

youth tour connection

Applications accepted at Steele-Waseca for 2020 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

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 2020 Youth Tour, June 20-25.

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 co-operatives 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

2020, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 21, 2020. The two Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 20, 2020.

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 2020? 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



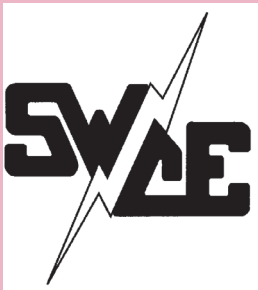
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 2019 delegates, Dawson Drentlaw of Faribault (back row, far left), and Leah Transburg of Northfield (front row, second from right) were among 37 delegates from Minnesota electric cooperatives experiencing last year's Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., pictured with the Capitol in the background.

community. Answer in 300 words or less. 26240

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 20, presently at 9 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the orientation session.



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

February 2020



VALENTINE'S DAY

inside connections

- 2 Manager Connection
- 3 GRE renewable energy goals
Why energy bills are higher in the winter
Electronic SWCE bill notification
- 4 Cookin' Connection
SWCE community solar update
Sparks in brief
Steele County Tip Line
- 5 Space heater safety tips
Installing and maintaining smoke alarms
How long do LED bulbs last?
- 6 Ad Connection
4-Seasons Vacations
- 7 Ad Connection
Multipurpose windbreaks
- 8 SWCE accepting applications for '20 Youth Tour to Wash., D.C.

calendar of events

February

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 2 Super Bowl LIV
Groundhog Day
- 12 Abraham Lincoln's birthday
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 17 Presidents' Day
- 21 SWCE's deadline for 2020 Youth Tour applications
- 22 George Washington's birthday

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric announce residential rebates for 2020

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric member-owners seeking to add value to their energy dollar may utilize rebates offered by the co-op in 2020.

Rebates for central air conditioners and air source heat pumps are listed below, and require a quality installation. To find a qualified installer, visit Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop, click on "Residential Rebates," then "Qualified Installers List," listed under "Quick Links."

	A/C	ASHP
14.5-14.9 SEER	\$50	\$200
15.0-15.9 SEER	\$50	\$300
16.0+ SEER	\$50	\$400

Rebates for Energy Star® labeled ground source heat pumps (GHSPs) are \$100 per ton in 2020.

Heat pump water heaters (HPWHs) in 2020 have a rebate of \$500.

Steele-Waseca is offering a \$50 rebate for a residential HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM), which offers a higher efficiency rating than typical electric blowers or condenser fan motors.

Ductless ASHPs with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate if your primary heat is delivered fuel, and \$200 if your primary heat is electric.

Energy Star labeled refrigerators and freezers are eligible for a \$50 rebate, only if you recycle your old unit.

Dehumidifiers with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$25 rebate.

Residential lighting rebates in 2020 will only be for LED (light emitting diode) lightbulbs with the Energy Star label. The rebate is \$2 per bulb up to one-half the purchase price (limit 5 bulbs).

Steele-Waseca members who install a LED yard light fixture that is Energy Star or DLC (Design Lights Consortium) rated are eligible for a \$30 rebate; Wi-Fi smart thermostats are eligible for



ENERGY STAR
Products with the Energy Star label have met federal specifications regarding energy efficiency.

a \$25 rebate; Energy Star labeled electric clothes dryers are eligible for a \$25 rebate; a central air conditioner tune up is eligible for a \$25 rebate per unit; variable speed pool pumps with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate; and pool ASHPs are eligible for a \$200 rebate. 19513

Steele-Waseca is offering up to \$500 for members participating in the ChargeWise program. This is a voluntary program offered by participating electric cooperatives for qualified members who own a plug-in (PEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) electric vehicle.

The program allows members to charge their PEV/PHEV in their garage or carport using electricity from a specially installed 20-amp ChargeWise outlet. This ChargeWise outlet only provides energy during the off-peak hours of 11 p.m.-7 a.m. Members simply plug in the PEV in the evening and their vehicle is charged during those overnight hours at a reduced rate. They wake up to a fully-charged electric vehicle.

If you have a question, or wish to request a rebate form, please call Cindy Butterfield at Steele-Waseca weekdays

(Residential rebates continued on Page 3)

Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2020 — June 20-25

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 2020 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 # _____

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Email: swce@swce.coop
Fax: 507-446-4242



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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

Being prepared for storms that potentially create power outages requires proactive planning to minimize the inconvenience.

If you have endured an extended power outage due to a storm, you may have taken steps to not be inconvenienced in that manner again. However, most simply count on the line crews to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

With the way this past fall was going with January weather in November, you couldn't help but think it was going to be a long winter in Minnesota. However, we ended up having a minimal white Christmas with what could be described as Easter weather in December. 30379

However, if you have lived in the area for any length of time, you realize winter weather can go into the first week of May (remember 2013). In any event, it is important to be prepared during any season where storms may cause a power outage. Motorists are encouraged to be prepared with car care kits when traveling. The same holds true for residents whether they are a homeowner or renter.

While you can't predict which weather forecast will come true, you can plan ahead so when a severe weather event strikes, you have the tools and resources to effectively weather the storm. The Department of Homeland Security offers several resources to help you prepare for major weather events. Visit www.ready.gov for more information.

Preparedness actions and items

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other

medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.

- Organize emergency supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location.

With advance warning

If a severe storm is expected with high winds and sustained precipitation, you may need to take extra steps to safeguard your home, like securely closing exterior doors. Fully charge all cellphones, laptops, and devices so you have maximum power in the event of a power outage.

If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

During a prolonged outage

In the event of an outage, turn off appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when the power is restored.

If utilizing a small household generator, consider using LED holiday lights to illuminate a living area. A strand of 100 white lights draws little energy yet produces considerable light. Solar lights also work, if they can receive some sunlight during the day for charging. During weather events, listen to local news or NOAA weather radio for emergency updates. For power restoration updates, check on Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's app, Facebook page, or the outage map on Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop, for restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through areas where power lines may not be seen. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs—including on your property.

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)
HANDMADE QUILTS, queen sized, \$100/each. 688-2039.

BERKSHIRE/HEREFORD CROSS PIGLETS, \$50. 456-7392.

WEIDER SKI MASTER CROSS COUNTRY SKIER EXERCISE MACHINE. 838-8792.

FISH HOUSE, 6'x8' on 4x4 skids, insulated ceiling, walls & floor, rubber roof, LED lights, catch covers, \$875. 456-1133.

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.

(LED bulb life continued from Page 5)

30 percent with little notice. The average rated life of LEDs then, is established by a projection of when the light output will decrease by 30 percent.

Manufacturers test LEDs for lumen depreciation for at least 6,000 hours. The small amount of lumen depreciation in that test and UL temperature testing of an LED fixture is combined and rated life is projected out by a factor of six times the test duration (50,000 hours for 8,400 test hours).

Real world test results

Projections are nice, but how do we know if LEDs really last 50,000 hours or more? U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) tests may provide an answer. In 2010, the DOE began testing a sample of 31 LED bulbs. After more than 60,000 hours of continuous operation, the average lumen depreciation was only 5 percent, and all of the bulbs were still going strong.

Bulb life and performance can vary depending on the product. To get the best results in your home, purchase Energy Star®-certified LED bulbs. Energy Star products are independently tested to ensure they deliver efficiency and performance.

Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

Visit Great River Energy's website at www.greatriverenergy.com and click on "Load Management"

Need a history of controls? Click on "History" on the "Load Management" page

(2) **VideoSecu® SPEAKER WALL MOUNTS**, Model MS56B, \$20; (2) **BELL'O SP200 SPEAKER STANDS**, \$20. 279-2463.

2004 NH TM175 TRACTOR w/loader; **1981 IH 1586 TRACTOR**. 271-1082.

RETIRED WATT WARE APPLE PATTERN: (3) pitchers, (2) large bowls, (2) casseroles, butter dish printed w/co-op names, \$800. 527-2307.

(2) **FORD F-150 FLOOR MATS (FRONT)**, should fit models 2004-14. 685-4372.

WIN. 25 12-GA. SHOTGUN; DISPLAY CABINET, 48"high, 32"wide, 24"deep, made of solid oak, \$50; **1984 CUTLASS CIERA**, rust free, V6, diesel (all in vry gd cond.). 451-0996.

JD 7720 COMBINE, 3800 hrs; **NH 311 BALER**, shedded, exc. cond. 524-4637.

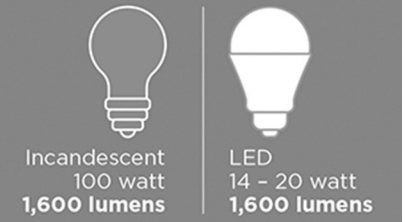
FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000. 838-5033/John.

CERAMIC FLOWER POTS, different sizes, shapes, & colors. 451-4133.

Buy Lumens, not Watts

Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption.

Tip: To replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that produces about 1,600 lumens.



Multipurpose benefits to windbreaks on your property

by Adam Arndt, Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Trees and shrubs planted in windbreaks have many benefits including protection of livestock and buildings from snow and wind, reducing energy consumption, and providing habitat for wildlife.

There are several ways to improve the suitability of windbreaks for each of the benefits listed above. A little planning and preparation can be very rewarding for many years to come.

When planting a windbreak to protect a farmstead and livestock, plan for a minimum of three rows. The outside row being a low growing shrub to trap the snow with a combination of spruce, pine or deciduous trees on the inside. This creates the effect of shortest to tallest to force the wind up and over your farmstead. Studies have shown 40 percent of the snow that falls is moved to another location by wind. A shrub row on the outside of your windbreak will start stopping snow in their third year of growth and only get better after that!

Energy consumption in the winter months can increase drastically due to cold weather and wind. Windbreaks can help reduce heating costs by up to 25 percent. A properly planted windbreak with dense conifers on the north and west side of your building site helps save energy and reduce the cost of heating and cooling by protecting buildings from winter wind and summer sun. On the south side of your property plant tall deciduous trees that will provide shade to buildings in the summer, but allow

the sun to warm them up during winter months when the leaves fall.

Wildlife need two key elements from any habitat they live in which can both be provided by a windbreak. Those include: sources of food and places for protection from weather and predators. When it comes to wildlife, the more rows of trees—the better. A typical wildlife windbreak would contain five rows of trees and shrubs that provides, berries, fruit, and seeds along with conifers that provide thermal protection during the harsh winter months.

Planting species native to the Midwest increase the survivability of the trees in your windbreak, and in some cases increase growth. Allowing grasses and wildflowers to grow in and around established plantings will provide more food and cover for wildlife than windbreaks that are closely manicured with mowing.

Visit the Steele County SWCD for site visits, advice, and plan creation for all types of windbreaks. They are again holding their annual tree and native plant sale with select varieties suitable for this area at very reasonable prices.

New this year, the Steele County SWCD has an online store where you can view all species featuring pictures and descriptions, and place your order. Visit their website, stealeswcd.org, or on Facebook. You may always stop by their office at 235 Cedardale Dr. SE, Owatonna; or call 507-451-6730 ext. 3.

ad connection

give away

FREE ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS, you place & remove your own ad on SWCE's website, swce.coop, these are separate from Sparks & will not appear in Sparks unless mailed, delivered, faxd or emailed to SWCE.

wanted

GRAIN BELT PORCELAIN SIGNS & OLD PAPER WALL SIGNS. 301-9053.

JUNKERS OR REPAIRABLES, top \$ paid for trucks, cars. 332-2300.

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS PLASTIC (BLOW MOLD) LIGHTED DECORATIONS. 645-5387.

PINBALL MACHINES, working or non-working, paying \$, will haul away, no poker/slot machines. 920-723-4969.

USED OIL, 200-gal. min. 420-7429.

for sale

2-WHEEL TRAILER, homemade; **ROLLER MILL.** 456-8329.

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

TRAILER, 8x14, tandem axle (7,500/each), new tires, \$1700; **FISH HOUSE** (wheel house), 6x10, needs floor & a little TLC, \$300. 456-9145.

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

DDEC 5 ENGINE SENSOR HARNESS, new; **SE-RIES 60 FUEL CHECK VALVE.** 380-4291.

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

SONY CAR STEREO w/speakers, AM/FM/CD/MP3, remote, new, \$150; **TV CONVERTER BOX**, new, \$50; **FLARE BOX**, exc. shape, \$675. 455-3881.

ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS (USED), 30-day warranty. 332-2300.

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

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **February 5** to ensure being printed in the March 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 April 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

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

WeatherTech® FLOOR LINERS, tan, fits 2003-14 Volvo XC90, front, back, 3rd row, & cargo area, \$150 for all. 210-9908.

RENTAL, Izaak Walton League Bldg., 4 mi. south of Owat., seats 100, full kitchen, grill, Wi-Fi, \$125. 451-7946.

MINI STORAGE avail. in Fbo: 6'x8', \$49/mth; 10'x24', \$125/mth; **MINI STORAGE** avail. in Morristwn: 10'x20', \$99/mth. 333-0319.

BALDWIN ORGASONIC ORGAN w/bench & instruction playbooks, perfect cond. 451-7626.

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

2003 GRAND CHEROKEE LAREDO, \$1000; **2001 DODGE DAKOTA**, 4x4, \$2000; **2003 SUBARU FORESTER**, \$2000; **1998 CHEVY**, 4x4. 402-7679.

'02 GMC 24' CUBE VAN, 100,000 mi., \$6500; **FORD 9000 BOOM TRUCK**, 204,000 mi., \$15,000; **MISC. PARTS** for '55 Chev., & 1930 Model A. 323-5750.

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

(4) BEVELED GLASS OCCASIONAL TABLES w/ wicker bottom shelves, beautiful, \$250. 465-8566.

OAK ROLLTOP DESK, \$500; **SML WOOD TABLE**, \$50; **ENTERTAINMENT CENTER**, all oak, \$100. 339-2144.

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

JD 845 12-ROW CULT. MADE INTO SIDEDRESS BAR, \$2900; **HEWITT 1600# BOAT LIFT**, \$450; **BOWFLEX TREADCLIMBER**, \$400. 456-8639.

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

S&S HORSE TRAILER, 16', newer wood floor, bumper pull, \$750/obo. 952-736-8298.

VINTAGE BOOKS; 24-CAN STAR WARS COLLECTION w/display rack; **BEER CAN COLLECTION; OLD TRUNKS; VINTAGE 7-DRAWER WORKBENCH & METAL CABINETS.** 612-827-6575.

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

105 ACRES, tiled, 1-mi. to Shieldsville Store, retiring from farming, 3/4 mi. on Cty Rd 271. 301-9694.

2" TUBULAR LIVESTOCK GATES, various sizes, 6' to 18'; **16' WIRE LIVESTOCK FENCE PANELS.** 465-3380 before 9 p.m.

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

SNOWSHOES, like new, worn once, \$35; **(2) POLES**, \$10. 334-4056.

2009 ARCTIC CAT PROWLER 700 XTX, side-by-side, 4x4 w/dump box, always stored inside, exc. cond., 1170 mi., \$5900. 491-4565.

QUAIL, Coturnix & Bobwhite, gd for eating & dog training, & got eggs. 581-5025.

NordicTrack® WalkFit. 583-7408.

WeatherTech® FLOOR LINERS, new, fits Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia, & Chev. Traverse, \$70. 456-8814.

(4) PIRELLI TIRES, P-6, P225-55-R18 M&S, \$5/ea. 334-9583.

RESERVE YOUR MARCH-APRIL BORN KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP RAM & EWE LAMBS. 451-2722.

(4) BOUMATIC FLOW STAR MILKER PIPELINE UNITS w/pulsators & SS hangers, 5/8" milk outlet, some extra parts, \$20. 251-7680.

TORQUE WRENCH, 1/2" drive, in case, like new, ratchet handle 10-150 ft/lbs. & 13.6-203.5 Nm; **ZAREBA DC 12V FENCER**, 10-mile range, \$40. 696-5820.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

SAN ANTONIO, March 7-15. By motor coach, 8-nights, 14-meals, cruise Riverwalk District, LBJ Ranch, Dealey Plaza, Magnolia Market at the Silos Tour, & much more. \$1,399 pp w/2 per room.

MN TWINS SPRING TRAINING CAMP, March 4-14. By motor coach, 10-nights, 16-meals, tickets for 4 Twins spring training games, Louisville Slugger Museum & more! \$1,969 pp w/2 per room.

ARIZONA, Mar. 16-26. Delta air, 10-nights, 10-meals, day trips to Sedona, Tombstone, & Bisbee. Stay at Crowne Plaza Golf Resort in Chandler, customize trip w/shuttle. \$2,499 pp w/2 per room.

ALASKA TOUR & CRUISE, Aug. 15-29. Delta air, 7-nights land accommodations, 7-nights cruise on Grand Princess, includes all onboard meals & entertainment. \$5,099 pp w/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

Our promise to members: Energy that's clean, without the added cost

by David Saggau, president and chief executive officer, Great River Energy (GRE)

(Editor's Note: Great River Energy is the wholesale energy provider to Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's legacy members. Like Steele-Waseca, GRE is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by its members.)

Twenty years ago, Great River Energy began receiving electricity from three wind turbines in southern Minnesota. Today, there are nearly 350 turbines spinning to provide you emission-free electricity.

Now, GRE is striving to serve Steele-Waseca with energy that is 50 percent renewable by 2030. We are ahead of



David Saggau

schedule, too, reaching 30 percent in 2019.

Meanwhile, Great River Energy's average wholesale electric rates have remained flat. GRE and its 28 member-owner cooperatives are committed to providing clean energy that is as affordable and reliable as ever.

Carbon emissions are declining

Great River Energy has long sought strategic ways to reduce the carbon emissions on its system, and we have made real progress.

We exited two contracts for coal-based electricity and closed a long-running coal power plant. Those decisions were made for economic benefit while also providing for reductions in carbon emissions.



Using electricity in new ways

Electricity is improving so rapidly that it has become a favored energy source for transportation, which is currently the state's largest source of carbon emissions.

Minnesota is encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions because they have no tailpipe emissions. Members are drawn to them because they require no stops at the gas station and very few trips to the mechanic.

Your cooperative has programs that make it easier to purchase an electric vehicle and at-home charger, as well as other efficient electric devices such as air conditioners, water heaters and heat pumps. 1017001

Remaining focused on our members

The electricity you receive is improving because of you, the cooperative membership. Our research shows that members strongly believe adding more renewables is a good idea and support our efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Cooperative members want electricity that is affordable, reliable and clean. As your wholesale power supplier, that is what we will continue to provide.

If you wish to reduce clutter and add convenience, you may elect to receive an email that your bill is available to view online. Log in to your online account at www.swce.coop, click on the "Alerts" tab, and check "Bill Notification," and "Electronic Only." Enter your email address and click "Update" to receive your bill notification by email instead of in the mail.

(Residential rebates continued from Page 1)

between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Rebate forms are available at Steele-Waseca's website, swce.coop, by clicking on "Residential Rebates." Please visit energystar.gov to check the model number of qualifying products.

Completed rebate forms must be accompanied with a copy of the receipt and submitted within 90 days of purchase. Please allow 6-8 weeks for processing. The rebate will appear as a credit on your Steele-Waseca bill. ^{5/15}

cookin' connection

Meat & Vegetable Spread

Dorthy Jackel

Claremont

1 can of canned meat (12 oz. SPAM®)
1/4 carrot
1/4 onion
2 boiled eggs

Grind a little meat, carrot, onion, one egg, and keep on doing this until you have it all ground. Then mix with Miracle Whip (Dressing). Add salt and pepper to taste.

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 17 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during December 2019. 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 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.

January issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
Douglas Hiatt
Numbers not found:
Gary Spatenka
Kevin/Nada Docken
Robert/Linda Myers
Matthew/Nicole Yochum



sparks • february 2020

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

• **December temps** – The average high temperature for December was 29°F, while the average low was 14°F. This resulted in 1,348.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 30°F and average low of 19°F. This resulted in 1,257 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2020, 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. 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

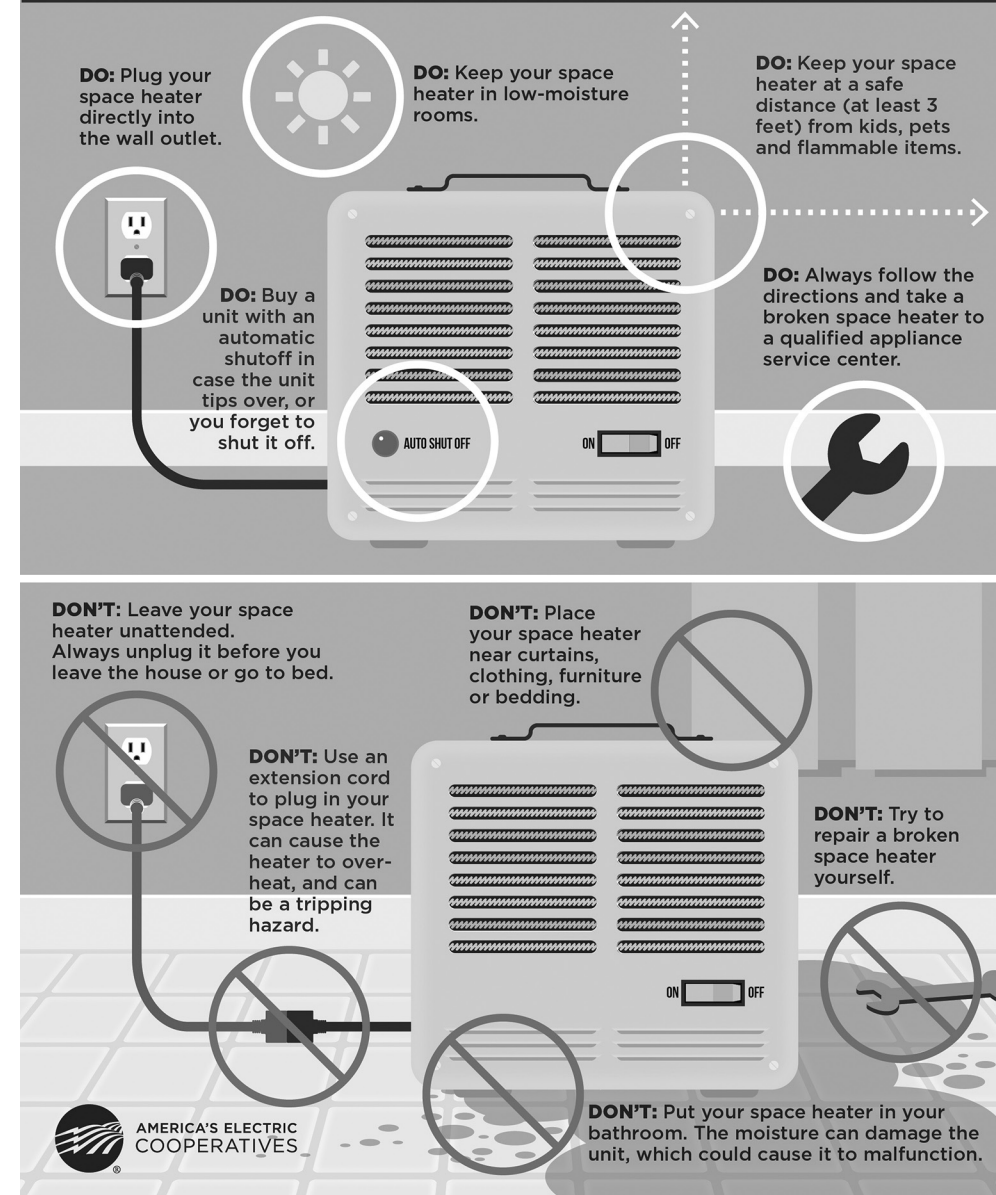
COVERS ALL OF STEELE COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITIES OF:

OWATONNA ELLENDALE BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD

health & safety connection

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.



Smoke alarms save lives

According to the National Fire Protection Association, an average of 1,450 fire deaths occur every year in homes with missing or non-functioning smoke alarms.

Remember to:

1. Test smoke alarms monthly.
2. Change smoke alarm batteries yearly.
3. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.

Install smoke alarms in:

- Every bedroom.
- Outside each sleeping area.
- On every level of your home, including the basement.
- On levels without bedrooms: install in the living room, den, or family room.
- Install near stairways leading to upper levels.
- Install smoke alarms 10 feet from cooking appliances to minimize false alarms.

Use interconnected smoke alarms for additional safety and early warning. Low pitch sound and vibration smoke alarms are available for those who are hard of hearing. Do not install near windows, doors, or ducts. Never paint smoke alarms. 1076700

Also, be sure to test your carbon monoxide alarms, ground-fault circuit interrupters, and arc-fault circuit interrupters once a month as well.

Courtesy: Electrical Safety Foundation International

How long do LED bulbs really last?

LED bulbs have a number of advantages over conventional incandescent bulbs: higher energy efficiency, improved light quality, and an average rated life of up to 50,000 hours or more.

That all sounds great, but what exactly does "average rated life" mean? How's that different than "actual" life? After all, you want to know how long a bulb really lasts, not how long it's rated to last. The following is an explanation of average rated life, how bulb manufacturers test for it and what it means to you.

The facts of LED life

Average rated life is the life expectancy in hours based on laboratory tests of a sample set of bulbs. The "average" rated life is the point at which half the sample bulbs failed. For example, if 100 bulbs are tested and 50 of them fail at 10,000 hours, then their average rated life would be 10,000 hours.

The useful life of LEDs is defined differently than it is for other lighting technologies. Incandescent bulbs fail when the filament burns out. LEDs typically don't burn out. They experience "lumen



depreciation" where their brightness slowly fades over time.

Research has shown that people will accept gradual light reductions of up to (LED bulb life continued on Page 7)

sparks • february 2020

5