


member connection

(Pollinators continued from Page 1)

nator plants were blooming this past spring.

According to Great River Energy (GRE), Steele-Waseca's wholesale energy provider, bees, butterflies and other bugs pollinate more than 70% of the world's crops. GRE and other electric cooperatives are among many organizations that have focused on the plight of these pollinators, and are working to re-establish their native habitat.

Great River Energy has restored more than 200 acres of native habitat over the years. A team of employees continuously looks for ways to establish prairie and pollinator-friendly habitat along transmission lines, near substations and power plants, and on land where the cooperative has facilities. The group first collaborated on the pollinator-friendly prairie in Elk River, which was planted in 2016.

Schwab said Steele-Waseca's pollinator plot is contributing toward sustainability and protecting the environment. "This project should allow us to avoid pesticide use for the life of this habitat." 

SPECIES

- WI Native Anise Hyssop
- IA Native Black Eyed Susan
- IA Native Blue Vervain
- IA Native Culver's Root
- Variety Not Stated Evening Primrose
- IA Native False Sunflower
- IA Native Foxglove Beardtongue
- IA Native Golden Alexanders
- IA Native Grayhead Coneflower
- SD Native Hoary Vervain
- IA Native Illinois Bundleflower
- Variety Not Stated Lance-Leaved Coreopsis
- Medicine Creek Maximilian Sunflower
- IA Native Partridge Pea
- MN Native Prairie Cinquefoil
- IA Native Prairie Coneflower
- MN Native Purple Prairie Clover
- IA Native Rattlesnake Master
- IA Native Smooth Blue Aster
- MN Native Smooth Blue Aster
- ND Native White Prairie Clover
- IA Native Wild Bergamot
- WI Native Big Bluestem
- Bad River Blue Grama
- Mandan Canada Wildrye
- Tomahawk Indiangrass
- Badlands Little Bluestem
- MN Native Rough Dropseed

- Pierre Sideoats Grama
- Certified Revenue Slender Wheatgrass
- Dacotah Switchgrass
- MN Native Virginia Wildrye

Above is a list of the various seeds planted in the co-op's pollinator plot located on the west side of property headquarters in Owatonna.

Steele County Ducks Unlimited

49th ANNUAL FALL DUCK BASH

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Foundation Building @ The Steele County Fairgrounds

Doors Open at 5:00 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Wear Camo or Blaze Orange for a chance to win a FREE gun!!

1 FREE keg of beer (courtesy of Steele Co. DU Committee)

Sponsor tickets include:

1 entry into the Sponsor drawing, a Duck Buck Pack (\$50 dollar value), a Sponsor knife, & an invitation to the 2022 Sponsor Member's Dinner Banquet

- Limited seating so register early!!! (pre-registrations given preference)
- Menu: Smoked Chicken Breast and Smoked Country-Style Pork Ribs
- Vikings Suite Raffle (includes all food and drink) for the final home game

Single's Ticket.....	\$45
Couple's Ticket.....	\$65
Sponsor Membership.....	\$300
Sponsor Couple.....	\$320
Greenwings (Age 17 & Under).....	\$20
DuckBuck Pack(\$55).....	\$50

****\$55 IN DUCK BUCKS PACKS FOR ONLY \$50****

Three ways to order your 2021 Steele County DU Fall Duck Bash tickets:

*Purchase online tickets at www.mndu.org

*Call 507-456-5046

*Or mail the completed bottom portion of this form with your payment to:

Steele County Ducks Unlimited
PO Box 226
Owatonna, MN 55060

PLEASE PRINT PHONE NUMBER(S) NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP TRACKING

_____ GREENWING BANQUET TICKET(S) @ \$20	\$ _____
_____ SINGLE ADULT BANQUET TICKET(S) @ \$45	\$ _____
_____ COUPLE ADULT BANQUET TICKET(S) @ \$65	\$ _____
_____ SPONSOR BANQUET TICKET(S) @ \$300	\$ _____
_____ SPONSOR COUPLE BANQUET TICKET(S) @ \$320	\$ _____
_____ PRE-EVENT RAFFLE TICKET(S) @ \$10 per chance	\$ _____
_____ SORRY, I CANNOT ATTEND THE EVENT, \$35 SINGLE MEMBERSHIP	\$ _____
_____ SORRY, I CANNOT ATTEND THE EVENT, \$250 SPONSOR MEMBERSHIP	\$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ (MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DUCKS UNLIMITED)

CREDIT CARD: VISA MC AMEX DISCOVER (CIRCLE ONE)

ACCOUNT # _____ EXP DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ THANK YOU!!!!


NAME ADDRESS PHONE

NAME (spouse) ADDRESS PHONE

NAME ADDRESS PHONE

GREENWING NAME ADDRESS MONTH & YEAR OF BIRTH

(BioPlastic continued from Page 1)

General Manager Syd Briggs. "We are excited to see BioPlastics locate in and serve our rural area, and we are grateful the Rural Economic Development Loan program supports projects like this in our smaller communities and helps create and save jobs." 



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric September 2021

inside connections

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- 8 Steele County Ducks Unlimited Fall Bash details

calendar of events

September

- 6 Labor Day 26392
SWCE office closed;
Final day of Minnesota State Fair
- 8-12 The Defeat of Jesse James Days, Northfield
- 11 Patriot Day
- 11-12 Mantorville Marigold Days
- 17 National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 18 Steele County Relay for Life
- 22 First day of autumn
- 23 Steele County Ducks Unlimited Fall Bash, Owat.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric assists BioPlastic Solutions with obtaining USDA funding for business expansion

BioPlastic Solutions (BPS) in Ellendale closed Thursday, July 22, on a zero-interest loan with Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) to expand their business operations.

The loan closing was held at Steele-Waseca's headquarters in Owatonna. The co-op was awarded \$600,000 through the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Steele-Waseca is re-lending the funds to BPS for new equipment, and interior building upgrades to support increased production at their facility. With the proposed project, BPS is anticipating they will add up to 16 additional full-time positions.



BioPlastic Solutions President and CEO Gary Noble (pictured left) and Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Board President Gary Wilson enjoy the moment Thursday, July 22, after completing the paperwork for a \$600,000 zero-interest loan through USDA's REDLG program, allowing for BPS expansion in Ellendale.

“BioPlastics is a progressive high tech employer in the city of Ellendale, and it is a privilege to work with Gary Noble in supporting the economy of the local area,” stated Steele-Waseca

(BioPlastic continued on Page 8)

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric pollinator project showing results of invested work

With an effort that started during fall 2019, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is noticing the impact of their work in establishing a pollinator plot on the west side of the co-op's property closest to the community solar installation.

The project has been led by Steele-Waseca Safety Coordinator/Member Service Representative Jack Schwab. He worked with the Steele County Farm Service Agency to qualify the property under provisions of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Seeding of the 1.83 acre plot was conducted in May 2020 with a combination of grasses, sedges, forbs, and legumes. After a couple of mowings, the polli-

(Pollinators continued on Page 8)

Steele-Waseca's Jack Schwab is pictured recently with a monarch butterfly among the pollinators located south and immediately west and north of the co-op's community solar installation.



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2411 W Bridge Street, PO Box 485
Owatonna MN 55060-0485

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: www.swce.coop Find us on Facebook
Email: swce@swce.coop
Fax: 507-446-4242

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Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages Phone:

507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

Before calling to report an outage

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

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

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

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

48-hour notice required for ALL underground cable locations

manager connection



By Syd Briggs,
General Manager

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances, and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater, and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones,

computers, TV, and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and businesses, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses highlighted in the chart below. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value. 34528

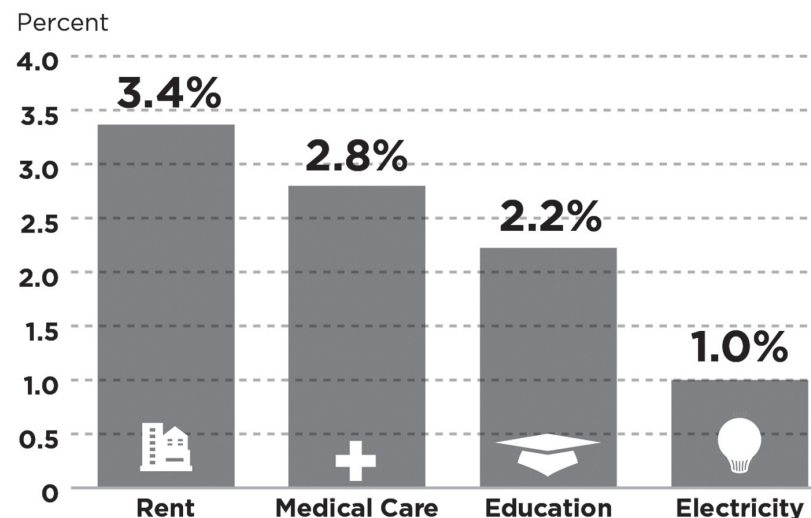
So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

At Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, we care about you, the member-owners we serve, and understand electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Steele-Waseca will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

ROUND TREATED POST, 5" to 6" diameter, 6' length, \$5/each; **(2) TRAILER TIRES & WHEELS**, 155/80R13, 80% tread, 5-bolt, \$55. 491-4565.

MIXED GRASS HAY BALES, last yr's, \$2.50; **(1) ROUND BALE**, \$40, Lonsdale area. 744-5288.

2009 VW PASSAT KOMFORT, 2.0L, turbo, FWD, leather seats, silver, sunroof, gd tires, A/C, heater, new parts, clean title. 308-4513/iv. msg.

OAK FIREWOOD, 1/2 cord/\$120, full cord/\$200, prices incl. delivery within 10 mi. of Owat. 475-2651.

(2) WOOD-SIDED HAYRACKS, 8-ton gear, \$400/each; **INT 710 3-18 AR PLOW**, \$700; **INT 470 10' DISC ON RUBBER**, \$400; **OTHER MISC. ATTACHMENTS**. 456-6014 or 952-292-9796.

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

1-PR CARHARTT BLK JEANS; 1-PR WRANGLER, size 38x30, \$10 per pair. 210-6728/leave message.

4X5 MIXED GRASS HAY ROUND BALES & CORN-STALK BALES, net wrapped, no rain. 451-5131.

FORD TW20, good condition, shedded, new tires. 649-1228 after 6 p.m.

1971 CHEVY C50 TRUCK; 16' STEEL BOX & HOIST. 475-2118.

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

SMALL J&M GRAVITY BOX. 210-1158.

1994 POLARIS 4-WHEELER, runs, but needs work. 455-1625.

OUTDOOR WOOD BOILER, Harding Manufacturing, 180,000 Btu per hour, returned to manufacturer for complete rebuild in 2010, has not been used since. 272-5852/leave message.

LARGE DOG KENNEL, \$10; **MOTOROLA E51 DIGITAL CORDLESS PHONE**; **(3) PHONES** w/bases, also operator manual. 363-2219/afternoons.

1-ROW CHOPPER & HAY HEAD, \$350; **IH 1-ROW CORN PICKER**, \$250; **IH 1420 COMBINE** w/4-row narrow head, \$5200; **JD CAB**, no windows, \$20. 456-1181.

COMMERCIAL VENDING MACHINE, \$50; **A.R.E. RED HARDTOP** for Dodge Ram, \$75. 334-7177.

PAIR OF HEAVY DUTY CAR RAMPS, \$65. 612-309-4995.

JD 6620 COMBINE; EZ-FLOW 300 GRAVITY WAGONS; WESTFIELD AUGER, 8"x46'. 583-2026.

OLD SAW BLADES, 24"; **3-TON HOIST**; **OLD GRAIN WAGON**. 491-9259.

7.5-HP SINGLE PHASE ELEC. MOTOR, runs gd, \$250. 234-6375.

JD LAWN MOWERS; LAWN MOWER PARTS: tires, rims, motors, decks. 701-230-5697.

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.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric seeking assistance in locating former members

Capital credit checks for the following former Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members have been returned to the co-op because their mailing addresses are no longer accurate.

If you know any of the following former members and can provide information about them, please call Hlou Yang at the Steele-Waseca office during regular business hours. 1014075

Sylvia Alberts Aberdeen, SD
David/Lisa Born Dodge Center
Donald/Laurie Deutsch Lakeville
George V. Doyle N. Mankato
Robert N. Dunn Rochester
Catherine Dusbabek or Christine Gavenda Corrinth, TX
Eugene W. Fremouw Faribault

Larry/Beverly Gullickson Dodge Ctr
Stanley D. Poole Fort Myers, FL
Russell E. Hanson New Richland
Tim Harguth Waseca
Jane Hawes Owatonna
Timothy/Susan Hazen Faribault
Irma/Donna Hindal Dodge Center
Joan C. Horsman Faribault
Joshua/Margaret Hurd Faribault
Kevin P. Johnson or Kim Harpel Owat.
Maurice Johnston Bloomington
Gary A. Jones Hayfield
Gary J. Jones Owatonna
Shirley L. Karman Newark, OH
Diane E. Kohanek Faribault
Roger K. Larson Lyle
Matt/Kay Lawson Long Prairie
Janet Lohberger Mankato
Susan M. Misgen Sidney, MT
Loring Olson or Holly Wayne Al. Lea

1938 FORD PICKUP, drives like a new one, \$26,800; **16' LUND FISHING BOAT** w/25-hp Mercury, boat trailer, depth finder, & trolling motor, lots of extras, \$2350. 327-3626.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Ellendale. 456-1460.

DRIVEWAY GRADER, 3-pt hitch, hvy steel, 7' blade, adjustable. 339-0763.

OVER-THE-CAB PICKUP CAMPER, 8' box, propane stove, refrig., & furnace, \$595/obo. 451-0715.

(2) GRAVITY FLOW WAGONS, 165 bu., \$450/each; **GE REFRIG.**, white, great extra, \$100; **BARN FOGGER**, 2 gal., \$40. 400-4662 or 210-2392.

(75) RETAINING WALL BLOCK & CAP BLOCK, \$150; **5-GAL. PLAS. PAISLS**, \$2/each; **HORSE LEG PROTECTORS**, like new, (3) sets, \$50. 456-8893.

'67 CAMARO, 90% orig.; **NATIONAL CASH REGISTER**, antique, \$75; **CRAFTSMAN RADIAL SAW**, like new, best offer. 440-8831/leave message.

'70 CHEVROLET GRAIN TRUCK, single axle, \$1000/obo. 456-5130.

BARNYARD CHICKS, 3-mths-old; **PYGMY GOATS**. 475-1468.

CIRCLE LK LOT, 0.7 acres. 678-978-7444.

Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

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

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

ad connection

give away

KITTENS, tame & adorable. 676-6510.

ICE BAGS. 451-2687.

OLD METAL CORNGRIB, nice roof, roof made of corrugated tin, 10' wide, 18' long. 330-3383.

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

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

2002-10 TRUCK OR LARGER CAR such as a Buick Lucerne/Park Ave., etc., Lincoln Continental, etc., Ford Taurus, etc., in running cond., & non-white in color, cash. 475-2645.

LOOKING FOR FARMLAND TO RENT in the Owat. area. 213-6979.

WILL ASSIST PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES w/personal cares, exercises, housekeeping, meal prep, errands, appointments, 40+ yrs exper. 456-0076.

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

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

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

SEEKING RURAL RESIDENCE: small house or mobile home, pet friendly, trustworthy. 308-8556.

JOE TO PICK UP MASSEY CORN PICKER, you pd \$200 a yr ago & never picked it up. 952-652-2933.

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

LAWN MOWER PARTS. 701-230-5697.

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

SOMEONE PART-TIME TO WORK ON SMALL ENGINES, prefer retired person, will also repair mowers and snowblowers. 213-7978 or 475-1311.

SEEKING PLASTER FOUNDATION JOBS on old houses, barns, stone walls & sm. cement jobs, close to Owat. area. 273-3587.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

for sale

TRACFONE w/994 minutes of call time, great cond., \$150/obo. 789-6596.

FLARE BOX, hydraulic lift, treated 2x8 extensions, \$575; **PET KENNEL**, \$30; **FLUORESCENT SHOP LIGHTS**, 4'-8", \$5/each. 455-3881.

CRIB used for dog kennel, \$100; **16' CATTLE GATES**, \$125/each. 524-4637.

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

OLIVER TRACTORS: 1750, 1650, 88, 77, & 70; **'83 MON ARK BOAT**, 17.5', Evinrude 115. 455-2599.

1953 FARMALL SUPER M w/all hyd. loader, many new parts, WF, runs & drives great. 456-0760.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

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

BOAT STORAGE near Interstate 35 & Dundas/Nfld exits, reasonable. 612-423-4500.

(3) 5' X 7' AREA RUGS: (1) brwn shag; (1) green/gold sculptured; (1) multi-colored. 528-2075.

9T GRAIN BIN w/elec. auger, best offer; **STORAGE FOR RENT**: boats, trailers. 475-2322.

LADIES-SIZED RECLINER, no rips or tears, gd shp for basement, etc., you haul, \$15/Owat. 676-0825.

BATHTUB. 451-6313.

(4) '97 CHEVY ALUM. RALLY RIMS, 6-hole, 245x75x16, \$100. 334-2673.

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

TOLEDO PIPE THREADING MACHINE, 1/8"-2", vry hvy duty on wheels, 115V, wrks perfect, \$500/obo. 323-4362.

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

BUILDABLE RIGHTS IN WEBSTER TOWNSHIP, Rice Co. 612-919-4130 for pricing & details.

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

4D MFG LIVESTOK/HORSE HAY/GRAIN FEEDRS, 2-horse 68"x38"x46", \$175; 4-horse 68"x38"x88", \$220; **LIVESTOK GATES**, 10' & 12', hvy duty 16-ga. steel, 2" bars, no hanging hdwe, \$60/ea. 323-4118.

COUNTRY HOME FOR RENT, 4-bdrm, avail. 9/1/21; **BLK ANGUS BULL FOR RENT OR SALE**. 451-3678 or 213-4060.

WWE COLLECTABLES: T-shirts, cups, mini figurines, magazines, puzzle, bed sheets, 50th anniversary book, necklace. 451-0653.

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

NEW CLARINET & ALTO SAX; SCOTTS REEL MOWER; STIHL CHAIN SAW w/case; **BCS GARDEN SHREDDER & CHIPPER**. 340-0506.

LIFT CHAIR, blk w/3-spd massager, wrks gd, \$75. 451-2687.

FLUTE; TENOR & BARI SAXOPHONE; BLK & DECKER CORDLESS MOWER w/catcher; **KETTLE GRILL**, 22.5"; **WEED EATER**. 461-3450.

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

(4) BEVELED GLASS OCCASIONAL TABLES w/wicker bottom shelves, beautiful, \$250; **CULVERT**, 18"x24'. 465-8566.

(2) DEMCO ALUM. LOADING RAMPS, 14'x30", apron on 1 end, hooks on the other, 1000-lb. capacity each, \$800/pair. 612-247-2957.

SMALLER GRAVITY BOX & WAGON, \$300; **5TH WHEEL HITCH** w/rails, like new, \$150; **FORD 1-TON CHAIN HOIST**, like new, \$50. 456-7614.

DUMP TRUCK SERVICES FOR ALL YOUR HAULING NEEDS: rock, gravel, dirt, etc., 15.5-ton capacity. 456-7774.

TRUCK TIRES, set of (4), Toyo M/T 33x12.50R18LT, 1/4 thread, all for \$150/obo. 413-2659.

SPECIALIZED HOTROCK BIKE, boy's, 16x175, \$40; **TREK BIKE**, boy's, 16x175, \$40; **TREK BIKE**, girl's, 16x175, \$40 (all like new). 330-3178.

CANON PIXMA MX340 COPY-SCAN-FAX MACHINE, comes w/cartridges (4-blk, 1-color), \$250. 334-3804.

(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.



member connection

Co-ops grapple with parts shortages, cost increases

Courtesy: Derrill Holly, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

The COVID-19 pandemic and a spate of natural disasters have triggered a parts shortage and driven up operating costs for electric cooperatives and other utilities, and the problem could continue well into next year.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Operations Division Manager Dan Meier said the co-op started the ordering process for next year in June. "This is typically done in December," said Meier. "This will impact the budget and inventory dollars. However, it is imperative that we have the necessary materials on hand." 1060300

The pandemic forced many manufacturers to reconfigure plants to accommodate social distancing, which slowed production, packaging and shipping, and delayed deliveries.

Commodity prices have also increased, with the cost of steel, copper and petroleum-based products, including plastics and composites, up at least

6% to 8% since the pandemic began.

According to logistics and distribution members of the Electric Utility Distributors Association (EUDA), transformer and conductor lead times have doubled or tripled.

Some product manufacturers have logged as many as three price increases for manufactured items during their 2021 production cycle, and EUDA members have reported price increases on certain items exceeding 300%.

Pressures on the logistics system started showing up in the Southeast and West nearly a year ago, as co-ops and contractors began rebuilding from hurricane and wildfire damage.

Unusually low interest rates have also spurred utility infrastructure investment, including expansion of electric vehicle charging networks and transmission to support renewable generation. The deployment of advanced metering infrastructure components and

the phaseout of analog control and metering equipment is also up.

RESCO, which supplies co-ops and other publicly owned utilities in eight Midwestern states, has boosted inventory levels by 40% since the pandemic began.

Louisville, Kentucky-based United Utility Supply responded to multiple natural disasters during the pandemic, sending truckloads of transformers to Iowa after a derecho and to Texas following February's deep freeze. Massive supply efforts were also mounted after ice storms hit Ohio and Kentucky, and big shipments moved to co-op yards after hurricanes Sally, Laura and Delta.

Cooperation among supply and logistics cooperatives continues to help prevent pernicious shortages of essential parts and equipment. That's keeping a steady stream of hardware and components headed to co-ops across the country.

ENERGY WISE MN

WE PUMPED UP OUR REBATES
SO YOU CAN SHRINK DOWN YOUR ENERGY BILL

SAVE ENERGY AT HOME WHEN YOU INSTALL A DUCTLESS AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP.

Ductless/Mini Split Air Source Heat Pump	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
Delivered fuels	\$100	\$450*
Electric heat	\$200	\$750*

*Minimum HSPF ≥ 9.0

And when you act now, you'll receive a supersized, limited-time rebate of up to **\$750!**

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

Visit energywisemn.com/promotions to learn more about the rebate!

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice. Offer extended through Sept. 30, 2021

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **September 3** to ensure being printed in the October *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 3rd will be printed in the November 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.

cookin' connection

Mandarin Orange Cake

Melaine Schrot

Faribault

Mix:
1 yellow cake mix; 4 eggs; 1/2 c. vegetable oil; (1) 4 oz. can of Mandarin oranges with juice.

Frosting:
(1) 15 oz. can crushed pineapple with juice
(1) 3.4 oz. pkg vanilla instant pudding
8 oz. Cool Whip whipped topping

Mix cake mix, eggs, vegetable oil, and Mandarin oranges. Put in 9"x13" floured pan. Cook at 350° for 30-35 minutes until toothpick in center comes out clean. After cooled, apply frosting mixture of pineapple, pudding, and whipped topping.

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 55 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during July 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.

August issue of Sparks

Numbers found:

None found by those members

Numbers not found:

Harvard/Pauline Richardson
Robert Giacomini
Robert Whitney
John/Amy Liebelt
Dawn Chadwick



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.

• **July temps** – The average high temperature for July was 81° F, while the average low was 61° F. This resulted in 188.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs), and 8.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 83° F and average low of 62° F. This resulted in 233.5 CDDs and 2.5 HDDs.

• **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

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

Great River Energy member cooperatives approve sale of Coal Creek Station, HVDC transmission system

At a special Friday, July 30, meeting, Great River Energy's (GRE's) member cooperatives, including Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, approved the sale of Coal Creek Station and the high voltage direct current (HVDC) system to Rainbow Energy Center, LLC and Nexus Line, LLC, respectively.

GRE's all-requirements members also approved a related purchase power agreement with Rainbow Energy Center, LLC. Great River Energy will purchase 1,050 megawatts (MW) of power from Rainbow for approximately two years, followed by 300 MW for approximately eight years.

Great River Energy projects the transaction could save its members approximately \$130 million compared with shutting down Coal Creek Station. Rainbow plans to operate the 1,151 MW power plant using current plant employees they hire. 1071372

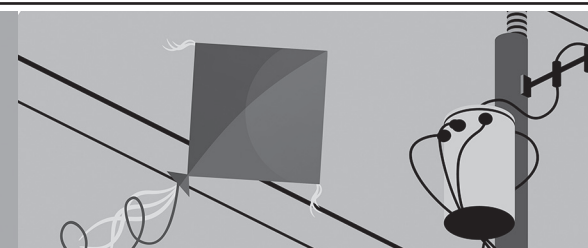
Rainbow's plan to pursue carbon capture and storage at Coal Creek Station provides the possibility that many of the employees at the plant and adjacent coal mine will retain their jobs for the long term. GRE will operate and maintain the HVDC system for Nexus using existing Great River Energy transmission employees under a 10-year contract.

Rainbow Energy Center, LLC and Nexus Line, LLC are affiliates of Rainbow Energy Marketing Corporation of Bismarck, North Dakota.

GRE is building a power supply portfolio that will serve its member-owner cooperatives with clean, affordable and reliable energy for decades. The cooperative will add 900 MW of wind energy by the end of 2023 and remains on track to meet Minnesota's 80% carbon dioxide reduction goal ahead of schedule.

The purchase of Coal Creek Station and the HVDC system is expected to close later this year, after additional required approvals are obtained.

Talk to your children about the importance of practicing electrical safety.



ENERGY WISE MN

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

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

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UP TO \$2,000 REBATE WHEN YOU INSTALL A QUALIFYING, ENERGY-SAVING AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP!

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

Visit energywisemn.com/promotions to learn more about the rebate!

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

Offer extended through Sept. 30, 2021