

Sobrack among Jay York Scholarship recipients

Carson Sobrack (pictured right) of Medford was among four electric cooperative recipients randomly selected to receive a 2021 Jay York Scholarship.



The Jay A. York Scholarship was started in recognition of the first Minnesotan to head the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). York was a prominent figure in rural electric cooperative issues for nearly 30 years. He was elected in 1964 to the Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) board. He was not only well-known for his great leadership ability, but also great dignity, a disarming understanding of the issues, and an unyielding dedication to his fellow rural Americans.

This year 11 cooperatives participated in the scholarship in honor of Jay. They were: Arrowhead Electric Cooperative, Federated Rural Electric Association, McLeod Cooperative Power

Association, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, NCE, Redwood Electric Cooperative, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association, Sioux Valley Energy, South Central Electric Association, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, and Traverse Electric Cooperative, Inc. The other scholarship recipients besides Steele-Waseca's Sobrack were Lilly Ehrke, McLeod; Kaitlyn Anderson, Sioux Valley; and Emily Matejka, South Central. Each recipient receives a \$400 scholarship made available from the participating cooperatives. 31579

Carson, the son of Randy and Holly Sobrack of Medford, is completing the two-year commercial carpentry program at Riverland Community College in Austin, where he will be graduating in the spring of 2022. Carson graduated from Medford High School in 2020, where he participated in FFA, concert choir, football, basketball, and baseball. The York Scholarship was established in 1994 by Minnesota's electric cooperatives in recognition of Jay.

(BNSF continued from Page 3)

cision from the PUC," said Nick Loehlein, vice president of electric operations for Connexus.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association participated to communicate the interests of all electric cooperatives. "Together as a strong family of Minnesota cooperatives, we stood up for what's right for all electric cooperative member-owners," added Loehlein.

In addition to Loehlein, the following people testified in front of the PUC: Felhaber Larson Attorney Sara McGrane, MREA CEO Darrick Moe, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative CEO Dan Carlisle, and Meeker Cooperative Light and Power CEO Tim Mergen.

History of right-of-way issues

After several years of the rail industry charging cooperatives unreasonable fees, in 2016 the Minnesota legislature passed a law that set a standard crossing fee and established a clear process and requirements for utility crossings of railways.

BNSF previously appealed a similar

petition filed with the Commission in 2018, but the Minnesota Court of Appeals affirmed the statute.

Despite the statute, BNSF routinely charges Connexus and other electric cooperatives across the state unreasonable fees above what is allowed by statute, and subjects the cooperatives to compliance with unwarranted additional requirements that risk grid reliability, delay construction and increase costs.

A critical victory

The Commission agreed unanimously with Connexus, deciding in their favor on all eight decision points. Additionally, Commissioner Tuma drafted a decision option for the Commission to investigate the conduct that has been occurring. "This is a shining example of cooperation among cooperatives," said Moe. "Connexus undertook the petition for the collective benefit of all of Minnesota's not-for-profit electric cooperatives and their member-owners to ensure the continued delivery of reliable and affordable energy."

cooperatives to learn from each other and to enhance security practices. By working together and as part of a national effort, cooperatives keep the grid secure.

Protecting against cyberattacks

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

The security of critical infrastructure is garnering increased attention following several recent notable cyberattacks.

The company that delivers nearly half the fuel used on America's east coast needed to shut down the flow of oil, May 7, after its systems were compromised by a cyberattack. Hackers also gained access to SolarWinds, New York City's Law Department, and California's water supply.

"We're seeing an increase in sophisticated hacking operations," said Marc Child, the information security program manager at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale power provider Great River Energy. "In our partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, we're hearing hackers likened to terrorists. It's gaining national and international attention especially among what we consider as essential infrastructure: electricity, banking, public works."

Critical infrastructure companies, including our cooperative, are among the few that have mandatory minimum standards for cybersecurity. Their cybersecurity practices and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they're effective against a cyberattack.

"At Great River Energy, we're required by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation to ensure our cyber assets are secured," said Child. "This means that we're required to take necessary steps to ensure the grid and our member data is safe and secure. Cybersecurity is critical to what Great River Energy does as it maintains and operates the grid."

GRE has emerged as a cybersecurity industry leader, giving cooperatives a voice at the Department of Energy and sharing lessons learned with its member-owner cooperatives.

Great River Energy facilitates collaboration on topics related to cybersecurity among its member-owners through an information-sharing team as well. Together, co-op representatives discuss their successes and opportunities in security practices. This allows all



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

November 2021



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calendar of events

November

- 2 Election Day
- 7 Daylight saving time ends
- 11 Veterans Day 15909
- 25-26 Thanksgiving holidays
- SWCE office is closed
- National Lung Cancer Awareness Month



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric nominating committee appointments announced for 2022

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors have made appointments to the 2022 Nominating Committee.

It is the nominating committee's responsibility to prepare the list of director candidates, and post it at the cooperative's office at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting scheduled Tuesday, June 7, 2022.

The election of directors will take place during the business portion of the annual meeting, held at Steele-Waseca's headquarters, located at 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna.

All Steele-Waseca members are eligible to serve as board directors. The governance role of directors can be summarized as being responsible for setting the overall policy, and monitoring the business affairs of the cooperative.

If you are interested in becoming a director, you may call Executive Assistant Jenifer Shimpach at Steele-Waseca, and a director nomination form will be sent to you.

Or, if you know another member who would make a good director, and you want him or her to be considered, please contact the nominating committee member nearest you. However, before you make the request, be certain the person will accept the position if nominated.

The Nominating Committee will conduct two in-person meetings. The first is scheduled Thursday, Nov. 11. The second meeting is scheduled Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022. The committee would appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping them select director candidates.

All Steele-Waseca members are eligible to vote each year for all expiring board director positions.

The districts electing directors at Steele-Waseca's 86th annual meeting include the following:

District 2

Ryan/Jenny Angelow . . . 330-0424
Frank/Joyce Ahlman . . . 334-8613
Dale/Lynn Groskreutz . . . 239-2409

District 4

Glenn/Linda Wiesjhan . . 451-2902
Keith/Carol Schrader . . . 649-1574
Denise Bartness 444-9147

District 6

Joseph Haberman 438-7236
Patricia Pagel 333-5724
John/Lylia Iverson 451-2019

• **District 2:** Dunbar, Lura and Minnesota Lake Townships in Faribault County; Mapleton, Danville, Medo, McPherson and LeRay Townships in Blue Earth County; Freeborn Township in Freeborn County; Alton, Byron, Freedom, Janesville, St. Mary, Vivian and Wilton Townships in Waseca County. (Represented by Geraldine Lienke)

• **District 4:** Bath and Geneva Townships in Freeborn County; the Southwest one quarter (SW 1/4) and the Southeast one quarter (SE 1/4) of Berlin Township; Deerfield, Owatonna and Meriden Townships; the Northeast one quarter (NE 1/4) and the Southeast one quarter (SE 1/4) of Somerset Township, and Summit Township in Steele County; the Southwest one quarter (SW 1/4) of Warsaw Township in Rice County. (Represented by Dennis Ringhofer)

• **District 6:** Medford, Clinton Falls and Merton Townships; and the Northwest, Northeast and Southeast one quarters (NW, NE & SE 1/4's) of Havana Township in Steele County, and Ellington, Concord, Claremont and Wasioja Townships in Dodge County. (Represented by Gary Wilson)

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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

You may recall last month, my column touched on the first three cooperative principles, so as cooperative month concludes, I'd like to reflect on the remaining four principles, as they, like the previous three, are essential to the co-op business model, benefit all members of the co-op, and make me thankful for all stakeholders in the co-op nation.

Autonomy and Independence

The fourth principle, Autonomy and Independence, means the co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local communities in our service area. This means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the co-op is led by the local members it serves. 1062339

Education and Training

The fifth principle, Education and Training, focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members, which enables them to contribute to the development of the co-op.

By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members,

which is you, and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. In fact, that's why you receive a *Sparks* newsletter each month, so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters the way co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts—and we of course extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an ever-changing energy landscape.

Concern for Community

The seventh principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our local communities not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy, whether through economic development, volunteerism, or donations to local causes.

I believe you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the local communities. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, we're thankful for your membership, and hope you have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

Community born.
Community led.
Focused on YOU.



ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

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

DR PRO 16.50 WOOD CHIPPER, like new, \$2000; **ECHO 10" BRUSH SAW**, like new, \$400. 202-8871.

17' FIBERGLASS CANOE w/trailer, exc. cond., \$800. 456-8931.

(4) ATV TIRES ON RIMS unmounted off Polaris 900 Ranger. 451-6695.

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

(2) WHEELS, TIRES ON RIMS, ST175/80R13, 5-bolt rim, both for \$85. 491-4565.

TRACTOR CHAINS, size 13.6x26, showing vry little wear, \$100. 390-5222/Owat.

MF 2705 w/cab, \$7800/obo; **SUPER M**, narrow front, \$3500; **JD 410 BALER**, extra parts, \$4500/obo; **OLD TRAILER HOUSE FRAME**, needs tires fixed, \$500. 456-1181.

FIREWOOD, \$75/qtr cord, \$280/full cord; **ONIONS & POTATOES**, \$1/lb., Nfld area. 651-357-5092/Paul.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Ellendale. 456-1460.

2009 CHRYSLER 300 TOURING, 3.5L, V6, AWD, blk on blk, vry clean, new tires & alignment, 107,600 mi., \$8250. 612-388-5994/New Prague.

WHITE PLOW, 6-btm, variable width, on land hitch. 465-8191.

MIXED GRASS HAY, sm. sq., no rain. 210-1158.

GRASS HAY, sm. sq.; **BANKING HAY**. 334-6377.

WOODEN PLANT STAND, will hold (3) plants, \$10; **SUITCASE**, soft side, gd cond., \$10; **(10) ANTIQUE BOTTLES**. 451-2687.

LATHAM RASPBERRY PLANTS, \$1.50/each. 581-2301 or 663-1275.

ROCK BOX; 1850 AXLE WTS; GRAVITY WAGON, 190-bu. 465-8483.

(5) 50' ROLLS OF WOODEN SNOW FENCE, \$15. 363-9084.

GRAIN WAGON w/hydraulic lift, 450-650 bu.; **CREAM SEPARATOR; SEED CLEANER; SM. WOOD-BURNING STOVE; ANTIQUE WASHING MACHINE; 2-PERSON PEDAL CAR**. 451-5172.

6-PLATE SET, yellow depress. glass, \$40. 461-3324.

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

HEREFORD BULLS & HEIFERS; KATAHDIN HAIR SHEEP. 451-2722.

1999 MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS E300TD, sedan, (4) door, 277,000 mi., diesel w/WVO kit avail., runs & drives great. 301-1525.

2016 LINCOLN MKC, auto everything, moon roof, 65,000 mi., gray color, asking low 20s. 330-0876.

FEED WAGON, PTO drive, needs tires, \$75; **BOAT TRAILER**, has winch & jack, \$125. 952-652-2933.

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

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

6" DRAIN TILE, 100', \$75; **JONSERED 621 CHAIN SAW**, runs & cuts, needs some TLC, \$50; **300-GAL. ALUMINUM TANK** on 2-wheel steel frame, \$500. 456-8893.

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 ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT'S BELOW!

Protect yourself and those around you. Use GSOC this time and every time.

Whether you are a professional excavator or homeowner, in accordance with Minnesota State law, you must contact Gopher State One Call (GSOC) before starting any excavation project if you are using any machine-powered equipment of any kind, or explosives. You may be simply installing a new mail box or planting a tree, whatever the project may be, contacting GSOC before starting your project may allow you to avoid costly damages to underground facilities.

Please note: Gopher State One Call is NOT responsible for contacting locators to paint or flag your PRIVATE FACILITIES.

THE ONE CALL PROCESS

When you have a project that requires digging, your first step is to contact Gopher State One Call. You can do this by using GSOC's Homeowner Online Locate Request system or by calling the One Call Center.

(651)454-0002 -or- (800)252-1166
www.gsocsubmit.org

BE PREPARED

When you contact GSOC with a locate request, a series of questions will be asked.

- What is your name, address and phone number?
- What type of work will you be doing? (i.e. planting a tree, installation of fence)
- What is the dig location's address, city, county and nearest intersecting street?
- At the dig location, where will you be digging? (i.e. east side of house, within 5 ft radius of white stake.)
- When will you be digging? (i.e. 3 days, next week)

GET YOUR UNDERGROUND FACILITIES MARKED

Once you have submitted your dig information it is created as a "ticket" which is sent to any utilities that may have underground facilities in the area of excavation. Those utilities will send a locator to the site to either paint or flag the area in question.

CHECK FOR POSITIVE RESPONSE

A good practice before digging is to check Gopher State One Call's Positive Response site respond to determine if each utility company

has visited your dig site or responded to your locate request.
www.gsocsearch.org

DIG!

In accordance with Minnesota, you must wait 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) after you've submitted your dig information to begin your digging project.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND!

OUTLINE THE DIG AREA

Before you contact GSOC, you must outline your dig area with white markings. This helps the locator know exactly where you will be digging. Some good examples of white marking tools include white paint, flags, laths or stakes.

WAIT FOR LOCATES

After contacting GSOC, you must wait. Utilities have 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) to locate their facilities. That means if you plan to dig on Saturday, call on Wednesday.

CONTACT US BEFORE YOU DIG!

www.gopherstateonecall.org

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric does not locate private underground facilities that are the homeowner's responsibility. Private underground facilities usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills. Other private facilities include natural gas farm taps, private water systems, data communication lines, and invisible fences. 24582

The contact information for a number of locating companies who will locate privately owned underground facilities on your property can be found in the industry directory at www.gopherstateonecall.org/homeowners, then click on "Private Utility Locators." This list is by no means an exhaustive list or a list of locators recommended by GSOC. For additional locators, consult a search engine, like Google, or refer to the Yellow Pages under "Utilities Underground - Locating." Remember, **private locators will charge a fee for their services**. No one should ever remove flags before work is completed for the safety of all digging in the area. If you come in contact with an underground utility, evacuate the area and notify your utility provider.

ad connection

give away

PRINCESS HOUSE CRYSTAL, HERITAGE, RE-
GALE serving plates, bowls, candle holders, decant-
ers, copper carafe, cake plate & cover. 461-3324.

OLD FASHION UPRIGHT PIANO to a gd home, you
load & haul. 612-986-6223/Mdfd.

USED OIL, (40) gal. 612-756-0741.

FIREWOOD, (3) dead ash trees, you cut—you can
have, 1/2 mi. east of Owat. 451-3370.

FREE-STANDING BASKETBALL HOOP, fill base
w/sand. 527-2307.

EGG CARTONS; ICE CREAM PAILS w/covers;
CABINET STEREO. 451-7837.

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

LOCAL HANDYMAN to do small remodel jobs &
installation of windows, located NW of Faribault.
319-415-5427.

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

WASTE OIL TRANSFER PUMP, not air powered;
8-HOOK HAY CARRIER from hay barn. 440-8831/
leave message.

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

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

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

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

OLD POSTAGE STAMPS, used or new before 1950
issuance, collections OK, free estimates on current
value. 676-0970.

BLK WALNUT CRACKING DEVICE. 465-8398.

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

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

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

SPEARING FISH HOUSE; SPEARING DECOYS &
FISHING SPEARS; KEROSENE LANTERNS. 952-
290-0059.

SMALL BUILDING for chicken coop. 581-2301 or
663-1275.

JD 70 OR OMC 330 MUSTANG SKID LOADER,
running or parts. 451-5131.

USED OIL, 200-gal. minimum. 420-7429.

for sale

EXPANDABLE BED FRAME, queen or king size,
new, \$20. 363-2219.

50-GAL. BURN BARRELS, \$20; LAND WHEEL
COUNTER, \$30; FLARE BOX, exc. cond., great
wood hauler, \$575. 455-3881.

SNAPPER I524 SNOWBLOWER, 24", \$125; 45
COLT RELOADING DIE SET, new Hornady, \$20; 32
RDS 444 MARLIN AMMO, 240 gr., \$45. 461-1191.

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

TRIP LOADER for Massey-Harris 33. 330-0672.

TENOR, ALTO, BARI SAXOPHONES; BLK &
DECKER CORDLESS MOWER; SCOTTS REEL
MOWER; BCS GARDEN SHREDDER; CLARINET.
340-0506.

KARRITE ROAD RIDER CAR ROOFTOP CARGO
CARRIER, 3'x4'x18", gd cond., high density polyeth-
ylene shell, no leaks, side opening, place for locks,
\$50. 301-9965.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

WHITE ALUM. CONSTRUCTION GRADE 8' PICK-
UP TOPPER w/ladder rack, side window open over
wheel well for box access, \$250. 330-2452.

1975 FORD GRAIN TRUCK, 16' box & hoist, needs
brake & carb. wrk, \$750. 612-756-0741.

MINI REX RABBITS. 535-9301/leave message.

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

(2) FAINTER FEMALE YEARLING GOATS; (2)
FAINTER SPRING WETHER GOATS; (2) CROSS-
BRED SPRING WETHER GOATS; (3) CROSS-
BRED SPRING FEMALE GOATS. 456-1357/Sue.

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

BUILDABLE RIGHTS in Rice County's Webster
Township. 612-919-4130.

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

(11) FEEDER CATTLE: (8) Hereford, (3) blk, 400-
450 lb. 213-8670.

1995 POLARIS 440 SKS, liquid cooled, ready for
winter; 1983 YAMAHA PW50 w/training wheels;
MINI BIKE, 3 hp. 838-8870.

RAT TERRIER X TREEING FEIST PUPS, born
8/22/21, tails not docked, vaccinated, dewormed, (3)
males & (1) female. 465-8593/Brad.

SEASONED FIREWOOD, mostly oak, you haul,
\$100 per truckload. 323-1539.

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

SCHWINN WORLD TOURIST BIKE, women's, 10
spd, \$40; RALEIGH M20 MTB, 18 spd, women's,
26x175, \$100. 330-3178.

PIPE THREADING MACHINE, 1/8"-2", elec., 120V,
on stand w/wheels made by Toledo, \$500/obo.
323-4362.

(4) BEVELED GLASS OCCASIONAL TABLES w/
wicker bottom shelves; STEEL CULVERT, 18"x24';
MERCURY VAPOR YARD LIGHT; ACE PTO
SPRAYER PUMP. 465-8566.

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

FARMALL B, \$850/cash; (2) REAR TRACTOR
TIRES, 13-6-28, \$150/cash. 456-0835.

(4) 6-HOLE CHEVY ALUM. RALLY RIMS, \$100;
8' PICKUP TOPPER w/slider window, \$60; 1986
FORD F-150, great shape, \$2100. 334-2673.

CANON MX340 PRINTER, copy/fax/scan, comes
w/(4) blk PG-210XL cartridges, & CL-211 color car-
tridge, \$250. 334-3804.

WOODCARVING SCANDINAVIAN-STYLE BOOKS
by Harley Refsal, history, pictures, & patterns.
583-2173.

(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

Storage Water Heating Program

Benefits

Installing an electric water heater lets you enjoy the cleanest, safest, most efficient
water heating system.

The SWCE Storage Water Heater Program

- * SWCE will give you a FREE 115-gallon Westinghouse water heater
- * Water heater will be controlled from 7AM-11PM (Mon-Fri)
- * You will receive either the dual fuel rate (if on dual fuel) or a \$10/month credit (when over 400 kWh are used)



Westinghouse Water Heater

- * Stainless steel tank with heavy-duty insulation
- * 115 gallon weighs 224 lbs. shipping weight
- * Dimensions 27" x 70.5"
- * Industry best Lifetime Warranty when registered online within 90 days

How to Sign Up

- * Contact SWCE to pick up water heater and receiver
- * Homeowner or licensed contractor is responsible for picking up and installing water heater and receiver within 60 days
- * An affidavit is required by the state of Minnesota for all new wiring
- * Contact SWCE at 507-451-7340 to schedule a field check after it has been inspected by the state electrical inspector. Credits will not be applied until field check is complete
- * If longer than 60 days, member will be billed for the water heater and receiver

Supporting electric co-op members across Minnesota, Connexus Energy successfully challenges unlawful BNSF practices

Courtesy: Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

Connexus Energy and electric coop-
eratives across the state were hand-
ed a critical victory, Sept. 9, regarding
fees and requirements related to rail-
road crossings.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Com-
mission (PUC) decided in favor of Con-
nexus in a petition for resolution of a
dispute with BNSF Railway Company.

Utilities must cross existing railroad
rights-of-way in order to provide neces-
sary services to consumers, and electric
cooperatives are no exception. Railroad
companies and utilities are required to
work together to maintain safety and
smooth operations.

This ruling directs BNSF to comply
with state law regarding access to rail-

road rights-of-way to enable construc-
tion and maintenance necessary for
electric grid reliability. Connexus made
every reasonable attempt to resolve the
dispute through negotiation, but ulti-
mately brought it to the PUC.

“Connexus and our members are
grateful for the unambiguous 5-0 de-

(BNSF continued on Page 8)

cookin' connection

Chicken Wild Rice Soup

Jane Kubinski Faribault

1 pkg. Uncle Ben's Long Grain Wild Rice (cooked according to pkg. directions)
1 large can of chicken
2 cans chicken broth
(1) 8-oz. block of cream cheese

Put cream cheese and 1 can of broth in microwave safe bowl. Microwave 2 minutes. Whisk until smooth, add to other ingredients. Heat and serve.

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 43 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during September 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.

October issue of Sparks



Numbers found:
Andrew Eggum
Numbers not found:
Nghì Nguyen
Herman Transburg
John Ihlenfeld
Thomas/Whitney Agrimson



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.

- **September temps** – The average high temperature for September was 76° F, while the average low was 51° F. This resulted in 106.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 57.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 69° F and average low of 50° F. This resulted in 197.5 HDDs and 32.5 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 www.swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514. 1025345

- **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

Getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe during harvest

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest.

The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," said Rudolphi.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She said getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," said Rudolphi. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.

- Limit electronic device use.

- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning

ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long

hours and unpredictability," added Rudolphi.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Make Time for Safety

AVOID HAZARDS WITH OVERHEAD POWER LINES

Fall harvest is the most likely time of year for farm-related accidents and fatalities. The number one factor in electrocution on the farm is an auger that hits a power line when being moved. Be aware of your surroundings and look up often.

SAFE ELECTRICITY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING HARVEST SAFETY TIPS:

1. Check the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
2. Be aware of the location of power poles and lines, including field entry and exit points, and plan a safe equipment route.
3. Always keep a minimum 10-foot safety radius around an electric line.
4. Use a spotter when moving tall loads near electrical lines.
5. Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving equipment.
6. Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
7. Know what to do if your equipment does make contact with a power line. It's almost always safest staying in the cab. Call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait until the electric utility says it's safe to get down.

Learn more at:

SafeElectricity.org



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.