

member connection

(Cool and comfy continued from Page 7)

- An Energy Star certified smart thermostat is Wi-Fi enabled and can automatically adjust temperature settings in your home for optimal performance to save energy and money without anyone having to lift a finger (or paw). (Visit swce.coop for rebate information regarding smart Wi-Fi thermostats.)

- Control your home's cooling remotely through your smartphone and quickly enter a low-power standby mode when inactive.

Choose an Energy Star Certified Room AC

For households without central air conditioning, choose an Energy Star certified room air conditioner to save money on your energy bills. Consider the following:

- Room AC models that have earned the Energy Star cost, on average, less than \$70 a year and offer improved sealing and insulation around the unit. Save even more by choosing a model that uses innovative variable speed technology.

- Properly size your room AC for comfort and savings. An oversized unit will cool the room but only remove some of the humidity, leaving the room with a damp, clammy feeling.

- Energy Star certified room air conditioners with connected functionality offer additional convenience, comfort, and energy savings, including the ability to schedule temperature changes or receive feedback on the energy use of the product.

Want more ideas?

- **Seal and insulate:** You could save up to \$200 a year by sealing air leaks around your house and adding insulation. Focus first on sealing ducts that run through the attic, crawlspace, unheated basement, or garage. Then wrap the ducts in insulation to keep them from getting hot in the summer or cold in the winter.

- **Be a Fan of Fans:** Run your ceiling fan to create a cool breeze. Remember, ceiling fans cool you, not the room. So, turn it off when you leave the room.

Need a new fan? Energy Star certified ceiling fans with lights are 60 percent more efficient than standard fans with lights. 32691

- **Look for Energy Star Certified LEDs:** Replace those old, hot, incandescent lightbulbs with much cooler Energy Star certified LED lightbulbs. They produce about 70-90 percent less heat, so they're safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling. (Visit swce.coop to learn about rebates on Energy Star LED lightbulb purchases.)

- **Upgrade your Pool Pump:** Nothing cools you off more than a pool, but your old pool pump could be a big energy drain. If you need a new pool pump, ask for one that's earned the Energy Star. They use up to 65 percent less energy than a standard pool pump and can save you thousands of dollars over the lifetime of the product. (Visit swce.coop to learn more about pool pump rebates.)

Visit energystar.gov/cooling to learn more.

If you are planning... Let us know in advance!

Call Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric during regular business hours

Alternative Energy Source

Home Addition

New Barn, Building or Grain Storage

If you are planning a home addition, a new or expanded outbuilding, a new grain storage facility or maybe a wind or solar system, please contact us. This allows us to prepare for the change in your electric service, and offer assistance.

I. Home Addition

(involving electric heating or cooling system changes).

II. New building, barn or grain facility

III. Alternate Energy (wind or solar electric)

If you are planning any of these projects, we may need to make changes and upgrades to your electric service and the equipment that provides power to your prospective project. Without sufficient lead-time to accomplish this, you may experience a delay in the completion of your project.



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

August 2020

Is your electric bill more than you expected?

With the number of hot, humid days this summer, you may notice increased usage in your electric bill. For those with air conditioners, dehumidifiers, refrigerators and/or freezers in your garage, or children spending more time inside than outside, it all adds up. You can help minimize your usage by using electricity wisely every day.

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- 29 7th Annual Caleb Erickson Memorial event in Waseca

National Eye Exam Month



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Huxford retires from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric after 33-year career

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Operations Division Manager Kim Huxford (pictured right) retired Tuesday, June 30, after a 33-year career with the co-op.



one-on-one with both large and small accounts to understand their businesses, and address any current or future electrical needs they may have; develop marketing strategies that benefit not only the member, but Steele-Waseca with increased electric sales; and administer a low interest loan program for energy efficient devices.

Kim started with Steele-Waseca May 14, 1987, as an apprentice lineman. Born in Wells, he was raised in the Waldorf area and graduated from Waldorf-Pemberton High School. Kim attended college and night classes at a vocational college. Prior to joining Steele-Waseca, he had his own electrical business in the Pemberton area.

Kim said his interest in joining Steele-Waseca was due to, "the opportunity to work for a great company with the possibility of advancement." In addition, it provided an opportunity to locate his family in a thriving Owatonna community and a great school system.

Huxford was promoted to journeyman lineman May 16, 1990, before being promoted to an inside position of engineering aide. He monitored the distribution system and identified potential upgrades to the system. In addition, Kim worked with electricians and members regarding service upgrades, load management questions, and any other electrical concerns they would have. 24202

As for his line technician experience, "One of the best things I've done in my life," said Kim. "It gave me another perspective working with electricity on a different level and what it takes to deliver it 24/7, 365 days a year. Also, it reaffirmed my belief that Mother Nature is still in control and always keeps you on your toes."

In March 1996, Kim was named marketing assistant. It allowed him to meet

On Nov. 1, 1997, Kim was promoted to operations division staff assistant, and became responsible for crew scheduling and line maintenance.

Prior to becoming operations division manager on Nov. 1, 2001, Huxford was involved with the co-op's load management programs, a responsibility he maintained until his retirement. "You get great satisfaction when you're able to help others when problems arise or answer key questions regarding installation of equipment. With my electrical background of working on different systems as well as being able to communicate with electricians and installers, it has allowed me to help members better understand the process."

In the January 2002 *Sparks* newsletter, then General Manager Gerald Mikel said of Huxford's promotion to operations division manager, "Kim has the skills necessary to help us face the challenges of the future. I am confident in his ability to manage and lead our operations division as we grow to meet the needs of our members."

After roughly 19 years in the position, Kim was asked how he's seen the industry change. "Electronic intelligence. Real time data with new software packages," citing mapping as one example, with Steele-Waseca's outage management system tied into the member information database, along with the co-op's advanced meter infrastructure. "All communicating together in real time to help us better understand

(Huxford retirement continued on Page 3)

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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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

At Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency, so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for you, our member-owners.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service you expect and deserve. 1019812

Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated or personal phone messages, or on occasion email, *if* we have your updated contact information.

Quite often when a planned outage is going to take place and office personnel call members to alert them of the upcoming outage, we have at least one member who doesn't have any valid phone num-

bers. On one recent occasion, the member called in to report an outage only to find out the outage had been planned, and they weren't notified because there wasn't a way to leave a phone message for the member. The member has since updated their contact information with the co-op.

Keeping Steele-Waseca updated with your information also helps when there's a question about energy use or billing. Discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Steele-Waseca has accurate account information.

The co-op also has situations where spouses, family members, or roommates call regarding questions on the account for their service location. However, due to federal law, the co-op is not allowed to speak with anyone regarding the account unless their name is on the account. So if you have a spouse, loved one, or roommate that may have the need to call on the account, please make sure they have their name on the account. Steele-Waseca has name change forms available for adding a name to an account. Please call during regular business hours to inquire about that form.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by Steele-Waseca to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by calling Steele-Waseca during regular business hours or email us at swce@swce.coop. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.

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

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

CAR HOIST, \$1500; NEW VISION 5TH WHEEL TOW HAULER, \$14,900. 210-6084.

TORO 22" RECYCLER/LAWN MOWER, new, elec. start, eco friendly, located in Roberds Lk area, best offer. 612-805-3033.

JD 6620 COMBINE; 6-ROW CORN HEAD; A-C 7020 TRACTOR. 583-2026.

REFRIG./FREEZER, freezer works great, refrig. not so gd, \$10. 334-7177.

SHOPSMITH MARK V WOODWORKING SYSTEM: lathe, circular saw, band saw, sander, multipurpose tool, \$600. 334-6362.

A-C WD-45, diesel, runs, wide front, gd tires, \$3500. 456-8094.

7# GOLF CART WHEELS & TIRES, lots of tread left, \$100. 491-4565.

'75 CHEVY C65 TANDEM TRUCK, diesel, reliable; '38 FORD PICKUP, custom restored in gray premier; 2008 FORD TAURUS TRANSMISSION. 327-3626.

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.

(Look up for power lines continued from Page 5)

- Equipment, antennas, and people should stay at least 15 feet away from any energized power line to help prevent arc flashing. 1054239

- Equipment that can be extended, such as a stack mower or grain elevator, require the utmost care when near a power line.



Farm operators are encouraged to look up and look out for power lines as they spray their fields. Steele-Waseca's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy, has already recorded two incidents this year.

- Physical contact with a power line is extremely hazardous and may cause a lethal shock. Equipment should not be operated under a power line in a manner that would cause contact or near contact.

If you do come in contact with a power line:

- Call 911 as soon as possible and keep the area clear until help arrives.

- If you can do so without risking your machinery or damaging utility infrastructure, drive at least 40 feet away.

- If the vehicle is on fire or you must exit for other safety reasons, jump clear so that no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time, and land with feet together. Hop to safety in small steps to avoid electric shock by breaking the current's path.

If you have more questions about safety around power lines, please contact Steele-Waseca, visit the co-op's website, swce.coop, or visit GRE's website, greatriverenergy.com.

HOMEMADE HVY DUTY STEEL YARD TRAILER, 6'x38"x10" high box, 165/80R15 tires. 234-6375.

16 DUCK DECOYS in gd shape, \$40/obo. 332-7590.

PAIR OF 18-4-38 BIAS FIRESTONE SUPER ALL TRACTION FIELD & ROAD TIRES mounted on 18-34 step-up rims. 456-0068.

'77 O'DAY MARINER 2+2 SAILBOAT, 19", 2", (3) sails, trlr has new tires, bearings, electrical/light sys. & felt, \$500; '89 H-D 883 SPORTSTER, converted to 1200, sits low, \$2400. Txt 390-0279 for pics/info.

22' 6X6 TREATED SQUARE POLE, like new, \$60. 456-7614.

KENNEL EQUIP. & SUPPLIES. 583-7718.

CHEST FREEZER; SIDE-BY-SIDE REFRIG./FREEZER; WIRE-FEED WELDER; DIRT DEVIL CLEANER for carpet & wood floors. 213-7978.

TRIPLE-AXLE TRAILER, beavertail w/fold-up ramps, pintle hitch, mobile home tires, decking & tires rotted, \$300/obo. 952-652-2933.

12V REMAN STARTER for 4020 diesel, completely checked out gd, \$400. 527-2560 or 456-1301/cell.

DORM-SIZE REFRIG., \$30; ROLLTOP DESK, gd cond., \$100; WOOD ROCKER w/cushion seat, \$30; (2) FENCE CHARGERS, \$10/ea.; T-POSTS, \$1/ea.; MOPED, \$125. 952-261-6601/txt.

WOOD, mixed types, \$40/pickup load. 332-7739.

SCHWINN LE TOUR, 10-spd, men's, 27x1/4, \$40; HUFFY GIRL'S BIKE, 6-spd, 20x175, \$40. 330-3178.

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

GRASS HAY, no rain, \$55-\$60 a bale; last year's hay, \$45/bale; BEDDING HAY, \$40. 451-5131.

TONY LAMA WOMEN'S COWBOY BOOTS, size 8. 676-4039.

OLDER 20' PALM BEACH PONTOON w/lift & Merc. Classic 50 motor w/tilt & trim, \$1695/obo. 456-2306.

Stay cool and comfy through the dog days of summer

Did you know the average home spends \$2,000 per year on utility bills, with nearly half going to heating and cooling?

Energy Star® experts can show you how you can keep your energy bills under control and help protect the environment all summer long. Cool and comfortable for everyone—from pooches to the planet. Visit energystar.gov/cooling for more information.



Maintain or upgrade your HVAC system

An efficient HVAC system is the key to keeping cool this summer. You're encouraged to:

- Check out your system's air filters every month. A dirty air filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder to keep you cool.

- When it's safe to do so, get a maintenance check by an HVAC contractor to ensure your system is running at optimum efficiency to save energy and money. (Visit swce.coop for rebate information on having your HVAC system maintained.)

- If you're ready to consider an upgrade, the interactive [Energy Star Heating and Cooling Guide](#) is a resource for navigating how to choose the right equipment.

Install an Energy Star Certified Smart Thermostat

Get smart about the thermostat that is controlling your HVAC equipment. Consider the following:

(Cool and comfy continued on Page 8)

ad connection

give away

HANDICAPPED SHOWER CHAIR, new. 213-7994.

SEVERAL LARGE DOWN & SOME STANDING EVERGREENS for logging or firewood. 332-7624.

SHOWER CHAIR/COMMODE ON WHEELS, only used for showering. 676-0355.

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, faxed or emailed to SWCE.

wanted

IH 990 HAYBINE. 475-0753.

TROY-BILT HORSE GARDEN TILLER, must be in gd cond. 744-2792.

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

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

LAWN WORK JOBS. 651-354-4405/Tim.

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

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

SICKLE BAR MOWER. 330-3387.

for sale

7' NH SICKLE BAR & DIVIDER BOARD, \$50. 451-5121.

1987 FORD ECONOLINE CONVERSION VAN, low mileage, gd cond. 451-6563.

9-TON GRAIN BIN w/motor, best offer; **STORAGE** for boats, sm. recreational, call for prices. 475-2322.

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

BALDWIN ORGASONIC ORGAN w/bench, instruction books. 451-7626.

'02 DODGE RAM 1500 EXT. CAB w/toppr, 71,718 mi., 4WD, trlr brakes, stabilizr hitch, \$4700; **'02 K-Z SPORTSMEN ULTRA LT 2505**, 26', full ba. & kitchn, qn bed pull out, 4-bunks, heat, A/C, \$5000. 412-9616.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

CRAFTSMAN 18V CORDLESS DRILL & 4.5" GRINDER, both new in box, \$60 for both; **LARGE DOG KENNEL**, \$35. 455-3881.

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

GRANDFATHER WALL CLOCK, non-elec., chimes, has a glass door on either side w/interior shelves for small knickknacks, etc., cherry finish, \$65. 251-7680.

SIMPLICITY 3415 MOWER, \$100; **15-HP BRIGGS**, \$100; **'98 FORD ESCORT**, \$300; **SM. TK TOOL-BOX**, \$100; **REFRIG. AIR DRYER**, \$100; **O'BRIEN 54" TUBE**, \$75. 271-6592.

1999 SCOUT 185 CENTER CONSOLE BOAT, 130-hp Honda, Minn Kota autopilot elec. motor, Hummingbird 1198C & 988C depth finders, \$12,000. 456-1674.

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

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

AMANA WINDOW A/C, Model AAC051 FRA, 5000 Btu, \$50; **WHIRLPOOL WINDOW A/C**, Model AC-M052XKO, 5000 Btu, \$50. 456-2017.

EXCESS COINS FROM MY COLLECTION, some rare, some silver half-dollars, dollars, qtrs. & more. 676-0970.

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

LIFT CHAIR for shorter person, tan in color, \$100/obo. 676-4870.

SMALL ADULT WHEELCHAIR, used (3) times, \$100; **COMPUTER DESK** w/hutch, you haul, \$10. 676-0355.

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

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

GRAIN WAGON w/hydraulic lift, always shedded. 451-5172.

1995 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE. 884-5739.

(2) 2004 VMAX 500 SNOWMOBILES & TRAILER, real gd, all, \$4400. 444-9640.

SKI MASTER CROSS COUNTRY SKIER EXERCISE MACHINE, Weider XC-1, \$10. 838-8792.

YAMAHA VINO CLASSIC SCOOTER, silver, like new, 1400 mi., \$1000. 334-3804.

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

1994 INNSBRUCK, 20', pull behind, bunk-bed model, gd shape, \$3000. 334-2673.

2017 JD RIPPER, 9 shank on 24" spacing, 18', exc. cond., \$59,000. 573-1129.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

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

SUPERMAX 16-32 DRUM SANDER, looks & works like new w/many extra belts, \$700; **DEWALT DW734 BENCHTOP PLANER**, exc. cond., \$300. 323-5349.

TRUNDLE BED, will sleep 2-4 comfortably, oak wood, in gd cond., \$75/obo; **SINGER SEWING MACH.**, \$25/obo. 363-6503.

ANTIQUE STONE BOAT, 4x5 steel; **(2) TIRE RIMS**, 7.5x24", (8) holes. 744-2709.

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

1957 JD 820, 2-cyl., diesel w/pony engine, exc. cond., \$10,500. 213-1873.

1981 16' ALUMACRAFT w/50-hp Mercury motor & trolling motor, trailer, \$1500/obo. 952-201-1043.

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

GRASS HAY, (180) sm. sq. bales, no rain, can deliver within reas. distance, \$5/bale. 330-5113/Nfld.

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

1946 FORD-FERGUSON 2N, does not run, \$500/obo. 838-6612.

1944 A-C B w/wide front & 5' Woods belly mower, has C rear end & overhauled w/oversized pistons, \$1800/obo. 210-5027.

LOG BED w/matching cabinet, \$1150; **HORSE EQUIP.**: buckboard, \$2000; 2-person cutter, \$1200; asst saddlestack, sully. 612-719-1678.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

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



member connection

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric names Meier operations division manager

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, June 2, announced the promotion of Line Supervisor Dan Meier (pictured right) to operations division manager effective July 1.

"Dan has the experience we need from the ground up," said Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs. "He has worked in several capacities at the cooperative for the past 20 years; from line technician to line superintendent, and now operations division manager. As we experience ever increasing changes in service and communication, Dan will develop the operations department to best meet those needs." Meier joined Steele-Waseca as a line technician July 5, 2000. He was promoted to the position of line supervisor May 1, 2012.

As for becoming operations division manager, "What interested me in the position is all the different facets of the job," said Dan. "I've always felt it is important to push yourself, especially in situations that are uncomfortable."

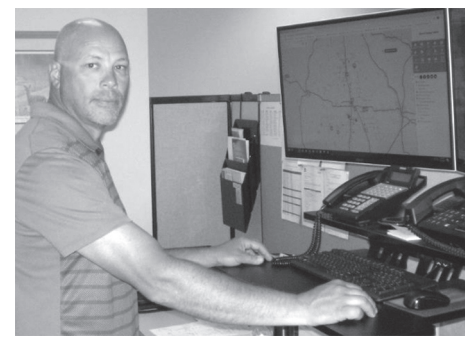
Meier believes it will be a seamless transition into his new role at the co-op. "There are many aspects from line supervisor's role that directly correlates to my new role as operations manager. One major aspect is working with other team members. I believe that our employees are our greatest asset." 1082991

The work plan for this year continues to be the primary focus in operations. However, Meier concedes 2020 is no different than many other years. "Just when you think everything is coming together, in comes a ice storm, or a tornado, or some other anomaly that keeps me from growing my hair back."

Dan and his wife, Missy, reside in Owatonna. They have two adult sons, Dalton, 22, and Landon, 18.

During his free time, Dan enjoys fishing, cooking, and spending time with family and friends. *5/25*

(Editor's note: Steele-Waseca Line Foreman Matt Rohman was hired as the co-op's line supervisor, June 26, and officially started his new position July 1. Matt will be featured in an upcoming Sparks newsletter.)



(Huxford retirement continued from Page 1)
what is happening throughout all nine counties we serve," said Kim.

Other industry changes include: fuses being replaced with electronic reclosures, breakers, and such; specialized utility vehicles and more robust line equipment; large commercial, industrial, and manufacturing companies locating in our system requiring large amounts of power along with the need to upgrade our distribution system; renewables such as solar and wind integrating Steele-Waseca's distribution system; and power supply with the reliance of coal shifting to large scale renewables as large wind farms dot the landscape throughout the country.

"People have no idea how the co-op has grown over the last 30 years," said Kim. "I started in 1987 and at that time, our largest loads consisted of a few 3-phase crop dryers, an Ellendale Standard gas station, and the Humphrey Elevator near Cannon Lake. All were around 75 kW in size or less." He recalled during his first year, Steele-Waseca added the Jerome Feed Mill near Medford (now Jennie-O), and within two years, added Viratec in Faribault (now Tru-Vue), and the Medford Outlet Center.

"Since then it's taken off gangbusters," said Kim. "Today we have a couple large glass plants, manufacturing and food processing plants, an ethanol plant, a large grocery distribution center, many swine and turkey facilities, and soon to be added, a large air separation plant." With that growth, Steele-Waseca has gone from 7 megawatts (MW) to over 50 MW in just over 30 years. Huxford also credited the development in Lonsdale, and adding Alliant Energy's former territory with the Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative in additional load and members.

Huxford noted the line crew today is more diverse. "When I started, the crew consisted with mostly men from the Owatonna area and a couple from neighboring towns. Today, the crew consists of men throughout the state of Minnesota, as well as a couple from out of state. I am very proud of the crew that I have had a part of putting together."

As for retirement, Kim said he plans to help his wife, Lisa, with her projects and hanging out with the grandkids. "Maybe do a little traveling, volunteer work, a little fishing and keeping the place in the country looking nice."

Kim also takes pride in having the privilege of introducing ice fishing to two general managers, including present General Manager Syd Briggs, "Has Syd caught a larger walleye? I don't think so."

Steele-Waseca wishes to thank Kim for his 33 years of service to the co-op and best wishes toward enjoying retirement. *5/25*



BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

- We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:
- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!



cookin' connection

Onion Pie

Amy Nystrom

Lonsdale

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 c. soda crackers, crumbled | 1/4 lb. salted butter, melted |
| 2 1/2 c. sweet onions, sliced, sauteed | 1 c. milk |
| 3 eggs, beaten | pinch of salt |
| 2/3 c. shredded cheese | paprika for color |
| parsley for color | |

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine crackers and butter in a pie tin. Once mixed press to make the crust. Add sauteed onion. Combine milk, eggs, and cheese, and pour over onions. Add salt, paprika, and parsley for color. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

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



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's solar subscribers will see a 49 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during June 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.

July issue of Sparks

Numbers found:

John/Melisa Vick

Numbers not found:

Gary Budach
Dennis Keefer
Catherine Phillops
David/Trenne Fields



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.

• **June temps** – The average high temperature for June was 82° F, while the average low was 61° F. This resulted in 204.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs), and 4.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 76° F and average low of 59° F. This resulted in 115.5 CDDs and 41.5 HDDs.

• **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

What's inside my service panel?

► Home Electrical Service Panel

Every home has a service panel that distributes electricity to switches, outlets, and appliances. Service panels are equipped with fuses or circuit breakers that protect the wires in each circuit from overheating and causing a fire. Older service panels use fuses, while more modern systems utilize circuit breakers.

A tripped breaker is likely the result of too many appliances overloading the circuit and should be fixed immediately. Follow these steps to turn the power back on.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESETTING A TRIPPED BREAKER

- ① Unplug or turn **OFF** appliances in the room.
- ② Find your main breaker panel and open the cover.
- ③ Locate the tripped breaker or blown fuse. A tripped circuit breaker will be in the off position or in a middle position between **ON** and **OFF**.
- ④ To reset the breaker switch it to **OFF** position and then back to **ON**. This may restore power to the room.
- ⑤ If the problem continues, there may be more serious issues. Contact an electrician to diagnose the problem.



Fortunately, many of the dangers associated with older systems can be prevented simply by upgrading your home's electrical service panel.

FUSES

Service panels installed before 1965 use fuses to protect each individual circuit. Once a fuse is blown, it must be unscrewed and thrown away.

Fuses were commonly used in 30- and 60-amp service panels. Today, most homes use 100- to 200-amp service.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPLACING FUSES

- ① When replacing fuses in your service panel, the replacement fuse should always match the amperage rating of the circuit.
- ② Never replace a fuse with one that has a larger amperage rating. This is a very dangerous practice.

(Courtesy: Electrical Safety Foundation International)

Spraying your crops? Look up for power lines

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric and the co-op's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy (GRE), remind farm operators spraying their crops to also look up and look out for power lines.

"We've had two incidents already this year where farm equipment came into contact with our power lines," said Kevin Hodgson, GRE's leader of transmission construction and maintenance. "We urge farmers with sprayers to take extra precaution. Since the sprayer booms can fold up, they're at their highest—right where there could be a power line."

It's important to remember where your equipment is in relation to the power lines overhead. Before using your equipment, plan a route that will avoid overhead power lines, or adjust your equipment before reaching power lines if you cannot avoid these areas. Those power lines are energized and bring electricity to your farm, family, and local businesses. Call 911 right away if you do come in contact with a power line.

Tips for operating farm equipment around power lines include:

- Do not lift, elevate, build, or pass under a power line anything that may make contact or come close to contact with the power line.

(Look up for power lines continued on Page 7)

