



WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

Take advantage of these hot promo rebates when you install a qualifying, energy-saving air source heat pump!

Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$2,000

Air source heat pumps provide **home cooling and supplemental heating**, using **72% less electricity** than conventional air conditioners and furnaces.

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice.

(Electrify lawn care continued from Page 3)

Electric trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Traditionally, like lawn mowers, string trimmers have typically been powered by gas. But new versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a backup battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you're



Photo Source: Abby Berry
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interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.

Electric leaf blowers

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you'll need to clear off those walkways and patios for the finishing touch. If you don't want to deal with the maintenance of a gas-powered blower or the restraints of a corded blower, a cordless electric version is a great option.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are

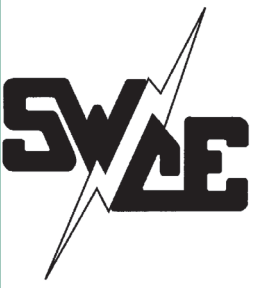


Photo Source: Scott Van Osdol
sparks • june 2020

minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about \$150 and up.

If you're looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites like [ConsumerReports.org](https://www.consumerreports.org). With a little research, you'll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month - with less maintenance, hassle and noise (and your neighbors will thank you!).

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric does not sell the mailing addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of our members.



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

June 2020

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calendar of events

- June
- 14 Flag Day
 - 20 First day of summer
 - 21 Father's Day 28723
- National Dairy Month

Summer Energy-Saving Tips

Costs associated with cooling your home can make up a large portion of your summer electric bills. Stay cool and save money with these energy efficiency tips!



NO-COST TIPS

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.



Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home. Set it to a higher temperature when you're away.



Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.

(Summer energy-saving tips continued on Page 3)

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 84th annual meeting, originally scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, has been postponed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please see General Manager Syd Briggs' column on Page 2 for additional information.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

You can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses with these actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth.
- Practice social distancing by putting space between yourself & others.
- Wash hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

316159-A March 25, 2020 8:00 AM

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.

ad connection

give away

STEEL GRAIN BINS, located 3 mi. south of Waseca, you take down & remove. 612-817-3426.

36" SONY TV, you haul. 456-7757.

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.

SEND FREE COVID CARDS OF COMFORT & CARING, komfortkardz.com.

wanted

RHUBARB PLANTS for give away, needing 1-2 plants to get a patch established, willing to come & dig. 272-9168.

PONTOON LIFT for 22' pontoon. 612-817-3426.

USED CULTIPACKER for food plots. 451-2286.

PAINTING JOBS: houses, outbuildings, garages, barns, etc. 308-8556.

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

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

TRACTOR TIRE CHAINS, size 18-4-34. 456-0296.

LANESBORO GOPHER TRAPS, preferably the older, smaller style. 475-0753.

FARM ADVERTISING SIGNS: dairy, feed, seed corn, metal signs. 450-1676.

TRACTOR TIRE, 12.4x28; **(2) 12.4 X 28 TIRES & WHEELS** for Ford TL10 Ferguson or just 28" rims off combine. 384-7553.

USED CULTIPACKER, any cond. 334-0188.

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

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

for sale

TRACTOR TIRE CHAINS SET, 13.6-38, \$125. 451-5208.

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

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **June 5** to ensure being printed in the July 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 August 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

HUSQVARNA 36 CHAIN SAW, 16" bar, (3) chains, chain guard, all manuals, \$125; **CRAFTSMAN CORDLESS DRILL**, 18V charger, battery, case, new in box, \$30. 455-3881.

6000-BU. MFS BIN w/drying floor, 24' diameter, you move, best offer. 456-1357.

TIRES, 235/55R18, (1) new, (1) 50% tread, \$100 for both. 451-8585.

HOSPITAL BED, new matt., twin XL. 456-4253.

GRASS HAY, sm. sq. bales, Waldorf. 327-3672.

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

KOHLER KT17 TWIN CYL. ENGINE, 17 hp, runs OK, uses some oil, \$250/obo. 456-0348.

1997 PALM BEACH PONTOON, 20', 40-hp Force motor & trailer, \$3900. 330-4833.

ROOF & SIDING REPLACEMENT, STORM DAMAGE. 848-1477.

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

LARGE PARTS BIN, 5' high x 8' width x 1' deep; **GARDEN CART** w/dump; **DOUBLE COOLER** on frame w/wheels. 612-978-1123.

EXCESS COIN COLLECTION, all denominations. 676-0970.

1996 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE, 117,000 mi., gd cond., \$1500; **(2) LA-Z-BOY RECLINERS**, gd cond., \$10/each. 479-0576.

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

COMPACT TRACTOR YARD WORK: move rock & dirt, till gardens, have bucket & blade. 451-6046.

JD 772 COMBINE, 3800 hrs, JD pick-up head, \$1500; **NH 311 BALER**, \$4500; **IHC 720 PLOW**, 5-18", \$3000. 524-4637.

SCREEND BLK DIRT, \$18/ton. 651-238-1502/Owa.

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

COMPACT TRACTOR WORK: tiller, loader, backhoe, food plot, post holes, brush mower, Fbo/Nfld area. 330-5113/Cory.

(2) SEARS MINI BIKES, \$250 for both. 334-5245.

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) ROLLING TOOLBOXES, different sizes; **PULL-BEHIND LAWN SPRAYER**, 20-gal., gd shape, \$75. 210-2074.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP, ewe & ram lambs, great for organic, beginner, & 4-H. 451-2722.

'02 FORD F-450, 7.3 diesel, auto w/19' flatbed & gd liftgate, \$4500; **TANDEM CAR TRAILR**. 456-8521.

DUMP TRUCK AVAIL. FOR ALL YOUR TRUCKING DELIVERIES: rock, gravel, dirt, etc., 15.5-ton capacity. 456-7774.

2-WHEEL TRAILERS; 120 ACRES OF HUNTING GROUND; JD BACKHOE. 664-9426.

'01 WINNEBAGO ITASCA SUNCRUISER MOTOR HOME, 32', exc. cond., (6) new tires; **2007 SCOOTER**, red, 150cc, like new, kept inside. 456-1133.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

DISH SOUNDBAR & SPEAKERS, best offer. 612-805-3033.

16' DOCK, cranks up & down, has plastic wheels, \$500; **(4) GOLF CART WHEELS & TIRES**, 18x8.5-8, gd tread, \$100. 491-4565.

RYOBI 40V TILLER CULTIVATOR, like new, \$125. 330-3303.

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

OLDER 20' PALM BEACH PONTOON w/lift & Mercury Classic 50 w/tilt & trim, \$2500/obo. 456-2306.

NH L180 SKID STEER, 3065 hrs, 2-spd, high & low flow, heat, bucket, \$17,500/obo. 210-5027.

FARMALL C w/wide front 6' Artsway belly mower, around 1950s model. 456-8622 or 456-2459.

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

KEWANEE 12' WHEEL DISC w/cylinder, \$275; **CALHOUN 18' DIGGER ON WHEELS**, gd teeth, \$250; **32' HAY CONVEYOR ON WHEELS** w/chute & 1-hp AG motor, \$250. 456-7614.

2019 FORD F-150 REAR CHROME BUMPER, \$250. 390-5508.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

Call 4-Seasons at 800-328-4298 to learn more about their tour information.



member connection

Great River Energy conducts annual meeting via teleconference

Although the coronavirus pandemic prevented Great River Energy's (GRE's) stakeholders from their traditional in-person gathering in 2020, GRE completed its cooperative duty by holding elections and disclosing financial and operational information.

"Our first priority is keeping our stakeholders safe and healthy, but our obligation to member-owners remains," said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau (pictured right).



Great River Energy's 28 member-owner cooperatives assigned voting delegates for an April teleconference to certify GRE's directors for the upcoming year. Stakeholders also received reports documenting the cooperative's 2019 performance and strategic direction.

"We had a remarkably successful 2019," said Saggau. "Our rate projections are favorable and we continue to make progress on our goal of reaching 50 percent renewables by 2030."

For the second consecutive year, Great River Energy shared financial gains with its member-owner cooperatives, issuing a \$5 million refund in January 2019. For the first time in its history, GRE returned patronage capital

Three ways to electrify your lawn care

by Abby Berry, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric (or battery-powered) options.

Gas-powered lawn mowers and trimmers may be your go-to, but times they are a changin'. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

Electric lawn mowers

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections,



through \$15 million in cash payments to its member-owner cooperatives. Great River Energy also upgraded its high-voltage, direct-current system, a critical transmission resource that has served members for 40 years. 62475

During the board of directors' reorganization meeting following the annual meeting, Robert Bruckbauer (Lake Country Power, Grand Rapids) was re-elected board chair; Dale Anderson (Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Spicer) was re-elected board vice-chair; Audrey Hjelle (Runestone Electric Association, Alexandria) was re-elected secretary, and Lee York (Nobles Cooperative Electric, Worthington) was re-elected treasurer.

In addition to the officers, directors were elected to Great River Energy's 24-member board. Among those elected were Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Board President Gary Wilson (pictured right).



Gov. Walz responds to rural electric co-op questions during teleconference

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric General Manager Syd Briggs was among rural electric co-op leaders to question Gov. Tim Walz during a teleconference Thursday, April 9, organized through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA).

Briggs questioned Walz on the state supporting measures to diminish revenue shortfalls of cooperative utilities, given the increased payment delinquencies of its members, due to higher unemployment as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It costs money to generate power," said Walz, recognizing the revenue shortfall for cooperative utilities, who don't have shareholders to absorb the financial impact. "We need to make sure you have the resources to generate power."

MREA sent a letter to the governor requesting him to consider stimulus funding to make up for the future shortfall.

Rural electric co-op leaders also questioned the governor on the load control receiver permitting issue, that could collectively have millions of dollars from utilities paying for inspection fees in proposed legislation regarding future replacement of hundreds of thousands of load management controls in coming years. Walz assured those on the call that he would be learning more from both sides regarding the issue at hand.

MREA officials expressed that overall the visit with the governor went very well, and believe Walz was very receptive to electric cooperative issues. *By AC*

(Summer energy-saving tips continued from Pg 1)

Summer Energy-Saving Tips



LOW-COST TIPS

Plant trees and shrubs to shade the exterior of your home.



Replace disposable air filters (or clean permanent filters) once a month to maximize efficiency.



Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install, low maintenance and provide free electricity.

(Electrify lawn care continued on Page 8)

cookin' connection

Frozen Cherry Salad

Marlene Lau

Pemberton

- 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple (undrained)
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 8 oz. Cool Whip whipped topping
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 c. miniature marshmallows

Mix ingredients and freeze about 24 hours. Take out of freezer 1-2 hours before serving, depending on the size of the bowl.

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 49 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during April 2020. 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.

May issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Colin McAdam

Numbers not found:

Keith Dodge

John Spatenka

Martin/Leslie Young

Nicholas Hildreth



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.

• **April temps** – The average high temperature for April was 54° F, while the average low was 33° F. This resulted in 651.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 54° F and average low of 37° F. This resulted in 587.5 HDDs and 4 CDDs. 1002402

• **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

Prevent deadly shocks—check your boats and docks

If you own a boat and/or a dock, take steps now to help prevent a tragedy. The Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program advises, "Prevent deadly shocks. Check your boats and docks."

An important step in helping prevent those tragedies is to ensure proper installation and maintenance of electrical equipment on docks and on boats. Take the time to inspect all electrical systems on or near the water.

Safe Electricity, with the American Boat and Yacht Council and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers/National Electrical Contractors Association, recommends adhering to these steps to improve water recreation safety and accident prevention:

- All electrical installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards, and inspected at least once a year.

- Docks should have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on the circuits feeding electricity to the dock.

- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal parts to the alternating current (AC) safety ground at the power source. That will ensure any part of the metal dock that becomes energized because of electrical malfunction will trip the circuit breaker.

- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspec-

tions and maintenance. Marinas should comply with NFPA and NEC codes.

Below are a few additional tips to remember for your boat's electrical system, particularly those with AC systems:

- Regardless of the size of boat, maintenance of the electrical system should be done by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.

- Have your boats electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added to or removed from their systems.

- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection, comply with ABYC standards, and be serviced by an ABYC Certified® Technician.

If you are in the water and feel electric current:

- Shout to let others know.
- Tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller.
- Try to go away from anything that could be energized.
- Do not head to boat or dock ladders to get out.



Prevent DEADLY shocks.
Check your boats and docks.

Prepare for a safe summer on the water.
Poor wiring creates hazards that can electrocute swimmers, boaters, and people on the dock.

If you are on the dock or shore when a swimmer feels electric current:

- Do not jump in. 1057250
- Throw them a flotation device.
- Unplug or turn off the source of electricity as quickly as possible.
- Then call for help.



BEWARE of dangers above. Your LIFE depends on it.



Look up and look out for power lines.

Residential construction site safety

Before starting any outdoor project, always look up to make sure you're aware of any overhead power lines. Whether you're working on the roof, trimming trees, or cleaning the gutters, make sure you're a safe distance from any power line and make sure to warn others of their proximity.

You should always stay at least 10 feet away from any overhead power lines. Be sure to carry long equipment, such as a ladder, horizontally to avoid bumping into any lines.

Don't ever touch anything that's in contact with a power line. If you ever see a downed power line stay away, and call 911.

Remember, to avoid major accidents be sure to always look up in all ways.

(Courtesy: Electrical Safety Foundation International)