

member connection

ECO Act demonstrates smart electrification benefits consumers, environment

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

A bill led by electric cooperatives to modernize and expand the state’s energy conservation program for utilities was signed into law Tuesday, May 25, by Gov. Tim Walz.

Receiving strong bipartisan support from both the House and Senate, the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act updates and expands the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP established energy savings requirements for all Minnesota utilities—including electric cooperatives—to realize annual energy savings equal to at least 1.5% of annual electricity sales and to spend at least 1.5% of their gross operating revenues on programs to achieve this goal.

Energy savings are typically achieved through member participation in energy savings programs such as energy audits and incentives for energy-efficiency improvements, like LED lighting and Energy Star® appliances. These services helped Great River Energy’s members realize more than 1 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in energy savings over the years.

Since CIP was adopted in 2007, the landscape of the utility industry has changed dramatically—primarily the amount of renewable energy resources that have been added to the electric grid. For example,

GRE is transforming its power supply portfolio in ways that will result in more renewable resources, significantly lower emissions, and reduced power supply costs.

To make CIP more relevant for today, a variety of stakeholders including Minnesota’s electric cooperatives and other industry partners, introduced the ECO Act to help incentivize technologies and behaviors that lead to greater efficiency while also reducing emissions economy wide.

“Back when we first began our energy efficiency initiatives, we would say ‘The cheapest and cleanest form of energy is the energy that is never used in the first place,’” said Jeff Haase, manager of member services at Great River Energy. “But that’s not the case anymore since we’ve added, and will continue to add, affordable renewable energy resources to our generation portfolio. We now encourage the smart use of electricity and the electrification of certain end-uses because it’s become cleaner and remains cost-effective.”

A main component of the ECO Act emphasizes total energy efficiency across several sectors (e.g., transportation, agriculture) rather than focusing solely on reducing electricity use. This will allow cooperatives the flexibility to achieve their 1.5% reduction goal through programs that promote electrification technologies such

as electric vehicles, electric storage water heaters and air source heat pumps.

“I am proud to sign this important energy legislation into Minnesota law,” Walz said in a press release. “We know that investing in energy conservation and beneficial fuel switching means that Minnesota’s homes and businesses run more efficiently and have a lower impact on our environment. The ECO Act will help Minnesota families and small businesses save money, create good-paying jobs, and, most importantly, protect Minnesota’s environment for generations to come.”

Another component of the bill removes the 1.5% spending requirement, unless the reduction in electricity is not met, which will reduce consumers’ total energy bills. These updates will not only benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they will foster a more resilient grid as well.

“Not only will the ECO Act benefit consumers’ pocketbooks while contributing to Minnesota’s conservation goals, but it also will increase and expand workforce opportunities all over the state,” said Darick Moe, president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, which represents electric cooperatives. “This is a win-win-win for consumers, energy providers and all sectors of Minnesota.”



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

July 2021

Your billing statement this month has a special line listing the amount of your electric sales less power costs in 2020. This is shown as **2020 PATRONAGE BASIS**. Capital credit equity you’ve been allocated for 2020 is shown as **2020 ALLOCATION**, if electric sales exceeded power costs. Also listed is the **CAPITAL CREDIT BALANCE**, which is the amount of your remaining accumulated equity. Please save this month’s billing statement if you will need any of those amounts for tax preparation. Only inactive accounts receive separate statements of equity.

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calendar of events

July

- 3-4 Blooming Prairie’s Old Fashioned Fourth of July
- 4 Independence Day
- 5 SWCE office is closed in observance of Independence Day 1927
- 14-18 Waseca County Fair
- 21-25 Rice County Fair
- 23-25 Montgomery Kolacky Days; W. Concord Survival Days
- 24 Waseca Co. Relay for Life
- 25 Litomysl Summer Festival
- 27 Korean War ended in 1953

Incumbent directors re-elected during Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric’s drive-thru annual meeting

Three incumbent directors were re-elected to the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board, Tuesday, June 8, during the co-op’s 85th annual meeting at its headquarters in Owatonna.

Re-elected to three-year terms were District 1 Director PJ Duchene, Faribault; District 3 Director Duane R. Edwardson, Ellendale; and District 5 Director Rodney D. Krell, Blooming Prairie. Duchene and Krell

were unopposed and re-elected with 398 and 399 votes respectively. Edwardson was re-elected against challenger Sylvia J. Archer, New Richland with 244 votes to 160 votes for Archer.

The co-op’s drive-thru annual meeting with temperatures in the 90s had 414 members register at one of five reception areas to cast their ballot and receive a binder of gift certificates, which included a \$50 Energy Star® certificate and \$30 Power Perks certificate (good



The incumbents re-elected to the SWCE board of directors Tuesday, June 8, during the co-op’s drive-thru annual meeting were (left to right): PJ Duchene, District 1; Duane Edwardson, District 3; and Rodney Krell, District 5.

at one of the participating member businesses listed on the certificate), and Steele-Waseca promotional products. The drive-thru annual meeting was scheduled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

At the conclusion of the annual meeting, the co-op’s board of directors met for their reorganizational meeting. The following officers were elected: Gary W. Wilson, Owatonna, president; John R. Beal, Faribault, vice president; Renee J. Malecha, Dundas, secretary/treasurer; Rodney Krell, assistant secretary/treasurer; and Duane Edwardson, chaplain.

Steele-Waseca has over 11,600 service locations in a nine-county area including: Blue Earth, Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Goodhue, LeSueur, Rice, Steele, and Waseca counties.



Steele-Waseca Line Supervisor Matt Rohman (pictured right) scans the registration card of a co-op member as Operations Assistant Cindy Butterfield (center) provides the member with a binder and ballot during the drive-thru annual meeting conducted with temperatures in the 90s adjacent to the co-op’s headquarters in Owatonna.

RentHelpMN COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance



GET RENT HELP MN TODAY

Visit renthelpmn.org or call 211

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance

RentHelpMN is Now Open for Applications

Minnesota Housing is pleased to announce that [RentHelpMN](https://renthelpmn.org) is now open and accepting applications. RentHelpMN makes it possible for eligible renters to get caught up on overdue rent and utilities dating back to March 13, 2020. It also makes provisions for those at risk of falling behind on rent payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note that RentHelpMN is in **Phase One**, in which people with past due rent who meet eligibility requirements are invited to apply.

To apply for RentHelpMN, please visit renthelpmn.org or call 211. The 211 helpline has dedicated multilingual staff available to answer questions about RentHelpMN, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Visit renthelpmn.org to learn more about the program and eligibility requirements and to apply.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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



Board of Directors

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

Management

Syd Briggs *General Manager*

Division Managers

Darla DeVries *Office*
David Lundberg *Finance*
Dan Meier *Operations*

Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages Phone:

507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

Before calling to report an outage

1. Check fuses and circuit breakers in your home and on meter pole.
2. Check with your neighbors to see if they have power.
3. Look for possible causes such as a tree branch on wires, a broken pole, twisted wires, etc.

To leave a non-emergency message whenever SWCE's Office is closed:

Phone 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514 and listen to the prompts. Please have your account number, phone number, and name on the account available.

Call *Before* You Dig
Gopher State One Call
811 or 800-252-1166

48-hour notice required for **ALL** underground cable locations

manager connection



By Syd Briggs,
General Manager

I wish to thank our members who came out in 90-plus degree weather with humidity to match, and participate in Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 85th annual meeting Tuesday, June 8.

It was the co-op's second consecutive annual meeting that was conducted as a drive-thru event due to the coronavirus pandemic. After the lineup of member vehicles during the annual meeting in September 2020, some adjustments were made to streamline the process, and heard comments from both participating members and employees, how much quicker the lines moved this year. While our board of directors, and director candidate, enjoyed brief conversations with members proceeding through in their vehicles, board directors are looking forward to conducting a traditional in-person annual meeting in 2022, if progress continues to be made in the coronavirus pandemic.

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather, but I certainly would be open to backing off the extreme heat and humidity experienced in early June.

Unfortunately, summer months also make conditions right for severe storms. These potential weather events can cause damage to our electrical system, but I can assure you our line crews are ready to respond should power outages occur in our service area.

When storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during severe storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit ready.gov for additional resources:

- 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.

- Confirm you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towels, 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 easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major 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 power is restored. 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.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's website and/or Facebook page for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property. 30857

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event, and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Steele-Waseca, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

A-C 185, diesel, cab, 3-pt. w.f.; **(3) PIPE & FENCE GATES; CHICK FEEDERS & WATERERS; MULTI-POSITION LADDER.** 528-2252.

6.3-ACRE BUILDABLE LOT, corner of Holt Tr. & Cedar Lk Blvd, Fbo, \$78,000. 210-3856.

REDLINE 340 BMX, 20", \$100; **TREK 720 MULTITRACK**, 21 spd, men's, \$100; **MONGOOSE 29" MTB**, F.S. Fork, \$150. 330-3178.

USED ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS, 30-day warranty; **CAR & TRUCK PARTS.** 332-2300.

2006 NISSAN XTERRA, 92,000 mi., V6, 2WD, \$3500. 455-0022.

20' PIPE, 4", 3/16 thick; **6X10 I-BEAM**, 16' long, 3/8" thick; **SMALLER MISC. I-BEAMS.** 210-4225.

KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP RAM LAMBS; HEREFORD BULLS. 451-2722.

OLD FORD 8N TRACTOR, needs a valve job, best offer. 451-7837.

16' LUND FISHING BOAT, 25-hp Mercury w/elec. start, depth finder, trolling motor, battery, Spartan trailer, & LED lights, \$2450. 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.

Don't fall victim to utility scams

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

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person.

Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Occasionally, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members will report receiving a phone call where the scammer demands immediate payment and threatens to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, Steele-Waseca will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.

We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have *overpaid* your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. **Don't fall for this scam!** If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Steele-Waseca will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many con-

(30) **BIG CORNSTALK BALES**, net wrapped, stored inside. 583-2577.

'95 CASE 1845C SKID STEER LOADER, 4584 hrs, 56-hp Cummins engine, hand controls, 7" bucket, 75% tires remain, 1850-lb lift capacity, front & back lights wrk, no leaks, wrks perfectly. 612-462-2913.

(3) BOXES 60-RDS 350 LEGEND, 145 gr., \$45; **FL DIE SET .300 SAVAGE**, new, \$35; **32-RDS 444 MARLIN**, 240 gr., \$45. 461-1191.

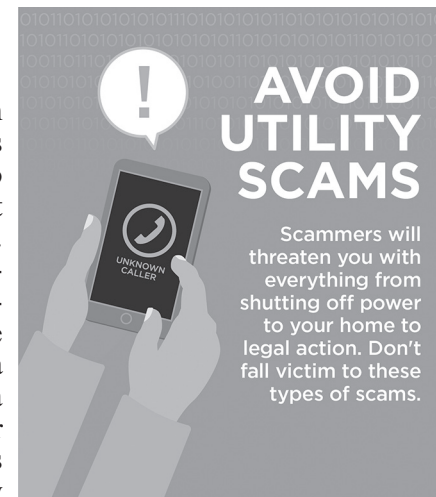
QUEEN-SIZED SOFA SLEEPER COUCH, gd shape, \$75; **DINING ROOM BUFFET**, 60-yr-old, \$50. 649-7820.

VINTAGE "IDEAL" DUAL WASHTUB w/cover, gd cond., \$350. 330-4125.

CHAR-BROIL LP GAS GRILL, brand new in box, (4) burner, \$200; **SHIPPING CONTAINERS**, store your stuff on your property in moisture- & rodent-proof containers, 20' & 40'. 612-418-4375.

COMMERCIAL VENDING MACHINE for chips, gum, & candy bars, \$250. 334-7177.

2006 FREIGHTLINER COLUMBIA SLEEPER, 13 spd, MBE 4000, new steer, tires, \$10,000/obo; **ALUM. FUEL TANK**, \$175/obo. 380-4291.



- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.

mer. 1010102

- **Confirm before you act.** If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Steele-Waseca or another utility, but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Steele-Waseca so we can let others in our communities within the co-op's service territory know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.

- **Be suspicious.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scam-

ad connection

give away

CAB for JD 3010-4020 tractor. 340-2810.

POOL HEATER, natural gas, works. 339-0763.

SM. PASTURE LAND. 330-4125.

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

COMPACT TRACTOR, 25-30 hp, 4WD-loader, 3 pt, PTO. 339-1138.

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

WILL DO TILLING, PLOWING, BLADE & BUCKET WORK w/compact tractor. 451-6046.

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

WILL ASSIST PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES w/per-sonal cares, exercises, housekeeping, errands, ap-pointments, 40+ yrs experience. 456-0076.

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

BARN, GRANARY, &/OR OUTBUILDINGS, I re-move to re-purpose the lumber; OLD TIN; BARN SIDING OR LUMBER. 330-0258/Tim.

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

HOUSEKEEPER near Fbo. 838-8958.

SOMEONE TO MAKE HAY ON MY 8-10 ACRE FIELD on shares or cash near Mdfd on county line. 339-0763.

EXTERIOR BLDG PAINT JOBS: houses, garages, barns, etc. 308-8556.

SOMEONE TO REPAIR ROCK FOUNDATION WALL ON HOUSE. 334-6023.

for sale

FLARE BOX, T&G wood floor, hyd. lift, exc. shape, great wood hauler, \$575; LAND WHEEL COUN-TER, \$30. 455-3881.

32' X 6" BIN ROOF AUGER w/motor mount, hopper, trusses, & roof mounts, \$250. 330-5503.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

CAR TRAILER & OTHER TRAILERS; FORK-LIFTS; JD 7410 w/loader; A-C B w/woods mower, \$1675. 402-7679.

KERR & BALL CANNING JARS, pint & quart, no lids. 451-9533.

2008 HONDA GOLD WING TRIKE, gd cond., ready to ride. 838-1677.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

HUMMINBIRD FISH FINDER w/transducer 859 HD DI w/"8" screen, wrks great, \$200/obo (cash); VER-IZON HOTSPOT INTERNET, great for traveling or home use, \$20/obo. 789-6596.

MINI STORAGE UNITS in Ellendale. 456-1460.

(2) NETHERLAND DWARF BUNNIES, both are chinchilla gray, & parents have pedigree. 210-4164.

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

INT'L SUPER M, nice tin, runs gd, wide front, gd tires, \$2600. 456-6959.

8' PICKUP TOPPER w/slider window, \$40; TOP-PER, 62" wide x 74" long, \$40. 334-2673.

FRIGIDAIRE FREEZER, upright, you haul, \$150; OVEN HEATING ELEMENT, new, \$20. 645-8659.

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

POLY STOCK WATER TANKS: (1) 100-gal., \$70; (1) 100-gal., \$50; (1) 150-gal., \$55. 744-2792.

1999 TOYOTA TACOMA TRD OFF-ROAD w/topper, 154,400 mi., runs great, clean inside, well taken care of, \$9000. 383-7873.

GROUND BEEF, 4 mi. north of Fbo on Cty Rd 46, pick up on Sundays, \$5.25/lb. 210-4032.

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

(2) BOAT SEATS w/pedestals; HOMELITE GAS WATER PUMP, 1.5"; MERCURY VAPOR YD LIGHT; RETRACTABLE CLOTHES LINE. 465-8566.

(3) PAIRS OF JEANS, 38W x 30L, brands are Levi's, Dickies, & Wrangler, \$10 each pair. 210-6728.

CANON PIXMA MX340 COPY-SCAN-FAX MA-CHINE, comes w/cartridges (4-blk, 1-color), \$250; GARAGE DOOR, 7x18', like new, complete, \$250. 334-3804.

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

60 WATERPROOF LAMINATE FLOORING w/rub-ber backing, 6"x36", (30) 6"x24" gray, all new, \$100. 412-3775.

A "HARDING MANUFACTURING" OUTDOOR WOOD BOILER, 180,000 Btu's an hour, complete-ly factory rebuilt in 2010 & not used since, \$2500. 272-5852.

CASE 1840 SKID LOADER w/accessories, 5024 man hrs. 381-1160.

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

1951 DODGE 1-TON PICKUP (COLLECTOR), gd cond., been shedded all the time. 456-3016 or 455-1502.

STRAIGHT GRASS BALES; MIXED ALF. & GRASS BALES, sm. sq., \$4/bale. 612-756-1131.

LUMBER, assortd sizes. 612-703-1316/Duane/Fbo.

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

2004 HONDA CIVIC EX, 283K mi., clean, gd runner, needs some cosmetic repair, \$800/firm. 612-207-4390/Mark.

1000-GAL. FUEL TANK w/Gasboy pump, \$1000/ obo. 451-3554.

MINN. 6-TON WAGON, ext. pole, ext. hitch, gd tires, \$500; MENARDS PIONEER SWING SET, \$25. 952-212-6975.

TREE TRIMMING, REMOVAL & STUMP GRIND-ING, pro climber & aerial lift to U of M guidelines; 2007 FRONT CHROME BUMPER for an F-650, like new. 456-1609.

INDOOR BOAT STORAGE, close to Interstate 35 & Dundas/Nfid exits, reasonable; GE 40-PINT DEHU-MIDIFIER, white, \$50. 612-423-4500.

MIXED GRASS HAY, new crop, sm. sq., off wagons in season. 334-6377 or 210-1158.

(2) TRAILER TIRES & WHEELS, brand new, (5) bolt, 5.30-12", tubeless, Load Range C, \$95 for both. 491-4565.

(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.

4 Seasons Vacations, Inc.

TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE. LOVE YOUR VACATION.

member connection

Scholarships awarded by Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric to 16 "Class of 2021" high school graduates

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric awarded \$500 scholarships to 16 high school seniors who graduated this past school year.

A portion of the funds to support these scholarships come from unclaimed cap-ital credit equity.

Steele-Waseca's scholarship program has awarded \$189,750 in scholarships since the program was established in 1954. 1031727

The recipients are a dependent of a Steele-Waseca member and will be at-tending a two- or four-year technical school or college full time this fall. The recipients were selected by their respec-tive high schools. This year's recipients include:

• Bo Dienst, Bethlehem Academy, the son of Dustin and Anne Dienst, Faribault.

• Taylor Wurst, Blooming Prairie, the daughter of Tim and Tammy Wurst, Blooming Prairie.

• John Palmer, Faribault, the son of Bradley & Michelle Palmer, Faribault.

• Lynsey Knudson, Hayfield, the daughter of Salena Knudson, Hayfield.

• Anna Groskreutz, Janesville-Wal-dorf-Pemberton, the daughter of Joel and Renae Groskreutz, Waldorf.

• Mason Nagel, Medford, the son of James and Kris Nagel, Medford.

• Dylan Petsche, New Prague, the son of Jay & Denise Petsche, Lonsdale.

• Daniel Nydegger, New Rich-land-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, the son of Larry and Michele Nydegger, Ellendale.

• Joshua Johnson, Northfield, the son of Greg and Marie Johnson, North-field.

• Sam Snitker, Owatonna, the son of Grant and Paula Snitker Jr., Owatonna.

• Gracie Baer, St. Clair, the daugh-ter of Jesse Baer and Jennifer Mueller, Minnesota Lake.

• Jack Erickson, Tri-City United, the son of Kevin and Jill Erickson, Lonsdale.

• Chloe Staub, Triton, the daughter of Chris and Julie Staub, West Concord.

• Ethan Bushlack, United South Central, the son of Chris and Betsy Bushlack, New Richland.

• Alexis Barber, Waseca, the daugh-ter of Jason Barber and Amanda Ryan, New Richland.

• Taylor Landrum, Waterville-Ely-sian-Morristown, the son of Ryan Landrum and Katie Judd-Landrum, Waterville.



Bo Dienst



Taylor Wurst



John Palmer



Lynsey Knudson



Anna Groskreutz



Mason Nagel



Dylan Petsche



Daniel Nydegger



Joshua Johnson



Sam Snitker



Gracie Baer



Jack Erickson



Chloe Staub



Ethan Bushlack



Alexis Barber



Taylor Landrum

cookin' connection

Strawberry Limeade Smoothie w/Greek Yogurt

Sandi Jones

Faribault

6 frozen strawberries
1 lime
1 tsp. sugar

4 oz. Greek yogurt
8 oz. vanilla almond milk

You will need ice and a blender. Thoroughly rinse the fresh produce and pat dry. Halve lime and cut 2 rounds for garnish. Juice remaining lime. Mix sugar with 2 Tbsp. lime juice until dissolved. Place all ingredients (except the lime rounds) in a blender with 2 cups ice. Blend until smooth, 3-4 minutes. Pour smoothie into 2 glasses and garnish with lime rounds. Enjoy:)

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 46 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during May 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.

June issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
Craig/Lisa Nelson
Numbers not found:
Chris Tuma
David/Michelle Albers
Allan Elsner
Amy Ihrke



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.

• **May temps** – The average high temperature for May was 68° F, while the average low was 48° F. This resulted in 271.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and 55 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 66° F and average low of 46° F, which resulted in 291 HDDs and 16.5 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 swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 800-526-3514.

• **SWCE'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

LIVESTOCK OWNERS

If you have questions or concerns regarding stray voltage in your livestock confinement building(s), or are planning an addition, or constructing a new one, call Steele-Waseca at 507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514. Steele-Waseca will work with you and your electrician to eliminate potential stray voltage problems. You may also visit: www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com.

health & safety connection

Hot weather can stress the electric grid, but co-ops have a plan

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

Minnesotans experience weather in extremes oftentimes on a recurring cycle—from deep freezes to big melts to heat waves—which means electric cooperatives must be prepared year-round to keep electricity flowing to homes, farms and businesses no matter what Mother Nature brings.

When temperatures drop as low as they did during the polar vortex earlier this year, or reach heat index values as high as 100 degrees during the summer, Great River Energy and its member-owner cooperatives (which includes Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric) deploy demand response programs in order to cost-effectively meet members' electrical demands.

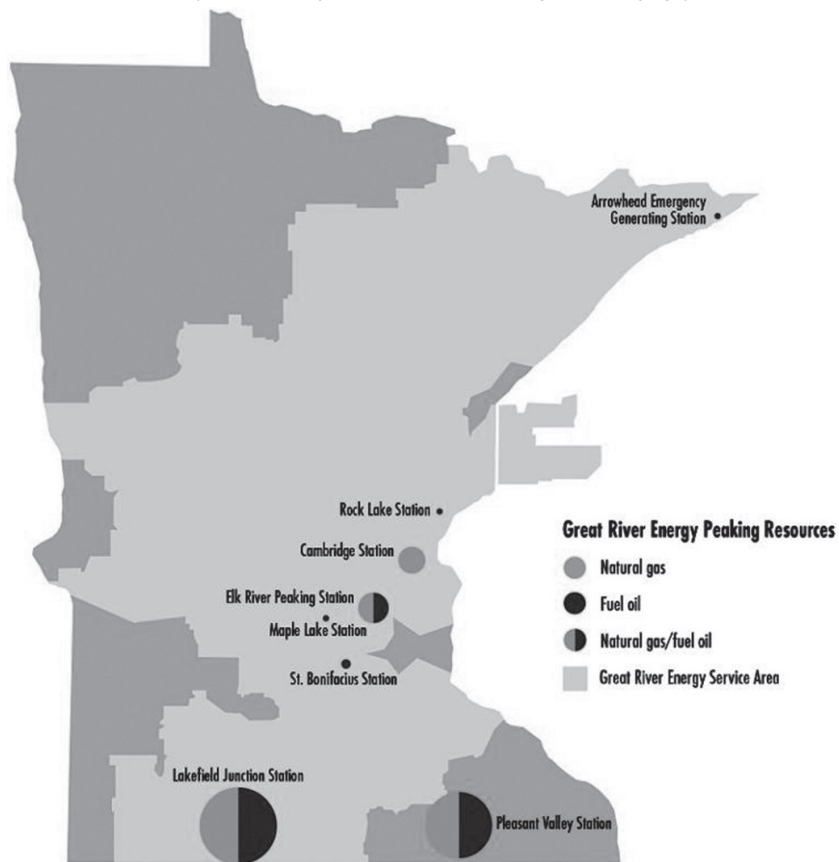
More than 200,000 residents participate in programs that allow cooperatives to cycle their air conditioner, water heater, or some other electric device for a period of hours on high-demand days. Because of this, GRE can control 15% of its peak load—or the equivalent of reducing electricity demand by more than 200,000 homes on a normal summer day.

“We are able to be very proactive in anticipation of extreme weather events and work closely with our members to ensure they are properly prepared,” said Josh Hebert, load management specialist at Great River Energy. “We depend on the flexibility of our programs, and the membership, to avoid paying higher market costs during times when demand for electricity is high. These programs also help avoid transmission and substation equipment from reaching thermal limits during extreme heat.”

In addition to these programs, GRE owns and operates a fleet of natural gas peaking stations across Minnesota that generally run only on the hottest and coldest days of the year. These plants can start up in a matter of minutes to add electricity quickly and dependably to the grid when needed. 1087261

When combined with the Midwest's high availability of wind, natural gas peaking plants provide stability today and flexibility for a future with

(Hot weather plans continued lower right on this page)



If you feel a **SHOCK**,
swim **AWAY** from the **DOCK!**



Did you know?

Electricity can enter water from energized boats and docks.

If you are in the water and feel electric current:

- 1 **SHOUT** to let others know.
- 2 **TUCK** your legs up to make yourself smaller.
- 3 Try to go out **AWAY** from anything that could be energized.
- 4 Do **NOT** head to boat or dock ladders to get out.

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

- 1 Do **NOT** jump in.
- 2 Throw them a float.
- 3 Eliminate or turn off the source of electricity as quickly as possible.
- 4 Then call for help.

Learn more at **SafeElectricity.org**

(Hot weather plans continued from above left on this page)

new energy technologies.

Most of the cooperative's peaking plants are “dual fuel” facilities, meaning they can operate on fuel oil when demand for natural gas is heightened.

With these programs and power supply assets in place, cooperative members can depend on reliable, affordable electricity throughout all of Minnesota's seasons.