



Steele-Waseca Coop Electric  
Coal Creek Tour-Bismarck, ND  
June 23-25, 2020

# REGISTRATION

1

## WHO'S COMING

(list first & last names; include age for students ages 10-18 yrs.; minimum age to participate on the trip is 10 years old)

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.
- List any special needs or notes:

## HOW DO WE REACH YOU

2

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
SWCE Account #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHERE WILL YOU DEPART

3

(please circle one location)

Steele-Waseca in Owatonna  
OR  
Flying J/Big Steer-Hwy 19

(we recommend getting on the bus in Owatonna)

## ACCOMODATIONS

(please circle room type)

- a. 2 Queen Beds & 1 Pull Out Sleeper; (5 people)
- b. 2 Queen Beds-Handicap; (4 people)
- c. 1 King Bed & 1 Pull Out Sleeper; (3 people)
- d. 1 King Bed & 1 Pull Out Sleeper-2 Rooms; (3 people)

## TELL US HOW MANY ARE COMING

Members: \$310.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ adults = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
1-3 Students: FREE FREE  
Add'l Students: \$150.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ students = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Non Members:  
\$620.00 each x \_\_\_\_\_ people = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

2nd Time Travelers:  
\$620.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ people = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
(if you bring a first time member, then the price is \$310.00)

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SEND IT IN

Mail this form & payment to:  
Steele-Waseca Coop Electric  
Attn: Jack Schwab  
2411 West Bridge St.  
P.O. Box 485  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
507-451-7340  
(email: jschwab@swce.coop)



the power of human connections

# sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

December 2019



## inside connections

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## calendar of events

### December

- 7 National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 21 First day of winter
- 25 Christmas Day  
SWCE office is closed

**FREE 2020 Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric calendars are available at the co-op's office, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, while supplies last. You may pick them up at the front desk during regular business hours.**

## Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board approves co-op's largest retirement of capital credit equity

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors, during their Oct. 17 meeting, approved the co-op's record-breaking retirement of \$1.5 million in capital credit equity allocated in 1991, 1992, 2018, and estate settlements in 2019. The previous record was \$1.1 million retired in 2017 and 2018.

All current and former member-owners who received electric service from Steele-Waseca during the years listed above are eligible for the refund if electric sales exceeded power costs.

For convenience and to save on check processing and mailing costs, current member-owners eligible for this year's refund will have the amount of their equity applied as a credit on their Steele-Waseca bill received next month (December 2019). 15602

All former member-owners eligible for a refund will have their equity mailed to them by check.

Capital credit equity comes from the cooperative's margins or profits. The co-op's margin each year is determined

## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$16 billion to members since 1988 – Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

by subtracting operating expenses from operating revenue collected during the year.

Your equity is reserved for you, even if you move away from the area. That's why it is important for you to make sure Steele-Waseca always has your current address and phone number.

Until it's refunded to members, the equity is used to finance new construction and system improvements. Using members' equity helps Steele-Waseca provide electric service at a lower cost than if all construction funds were borrowed from other resources.

Your billing statement this month has a special line listing the amount of your electric sales less power costs in 2018. This is shown as **2018 PATRONAGE BASIS**. Capital credit equity you've been allocated for 2018 is shown as **2018 ALLOCATION**, if electric sales exceeded power costs. Also listed is the **CAPITAL CREDIT BALANCE**, which is the amount of your remaining accumulated equity. Please save this month's billing statement if you will need any of those amounts for tax preparation. Only inactive accounts receive separate statements of equity.

## Steele-Waseca benefits area groups through CoBank program

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric during October presented grants made available through a cooperative lender to benefit three area organizations.

The CoBank Sharing Success program annually provides funds designed to match the contributions of CoBank customers to the charitable groups they support throughout rural America. Eligible CoBank customers can submit an application for up to three match-

(Sharing Success continued on Page 7)



Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs (pictured left) presented Joe Schwering with the Steele County Sheriff's Mounted Posse, Oct. 29, with a \$2,000 grant check from CoBank's Sharing Success program to benefit the Posse. Also representing the Sheriff's Posse is Mike Keinz.



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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop)  
Email: [swce@swce.coop](mailto:swce@swce.coop)  
Fax: 507-446-4242



### Board of Directors

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

### Management

Syd Briggs ..... *General Manager*

### Division Managers

Darla DeVries ..... *Office*  
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  
and listen to the prompts. Please have  
your account number, phone number, and  
name on the account available.

**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 you noticed on the front page of this month's *Sparks* newsletter, the board of directors approved the retirement of \$1.5 million in capital credit equity allocated in 1991, 1992, 2018, and estate settlements in 2019.

Our average retirement, or refund, over the past 10 years has been \$858,974 which makes this year's refund \$641,026 more than the average. 21493

One of our cooperative principles is the value of financial participation. It is great to be part of a cooperative that is able to return a significant portion of that participation each year.

Every year Steele-Waseca receives questions from our member-owners regarding capital credit equity. For those who are new to a cooperative, or not familiar with how capital credit equity works, keep in mind that when you signed up to receive electric service from Steele-Waseca, you became a member of an electric co-op.

With investor-owned utilities returning a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an at-cost basis. This means Steele-Waseca allocates 100 percent of its margins or profits (revenue less expenses) to its members who purchased electricity during the year, and retires or pays back those margins at a future date to those very members.

Instead of returning the margins to people or companies who had little or nothing to do with the generation of those profits, or who probably don't even live in the same region or state that you do, Steele-Waseca returns margins to those who actually purchase and use our product. Steele-Waseca allocates and retires capital credits based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

**Where does the money come from?** Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate enough funds to pay operating costs, make payments on any loans, and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, the co-op subtracts operating expenses from operating revenue collected during the year. The balance is called an operating "margin."

**Can we get our retirement of capital credits sooner?** Steele-Waseca currently has an equity-to-assets ratio of 50 percent. The board of directors has the responsibility of balancing the amount of equity with the cost of debt, and therefore, the amount of capital credit retirements each year. The higher the equity we maintain, the lower the debt, and the less we have retired in capital credits. However, the cost of our debt is one of the major components in our rates. Most co-ops attempt to maintain an equity ratio between 30 and 50 percent, and Steele-Waseca is within that level. Our overall objective is to reward both past and current ratepayers with a balanced approach of retiring past and current capital credits each year, and maintaining the most manageable level of debt possible.

At Steele-Waseca the board of directors make a decision in the fall of each year to retire capital credits. The co-op has retired over \$17.2 million in capital credits to its members since 1966.

**I did not have electric service from Steele-Waseca during 1991, 1992, or 2018. Will I get any retirement?** No. This year capital credit retirements are only being made to members who purchased electricity from Steele-Waseca in 1991, 1992, or 2018.

**How will the retirement of capital credit equity work?** Inactive or former members who no longer purchase electricity from Steele-Waseca (but who purchased electricity during the years being retired) will receive a check. Due to the expense involved with processing printed checks, current members eligible to receive capital credit equity will have that amount credited to their Steele-Waseca account on their bill coming in December 2019.

**What if I've moved?** If you move or no longer have electric service with Steele-Waseca, it is important you inform the cooperative of your current address, so future retirements may be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a capital credit retirement, even if you move out of Steele-Waseca's service area. If Steele-Waseca has your current address, then the co-op will send your retirement check by mail.

If you have additional questions regarding your equity, please feel free to contact Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

## ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

(2) 20-LB PROPANE TANKS, \$40 for both; JIFFY 8" ICE AUGER, used vry little, runs great, \$175. 612-309-4995.

**ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS & MOST TRUCK & AUTO PARTS**, 30-day warranty on eng. & trans. 332-2300.

1995 IH GRAIN TRUCK, DT 466, auto, vry nice, \$10,000; 1967 JD 3020G, powershift, prof. restored, \$11,000. 330-3945.

FORD 4000 BACKHOE; WHITE 6195 FWA, 8100 hrs; 2006 FORD F-150, 122,000 mi. 475-2029.

QK HITCH ADAPTER PLATE for old style Bobcat to new style Bobcat attachments, \$200; HINIKER 1300 TRACTOR CAB, JD mounts, \$65,000. 384-7553.

1995 CHEVY SUBURBAN, 4WD, white w/graphics, leather int., gd shape, loaded, 199,000 mi., 350 engine, \$2995/cash. 456-3905.

2-STORY FARM HOUSE, you move, \$1. 456-1980.

1953 ALLIS WD45, \$1500; (2) 200-GAL. GAS BARRELS, \$50/ea.; 300-GAL. GAS BARREL w/stand, \$75; PICKUP TOOLBOX, \$25; SINGLE DISK w/wings, \$100. 444-0579.

CIRCLE LK LOT, 0.7 acres; (2) DOWNHILL ROSSIGNOL SKIS. 470-262-7696.

AUSTRALIAN SHEP. PUPS, born 6/27/19; ALUM. KIEFER 3-HORSE SLANT TRAILER w/dressing & tack room; (3) POLISH SHOW RABBITS, blk, male. 475-2509.

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.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is the recipient of Rural Development funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

(Sharing Success continued from Page 1)

ing grants. The minimum qualifying amount for each contribution is \$1,000, and the maximum of all three can't exceed \$7,500. 136673

This year's area recipients included the Steele County Sheriff's Mounted Posse, Faribault Middle School, and the Search & Rescue Explorer Post 150.

CoBank launched their Sharing Success program in 2012, in conjunction with the International Year of Cooperatives. It is one more way the bank creates value for its customers, by partnering with them to strengthen the communities they serve.

Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank is a national cooperative bank serving rural power, water, communications providers, and agribusinesses in all 50 states.

**Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is accepting bids to lease 16 acres of tillable land exclusively for farming purposes. The lease would begin April 1, 2020, and terminate March 31, 2023. Rents shall be payable on April 1 of each year. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric reserves the right to reject all bids. If interested in receiving a bid request form, please email Jenifer at [jshimpach@swce.coop](mailto:jshimpach@swce.coop) or phone Jenifer at 507-446-4207 or 800-526-3514. Bids must be received at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, MN 55060 by 3:30 p.m., Dec. 16, 2019.**



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Controller Jon Stelter (pictured left) presented Faribault Middle School Counselor Brent Hawkins, Oct. 30, with a \$3,100 check from CoBank's Sharing Success grant program to benefit the school.



Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs (pictured left) presented Rick Ellingson with Gold Cross Ambulance, Oct. 30, with a \$2,400 grant check from CoBank's Sharing Success program to benefit Search & Rescue Explorer Post 150.



ad connection

give away

WOOD for splitting or outdoor burner. 334-9823.

EMPTY WOOD WIRE SPOOLS, various sizes. 451-7340.

(6) 8' STEEL POSTS, new. 645-5077.

wanted

OAK FIREWOOD that is ready to burn (split & dried), will pick up. 612-817-3426.

TRAILER TIRE w/5-hole rim, ST205/75R15. 612-210-3144/Kilkenny.

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

FALL CLEANUP & MOWING JOBS.651-354-4405.

JUNKERS OR REPAIRABLES: cars, trucks, most farm & constr. equip., top \$ pd for junkrs. 332-2300.

USED/WASTE OIL, 200-gal. minimum. 420-7429.

RECIPES for the Sparks, only from members who have not submitted a recipe in 2019, please use a 3x5 card, the member who has their recipe published earns a \$7 energy credit on their SWCE statement.

for sale

GRINDERS that were used for grinding coffee, flour, etc. in early America, hand crank & converted to elec.; LARGE ANVIL; FREEZE ALARM. 456-0259.

2002 HONDA GOLDWING TRIKE MOTORCYCLE, 1800cc, vry nice cond., 39,575 mi., has trailer hitch, light connection. 213-6427/txt.

PUREBRED LAB PUPS. 363-6909.

FISH HOUSE, 8x16, LP lift kit, LP heater, bunk beds, \$500 as is; (2) PORT. FISH HOUSES, \$200/each. 524-4637.

VARIETY OF MEN'S & WOMEN'S OLD WEST/ FRONTIER CLOTHING incl. hats, skirts, vests, frocks, shirts, trousers & accessories.952-451-4821.

CLAM NANOOK 2-MAN THERMAL SHELTER (2-yrs-old) & BUDDY HEATER, exc. cond., used vry little, \$425 for both or sold separately. 789-6596.

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

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by December 5 to ensure being printed in the January 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 February 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

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

DOGHOUSE, cedar w/shingled roof, 45 long, 32 wide, 38 tall, \$25. 330-3303.

CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS FOR RENT, 11'x9' to 16'x10'. 332-4623.

ON-SITE GRAIN BIN AERATION FAN BALANCING & VIBRATION TROUBLESHOOTING, www.cmttechnicalservices.com. 634-3409/Chuck.

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

MINI STORAGE AVAIL. IN FBO: 6'x8', \$49/mth; 10'x24', \$125/mth; MINI STORAGE AVAIL. IN MORRISTOWN: 10'x20', \$99/mth. 333-0319.

TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL, & STUMP GRIND., pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; FRONT CHROME BUMPER for an F-650, new. 456-1609.

MINI STORAGE UNITS FOR RENT in Ellendale. 456-1460.

CRANK-DOWN FISH HOUSE; POLARIS RANGER w/heated cab & plow. 210-1826.

FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000. 838-5033/John.

GOODYEAR 18.4-38 TIRES & TUBES. 330-1849.

1999 GRAND AM SE, (4) door, 205,000+ mi., blue, runs gd, \$1000/obo. 475-1746.

SHIPPING CONTAINERS, 20' & 40' lengths, rodent- & moisture-proof, store your stuff on your property. 612-418-4375.

TORO PWR SWEEP BLOWER, elec., wrks great for blowing snow or leaves off driveway.\$15. 451-2687.

PELLET STOVE, 80,000-Btu, less than 2-yrs, \$2000. 391-2485/leave message.

105-ACRES (220-bu. corn) on Cty Rd 271, Wells Twp., 1-mi. to Shieldsville, \$7500/acre. 301-9694.

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE incl. church, carolers, (2) candy shops, lighthouse, skating rink, lots of people, fencing, etc., fun to set up & enjoy; 2-PLACE SNOWMOBILE TRAILER. 583-7143.

JD 3-BTM PLOW, 3-16s with a stand, \$750. 612-598-3740.

RED WING CROCK, 12-gal., \$120/obo. 334-9541.

WOODEN ROCKING DONKEY, toddler sized or mostly for collecting; 4' CHRISTMAS STAR, hand-made w/white rope lights, \$12. 451-0653.

(30) TIE STALLS w/dividers. 451-7528.

BELLWOOD WINDSOR 9526 SMALL PARLOR WOODSTOVE, \$200; RED JACKET PUMP, \$80; VINT. WALTON HUMIDIFIER, \$120. 612-827-6575.

HEWITT 160# BOAT LIFT, \$450; PADDLEBOAT; JD 845 12-ROW CULTIVATOR, made into sidedress bar, \$2900; BOWFLEX® TREADCLIMBER®, \$450. 456-8639.

CAR MANUALS: '79 Buick Regal, '77 Chev. Monza, \$5/ea.; (4) '68 & (3) '81 PONTIAC CATALINA 14" HUBCAPS, \$25/each (all in gd cond.). 838-8565.

5TH WHEEL PLATE HITCH in bed of truck, \$350; GOLF CART TIRE & RIMS, set of (4), standard sized only, \$100. 491-4565.

JD 730; JD 4020; ARPS 70 SNOWBLOWER, 7', dbl auger, \$2500. 451-2583.

MF 50 TRACTOR, early model, parade or field ready, runs & looks gd, tires gd, gas, \$4250.952-652-2678.

GENERAC GP2200i PORT. GENERATOR, 1700 running watts, 2200 starting watts, run only 24-hr, 1-yr warranty, \$450. 685-4126.

FARMALL 460, gas, gd TA, 540 PTO, fast hitch, dual 345 hyd. loader; IH 886, gd TA, 3-pt, 540/1000 PTO; IH 656, diesel, gd TA, 540 PTO, 3-pt, 1504 hrs; IH 12.50 DISC, hyd. lift. 334-7995.

8' WESTERN STRAIGHT-BLADE SNOWPLOW off '86 Chev., \$800. 334-2673.

2007 CHEVY SILVERADO, reg. cab, half-ton, new tires on back, topper, rubber floor liner in box, new battery, \$7000/obo. 645-8984.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

A CHRISTMAS CAROL WKND, Dec. 5-7. By mtr coach, 2-nights hotel, 3-meals, St. Olaf Christmas, A Wonderful Life Dinner Theater, A Christmas Carol at the Guthrie, & more! \$539 pp w/2 per room.

WESTERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE (AIR INCL.), March 12-21, 2020; 2-nights hotel, 7-night cruise on Sky Princess, Grand Cayman, Cozumel, Belize, & more! Starts at \$2,699 pp w/2 per stateroom.

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C., May 15-19, 2020. Includes air, hotel, & many of the sites of Washington, D.C. Starting at \$1,599 per person with 2 per room.

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



member connection

Steele-Waseca accepting 2020 Coal Creek Tour reservations

If you're seeking ideas for a three-day getaway, reservations are now being accepted for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's annual Coal Creek Tour to Underwood, North Dakota.

This mini-vacation lets you get away and leaves the planning to us. Mom and/or Dad, or Grandma and/or Grandpa, have you ever thought it would be fun to take the kids or grandkids on an outing where everything is planned out, meals included, have fun, learn, and be worry free?

The tour includes the Coal Creek Station and Falkirk Mine, with a side tour of the Garrison Dam.

The three-day tour is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, through Thursday, June 25, 2020. Travel in the comfort of a motor coach from Steele-Waseca to Bismarck, N.D., then stay at the Country Inn & Suites, which also has a water park for the kids. Each morning the hotel provides a full buffet breakfast.

The tour on Wednesday, June 24, will include the Coal Creek Station to learn about the process of utilizing coal to generate electricity. Next is to observe the HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) Terminal. It's here participants will see the equipment where 22,000 volts of alternating current (AC) from the generators is converted to 400,000 volts of direct current (DC). 1003189

From the 21st floor of Coal Creek Station (see photo left), you will be able to view the Blue Flint Ethanol

Plant which generates over 65-million gallons of ethanol per year by using steam from the Coal Creek power plant rather than utilizing additional boilers and burning natural gas, making Blue Flint one of the most efficient ethanol plants.

Participants will also visit the Falkirk Mine to observe the open-pit mining process for lignite coal and the huge drag lines that uncover the coal. Tour participants will learn how the land is restored to its original landscape and farmland crop production levels after the coal is mined. If weather permits, tour participants will be able to walk in the coal field and pick their own coal (see photo above left).

The tour price per Steele-Waseca member and their guest is \$310 per adult. One of the cooperative's goals for STUDENTS is to offer an educational opportunity about the electrical industry to our membership's youth. This is a great way for parents and/or grandparents to bring up to three students between the ages of 10 and 18 on this tour at NO CHARGE! Additional students may attend for a minimal additional charge of \$150 per student. Students



Well attended Steele-Waseca town hall meetings conducted in Lonsdale and Owatonna

Over 250 members, spouses, family, and/or friends were in attendance for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric town hall meetings in Lonsdale and Owatonna.

The meeting, Oct. 23, at the Lonsdale American Legion had 171 in attendance from the invited townships of Wheatland, Webster, Upper Bridgewater, Northfield, Bridgewater, Forest, Erin, Kilkenny, Shieldsville, and Wells in Rice and LeSueur counties representing Steele-Waseca board director districts 1, 7, 8, and 9.

The meeting, Oct. 29, at Torey's Restaurant & Bar in Owatonna had 84 in attendance from the invited townships of Kenyon, Cannon City, Wheeling,

Richland, Walcott, Morristown, Clinton Falls/Medford, Warsaw, and Deerfield in Goodhue, Rice, and Steele counties representing Steele-Waseca board director districts 1, 4, 6, 7, and 8.

The presenter for both meetings was Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs.

He presented information on cooperatives' seven principles, the early history of Steele-Waseca, use of the co-op's app available through the App Store or Google Play for those with smart mobile devices, the rebate for Steele-Waseca's POWRE (Power Optimized With Renewable Energy) program, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA's) International



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric General Manager Syd Briggs (standing top left) presented information regarding cooperative's seven principles during the town hall meeting, Oct. 23, at the Lonsdale American Legion.

program bringing power to parts of the world living without electricity.

Steele-Waseca Operations Division

(Town hall meetings continued on Page 5)



## cookin' connection

### Holiday Salad

Delores Kalina

Lonsdale

16 oz. can fruit cocktail or mixed fruit  
15 oz. can crushed pineapple  
4 oz. pkg. vanilla instant pudding  
2 c. miniature marshmallows  
1 1/2 c. Cool Whip® topping  
1/2 c. coconut

Combine pudding, fruit cocktail, and pineapple (with juice). Add marshmallows. Fold in Cool Whip and coconut. Chill overnight.

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 31 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during October 2019. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://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 bills; 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.

## November issue of Sparks



**Numbers found:**  
Robert/Linda Peasley  
**Numbers not found:**  
Keith/Kelly Balfe  
Valerie/Chad Ubl  
Michael/Connie Featherston  
James/Tracy Kochendorfer



sparks • december 2019

## 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](http://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 Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Butterfield at our office between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **October temps** – The average high temperature for October was 52° F, while the average low was 36° F. This resulted in 627 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 53° F and average low of 35° F. This resulted in 638.5 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2019, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), electric clothes dryers, dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, light emitting diode (LED) bulbs purchased (limit 5) 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](http://www.swce.coop). For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield 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**

### STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE

**866-878-7964**

TO BE USED TO REPORT ANY CRIME OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY ANONYMOUSLY

COVERS ALL OF STEELE COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITIES OF:

OWATONNA ELLENDALE  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD

## health & safety connection

### 12 Days of Holiday Safety

It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!



**Day 1** What's that noise? Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.

**Day 5** Ouch! Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.

**Day 9** Nice and warm. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.

**Day 2** What a shocker! Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.

**Day 6** Kids eat the darndest things! Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.

**Day 10** Can't touch this! Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.

**Day 3** Two's company, three's a crowd. Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.

**Day 7** Thirsty? Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

**Day 11** Escape Route: Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.

**Day 4** Is it working? Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.

**Day 8** Make a wish! Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

**Day 12** Hot stuff! Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at [holidaysafety.org](http://holidaysafety.org).



## Be safe

### Stay clear of downed power lines

**NEVER TOUCH A DOWNED POWER LINE.**

Always assume it is energized and call 911 immediately.

**POWERFUL STORMS** can damage power lines. If you see a downed power line:

- Stay at least 50 feet away from it and assume it is energized. The ground may also be energized making the entire area extremely dangerous.
- Never touch anything that is touching a downed power line. It is as dangerous as the line itself.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside your vehicle until help arrives.

(Town hall meetings continued from Page 3)

Manager Kim Huxford presented information and answered questions from attendees regarding air source heat pumps. 1053463

Those in attendance learned more about ACRE (Action Committee for Rural Electrification) and how participation provides support to elected officials who support legislation keeping electricity reliable and affordable for rural electric cooperatives. Among those signing up to join ACRE included Donald/Delores Dierking of Medford, and Mark Lessman of Faribault.

The next round of town hall meetings are tentatively scheduled for Spring 2020, but specific dates and locations have yet to be finalized. Members are notified by a postcard mailed to their billing address. **5/22**

## Did you know?

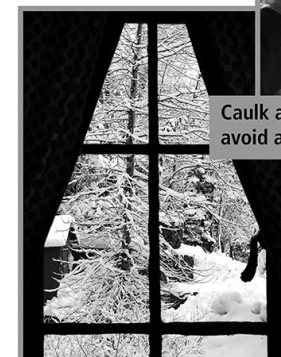
Heating your home accounts for up to 48 percent of your utility bill.

A few tips to help you save:

Clean or replace your furnace filter once a month (or as recommended).



Caulk and seal windows to avoid air leaks.



Keep draperies and shades open during the day and closed at night.



Visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov) for more ways to save!

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