION, PAINTING OR SHOVELING?**,
may barter; **MORELS, JERKY, TROUT, DEER
AVAIL.** 213-3509.

CHILD'S KITCHEN: refrig., stove, sink & office area,
plastic, \$30. 645-6894.

MTD SNOWBLOWER, 21", 4-cycle, elec. start, exc
cond., \$75; **HAY**, round bales, 5x5, 1st & 2nd cutting
grass hay, stored inside. 334-6334.

STORAGE CONTAINERS, 20' & 40', store your stuff
on your property, free delivery. 612-418-4375.

the fee may increase or decrease over
time, the change will likely be minimal.
Steele-Waseca will review the fee annu-
ally and provide notice of any changes.

What is the allowance?

There is a difference in how much each member uses based on many different factors, including the size of the home, energy efficiency efforts, and usage needs. This variance was taken into account and applied as an allowance for distributed generation facilities under 3.5 kW. That means a 5 kW system (the state average for residential systems is between 3.5 kW and 5 kW) pays only for 1.5 kW of distributed generation. For Steele-Waseca, that means a monthly cost recovery fee of \$7.28 (\$4.85 per kW x 1.5) or \$87.36 over the course of a year. 29452

Is there a cap on the cost recovery fee?

Yes, while larger distributed genera-
tors offset much more than their usage

**FANCY BRIDLE HEADSTALL, REINS & BREAST
COLLAR**, all studded in rhinestone, nvr used/tags
still on, \$60. 451-7226.

WYFFELS HYBRIDS SEED CORN, conventional
and treated hybrids avail., great new customer dis-
counts. 475-3111.

FIREWOOD: mixed hardwoods, 1/4 cord/\$65, 1/2
cord/\$120, full cord/\$220, you pick up. 645-4158.

COLD STORAGE IN FBO, 6x8, \$39/mth. 333-0308.

AXIS SEED, new soybean varieties showing strong
yields, 1616NR, 1916NR, 2116NR & 2416NR have
great traits & high yield potential, cash savings, JD
Financing. 676-7767.

HORSE HAY, sm. sq., 3x3-6. 838-7721.

HAY, 3rd crop, alfalfa, sm. sq.; **WHEAT STRAW**, sm.
sq. 330-3303.

GRASS HAY, no rain, 4x5 bales, \$25 & sm. sq.
bales, no rain. 744-5277.

FIREWOOD, mixed hardwoods, reas. price; **LP
TANK**, 100 lbs., \$30; **SNOW RAKE** for roof, \$10; **DH
SKI & POLES**. 451-5887.

GLASS LAMPS, all in working order, \$40/each.
334-7656.

TRACTOR TIRE CHAINS, fit Ford 8N, \$50.
461-1865.

KENMORE ELEC. COOK RANGE, white, exc.
cond., \$175; **LP/NAT. GAS RANGE**, apartment size,
works great, \$125. 649-7216.

DH ROSSIGNOL SKIS, 168 mm w/Salomon bindings
& boots; **DEHUMIDIFIER**, 1-y-o. 470-262-7696.

and make a profit (paid for by the rest
of the membership), we limited our
cost recovery fee to an amount that
only recovers fixed distribution costs.
This limits results in a fee cap that is
unique to each electric cooperative. For
Steele-Waseca, the cap is \$48/month.
The cap means that cost shifts continue
for larger distributed generators that
haven't properly sized their facilities to
the needs (or load) of their property.

When will this cost recovery fee take effect?

Investing in distributed generation is
a big decision with a lot of questions
about financing, return on investment,
and the expected life of the system. In
order to assist our members who are
weighing this option and provide cer-
tainty, Steele-Waseca will be grand-
fathering those distributed generation
facilities installed prior to Jan. 1, 2016.
Any distributed generation facility over
3.5 kW installed on or after Jan. 1, 2016,
will be subject to the cost recovery fee.

ad connection

give away

FARM CATS, outside/litterbox training. 213-1466.

(9) PALLETS OF MISSISSIPPI LIME, 40-bags per pallet, you must pick up from Mpls. 612-499-9112.

wanted

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

SHED OR CORN CRIB to tear down for the poles & tin. 213-1466.

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

SENIORS NEEDING A LITTLE EXTRA HELP AROUND THE HOUSE OR A RIDE TO THE DOCTOR OR SHOPPING. 451-3886.

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

MALE DOG to adopt/rescue for companion, should be middle aged & sm. to med. size. 645-2414.

CORN HEAD for JD 55 combine, seeking Model 335 or 334. 456-7754.

PERSON LOOKING FOR HELP IN HOME: meal prep, housekeeping & more, local ref. 334-5711 or 412-7045.

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

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

ENGINE for 1996 Aerostar van, 3.8. 838-7721.

ROOMMATE to share house in Fbo area.581-0470.

HAYBINE in gd cond. 744-5277.

for sale

HAY, big sq., \$45-\$70 depending on quality/delivery avail./volume & cash discounts. 573-2318/Andrew.

STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

(2) AURORA W403 WINTER RADIAL TIRES, P205/75/15, exc. cond., \$100 for pair; (2) FORTUNE DELTA MUD/SNOW RADIAL TIRES, P205/75/15, gd cond., \$100 for pair. 461-4113.

STEEL CATTLE GATES: 4', 8', 10', 12'. 455-2599.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

BLK ANGUS BEEF: qtrs, halves, whole avail., semi-organically & locally raised; FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, the covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000. 838-5033/John.

FINE BONE CHINA, Romance Collection "Heather," #H5089, exc. cond., (13) place settings (12 coffee cups), vegetable bowl, gravy boat, \$650. 451-6123.

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

FRIGIDAIRE LP STOVE, self-cleaning oven; FLO-RAL SOFA/LOVE SEAT, \$25; 2012 RICHMOND LP HOT WATER HEATER, 40-gal., \$100; 2007 AMANA FURNACE, 60,000 Btu, \$200. 381-9849.

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

3" STEEL DRAIN for basement, \$15; (2) TWIN BED BOOKCASE HEADBOARDS, A-1 cond., \$30/ea.; SEARS CUTTING TORCH HEAD, \$10. 334-5412.

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

FLARE BOX, great shape, treated wood, exc. tires, \$675; SONY CAR STEREO w/(4) speakers, AM/FM/CD/MP3, remote, new in box, \$150; TV CONVERTER BOX, high quality, new in box, \$49. 455-3881.

CELOTEX INSULATION, foil-faced on both sides, 4'x8' & 4'x9' sheets, 1" thick, approx. 100+ sheets, take all for \$1000 or \$15/sheet. 213-8823.

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

'98 POLARIS INDY 500 & '95 POLARIS XLT, low miles on both, \$2000 for pair/obo/will sell separate. 612-386-5098.

CLUB CAR GAS GOLF CART, aluminum framed. 210-1826.

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

TAIL LIGHT for 1990 series Dodge Ram pickup, fits right side of truck; SMALL PLANT STAND; SMALL SUITCASE. 451-2687.

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

FISH HOUSE, (2) holes, sm. woodstove, crank (can be raised/lowered), windows, gd cond. 334-9749.

ALF. GRASS MIX HAY, sm. sq. bales. 583-2475.

ANTIQUE BABY BUGGY, \$250; ANTIQUE DRESSER, \$200; SLOT MACHINE, \$2500; LOVE SEAT, \$50; BOAT MOTOR, 28 hp, \$900; COFFEE TABLE, \$75. 383-3871.

VAL 6 KBE5L RADIANT HEATER, 115V, single phase, \$2395; ALKOTA 216AX4 HOT WATER PRESSURE WASHER, short coil, 2 gpm @ 1600 psi, 115V, single phase, \$2395. 583-2703.

PRONTO M41 ELEC. PWR CHAIR, exc. cond., \$1800. 475-2322.

DODGE CARAVAN, high miles, working, \$700; NEW ZEALAND RABBITS for pets or meat. 213-1466.

DEWALT CIRCULAR SAW, \$45; LARGE GEORGE FOREMAN GRILL, new, nvr used, \$40. 334-3804.

1985 FORD F-150, 4x4, 130k mi., 6-cyl., nice body, \$1200. 334-2673.

WHITE 2-155, new front end, new clutch, seat, \$11,500; PICKUP SANDER, stainless steel, 12V, \$1500. 456-1181.

BRANSON TIMESHARE FOR RENT, (1) week anytime, avail. in 2016, 2-bdrm, sleeps (5), close to main strip, \$900. 334-5961/Joanne.

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

TRAILER; LP GAS HEATERS; (2) ELEC. SPACE HEATERS; FISH HOUSE, 4x6, port.; FISHING EQUIP. 664-9426.

RETIRED LONGABERGER BASKETS w/liners, protectors & lids. 789-6750.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

MEXICAN COASTAL CRUISE, March 11-19, 2016. From Los Angeles—Ports of Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta & Mazatlan, starting at \$2,249 per person based on 2 per stateroom.

NEW ORLEANS, LA., March 12-20. Motor coach—Visit a plantation, Mississippi Cruise, Tour of New Orleans + much more! \$1,099 per person based on 2 per room.

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C., April 8-12. Fly program—WWII Memorial, Smithsonian, Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon + much more! \$1,399 per person based on 2 per room.

SAVANNAH/JEKYLL ISLAND, April 9-17. Motor coach—Tour Jekyll & St. Simon's Island, Savannah & much more. \$1,059 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!

4 Seasons Vacations, Inc.

TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE. LOVE YOUR VACATION.

member connection

Cost recovery fee provides fairness between distributed generation systems and fellow members

Fee only applies to distributed generation systems starting on or after Jan. 1, 2016

Earlier this year the state legislature sought to return a level of fairness to how the electric distribution grid is paid for, by authorizing electric cooperatives and municipal utilities to charge a cost recovery fee on distributed generation facilities (wind and solar). The fee will allow electric co-op's, like Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, to recover some of the cost shift that occurs between distributed generators and the rest of the membership.

There is a fixed cost to deliver electric power to our members; the poles, the wires, the equipment and people that get the power to you and keep it reliable and safe. This fixed cost is re-

covered in two ways, through a monthly fixed charge and as a portion of your kilowatt hour (kWh) rate. Putting some of the fixed cost within the kWh rate was done on the assumption that the more energy a member used, the more demand they put on the grid and the more they should pay to maintain it. Distributed generators demand as much (or more) from the grid than the rest of the membership. But, because they offset some or all of their energy usage, they no longer pay their fair share to maintain the grid.

The intent of the cost recovery fee is just that, recover some of the cost shift and ensure that cost causers are also

cost payers. The fee is based on calculating the size of the distributed generation facility, the usage variation among members, and the unique nature of the electric cooperative. The cost recovery fee is applied equitably on a per kW basis with a state-wide allowance of 3.5 kW for electric cooperatives (the state average for size of rooftop solar facilities is between 3.5 kW and 5 kW).

The cost recovery fee is not punitive, and will return a level of fairness to how the electric distribution grid is paid. As at-cost energy providers, electric cooperatives believe that cost causers should be cost payers. This fee goes a long way (Cost recovery fee continued on Page 7)

Budget, forecast detail five-year rate stability

At its November meeting, Great River Energy's (GRE's) board of directors approved the cooperative's 2016 budget and rate forecast impacting the legacy members of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric.

"By taking a long-term view of financial needs, we moderated rate increases while continuing to maintain reliable generation and transmission assets," said GRE Vice President and CFO Larry Schmid. "We will continue to seek efficiencies to flatten our rate trajectory even further."

Great River Energy's revenue requirement for next year is budgeted at \$992.1 million, down from \$1.03 billion budgeted for 2015. The cooperative's average wholesale electricity rate is budgeted to be an increase of 1.5 percent, significantly less than a previous forecasted increase of 3.7 percent.

The organization's focus on stabiliz-

ing wholesale electricity rate increases was evident, as projections show annual rate increases below 2 percent for the coming five years. This trend of long-term rate relief is due to cost-control measures at Great River Energy and reduced expenses due in part to GRE exiting a contract to receive half the output of a coal-fueled power plant in Wisconsin.

Budgeted expenses are down \$27.5 million from 2015, due in part to favorable diesel prices at Falkirk Mine, which supplies fuel to GRE's Coal Creek Station power plant. Great River Energy also budgeted \$35.3 million less for purchased power in 2016.

The 2016 capital budget includes \$204 million for refurbishment of the high-voltage, direct-current system between Coal Creek Station and Minnesota, which has been in place since 1978.

(Co-ops Yes! continued from Page 1)

ent.

Renowned youth motivational speaker Craig Hillier will entertain and inspire while challenging students to work together for the greater good. Participants will also have the opportunity to work with cooperative leaders and business professionals to explore career opportunities.

Those interested will have the chance to run for the Co-ops Yes! youth board. The youth board plans the following year's program and will be attending

leadership conferences at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Virginia Tech.

The students randomly selected by Steele-Waseca to attend the Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference in March, must have a parent or guardian sign a release form that Debbie will mail to you. She will also be chaperoning Steele-Waseca's participants with a departure from the co-op at 6:30 a.m., Monday, March 7, and return to Owatonna at approximately 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 8, 9/16

SWCE offering scholarships to '16 graduates

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will present scholarships to qualified high school seniors graduating in 2016.

One \$500 scholarship will be awarded at each participating school. Scholarship eligibility required by Steele-Waseca includes:

1. Applicants must currently be high school seniors, who will be continuing their education on a full-time basis at a two- or four-year technical school or college.

2. Applicants must be dependents of a Steele-Waseca member.

Each participating school is responsible for administering any other eligibility requirements, the selection of their school's Steele-Waseca scholarship recipient, and the disbursement of the scholarship dollars from the cooperative. 108425

All eligible high school seniors should contact their guidance counselor or scholarship administrator for more information.

In 2015, Steele-Waseca awarded 17 scholarships to high school senior graduates. The co-op's scholarship program has awarded \$141,750 since the program was established in 1954. A portion of the funds to support these scholarships comes from unclaimed capital credit equity. 9/16

cookin' connection

Pecan Pie Bars

Joan Jandro

Faribault

2 c. flour
1 c. butter (soft)
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1 (6 oz.) almond brickle chips (Bit O' Brickle)
1 tsp. vanilla
1 c. chopped pecans

1/2 c. sugar
1 egg

In medium bowl, combine flour, sugar and butter. Press on bottom of 9x13 inch pan. Bake 15 minutes at 350°. In medium bowl, beat condensed milk, egg and vanilla. Stir in chips and pecans. Spread over crust. Bake 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool. Chill thoroughly. Cut into bars. Store covered in refrigerator.

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 36 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during November 2015. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop.

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 5th of the month following receipt of the *Sparks*, or the amount will be forfeited.

December issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Bruce D. Rumpza
Lorice H. Wilkie

Numbers not found:

Larry A. Coffing
Dennis Greenwood
Allen/Jean Gohlike



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.**

• **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.

• **November temps** – The average high temperature for November was 48° F, while the average low was 32° F. They compare to last year's average high of 33° F and average low of 16° 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

Be prepared for winter storms

by Abby Berry, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm.

Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to

prepare yourself.

• **Stay warm**—Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane-, or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

• **Stay fed**—The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend having several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy. Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

• **Stay safe**—When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to Steele-Waseca or law enforcement authorities.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Steele-Waseca is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more winter safety tips, visit www.ready.gov/winter-weather.



Fact or Fable? A dishwasher is more expensive than hand washing

This is a fable. It's a common misconception



that dishwashers are convenient, but use more water and energy than hand washing. In fact, dishwashers can help you conserve water and save on energy bills.

Cleaning a typical load of dishes in a dishwasher uses 37 percent less water than washing by hand, saving the average household nearly 5,000 gallons of water per year. Also, using a dishwasher, rather than hand washing, can cut

your annual energy costs by more than \$40, according to Energy Star®.

Energy-saving tips

Dishwashers are not only convenient; they are also your best energy-saving option. The following practices can help you save even more:

• Scrape dishes instead of rinsing before loading them into the dishwasher. Pre-rinsing dishes can use up to 20 gallons of water.

SWCE among drop-off sites for Recycle Your Holidays™ program

If you're seeking options on what to do with those old or no longer working strings of holiday lights, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) members may recycle the lights by placing them in the drop-off containers located in the entry way at the co-op's headquarters in Owatonna.

Recycle Your Holidays™ is a one-of-a-kind statewide holiday light recycling program in Minnesota created and managed by the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM). Drop off unwanted light strings at any of their 450+ participating locations now through the end of January 2016. To view a map with other participating locations, visit www.recycleminnesota.org/recycle-your-holidays.

Great River Energy, Steele-Waseca's wholesale energy provider, is among the statewide partners promoting the recycling effort in Minnesota. The program employs over 200 individuals with disabilities at vocational centers throughout the state. Every part of the strand is dismantled by vocational center clients and properly recycled locally.

Besides holiday lights, the program also accepts electric, telephone and appliance cords. Among the items not accepted are cord adapters and battery packs.

There are also several locations that offer year-round recycling drop-offs. The site closest to Steele-Waseca is the Steele County Waste Management Recycling Center located at 1171 Brady Boulevard in Owatonna, MN.



If you are shopping for a new dishwasher, purchase an Energy Star qualified model. Energy Star dishwashers use less energy and water than standard units.