

Three electrifying kitchen appliances to save time and energy

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

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

1. **Air fryers** are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food—this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are



Air fryers circulate hot air (convection) to cook the food. This means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Photo credit: Hamilton Beach.

fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.

2. **Electric griddles** have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once—like a “one-pan” meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.



Electric griddles consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times. Photo credit: Hamilton Beach.

3. Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a **pizza maker** for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multi-functional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.



Pizza makers are compact and inexpensive, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Photo credit: Hamilton Beach.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy. To learn about additional ways to save energy at home, visit Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's website, swce.coop.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static.

Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

Source: www.energy.gov

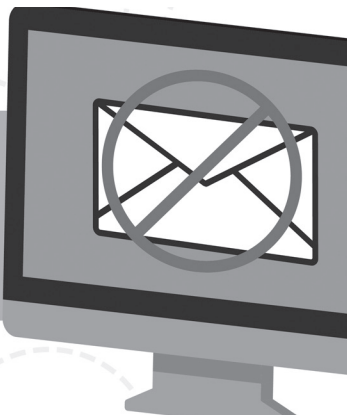
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14! Set your clocks forward by one hour.



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the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

March 2021

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- 8 Kitchen appliances saving time and energy; Energy efficiency tip for your clothes dryer; Online safety reminder

calendar of events

March

- 2 Dr. Suess' birthday; National Read Across America Day
- 3 "The Star-Spangled Banner" became U.S. national anthem in 1931
- 5 Employee Appreciation Day
- 14 Daylight saving time starts
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 First day of spring; International day of happiness
- 28 Palm Sunday

Happy St. Patrick's Day



WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS A MEMBER!


Planning for new projects in 2021?

The new construction season is right around the corner. If you are planning to upgrade your electrical equipment, or add a new electrical service this year, be sure to communicate your plans with the Operations Division at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric.

In some cases, Steele-Waseca may need to order the transformer which can take up to 16 weeks. 17614

Keep in mind Steele-Waseca requires new and upgraded services to have a disconnecting means located by the

meter socket. All 200 amp services and smaller are required to have a 200 amp bypass meter socket. Also, with the exception of some housing developments in Medford and Lonsdale, Steele-Waseca does not allow the main meter to be installed on buildings.

More information on adding a new electrical service or updating an existing service can be found at the [Builders & Electricians](#) link under “SERVICES” on Steele-Waseca’s website, swce.coop. 



Medford School presented lighting rebate check

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Board President Gary Wilson (center) presented a rebate check for \$26,712 to Medford School Superintendent Mark Ristau, Jan. 6, for the school's LED lighting retrofit project completed this past summer. More than 90 lighting styles were retrofitted with more efficient LED lights, which will allow the school district to experience more than 200,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) saved in one year, equating to more than \$18,000 saved on their electric bill. The presentation included Steele-Waseca Communications Specialist Randy Sobrack (left), who resides in Medford with his family. Steele-Waseca offers numerous rebates for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural member projects that conserve energy. More information may be found at the co-op's website, swce.coop.

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

WILL ASSIST PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES w/personal cares, exercises, errands, housekeeping, 40+ yrs experience, references avail. 456-0076.

JUNKERS OR REPAIRABLES, top \$ pd. 332-2300.

GUNS; AMMO; METAL SIGNS; TACKLE; ES-TATES. 279-0431/Mark.

FERTILE BROODING CHICKEN EGGS TO INCUBATE (not banties), brown preferred, need (5) doz-en. 330-8361.

POTATO LIFTR, used & wrking. 651-357-5092/Paul.

150' CONCRETE FIELD DRAINAGE TILE, 6"x12". 271-9411.

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

CARPORT w/steel roof. 461-1865.

2010-15 PICKUP, 1/2 ton, 4x4, low miles. 451-2722.

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

GATOR™ UTIL. VEH. OR GOLF CART; DRYWALL TAPER & MUDDER, TILE PERSON; CARPENTER to build porch & repair outbuildings; OLD BARN OR GAR. to save/move onto our proptry. 612-598-4005.

HANDICAPPED CHAIR STAIR LIFT for at least (9) steps, gently used. 327-3626.

JAR OF OLD BUTTONS, all sizes & colors, es-pecially red & yellow needed for an art project. 463-3721.

USED TYPEWRITERS, repairable, no junk, manual, old. 339-8577.

TABLE SAWS, 10-12". 363-6199.

RAT TERRIER PUPPY. 390-5964.

for sale

WHEAT & OAT STRAW, sm. sq., \$4.50/bale; (15) BERKSHIRE FINISHD HOGS, \$1/lb./live; FINISHED BEEF STEERS, HEIFERS ANGUS. 995-7021.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

7' GOLDEN WEST POOL TABLE, (3) pcs, slate, light oak in color, is apart—ready to move, \$450. 475-2214.

TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL, & STUMP GRIND., pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; 20' MISTY HARBOR PONTOON, TRAILER & LIFT w/ canopy. 456-1609.

BRIGGS & STRATTON LAWN MOWER MOTOR, 17.5 gross hp, runs gd, \$175. 583-6679.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

CABELA'S HUNTING BOOTS, Gore-Tex, Thinsu-late, size 8, (2) pair, \$50 for both; (7) FLUORES-CENT LIGHTS, \$40 for all. 455-3881.

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

CRAFTSMAN RADIAL ARM SAW, like new, \$200/obo; ANTIQUE NATIONAL CASH REGISTER, \$200/obo. 440-8831.

ALFALFA/GRASS MIX HAY BALES, full size, sm. sq., great quality, no rain. 451-2978.

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

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

GRASS HAY BALES, sm. square, by Waldorf, \$6. 327-3672.

VERSA-MAX SNOWMOBILE TRAILER, exc. cond., "2 UP." 339-1986.

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

FARMALL WIDE FRONT ORIG. EQUIP., came off Farmall 560, \$600/cash. 456-0835.

GRASS HAY, 5x6 round bales, 2 crop, no rain. 451-3456.

2013 CFM 185 COMP., \$10,000; REFRIG. AIR DRY-ERS, \$100/ea.; AUGERS & ELEV., \$50-\$100/ea.; TRUCK TOOLBOXES, \$50-\$100/ea.; '98 FORD ESCORT FOR PARTS, \$250. 271-6592.

SEVERAL POOL CUES, exc. cond. 451-5172.

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

TV ANTENNA, new w/UHF-VHF, ideal for house, cabin, fish house, \$50; CEDAR MAILBOX POST, new, \$10. 334-3804.

2003 FORD F-150 PICKUP, 4x4 w/bed liner, running boards, new tires, & heated leather seats. 685-2415.

(2) FRIGIDAIRE STOVES; FRIGIDAIRE UPRIGHT FREEZER; (3) TABLES W/CHAIRS; COUCH; RCA RECORD PLAYER CABINET; ENTERTAINMENT CENTER. 213-0443.

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

BOAT LIFT COVER, 8' wide x 20' long, new/nev-er used, off a FLOE lift, may fit others, \$400/obo. 451-9614.

6000 SERIES CORN PLANTER w/monitor, 32" rows, \$3000; JD 6600 GAS COMBINE, 4-ROW CORN HD, & BEAN HD, odometer 2963, \$4000; (each always shedded). Email: eakerdr@gmail.com.

DUMP TRUCK SERVICES, 15.5-ton capacity for all your hauling needs: rock, gravel, dirt, etc. 456-7774.

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

SHINGLING & LIGHT CONSTRUCTION, free esti-mates. 456-0296.

GRASS HAY, sm. square bales, \$35/bale; FISHER V-PLOW, stainless, loaded, \$7500; 2000 FORD, 3/4 ton, (4) door, 245,000 mi., 5.4 engine, \$4800. 456-1181.

(2) DEEDED LAKE ACCESS LOTS on 232nd St. W., on Cannon Lake, just outside of Warsaw. 612-247-2957.

(2) LP LIGHTS for fish house, \$15/each or \$25/both. 951-2568.

DROP LEAF CUTTING TABLE (do texting), sewer's delight, 36x60. 327-2990.

'38 FORD PKUP, 5-spd OD, Ranger 4L, V6 motor & chassis, tilt hood, new box & tires/chrome wheels, in primer—you paint your color. 327-3626.

SCHWINN 569 ALUM., 14-spd, 700x35c, men's, \$150; TREK ANTELOPE 800, 18-spd, 26x175, \$50. 330-3178.

GOLF CARTS: '95 Yamaha; '10 Club Car. 456-1629.

CABIN to be moved, 820 sq. ft, (2) br, (1) ba, Can-non Lk. 951-1271.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

Call 4-Seasons at 373-4705 or 373-2473, from 9 a.m. to noon Mondays, to learn more about their tour information.

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member connection

A heat pump built for Minnesota winters and summers

Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) have been used for



many years in nearly all parts of the United States, but, until recently, were not common in areas with extended pe-riods of subfreezing temperatures.

However, in recent years, cold-cli-mate ASHP (ccASHP) technology has advanced so it now offers a legitimate space heating alternative in colder re-gions, like Minnesota.

A ccASHP can provide both efficient heating and cooling for your home. When properly installed, it can deliver up to three times more heat energy to a home than the electrical energy it con-sumes. This is possible because a heat pump moves heat rather than convert-ing it from a fuel like combustion heat-ing systems do.

A project recently conducted by the Center for Energy and Environment found the efficiency of the newest gen-eration of ccASHPs can operate down to minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit. The ef-ficiency of these technologies in moder-ate climates is also two- to three-times more efficient than standard electric heating systems.

Since heat pumps provide heating in the winter and cooling in the sum-mer, you should be aware of at least two heat pump energy efficiency rat-ings. The Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) measures cooling effi-ciency over the cooling season, while the Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) measures heating ef-ficiency over the heating season. Giv-

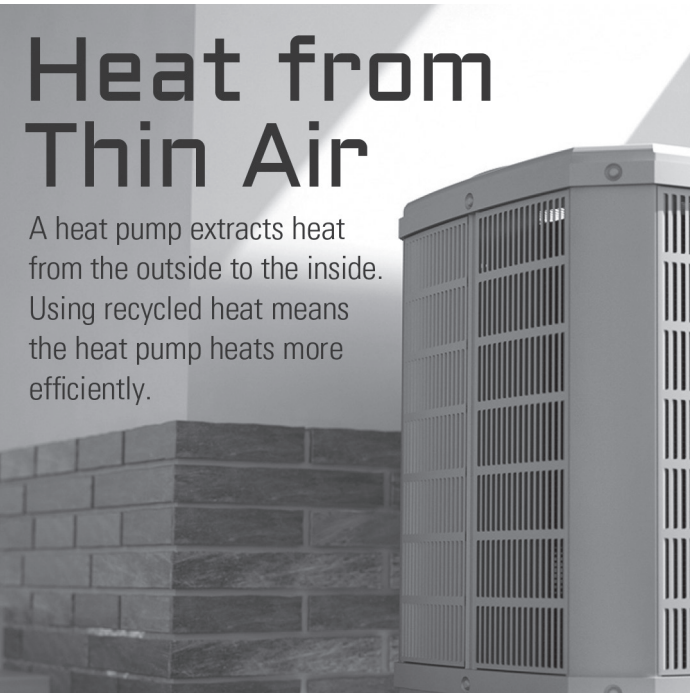
en we are still in a Min-nesota winter, let's fur-ther explore the heating aspect.

HSPF is a standard-ized rating used to-compare energy ef-ficiencies. HSPF is used by all heat pump manufacturers to indi-cate efficiency ratings. Like miles per gallon for your car, the higher the HSPF number, the more efficient the sys-tem.

Heat pumps, when properly installed, pro-vide members with sev-eral distinct advantag-es:

- When sized appropriately, today's ccASHPs can provide 100% of a home's heating needs down to temperatures as low as zero degrees, which is roughly 90% of all heating hours in Minnesota. If properly set, an ASHP can serve as your primary source for a good part of our Minnesota winters. 1021241

- The balance point of your heat pump is the outdoor temperature at which your home HVAC system switches over to its backup heating system, likely set by your installer. If your heat pump can keep your home warm down to 10° F, but your balance point is set to switch over to backup heat at that same tem-perature, then anytime it's in the 10- to 15-degree Fahrenheit range, you'll be

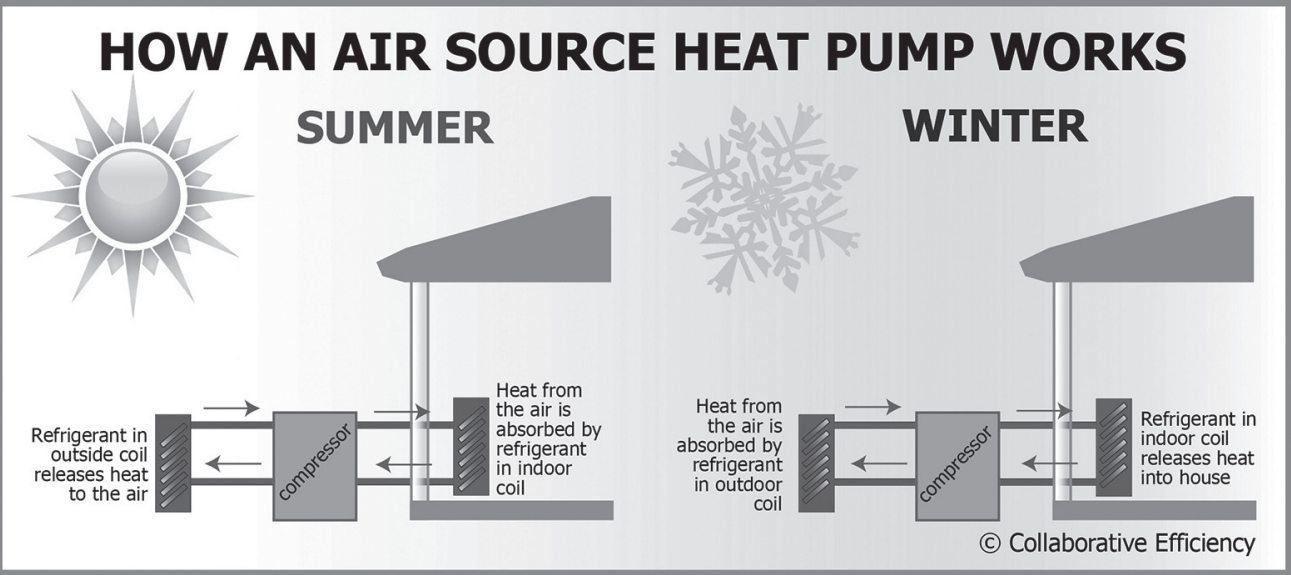


paying more than you should for heat.

- Aren't sure of your ASHP balance point? Take note of the temperature where your backup heating source kicks in, and if it's above 10° F, your balance point may be set too high. If you have already installed an ASHP, you may also want to contact your installation contractor to inquire further and ensure your balance point is where you want it to be.

Should you have any additional ques-tions, please contact Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric during regular business hours. Be sure to continue looking for additional ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home, and

take advantage of the rebates Steele-Waseca has to offer by visiting the co-op's website, swce.coop.



cookin' connection

Jello Flavored Sugar Cookies

Delores Kalina Lonsdale

1 box or pkg white cake mix
(1) 3 oz. pkg JELL-O (use cherry, orange, lime, or lemon)
1/2 c. vegetable oil
2 large eggs

Combine cake mix and Jello gelatin dessert. Whisk in vegetable oil and eggs. Mix well. Roll into about 24 balls. Place on 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Makes colorful cookies depending on which Jello was used.

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 January 2021. 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. 1071830

February issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
None found by those members

Numbers not found:
Michael Jirele
Susan Ewanga
Robert Tuma
Debra Aase
Daryl Neigebauer



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.

• **January temps** – The average high temperature for January was 27° F, while the average low was 12° F. This resulted in 1,396.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 25° F and average low of 12° F. This resulted in 1,428.5 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2021, 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

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**OWATONNA ELLENDALE
BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD**

health & safety connection



Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

"COOK WITH CAUTION"

- » Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- » Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- » If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- » Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

IF YOU HAVE A COOKING FIRE...

- » Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- » Call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number after you leave.
- » If you try to fight the fire, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear way out.
- » Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- » For an oven fire turn off the heat and keep the door closed.



Your Source for SAFETY Information
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169



Cooking and Kids

Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

FACTS

- ❗ The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- ❗ Most cooking fires in the home involve the stovetop.



www.nfpa.org/education