

youth tour connection

Applications being accepted for 2022 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will sponsor two eligible students

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is accepting applications from eligible high school sophomores or juniors for an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2022 Youth Tour, June 14-19, 1007427

The tour is coordinated through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Participating cooperatives sponsor a member student(s) to travel to Washington, D.C., to learn about cooperatives and our government, tour historical sites, and have fun meeting new friends from Minnesota and other delegates from across the nation.

To be eligible, the entrant must meet the following requirements:

1. The entrant is currently a high school sophomore or junior, and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are a Steele-Waseca member. Dependents of Steele-Waseca employees or directors are not eligible to participate.
2. All entries must include: a) the completed application form below; b) answers to both essay questions typed on an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper; c) applicant's school and community information typed on a separate sheet of paper; and d) two letters of recommendation (one from an instructor, counselor or administrator, and the other from a church or community leader).
3. Return entries to: Steele-Wase-

ca Cooperative Electric, c/o Youth Tour 2022, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 18, 2022. The two Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 18, 2022.

Each entry will be evaluated by a panel of judges for:

- completeness
- composition
- neatness
- ability to communicate
- school and community activities


Essay Questions:

1. Why would you like to be Steele-Waseca's delegate to Youth Tour 2022? What do you hope to gain from the experience? Answer in 150 words or less.
2. Write a short essay on what commitment to community means to you. Include how you contribute to your

community. Answer in 300 words or less.

School and Community Information (use a separate sheet of paper to list the following):

- All school activities – include letters and honors earned, positions held, etc.
- All community activities – include all church, community service and positions held.
- Work experience and any other information.

MREA is requiring that each participating cooperative's delegate(s) report to the Crowne Plaza Airport located at 3 Appletree Square in Bloomington for an orientation session on Tuesday, June 14, presently at 9:30 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the session. 

 #swceLIFE+



Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2022 — June 14-19

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ street \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Parent(s) or Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently a high school \_\_\_\_\_ sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ junior at \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian consent: I/we hereby give my/our dependent high school student permission to enter the Rural Electric Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2022 Contest. I/we understand if they're selected, I/we will be responsible for providing their transportation to the Crowne Plaza Airport in Bloomington and from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ SWCE account # \_\_\_\_\_



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

February 2022

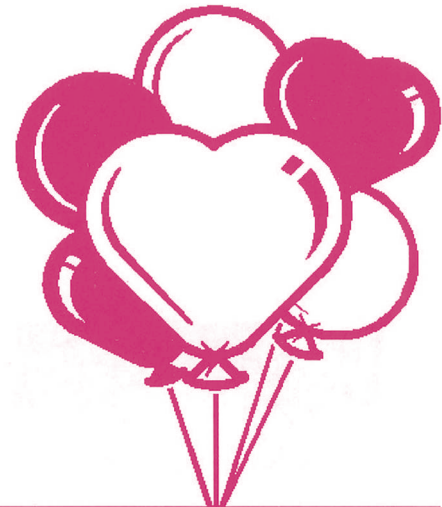
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calendar of events

February

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 4 National Thank a Mail Carrier Day
- 13 Super Bowl LVI 26409
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 21 Presidents' Day



VALENTINE'S DAY

Steele-Waseca details residential rebates available to members in 2022

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric member-owners seeking to add value to their energy dollar may utilize rebates offered by the co-op in 2022.

Rebates for central air conditioners and air source heat pumps are listed below, and require a quality installation. To find a qualified installer, visit Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), click on "Residential Rebates," then "Qualified Installers List," listed under "Quick Links."

	A/C	ASHP
14.5-14.9 SEER	\$50	\$200
15.0-15.9 SEER	\$50	\$300
16.0+ SEER	\$50	\$400

Rebates for Energy Star® labeled ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) are \$100 per ton in 2022.

Heat pump water heaters (HPWHs) in 2022 have a rebate of \$500.

Steele-Waseca is offering a \$50 rebate for a residential HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM), which offers a higher efficiency rating than typical electric blowers or condenser fan motors.

Ductless ASHPs with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate if your primary heat is delivered fuel, and \$200 if your primary heat is electric.

Energy Star labeled refrigerators and freezers are eligible for a \$50 rebate, only if you recycle your old unit.

Dehumidifiers with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$25 rebate.

Residential lighting rebates in 2022 will only be for LED (light emitting diode) lightbulbs with the Energy Star label. The rebate is \$2 per bulb up to one-half the purchase price (limit 5 bulbs).


Steele-Waseca members who install a LED yard light fixture that is Energy Star or DLC (Design Light Consortium) rated are eligible for a \$30 rebate; Wi-Fi smart thermostats are eligible for a \$25

rebate; Energy Star labeled electric clothes dryers are eligible for a \$25 rebate; a central air conditioner or ASHP tune up is eligible for a \$25 rebate per unit; variable speed pool pumps with the Energy Star label are eligible for a \$100 rebate; and pool ASHPs are eligible for a \$200 rebate.

Steele-Waseca is offering up to \$500 for members participating in the ChargeWise program. This is a voluntary program offered by participating electric cooperatives for qualified members who own a plug-in (PEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) electric vehicle.

The program allows members to charge their PEV/PHEV in their garage or carport using electricity from a specially installed 20-amp ChargeWise outlet. This ChargeWise outlet only provides energy during the off-peak hours of 11 p.m.-7 a.m. Members simply plug in the PEV in the evening and their vehicle is charged during those overnight hours at a reduced rate. They wake up to a fully-charged electric vehicle.

If you have a question, or wish to request a rebate form, please call Cindy Butterfield at Steele-Waseca weekdays between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Rebate forms are available at Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), by clicking on "Residential Rebates." Please visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) to check the model number of qualifying products.

Completed rebate forms must be accompanied with a copy of the receipt and submitted within 90 days of purchase. Please allow 6-8 weeks for processing. The rebate will appear as a credit on your Steele-Waseca bill. 

 #swceINNOVATION



ENERGY STAR

Products with the Energy Star label have met federal specifications regarding energy efficiency.



the power of human connections

SWCE

sparks

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Email: [info@swce.coop](mailto:info@swce.coop)

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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

We are now one full month into the new year and our prime concern is focused on living a fully healthy life. We continue to learn ways to stay healthy, and February will be a great month to enhance healthy living with an attitude of love for our family, friends, and neighbors. I believe we live healthier when we live happier with love in our hearts for each other; and there are so many ways we connect with our neighbors and family that provide an abundance of reasons to love. February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Tater Tot Day," "National Bubble Gum Day," and "National Drink Wine Day." They all have something in common as they were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy, and of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also a perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers, and other special people in our lives know we care about them—with or without a store-bought greeting card. So, in that vein, we've created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the member-owners of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric:

1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.

Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible, and safe electricity. Simply put, Steele-Waseca exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1936—to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

2. You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back.

A major part of our mission is to serve the communities in our service area and look after the greater good. With your assistance, we're able to help the most

vulnerable members of our communities through food drives and donations to local food shelves that help local families when times are tough.

3. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors.

They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in our service area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections, and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

4. You help us get it right.

Steele-Waseca members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball; our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our line crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. We also appreciate your feedback on co-op programs and services like rebates, renewable energy options, the water heating program, and website conveniences. Your opinions are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for that. 31268

5. You and other Steele-Waseca members make up the community we serve—and for us, it's all about community.

Our employees live, work, and care about our service area communities the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why Steele-Waseca donates to local community efforts, provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors, and are sponsoring two high school students on the 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering in various community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our service area communities, and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local communities, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.



#swceSERVICE

member connection

Windbreak benefits throughout the year

Courtesy: Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District

Each year throughout the countryside we see trees disappearing. Fence lines, old windbreaks, and small woodlots are vanishing at a rapid pace. We see excavators move in and clear an entire woods within a day, a woods that may have been there for hundreds of years. The only traces of these trees are fond memories and past aerial images that outline what once was. As these trees disappear, we need to think about where they can be replaced. Every farm has areas where trees can and should be planted from farmstead and field windbreaks to wildlife plantings on less productive soils. Tree and shrub windbreaks are valuable conservation tools with many functions including reduced soil erosion, crop protection, energy conservation, snow control, livestock protection, and wildlife habitat. Trees prevent wind erosion up to 20 times their height downwind and filter windblown soil particles from the air. Farmstead and field windbreaks can protect crops from devastating straight-line winds. They can reduce winter heating and summer cooling costs by up to 40%. Windbreaks also reduce the need for snow plowing and artificial snow fences along with protection for livestock, wildlife, and people.

You can do your part by refreshing an existing windbreak, cleaning out invasive species and planting more desirable species. Adding on to an existing windbreak or planting trees in areas that are too difficult to farm with modern equipment. Windbreaks and trees still belong in modern agriculture and should be used more. Come see us at the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District for site visits, advice, and plan creation for all types of windbreaks. We are holding our annual tree and native plant sale with select varieties suitable for this area at very reasonable prices. Check out our online store where you can view all species featuring pictures and descriptions, and place your order. Visit our webpage at [steeleswcd.org](http://steeleswcd.org) or Facebook page at [SteeleCountySWCD](https://www.facebook.com/SteeleCountySWCD). You can always give us a call at 507-451-6730 ex. 3, and we will be happy to take a phone order.

#swceLIFE+

When open wind velocity is 35 mph...

Wind currents are broken and lifted.

...toe of snowdrift will be about here under severe conditions

...velocity here is about 10-15 mph

...velocity here is about 15-20 mph

0' 100' 200'

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit [www.ArborDay.org](http://www.ArborDay.org).

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

Maple

Birch

Oak

Sweetgum

Spruce

Linden

Pine

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

Washington hawthorn

Goldenrain tree

Eastern redbud

American arborvitae

Dogwoods

SMALL TREES

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

Star magnolia

Crabapple

Lilac

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Tree pruning zone

Maximum tree height 25ft.

Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

COMMON UTILITY SCAMS: DISCONNECTION DECEPTION

Scammers call and threaten service disconnection, demanding immediate payment.

#swceTRUST

2

sparks • february 2022

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7



ad connection

give away

**FREE ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS**, you place & remove your own ad on SWCE's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), these are separate from *Sparks* & will not appear in *Sparks* unless mailed, delivered, or emailed to SWCE.

wanted

**RUBBER BOAT**, 2- or 3-person; **7' HAY MOWER**, cheap; **EXTENSION LADDER**, 24'-30'. 663-1275.

**JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES**, trucks or cars, top \$ paid. 332-2300.

**GUNS; AMMO; JD MOWERS; TACKLE; ESTATES**. 279-0431/Mark.

**CLEAN, USED REFRIG.** in gd working cond. for a garage; **HAND-CRANKED CORN SHELLER**, old farmer type. 451-7091.

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

**FORD DIESEL SKID STEER**. 330-1849.

**AG-RELATED ITEMS FOR EDUCATIONAL DIS-PLAYS** at family-owned & operated business in Nfld, including hand tools, livestock items, & machinery. 581-9248.

**PORTABLE CANVAS SPEARHOUSE; ICE FISH-ING SPEARS; SPEARING DECOYS; LANTERNS**. 952-290-0059.

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

for sale

**SNOW TIRES**, P215/78R15 MS, \$20/pair. 334-9583.

**FIREWOOD**, Walcott Town Hall area, \$40 per truck load. 332-7739.

**USED AUTO/TRUCK PARTS; ENGINES, TRANS-MISSIONS**, 30-day warranty. 332-2300.

**24" MURRAY SNOWBLOWER**, recently tuned up, elec. start, Fbo location, \$200/obo. 612-805-3033.

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

**ALFALFA**, small square, no rain, 3rd & 4th crop, Waldorf area. 327-4493.

**MINI STORAGE UNITS**, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

**(2) RADIAL TIRES**, 165SR13, gd tread, \$40/pair. 456-0643.

**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.

**CASE IH 4800 34' FIELD CULTIVATOR**, vry nice cond., nice sweeps, always shedded, new style hitch frame, \$7500. 338-0992.

**FIREWOOD**, \$80/qtr cord, \$300/full cord; **ONIONS & POTATOES**, \$1/lb., Nfld area. 651-357-5092/Paul.

**SEASONED FIREWOOD**, mostly oak, \$100 per standard pickup load. 323-1539.

**KITTENS** for house pets, 12- to 24-weeks old, mul-ticolored, vaccinated, for more info & photos, call 234-6865.

**ROUND BALE MOVER**, hvy duty, 3 point, \$100; **NUMEROUS MM CORN SHELLER PARTS; DRAGLINE** for Model D 1200, etc. 390-5508.

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

**GRASS HAY BALES**, small square, by Waldorf. 327-3672.

**FIREWOOD**: oak, sugar maple, elm & ash, mixed, most had dried 2 yrs & split well, \$100/truckload. 332-7590.

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

**ALFALFA/GRASS MIX HAY BALES**, full size, small square, great quality, no rain. 451-2978.

**FREE-RANGE DUCK EGGS**, \$4/dzn; **CHICKEN EGGS**, \$3/dzn, Nerstrand. 563-419-3661.

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

**TOLEDO PIPE THREADING MACH.**, elec. on cart, 1/8"-2" w/oiler, cutter, reamer, \$400/obo. 323-4362.

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

**(2) TRAILER TIRES ON RIMS**, ST175/80R13, 5-bolt rim, both for \$75. 491-4565.

**MINI STORAGE UNITS FOR RENT**. 456-1460.

**2009 CHEVY TRAVERSE LTZ**, 195,000 mi., many major repairs w/receipts, white w/gray blk interior, dual sunroof, clean title, no accidents, \$2500/obo. 363-6601.

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

**2-PERSON FISH HOUSE**, portable, great cond., \$150/obo. 744-5133.

**ALFALFA HAY**, big squares; **OATLAGE**, round bales, wrapped. 456-8639.

**JOHNNY TRACTOR TOYS THAT OPEN INTO BOOKS**: Big John, Wally Wagon, Barney Backhoe, Peter Pickup, & Corey Combine, \$20/ea. 330-0234.

**OLD ELEC. ROASTER**, wrks gd, \$20; **(2) WOODEN BUSHEL BASKETS**, \$5/each. 451-2687.

**ANTIQUE CUTTER, BUCKBOARD, SADDLES, & ASST. HORSE EQUIPMENT**. 612-719-1678.

**AUSTRALIAN SHEP. PUPS**, great companion, fam-ily, & working dogs, registered & ready to go mid-Feb. 456-3419.

**HEREFORD FEEDER STEER**, 800# on 12/24, \$1000/cash. 456-8094.

**STEEL BARRELS**: 55-, 30-, & 15-gal., \$10 any size. 451-7695/Gary.

**CIRCLE LK LOT**, 0.7 acres; **(2) DOWNHILL ROS-SIGNOL SKIS**, all well priced to sell. 678-978-7444.

**2-BTM PLOW; HAY ELEVATOR; 10' DIGGER; 10' DISC; HAY RAKE; STEEL WHEEL DRILL; FLARE BOX; WINDMILL**, still standing. 383-1021.

**TREK 3700 MTB**, men's, F.S. Fork, 21 spd, 26x1.75, \$200; **TREK 730 MULTITRACK**, men's, 700x35c, hybrid, \$150. 330-3178.

**MIXED GRASS HAY**, round bales, 4x5, net wrapped, no rain. 451-5131.

**DEWALT 1/2" DRILL COMBO**, \$60; **MIRA-FOUNT FROST-FREE CATTLE WATERER**, \$200; **A-C WD TIRES & RIMS**, 14.9x28, \$800; **A-C D ROAD GRADER**, some assembly req., \$3000. 330-3945.

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.

travel

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

4 Seasons Vacations, Inc.

TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE. LOVE YOUR VACATION.

member connection

Ensuring the electric grid can bounce back quickly

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

While temperatures are dropping and snow becomes more visible, Great River Energy has already taken steps to prepare for whatever impacts weather may bring.

“Resilience” has become a common focus for electric cooperatives and utilities around the country as extreme weather events, such as this past year’s polar vortex, become more common.

“The electric grid in our region per-formed very well during the polar vor-tex. We have prepared well in advance for such events,” said Dick Pursley, director of operations and transmission services at Great River Energy. “That said, along with the rest of the indus-try, we are focusing more than ever on building resilience into our systems and processes.”

Think about reliability as keeping the lights on and resilience as the ability to get the lights back on as quickly as possible if there is a major interruption from extreme weather, a cybersecurity incident or other cause.

“Great River Energy has always been dedicated to resilience, but the focus is now at a new level based on climate

change and major weather events,” said Pursley. “Over the last year, we have taken even further steps to ensure our electric system can bounce back from a major event and get the lights back on as quickly as possible.”

GRE performed a weather threat as-sessment in 2021 to understand how cli-mate change impacts the likelihood of, and the potential location of, damage to the tranmission system from weather risks such as ice storms, wildfires and flash floods. This provided the cooper-ative with insights on where and how they can better bolster the transmission system.

Great River Energy is also further preparing its power plants and facilities to operate in the bitter cold. 1091445

“Our power plants and facilities are designed to operate in extreme cold and hot weather, and they have per-formed well,” said Nathan Domyahn, director of generation strategy at GRE. “Nevertheless, we are ensuring ade-quate winterization of equipment. We are using arctic-level grease and oils as well as testing and replacing freeze protection systems periodically to help



A weather threat assessment performed by Great River Energy in 2021 provided the cooperative with insights on where and how it can better bolster its transmission system to handle weather risks such as ice storms, wildfires and flash floods. (Photo courtesy of [greatriverenergy.com](http://greatriverenergy.com).)

ensure proper operation during extreme events.”

Domyahn said the cooperative is also increasing the supply of back-up fuel supplies in the winter at its Min-nesota power plants to further support resiliency during extreme cold weather events.

#swceSERVICE

USDA funding available to help low-income individuals and families buy or repair homes

United States Department of Agri-culture (USDA) Rural Develop-ment has funding available for very low- and low-income individuals and families seeking to purchase or repair a home in a rural area.

The Direct Home Loan program of-fers financing to qualified very-low and low-income applicants that are unable to qualify for traditional financing. No down payment is required, and the in-

terest rate could be as low as 1% with a subsidy. Applicants must meet income and credit guidelines, and demonstrate repayment ability. The program is available in rural communities of gen-erally 35,000 people or less.

The maximum loan amount is \$20,000 at a 1% interest rate, repayable for a 20-year term and can be used to improve or modernize homes, and do essential repairs.

Grants of up to \$7,500 are available to homeowners 62 and older, and must be used to remove health or safety haz-ards, such as fixing a leaking roof, in-stalling indoor plumbing, or replacing a furnace.

Time is limited to receive funds for the current fiscal year. Contact a USDA

USDA Rural Development

Committed to the future of rural communities.

Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

Visit Great River Energy’s website at [www.greatriverenergy.com](http://www.greatriverenergy.com) and click on “Load Management”. Need a history of controls? Click “History” on the “Load Management” page.



cookin' connection

Cinnamon Caramel Swirl Bars

Doris Waknitz Pemberton

- 1 1/2 c. flour
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1/4 c. milk
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 c. (1 stick) butter, melted
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- 1 pkg. (14 oz.) caramels, unwrapped

Mix flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and set aside. Mix brown sugar, butter, eggs, vanilla, and 1/2 c. chopped pecans until well blended. Add flour mixture, mix well. Reserve 1 cup of the batter. Spread remaining batter into lightly greased 9"x13" baking pan. Bake at 350° for 15 min., or until firm. Microwave caramels and milk until melted (stirring often). Cool 5 min., or until slightly thickened. Then pour over baked layer. Add the other 1/2 cup pecans to caramel. Then spread by spoonfuls the rest of the dough mix over caramel layer. Cut through batter with knife for marble effect. Bake 20 minutes longer or until center is set. Cool in pan. Cut into bars. Makes 24 bars.

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 13 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during December 2021. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop). #swceINNOVATION

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. 1022162

January issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

No members found their account number

Numbers not found:

Bryan Hobbs  
Stephen/Sharolyn Zastera  
Douglas Siebenaler  
Mari Myre  
Erica/David Dye



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](http://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.

• December temps – The average high temperature for December was 33° F, while the average low was 16° F. This resulted in 1,245.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 33° F and average low of 15° F. This resulted in 1,261 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• ENERGY STAR® Rebates – In 2022, 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](http://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



Be Safe  
Stay clear of downed power lines

**NEVER TOUCH A DOWNED POWER LINE.** Always assume it is energized and call 911 immediately.

**POWERFUL STORMS** can damage power lines. If you see a downed power line:

- Stay at least 50 feet away from it and assume it is energized. The ground may also be energized making the entire area extremely dangerous.
- Never touch anything that is touching a downed power line. It is as dangerous as the line itself.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. #swceLIFE+



Thunderstorms with high winds swept through Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's service area Dec. 15, 2021, causing widespread outages. Operations Division Manager Dan Meier reported a total of 18 poles were broken throughout the service area. The damage pictured above was in Aurora Township in Steele County. The storm caused power outages to 2,380 members, mostly were transmission line outages which feed Steele-Waseca's substations, and is out of the co-op's control. Twelve lineworkers from Steele-Waseca and 17 from other co-ops and contractors restored power to all members by Thursday night, Dec. 16. #swceSERVICE

Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



**1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:** Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

**2. Distribution Substation:** A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

**3. Main Distribution Lines:** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

**4. Tap Lines:** If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

**5. Individual Homes:** If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

#swceSERVICE



Why is my bill higher in the winter?

In our region, November through March is typically when members use the most electricity due to cold weather. Here are other factors that cause energy use to increase:

- Shorter days and longer nights mean more time indoors. That typically means more lights, TVs, appliances and video games in use.
- Heating systems run more. Even if you have a propane furnace, your electric use increases because electricity powers the blower motor in the furnace.
- Holidays mean more guests, more hot showers, more cooking – all using electricity.
- Block heaters use between 500 to 1,500 watts depending on the vehicle. So a car using a 500-watt heater would use 150 kWh a month plugged in at 10 hours a day.
- Portable plug-in space heaters can dramatically increase your monthly bill as well. A 1,500-watt space heater used for 10 hours a day will use 450 kWh a month or \$54.45.

#swceLIFE+