




the power of human connections

# sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

June 2022



## 2021 Annual Report

86 Years  
*Lighting The Way*

### inside connections

- 2** General Manager's report
- 3** DeVries retires after 37 years
- 4** GRE year in review
- 5** 2021 annual mtg minutes;  
GRE conducts annual mtg;  
Voting authorization form
- 6** 2022 director nominees;  
SWCE fire safety training
- 7** SWCE director districts;  
Nominating Cmte report
- 8-11** Financial report for 2021
- 12** Cookin' Connection;  
SWCE community solar;  
Steele County Tip Line
- 13** SWCE Youth Tour delegates
- 14** Ad Connection;  
4-Seasons Vacations
- 15** Ad Connection;  
SWCE members to be  
surveyed; 20229  
SWCE capital credit update
- 16** Coal Creek Station, HVDC  
transmission system sold;

### calendar of events

#### June

- 3-5** Morristown Dam Days
- 7** SWCE Annual Meeting  
**SWCE Office closed**
- 14** Flag Day
- 15-18** Heritage Days in Faribault
- 16-18** Mdfd Straight River Days
- 19** Father's Day; Juneteenth
- 21** First day of summer

National Dairy Month

## SWCE's 86th Annual Meeting Agenda

*Tuesday, June 7, 2022 – 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.*  
**Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric**  
**2411 West Bridge Street, Owatonna, Minnesota**

- 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m. ....Present your pre-mailed registration card or register for director voting and prizes
- 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m. ....Popcorn and co-op display booths
- 10:25 a.m. ....Early Bird prize drawings

- 10:30 a.m. ....Registration ends, business meeting begins
- Presentation of Colors.....Color Guard, and Faribault Middle School
- Pledge of Allegiance.....Everyone
- National Anthem (please remain standing)
- Invocation.....Duane Edwardson, Board Chaplain

- Welcome.....Syd Briggs, General Manager
- Call to Order.....Gary Wilson, Board President
- Establish Quorum, Adopt Agenda.....Gary Wilson, Board President
- Notice of Meeting, Proof of Mailing.....Renee Malecha, Board Secretary/Treasurer

Acceptance of 2021 Reports as printed in *Sparks*.....Gary Wilson, Board President

Board of Directors Introduction.....Gary Wilson, Board President

- Election of Directors
- Nominating Committee Report.....Denise Bartness, Cmte Chair
- Director Candidate Introduction.....Denise Bartness, Cmte Chair
- Call for Nominations from the floor....Tricia Lancaster, SWCE Atty

Nominations Closed, Director Voting

Introduction of 2022 Youth Tour Delegates.....Randy Sobrack, Communications Specialist

- ACRE Presentation
- Guest Introductions.....Syd Briggs, General Manager
- Employee Introductions.....Syd Briggs, General Manager
- SWCE Report.....Syd Briggs, General Manager

Announcement of Election Results.....Tricia Lancaster, SWCE Atty


Unfinished and New Business.....Gary Wilson, Board President

Adjournment

Grand Prizes.....Gift cards and flowers

11:45 a.m. ....Lunch catered by HyVee, Owatonna

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

**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**

- Kim Wilson . . . . . *Member Services*
- 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

**message to our owners**



By Syd Briggs,  
 General Manager

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is conducting an in-person annual meeting Tuesday, June 7, with the doors opening at 9 a.m., and the meeting starting promptly at 10:30 a.m.

The purpose of this annual meeting remains the same as any annual meeting in the past; to provide information and report on last year's activities, and to elect three directors for a three-year term.

Steele-Waseca is providing the co-op's audited financials in this edition of *Sparks*, as we do each year, and need to address these reports along with approving last year's minutes.

This year there isn't any preregistration or call in before the meeting. We will again be providing registration cards in the mail that are bar coded specifically for each member.

Please bring these cards with you to be scanned at registration. You should be receiving these registration cards in the mail approximately 10 days prior to the meeting. Do not mail these in; just bring them with you to the meeting on Tuesday, June 7.

The Washington, D.C. Youth Tour is



For the first time in three years, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is conducting an in-person annual meeting, Tuesday, June 7, at our headquarters in Owatonna. Steele-Waseca has exercised the cooperative principle of "Concern for Community," by collecting non-perishable food items and donations for a local food shelf during similar annual meetings. However, the coronavirus pandemic eliminated similar collections during the last couple of annual meetings. Member participation will start again this year. For those wishing to donate to a local food shelf at the annual meeting, they will receive (1) free LED lightbulb in appreciation of their donation.

returning in 2022, and we'll be recognizing the co-op's delegates, Alex Kindseth of Farmington and Nate Seykora of Owatonna, joining the Minnesota delegation heading out Tuesday, June 14.

Also returning this year is the great meal served by HyVee and the always popular Dairy Queen Dilly® Bars.

Financially, Steele-Waseca had another good year. Our average number of meters grew from 11,537 in 2020 to 11,668 in 2021, and we experienced a slight increase in kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales as we started getting back to normal life after complications from COVID in 2020 and it's status impacting our annual meeting last year. 31391

We continued to reduce operating expenses (not including the cost of power) and increased operating margins for the fourth consecutive year.

Equity increased \$2 million, and long-term debt increased \$5.5 million.

In addition, to the primary purpose in an annual meeting of electing the leadership for our board of directors and providing our annual reports, we will have an opportunity to introduce all employees and directors to the membership again.

For many of you, it will be another chance to reminisce with the people you have been doing business with for many years.

We will also have a chance to speak about some new ways of communicating with each other that we initiated this year. Our success depends almost entirely on communicating our status, programs, rebates, and industry issues, and we hope to keep improving providing reliable power and information that will enhance and benefit our member's lives and their respective households.

Each member who is in attendance to present their pre-mailed registration card, or register, will receive Steele-Waseca promotional products, the \$30 Power Perks to be used at local businesses, and the \$50 Energy Star® gift certificate.

Personally, it will be good to see each of you again. If you have questions about our financials, the election process, or any business at all, please feel free to contact me, which I will be more than happy to address.

•• #swceAPPRECIATION

## member connection

### DeVries retires after 37-year career at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Office Division Manager Darla DeVries retired Friday, May 13, after a 37-year career with the co-op.

Darla started her career with Steele-Waseca May 1, 1985, as a data entry/computer operator.

“Back when I started at SWCE, a browser was a casual shopper, a cookie was something you had with milk, and tweeting was the sounds birds made,” stated Darla. “The computer room had sound proofing insulation on the walls and ceiling to help cut down on the noise made from the large Burroughs mainframe computer, and printer that filled the large room. The room was always hot and noisy because the mainframe created so much heat.

“Years later when we got rid of the large computer, OPU (Owatonna Public Utilities) called us wondering what we did to cause our electric usage to go way down. It was because the large computer was no longer running and the air conditioner no longer needed to constantly run to keep the computer room cool.”

In 1992, Darla was named director of data processing. “I remember the process of moving all the computers, printers, phones, paper, forms, etc., from our Rose Street building to our current Bridge Street location in 1994,” stated DeVries. “The process of moving all our phones and disassembling all the computers, moving them from one location to the other, and setting them back up, all the while still keeping the day to day

business of the co-op running was quite the undertaking.”

Darla was promoted to manager of data processing in 1995, before promoted to her position of office division manager on July 1, 1999.

“I remember when the year was switching from 1999 to 2000 and it thought that the ‘Y2K bug’ would cause computers and the electric grid to crash,” reflected Darla. “While all the employees were on call that night to help if anything went wrong, it was satisfying when everything kept running as normal, and the new year could be celebrated with family and friends.”

Darla recalled when Steele-Waseca’s first website was created. “There were many discussions on if our customers would really go to our website, and what information they would want to see,” stated Darla. “It was also a big deal when in 2001, dot co-op (.coop) was approved as a new domain name extension and only true cooperative businesses could use. Nationwide, cooperatives were proud to have their own domain name extension, and to be recognized as the special type of organization we are.”

In looking back on her career, she recalled the formation of Touchstone Energy in 1998, the start of Great River Energy with the merger of Cooperative Power Association and United Power Association, and the creation of Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) when Alliant Energy sold its Minnesota energy distribution business



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Office Division Manager Darla DeVries is pictured Wednesday, May 4, with keepsakes collected over her 37-year career with the co-op. Darla’s final day was Friday, May 13.

to Minnesota cooperatives in 2015.

“I think one of the underrated technological advancements for both employees and customers was when we went with an AMR (automatic meter reading) system,” stated Darla. “Prior to that a great deal of time was spent manually keying the readings onto keypunch cards each day after the mail was delivered to the office. The struggle of having to read everyone’s handwriting and having customer readings from different days of the month made double checking for accurate readings a time consuming job.

(DeVries retirement continued on Page 15)



The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors and corporate services include (seated, left to right): Renee Malecha, secretary/treasurer, District 9; John Beal, vice president, District 7; Gary Wilson, president, GRE director, District 6; Rodney Krell, assistant secretary/treasurer, District 5; and Duane Edwardson, chaplain, District 3. Back row (L-R): Syd Briggs, general manager; Geraldine Lienke, District 2; Ronald Sommers, District 8; Tricia Lancaster, SWCE attorney; Dennis Ringhofer, District 4; PJ Duchene, District 1; and Jenifer Shimpach, executive assistant. #swceTRUST

# Your membership to affordable, reliable, responsible power

Great River Energy (GRE) provides wholesale power and delivery services to Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric and 27 other electric cooperatives that collectively own GRE.

Together, these cooperatives provide retail electric service to more than 720,000 member-owners across Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin.

With stable wholesale rates, record-setting transmission reliability and a plan to dramatically reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Great River Energy is living up to its mission and fulfilling its promise to member-owner cooperatives.

### *Strong financials in 2021*

While other types of businesses strive to produce returns for investors, cooperatives focus on service. When there's excess revenue collected, it's reinvested in the company or returned to members.

That spirit of sharing guided Great River Energy throughout 2021. Due to strong sales and cost containment, GRE recorded very strong margins. Great River Energy issued bill credits to members several times during the year and returned \$25 million in patronage capital payments.

GRE's financial position has never been stronger. Great River Energy's wholesale power rates are 10.9% below the weighted regional average cost of electricity, and they are projected to remain steady or decline over the next several years.

### *Energy evolution underway*

2021 witnessed some of the most significant and lasting changes to Great River Energy's power supply portfolio. By dramatically reducing coal and more than doubling its renewable resources, GRE worked toward reducing its power supply costs and minimizing its environmental impact.

Great River Energy reached an agreement to sell its largest power plant, the coal-based Coal Creek Station located in central North Dakota. In addition, the 436-mile high-voltage, direct-current transmission system that delivered the



plant's energy to Minnesota was contracted to provide a dedicated pathway for the planned 400-megawatt (MW) Discovery Wind Project.

This shift has the cooperative positioned to meet Minnesota's 80% carbon dioxide emissions reduction goal more than 25 years ahead of schedule.

### *Battery comes into focus*

Great River Energy's partner on its upcoming Cambridge Energy Storage Project, Form Energy, revealed long-awaited details about its technology. The primary component of Form's first-of-its-kind, multi-day battery is also a cornerstone of Minnesota's economy: iron.

While other battery technologies employ expensive and rare metals, iron is one of the safest, cheapest and most abundant minerals on Earth—and it is found in Minnesota's Iron Range.

The energy storage project is expected to be in operation at the end of 2023 in Cambridge, Minnesota. It will be the first commercial deployment of Form Energy's proprietary multi-day energy storage technology.

### *Serving members reliably*

Transmission reliability is among the most important aspects of electric service. The electric system has developed over time and undergoes constant monitoring and maintenance to ensure it is reliable and resilient. Eight of the 10 metrics GRE uses to assess transmission reliability were at all-time records in 2021.

Great River Energy's system performed well in June 2021 despite temperatures repeatedly reaching above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The system did not experience any overloading, and GRE did not need to make any special opera-

tional changes. Every resource in Great River Energy's power supply portfolio played a role in serving its member-owner cooperatives.

### *A responsible conclusion*

Two-and-a-half years after the retirement of the Elk River Energy Recovery Station, the power plant site now resembles how it likely looked a century ago.

Crews spent much of 2021 removing underground structures, disposing of building materials and landscaping. The site has been graded to match the surrounding topography and seeded with pollinator plantings.

### *Transmission utility partnership builds under Grid North Partners*

A partnership of utilities responsible for more than 800 miles of high-



voltage transmission lines has been re-invented. Great River Energy was central to the launch of Grid North Partners, a collaboration with ambitions to build the next series of projects needed to ensure continued reliable, affordable energy and open new pathways for renewable energy. Grid North Partners is an evolution of CapX2020.

Grid North Partners worked with regional partners to identify the regional transmission enhancements needed to integrate the changing generation fleet while educating policymakers and other stakeholders on the purpose and need for transmission.

### *Guided by members*

Great River Energy measures its success by how well it serves its member-owners and interacts with the communities it serves. Member satisfaction remains high, and GRE is advancing the industry to new places.

Great River Energy is living its mission to provide member-owners with affordable, reliable energy in harmony with a sustainable environment.

#swceCOOPERATION

## swce 2021 annual meeting minutes

The annual meeting of the members of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) was held at SWCE in Owatonna, Minnesota, on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. In order to comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance of social distancing due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the meeting took place by drive-thru.

More than 50 members participated (their attendance having been verified), the number needed to constitute a quorum within the meaning of the bylaws of the cooperative.

Ballots were distributed asking for a motion to adopt the agenda as printed in the annual report. A motion was made, seconded, and carried. (A list of motions and members who made and seconded those motions were attached.)

Renee Malecha, secretary-treasurer of the board, reviewed the Proof of

Mailing of Notice of the Annual Meeting. The Proof of Mailing to all members of SWCE was attached to the minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and carried, to waive the reading of the minutes and accept them as printed in the annual report.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the president's and general manager's report, the financial report for the year ending Dec. 31, 2020, and the Great River Energy report printed in the annual report.

Attorney Tricia Lancaster presided over the election of the directors, which was done on site by ballot, and members were allowed to make nominations from the floor by arriving early. A copy of the minutes for the Nominating Committee meetings held on Dec. 2, 2020, and Jan. 12, 2021, was attached to the minutes.

There were no additional nomina-

tions for District 1; nominations were declared closed.

There were no additional nominations for District 3; nominations were declared closed.


There were no additional nominations for District 5; nominations were declared closed.

Attorney Lancaster reported the voting results. The director vote was as follows:

District 1: PJ Duchene, 398 votes.

District 3: Sylvia Archer, 160 votes;  
Duane Edwardson, 244 votes.

District 5: Rodney Krell, 399 votes.

There being no further business to be conducted, there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that the meeting be adjourned.  #swceTRUST

### GRE members elect directors; board elects officers

Part of being a democratically governed electric cooperative involves gathering annually and establishing the structure of the board of directors for the upcoming year.

During these annual meetings, cooperatives elect the directors—new and old—to their seats on the board and hold elections for board officers.

At the Great River Energy (GRE) annual meeting Wednesday, April 6, GRE's member-owners elected 24 individuals to serve a one-year term on the GRE board of directors, among those elected was Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Board President Gary Wilson.


During the board of director's reorganization meeting following the annual meeting, Bob Bruckbauer (Lake Country Power, Grand Rapids) was re-elected board chair; Dale Anderson (Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Spicer) was re-elected board vice chair; Audrey Hjelle (Runestone Electric Association, Alexandria) was re-elected secretary; and Lee York (Nobles Cooperative Electric, Worthington) was re-elected treasurer.

"Electric cooperatives serve members 24 hours a day, seven days a week—and the directors make consequential decisions that affect the membership throughout the year," said Bruckbauer. "What makes cooperatives special is they are governed by their mem-

ber-owners, who truly want to make the best decisions for their friends and neighbors."

Each Great River Energy director is a member of the board of directors

of one of Great River Energy's Class A member-owner cooperatives.

 #swceTRUST

### Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric 2022 Annual Meeting Letter of Voting Authorization

Member corporations, churches, clubs and organizations are encouraged to use this form as proof of designation.

Name of corporation, church, club or organization \_\_\_\_\_ SWCE Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Address of above \_\_\_\_\_

Name of officer or agent authorized to vote \_\_\_\_\_ Office title \_\_\_\_\_

is the person authorized to represent the organization as its voting delegate at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's Annual Meeting on June 7, 2022.

Secretary of organization or other designated official \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Only officers of an organization are generally authorized to vote on behalf of the organization. For any agent of the organization other than an officer to cast the organization's vote, this form must be accompanied by a certified copy of a resolution of its governing body appointing such person to vote for the organization.

## swce 2022 board of director nominees

June 7



The 2022 Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees for the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors. Committee members include: Ryan/Jenny Angelow, Faribault; Joyce Ahlman, Faribault; Dale/Lynn Groskreutz, New Richland; Keith/Carol Schrader, Nerstrand; Glenn/Linda Wiesjhan, Owatonna; Denise Bartness, Owatonna; Joseph Haberman, Blooming Prairie; Patricia Pagel, Faribault; and John/Lyilia Iverson, Medford. The election of directors will take place during Steele-Waseca's 86th annual meeting, scheduled Tuesday, June 7, starting at 10:30 a.m., at the co-op's headquarters located at 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna. #swceTRUST

District 2



**Geraldine G. Lienke**, incumbent, and her husband, Dave, reside in rural Janesville. Gerri has lived in Waseca County her entire life and their parents have also lived in Waseca County their entire life with all being served by Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE). Gerri's father-in-law remembers getting electricity for the first time and shared his story in the co-op's 75th anniversary book. "Just as we are faced today with many changes, I'm sure he went thru the same thoughts of 'how do you think that's going to work?'" wrote Gerri. "Same today with wind & solar generation & electric cars. Will it work for the good of the people? Today, just as years past, we need to have faith that all will create a better life for our kids & grandkids." As for the qualities she brings to the board, Gerri highlighted her work with Crystal Valley, being a good listener and open minded for all concerns brought to her attention. "I will do my best to stay educated by taking classes offered, keeping an open mind as new ideas are brought before us and try to leave the world in good or better conditions as we found it. I will also try to answer any questions & my door is always open."

District 4



**Dennis C. Ringhofer**, incumbent, has been a board director for SWCE since 2004. "I live in Steele County, in Somerset Township with my better half, Becca, on my family farm," wrote Dennis. "We raise corn, soybeans and hay." Between Dennis and Becca, they have 4 children and 10 grandchildren. Dennis is an independent insurance agent for Ringhofer Insurance agency for 34 years and currently serves as vice president of the Owatonna Mutual Fire Insurance Company. "For SWCE, I have completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director Program and hold the Board Leadership Program Certificate," wrote Dennis. "I consider it an honor to be on the Board of Directors for SWCE to see that the needs are met for the farms, residential and industrial as professional as possible. I am very proud to say I am a member and director of SWCE, where we are member owned. There will be lots of changes in the next few years and I would like to be involved with those changes."

District 6



**Michael T. Herman**, resides in rural Owatonna in Havana Township with his wife, Diana Lobo. Michael grew up on a farm outside of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. He joined the Marines and spent 21 years on active duty. In 2006, they moved to Northfield and in 2014 moved to their farm on Rose St. Michael is the CEO for Driessen Water, which has 26 locations in six states and 295 employees. As for the qualities he would bring to the board, Michael stated, "As a CEO and past military experience I believe my leadership, stewardship and team building traits would be a benefit." Among the boards he serves on includes the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Minnesota Plumbing Board. "I have always felt that as a person I need and desire to be actively involved in my community and to serve wherever I can." Michael cited his past experience on the Steele-Waseca Nominating Committee and have seen what the board of directors do and how it represents those in the co-op.



**Gary W. Wilson**, incumbent, and his wife, Diane, have retired from farming, but live on their farm in Havana Township. Both are lifelong residents of Steele County, except for four years Gary served in the U.S. Air Force. The couple has two married sons and seven grandchildren, all living in the area. In their leisure, both enjoy searching for antiques and driving their '59 Chevy Impala around the countryside. Gary currently serves as the SWCE board president, and previously served as secretary/treasurer. Additional board responsibilities include representing Steele-Waseca on the Great River Energy board of directors. He has successfully completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director program and holds the Board Leadership Program Certificate. Gary recently received the Director Gold Certificate to signify advanced training in cooperative leadership. He is a former supervisor on the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District board, served on the Havana Township board, and the Steele County Planning and Zoning Commission. "It is a privilege to serve on the Steele-Waseca board of directors," stated Gary, "and I feel my leadership and experience will help maintain the high standard of quality service that the members deserve and have come to expect."



### Fire safety training at Steele-Waseca

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Accountant Darlene Janda was among the co-op employees having an opportunity to utilize a fire extinguisher to a simulated fire in a fire pan during a safety session conducted Tuesday, April 12, at the co-op's headquarters parking lot in Owatonna. Fire Commander Matt Halverson and Equipment Operator Ryan Seykora with the Owatonna Fire Department conducted the fire extinguisher safety training exercise. The session included information regarding fire extinguisher use, levels of proper applications of rated extinguishers, and recommended maintenance.

#swceLIFE+

## swce director districts

**District 1:** Kilkenny Township in LeSueur County, Shieldsville and Morrystown Townships and the Southeast one quarter (SE 1/4) of Erin Township, Southwest one quarter (SW 1/4) of Wells Township, and the Northwest one quarter (NW 1/4) of Warsaw Township in Rice County. (Represented by [PJ Duchene](#))

**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 3:** Hartland Township in Freeborn County; New Richland, Otisco, Woodville, Blooming Grove and Iosco Townships in Waseca County; Lemond Township, the Northwest one quarter (NW 1/4) and the Northeast one quarter (NE 1/4) of Berlin Township, and the Northwest one quarter (NW 1/4) and the Southwest one quarter (SW 1/4) of Somerset Township in Steele County. (Represented by [Duane Edwardson](#))

**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 5:** Newry Township in Freeborn County; Aurora and Blooming Prairie Townships, and the Southwest one quarter (SW 1/4) of Havana Township in Steele County, and Westfield, Ripley, Ashland and Hayfield Townships in Dodge County. (Represented by [Rodney Krell](#))

**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](#))

**District 7:** The Northeast and Southeast one quarters (NE & SE 1/4's) of Warsaw Township; the Northwest and Southwest one quarters (NW & SW 1/4's) of Walcott Township; the Northwest, Northeast and Southeast one quarters (NW, NE & SE 1/4's) of Wells Township in Rice County. (Represented by [John Beal](#))

**District 8:** Kenyon Township in Goodhue County; Richland, Wheeling, Cannon City, Bridgewater, Upper Bridgewater and Northfield Townships, and the Northeast and Southeast one quarters (NE & SE 1/4's) of Walcott Township in Rice County. (Represented by [Ronald Sommers](#))

**District 9:** Forest, Webster, Wheatland Townships, and the Southwest, Northwest and Northeast one quarters (SW, NW & NE 1/4's) of Erin Township in Rice County. (Represented by [Renee Malecha](#))

## Nominating Committee determines board of director nominees



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's 2022 Nominating Committee included the following members (front row, left to right): Linda Wiesjhan, Owatonna; Lylia Iverson, Medford; Lynn Groskreutz, New Richland; and Denise Bartness, Owatonna. Back row (left to right): Glenn Wiesjhan, Owatonna; John Iverson, Medford; Dale Groskreutz, New Richland; and Keith Schrader, Nerstrand. Not pictured: Ryan and Jenny Angelow, Faribault; Joseph Haberman, Blooming Prairie; Carol Schrader, Nerstrand; Joyce Ahlman, Faribault; and Patricia Pagel, Faribault.

Steele-Waseca's bylaws require the board of directors to appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of no less than five cooperative members. Each year's committee is responsible for an important part of the cooperative process—to select nominees for the board seats up for election.

The committee met Nov. 11, 2021, at Steele-Waseca's headquarters in Owatonna.

General Manager Syd Briggs reviewed the duties of the Nominating Committee as stated in co-op's bylaws, the activities and conduct of individual board members policy, the qualifications for eligibility for service on the co-op's board of directors policy, the director election filing form and affirmation of director qualifications, and questions concerning qualifications for director.

The Nominating Committee works on a rotation system that keeps six experienced members on the committee, and adds three new members each year.

A list of members in each district was provided, and it was suggested that committee members from each district meet together to discuss the search for candidates and review the information given to them.

Nominations for committee chairperson for the January meeting were opened, Denise Bartness volunteered, and Board President Gary Wilson declared her nominating committee chairperson. After no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The Nominating Committee conducted their second meeting on Jan. 19, 2022, at Steele-Waseca's headquarters. Cooperative Attorney Tricia Lancaster reviewed the director duties, standard of conduct policy, and qualifications for eligibility for service on the board of directors policy.

The names of the following candidates were submitted, and will appear on the election ballot for Steele-Waseca's 86th annual meeting scheduled June 7, 2022, at the co-op's headquarters located at 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna:

**District 2** [Geraldine G. Lienke](#) (incumbent), Janesville.

**District 4** [Dennis C. Ringhofer](#) (incumbent), Owatonna.

**District 6** [Michael T. Herman](#), Owatonna;  
and [Gary W. Wilson](#) (incumbent), Owatonna.

Additional nominations will be from the floor during the business portion of the annual meeting until the nominations officially close and the election is held.

Steele-Waseca wishes to thank all of the committee members for their time and service. [swce](#) [#swceTRUST](#)

## financial report for year 2021

On Oct. 10, 1936, when Steele County Cooperative and Waseca Cooperative Electric voted to consolidate, there were 860 members. By the end of 2021, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) service locations had grown to 11,757.

SWCE's first office was located in Waseca. After Rice County joined with Steele-Waseca in 1937, the office was moved to Owatonna to provide a more central location. The office was located on West Bridge Street and then on Cedar Avenue until 1954, when a new building was constructed on East Rose Street. That building served as the headquarters until 1994 when the present facility on West Bridge Street was built.

The first part of SWCE's line was energized in February 1938. When completed, the initial project consisted of 350 miles of line. By 1950, that number had grown to 1,562. Today, SWCE has a total of 2,204 miles of line, 19 substations in service, and 900 square miles of service area.

In 1950, SWCE had 2.6 members per mile of line. Currently, SWCE has 5.3 members per mile of line. In comparison, investor-owned electric utilities on average serve 34 customers per mile of line while municipal electric utilities average 48 customers per mile of line.

### BALANCE SHEETS DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

ASSETS	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>UTILITY PLANT</b>		
Electric Plant in Service	<b>\$92,124,226</b>	\$88,449,700
Construction Work in Progress	<b>3,479,330</b>	3,120,763
Total	<b>95,603,556</b>	91,570,463
Less: Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	<b>(34,243,020)</b>	(32,647,143)
Net Utility Plant	<b>61,360,536</b>	58,923,320
<b>OTHER ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS</b>		
Investments in Associated Organizations	<b>16,773,533</b>	15,791,685
Investments in Related Companies	<b>711,106</b>	711,186
Notes Receivable - Net of Current Portion	<b>1,026,876</b>	761,533
Special Funds - Restricted Cash	<b>1,600,000</b>	-
Total Other Assets and Investments	<b>20,111,515</b>	17,264,404
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	<b>4,696,117</b>	2,152,928
Accounts Receivable, Net	<b>4,291,737</b>	4,204,267
Materials and Supplies Inventory	<b>1,249,430</b>	1,054,744
Interest Receivable	<b>6,661</b>	6,643
Current Portion of Notes Receivable	<b>309,657</b>	253,669
Total Current Assets	<b>10,553,602</b>	7,672,251
<b>DEFERRED DEBITS</b>	<b>1,154,402</b>	183,242
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$93,180,055</u></b>	<b><u>\$84,043,217</u></b>
<b>EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>EQUITIES</b>		
Patronage Capital	<b>\$45,004,028</b>	\$43,071,063
Memberships	<b>17,222</b>	17,170
Other Equities	<b>1,350,127</b>	1,294,132
Total Equities	<b>46,371,377</b>	44,382,365
<b>LONG-TERM DEBT, Less Current Maturities</b>		
RUS Mortgage Notes	<b>24,167,923</b>	17,005,391
CoBank Notes Payable	<b>9,068,319</b>	10,264,530
US Bank SBA PPP Loan	<b>-</b>	466,076
Total Long-Term Debt	<b>33,236,242</b>	27,735,997
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	<b>1,903,381</b>	1,711,727
Accounts Payable	<b>3,385,120</b>	3,908,489
Consumer Deposits	<b>173,565</b>	200,940
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	<b>1,354,500</b>	1,200,747
Total Current Liabilities	<b>6,816,566</b>	7,021,903
<b>DEFERRED CREDITS</b>	<b>6,755,870</b>	4,902,952
<b>TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>\$93,180,055</u></b>	<b><u>\$84,043,217</u></b>



# financial report for year 2021

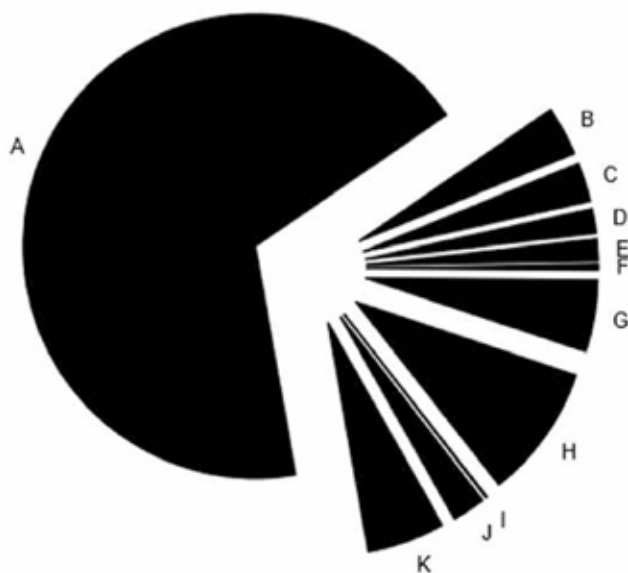
## STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
OPERATING REVENUES	<b>\$36,074,792</b>	\$36,742,466
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Cost of Power	24,597,165	23,578,118
Distribution Expense - Operation	1,212,441	1,331,588
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	974,090	1,226,657
Customer Accounts Expense	615,795	648,741
Customer Service & Informational Expense	555,721	598,355
Sales Expense	137,223	139,655
Administrative and General Expense	1,794,197	1,981,101
Depreciation	3,360,886	3,439,252
Other	21,136	24,604
Total Operating Expenses	<u>33,268,654</u>	<u>32,968,071</u>
OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE FIXED CHARGES	<b>2,806,138</b>	3,774,395
INTEREST ON LONG-TERM DEBT	<u>842,082</u>	<u>1,398,867</u>
OPERATING MARGINS AFTER FIXED CHARGES	<b>1,964,056</b>	2,375,528
GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION & OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	<u>1,569,602</u>	<u>816,199</u>
NET OPERATING MARGINS	<b>3,533,658</b>	3,191,727
NONOPERATING MARGINS	<u>76,868</u>	<u>780,765</u>
NET MARGINS	<u><b>\$3,610,526</b></u>	<u>\$3,972,492</u>

The mission of SWCE is to provide every member with dependable, reliable, high quality electricity. We work daily to accomplish this mission by striving for excellence through continual improvement, applying prudent leadership, partnering and following cooperative principles.

During the year 2021, the average SWCE member had power for 8,758.19 hours out of a possible 8,760 hours. That's a reliability record of 99.98 percent!

For each dollar received from consumers, 5.4 cents goes into operating margins. These margins are used to help finance construction and improvements, pay capital credits, and make payments on our debt. Since 5.4 cents per dollar is not enough to do all of this, we borrow money to finance the shortage of funds needed for these purposes.



## WHAT YOUR 2021 CONSUMER DOLLAR PAID FOR

A.	68.2%	Purchased Power
B.	3.4%	Operations
C.	2.7%	Maintenance
D.	1.7%	Billing & Collection
E.	1.5%	Customer Information
F.	0.4%	Sales
G.	5.0%	Administrative & General
H.	9.3%	Depreciation
I.	0.1%	Other Income Deductions
J.	2.3%	Interest on Long-Term Debt
K.	5.4%	Margins

# financial report for year 2021

## Nature of Operations

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's (SWCE) principal line of business is providing electric service primarily to local residential and business customers residing in the nine-county rural area surrounding Owatonna, MN. Rates charged to customers are established by the board of directors.

## Financial Statement Presentation

SWCE prepares its financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. These principles require management to make informed judgments, best estimates, and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenses. Actual results could vary from those estimates.

## Patronage Capital

SWCE operates as a cooperative. Amounts received from the furnishing of electric energy in excess of operating costs and expenses are assigned to patrons on a patronage basis. All other amounts received by the cooperative from its operations in excess of costs and expenses are allocated to its patrons on a patronage basis to the extent they are not needed to offset current or prior deficits.

## Income Taxes

SWCE has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Minnesota. Therefore, the financial statements do not include a provision for income taxes.

## STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Net Margins	\$ 3,610,526	\$ 3,972,492
Adjustments to Reconcile Net Margins to Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities:		
Depreciation	3,546,307	3,382,300
G & T and Other Capital Credits	(1,569,602)	(816,199)
Loss on Sale/Disposal of Assets	(11,024)	(9,990)
Interest Income Credited to Cushion of Credit	(26,840)	(709,185)
Interest Expense Paid by Cushion of Credit	94,012	-
PPP Loan Forgiveness	(466,076)	
Changes in Assets and Liabilities - (Increase) Decrease in:		
Accounts Receivable	(87,488)	554,888
Materials and Supplies Inventory	(194,686)	(24,718)
Deferred Debits	(971,160)	124,926
Increase (Decrease) in:		
Accounts Payable	(523,369)	62,586
Deferred Credits	252,918	177,065
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	153,753	230,764
Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities	<u>3,807,271</u>	<u>6,944,929</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Construction and Acquisition of Plant	(5,972,499)	(6,849,439)
Change in Other Assets and Investments	80	12,529
Cash Received from Retirement of Patronage	587,754	393,476
Payments Received on Notes Receivable	278,669	248,557
Issuance of Notes Receivable	(600,000)	(71,000)
Net Cash Used by Investing Activities	<u>(5,705,996)</u>	<u>(6,265,877)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Increase in Memberships	52	-
Retirement of Capital Credits	(1,621,566)	(1,573,307)
Change in Customer Deposits	(27,375)	(21,795)
Proceeds from Issuance of Long-Term Debt	7,725,000	466,076
Principal Payments on Long-Term Debt	(1,634,197)	(2,664,908)
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Financing Activities	<u>4,441,914</u>	<u>(3,793,934)</u>
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>2,543,189</b>	<b>(3,114,882)</b>
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of Year	<u>2,152,928</u>	<u>5,267,810</u>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b><u>\$ 4,696,117</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 2,152,928</u></b>
<b>SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION</b>		
Interest Paid	<u>\$ 658,953</u>	<u>\$ 1,405,382</u>
<b>NONCASH FINANCING ACTIVITY</b>		
Principal Payments on Long-Term Debt Paid by Cushion of Credit	<u>\$ 139,852</u>	<u>\$20,259,319</u>

# financial report for year 2021

## STATEMENTS OF PATRONAGE CAPITAL AND OTHER EQUITIES YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 AND 2020

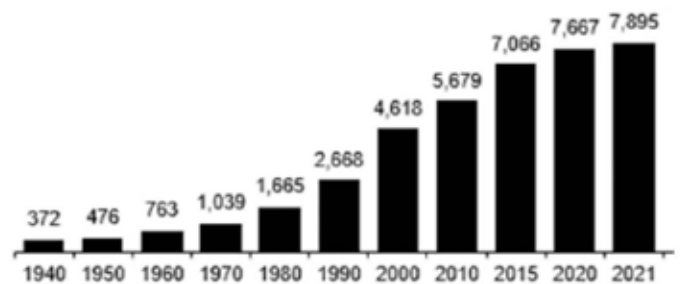
	<u>Memberships</u>	<u>Patronage Capital</u>	<u>Other Equities</u>	<u>Total</u>
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2019	\$17,170	\$40,708,295	\$1,257,715	\$41,983,180
Unassigned Current Year Margins	-	3,972,492	-	3,972,492
Retirement of Capital Credits	-	(1,498,162)	-	(1,498,162)
Estate Settlements	-	(111,562)	36,417	(75,145)
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2020	17,170	43,071,063	1,294,132	44,382,365
Unassigned Current Year Margins	-	3,610,526	-	3,610,526
Retirement of Capital Credits	-	(1,498,015)	-	(1,498,015)
Estate Settlements	-	(179,546)	55,995	(123,551)
Membership Changes - Net	52	-	-	52
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2021	<u>\$17,222</u>	<u>\$45,004,028</u>	<u>\$1,350,127</u>	<u>\$46,371,377</u>

### INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

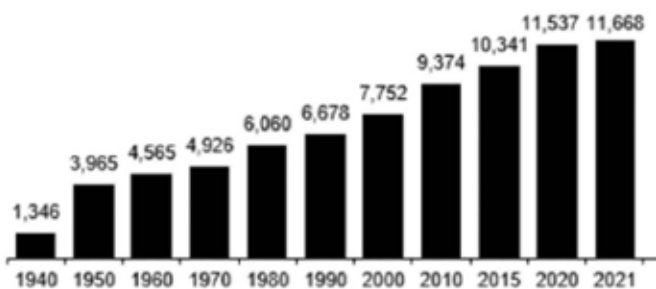
The balance sheets, statements of operations, patronage capital and other equities, and cash flows were taken from complete financial statements which were audited by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Certified Public Accountants, who expressed their unmodified opinion on those statements.

Copies of the complete financial statements together with the independent auditors' report may be examined at the office of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric.

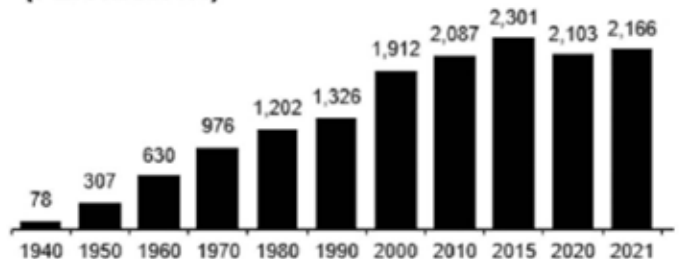
### PLANT \$ INVESTMENT PER CONSUMER



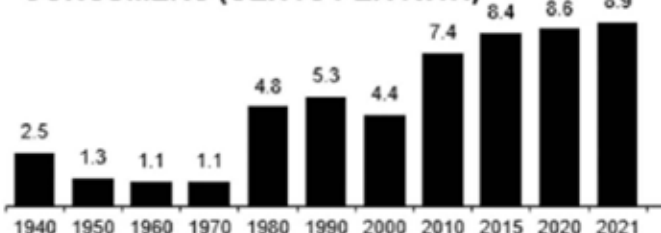
### AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS



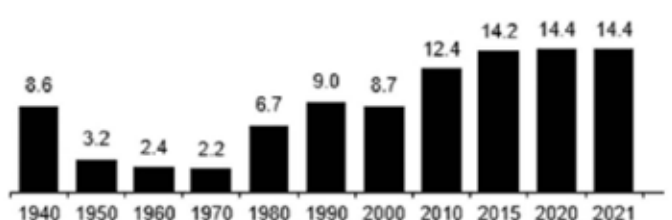
### AVERAGE KWH USED PER CONSUMER (PER MONTH)



### AVERAGE WHOLESALE POWER COST FOR RESIDENTIAL CONSUMERS (CENTS PER KWH)



### AVERAGE ELECTRIC RATE TO RESIDENTIAL CONSUMERS (CENTS PER KWH)



## cookin' connection

### Spanish Rice

Darlene Schultz

Faribault

2 lbs. ground beef  
1 onion, chopped  
1 green pepper, chopped  
2 c. Minute Rice  
1 c. tomato sauce

1 c. tomato soup  
salt and pepper to taste  
garlic powder to taste  
1/2 c. barbecue sauce  
Parmesan cheese

Pan fry ground beef with chopped onion and green pepper. Drain. Add rice, tomato sauce, tomato soup, salt, pepper, garlic powder and barbecue sauce. Grease baking dish. Bake in 375° oven for 30 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle cheese on top, if desired.

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 31 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during April 2022. 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.

## May issue of Sparks



**Numbers found:**  
Cindy/Michael Muldoon  
**Numbers not found:**  
Gretchen Supalla  
David Duban  
Lea Yochim  
Ann Husa



## 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 account number 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 SWCE between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **April temps** – The average high temperature for April was 49° F, while the average low was 32° F. This resulted in 741 Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and 0 Cooling Degrees (CDDs) for April. They compare to last year's average high of 57° F and average low of 36° F, which resulted in 561 HDDs and 0.5 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 [swce.coop](http://swce.coop). For more information or to receive a rebate 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

## youth tour connection

# Kindseth, Seykora to represent Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric during 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Alex Kindseth of Farmington, and Nate Seykora of Owatonna will be representing Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric as their delegates for this year's Washington, D.C. Youth Tour, June 14-19.

Alex, the son of Kristen Nelson; and Nate, the son of Charles and Theresa Seykora were selected from a panel of judges who evaluated five applications.

Application requirements included responses to essay questions on why the applicant wished to be Steele-Waseca's delegate for the Youth Tour, and what commitment to community meant to them. The applicants were required to list their participation in school and community activities, and submit letters of recommendation from an instructor, counselor, or administrator; and from a church or community leader. 1074133

Alex is completing his junior year at Farmington High School. His school activities include American Sign Language Club since 2020, the D and D Club since last year, and the Robotics Club during 2020-21.

Kindseth has been involved with the Boy Scouts of America since 2015. Among his achievements include trained in Wilderness First Aid, CPR/AED; has served with his troop as Quarter Master, Patrol Leader, and Troop Senior Patrol Leader; has logged over 125 conservation/service hours, has earned National Outdoor Awards in camping, hiking, riding, adventure, conservation, and aquatics; and has earned 131 merit badges.

Alex has participated in Steele County 4-H since 2017. As a member of the Lemond Snappy Boosters, he has served as their historian, treasurer, and reporter. Alex has been a general project and livestock exhibitor at the Rice and Steele County fairs, and at the Minnesota State Fair. He has also been a livestock exhibitor at AKSERBEN and American Royal.

His hobbies include being involved with the National Mini Rex Rabbit Club, and participation with the American and



Minnesota Rabbit Breeders associations.

Alex has worked as a veterinary assistant since 2019 at the Farmington Veterinary Clinic where he carries out veterinary instructions to care for ill or injured animals, and processed X-rays.

In his essay on commitment to community, Alex reflected on the bond between community members and their community by comparing his involvement with Boy Scouts, "As a troop we all have developed feelings of attachment, commitment and a sense of belonging. By having these feeling [sic] it has increased our participation and interactions with each other and has strengthened all our experiences. It has also enhanced our dedication and loyalty to each other. We have all learned the value of community even though we do not always agree on certain problem solutions. We know that the right answer is what is best for the troop as a whole not as an individual."

As for seeking to become a Youth Tour delegate, "The reason why I would like to participate in this trip is because I love to explore and discover new things," wrote Alex. "I have visited multiple city and state government buildings but nothing this extreme." Adding, "The trip will let me explore where big decisions are made and maybe I will meet some of the decision makers. I also hope to meet and make friends with other students during this once in a life time trip."

Nate is completing his sophomore year at Owatonna High School. His school activities include pep band, choir, band, DECA (Distributive Education Club of America), cross country, track & field, and winter speed & strength.

Seykora's community activities include Safety Camp counselor, and involvement with the Children's Church Choir. His work experience includes being a cashier at Hy-Vee in Owatonna since last year, and a farmhand on his family's farm.

Reflecting on why he would like to be a Steele-Waseca delegate on the Youth Tour, Nate wrote, "I have always been interested in American history and this trip would be a great opportunity for me to continue to learn about our country's history."

Secondly, Nate expanded on his family's connection to the Vietnam Memorial, "My great uncle died during that war and my grandfather has helped us all feel a connection to our Uncle Bill, even though we never met him in person. My family has visited the wall before but I wasn't old enough to fully understand the meaning of the memorial and the sacrifice those Americans made. This trip would help me better understand more of how our country is run and the sacrifices people have made to make this country how it is today." Nate is also looking forward to meeting the other delegates during the Youth Tour.

As for his essay on commitment to community, Nate reflected on his personal experience and challenges during last school year, "I sat by myself for lunch, I was overweight, and hadn't made any real friendships. This changed the summer of 2021, when I found my real community."

"My brother invited me to captain's practice for our high school's cross country team and that was where it all started. It was easily the hardest summer of my life. It was the community that pushed me to finish the long daily runs and difficult workouts. By the end of the season, I lost 30 pounds, was part of a team that supported one another and had a successful season. That community pushed me to join DECA, and even though I didn't make state, I learned new skills and made friendships I wouldn't have otherwise. That community is still pushing me today by 'forcing' me to sign up for our track team. If I just stayed in my safe little box, none of this would have happened.

"This experience has defined community for me: a group of people that push you to better yourself and supports you in the process. Whether this comes in the form of your choir, sports team, or your circle of friends - it's that push to be better that creates a community."

Steele-Waseca wishes to congratulate Nate and Alex on being selected to represent the co-op as their delegates on the 2022 Youth Tour, which was restarted for the first time in three years due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, which organizes the travel for the state's delegation to the national Youth Tour, 36 students and six chaperones will be making the trip from Minnesota. [swce](#)

[#swceLIFE+](#)



Alex Kindseth



Nate Seykora

# ad connection

## give away

**CHICAGO BUSCH & LANE**, Walnut Empire Revival upright piano, 1900 antique, vry gd sound quality. 323-5207.

**BASKETBALL HOOP**, free-standing, full size, fill base w/water or sand. 527-2307.

**HOMELITE GAS WATER PUMP**, 1.5" discharge, needs discharge hose. 465-8566.

**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

**GREEN-TREATED ROUND WOOD POSTS**, 3.5-4". 210-8425/Richard.

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

**55-GAL. BARRELS**. 250-4429.

**READERS** for a new book club SW of Hope, Sat., June 11, 3 p.m., "Four Winds" by Kristin Hannah, Email: [petra\\_e.cripe@gmail.com](mailto:petra_e.cripe@gmail.com). 612-598-4005.

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

**2-PLACEBIKERACK** to fit a 2" receiver. 612-388-5994.

**FLOE ALUM. DOCK/SECTIONS; ALUM. BOAT LIFT** for my 20' boat, lift capacity should be at least 3500 lbs. 612-817-3429.

**BUYING OLD COINS**, singles or collections, fair prices paid based on condition. 676-0970/Owat.

**PAINTING JOBS**: homes, barns, garages, sheds, etc. 308-8556.

**SMALL UTILITY TRACTOR**, 35-50 hp, Ford 4000 or newer; JD w/3-point hitch. 390-5222.

**USED/WASTE OIL**, 200-gal. min., call to schedule a pick up. 420-7429/Quentin.

**CATTLE SQUEEZE CHUTE**, text me pictures w/ asking price & location; also considering a head gate. 456-5463.

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

## All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

**MY HAY CUT & BALED**, 7 or more acres, cash or shares, about 3 mi. NE of Mdfd. 339-0763.

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

**PINBALL MACHINE**, working or not, any age or condition. 612-327-0255.

**SOMEONE TO CUT DOWN** a large maple tree. 214-3029.

**FORD SKID STEER**, diesel. 330-1849.

**BUILDING SITE** in the Bl. Pr., Owa. area. 475-4244.

## for sale

**15' BEAN HEAD** for older JD combine, \$100; **ANTIQ. JD BELT DRIVER HAMMER MILL**, Model 6910-C, I have all the pieces, \$1200; **444 CORN HD** for an older JD combine, \$250. Email: [eakerdr@gmail.com](mailto:eakerdr@gmail.com).

**SIDEBOARD BUFFET SERVER CABINET** w/drawers & storage, light walnut, gd cond., \$100. 323-5207.

**HYDRA-MAC 12C SKID LOADER**, 4-cy. Ford engine comes w/(4) buckets, \$5500; **JD 60 TRACTOR**, runs exc., new radiator, \$1800. 330-3945.

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

**FARM-FRESH EGGS**, \$2/dozen. 475-9834.

**30- & 55-GAL. STEEL DRUMS**, \$10/ea. 676-0969.

**16' ALUM. CANOE**, \$250. 451-3900/Mdfd.

**SHINGLING & LIGHT CONSTRUCTION; TREE REMOVAL**, free estimates. 456-0296.

**14' LUND FISHING BOAT**, 10-hp Merc., roller trailer, \$1300. 384-8970.

**GRASS HAY BALES**, sm. sq. by Waldorf. 327-3672.

**SPEEDBOAT & MOTOR**: 2000 Sea Ray 18' Bow Rider w/2000 Mercury 115-hp outboard motor, boat trailer included, \$6000. 210-1659.

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

**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.

**MINI STORAGE UNITS**, Ellendale. 456-1460.

**9T BIN w/auger & motor; 50-GAL. WATER HEATER; BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT**. 475-2322.

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

**BUILDABLE RIGHTS** in Rice County, Webster Twsp. 612-919-4130 for details.

**TRAILER TIRE ON RIM**, ST 175/80R13, 5-bolt rim, \$35. 491-4565.

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

**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.

**SET OF (2) STEEL CAR RAMPS**, like new, \$65; **5-HOLE RIM & TIRE**, new, 5-30x12, for trailer, \$75. 612-309-4995.

**(4) GENERAL GRABBER HTS60 TIRES**, size 275/60R20, like new 10/32, new depth 11/32, \$550 for set of (4). 612-250-6956.

**2006 H-D SPORTSTER 1200**, 9600 mi., lots of goodies, pipes, windshield, extra chrome, \$5000. 339-5102.

**GRAVEL TRUCK AVAIL.** for all your delivery needs: rock, gravel, dirt, etc., 15.5-ton capacity. 456-7774.

**MILLENIUM 2-PERSON TREE STAND**, 18' w/ shooting bar, like new, 1-yr-old w/straps & fall arrest gear, \$250/obo. 323-4362.

**SEASONED FIREWOOD**, mostly oak, \$100 per standard pickup load (smaller quantities avail. for campfires). 323-1539.

**GRASS HAY BALES**, sm. sq., \$4/ea. 612-756-1131.

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

(For Sale ads continued on Page 15)

## Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **June 6** to ensure being printed in the July 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 6th will be printed in the August issue.

For Sale                       Wanted                       Give Away

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to: SWCE, PO Box 485, Owatonna MN 55060-0485, deliver to the SWCE office, or email your ad to: [sparks@swce.coop](mailto:sparks@swce.coop).

## travel

**SUMMER ON THE MISSISSIPPI**, June 22-25. By deluxe motor coach, 6 meals, guided tours, lunch cruise, Circa 21 Dinner Theatre, "Beauty and the Beast," & more! \$759 per person w/2 per room.

**CIVIL WAR BATTLEGROUND**, Sept. 19-28. Deluxe motor coach, Civil War museums in Richmond & Appomattox, historical battlegrounds, Lincoln tomb & more! \$1,699 pp w/2 per room.

**AUTUMN IN NEW ENGLAND**, Oct. 6-15. Delta Air to New York City, 2 nights at Millenium Hotel, Broadway show, cruise eastern seaboard to Canada, scenic ports & more! \$3,599 pp w/2 per room.

Call 4-Seasons at 373-4705 or 373-2473, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, to learn more about their tour information.



## ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 14)

**AVON, COLLECTIBLES, (3) 18-GAL. TOTES + BOXES, \$40. 651-274-9616.**

**3-POINT SPRAYER, 45 gal. w/12V pump, new (never used), \$325; LINDSAY DRAG, (1) section, nice shape. 456-7614.**

**1970 16' TAFT FIBERGLASS CANOE, has trolling motor mount, \$125. 838-8689.**

**1977 HONDA GL1000 GOLDWING, 45K mi., custom paint, chrome, \$1800. 451-1153.**

**17' GRUMMAN CANOE; ANTIQUE FURNITURE; TABLES; ROCKERS; LAMPS; HOOKED RUGS, etc. 363-1566.**

**REESE 18K 5TH WHEEL HITCH for Ford 250-350, \$500. 213-6582/leave message.**

**TREK 3500 MTB, men's, 26x175, 21 spd, \$150; SCHWINN ROXIE CRUISER, women's, 7 spd, 26x175, \$100. 330-3178.**

**17' ALUMACRAFT CANOE w/factory motor mount. 465-8566.**

**2002 FLEETWOOD 10' PICKUP CAMPER, slide out, generator - 24 hrs, stored inside, bath, air, TV, gd cond. 475-0336.**

**OLD MEDICINE BOTTLES; POP BOTTLES; RED WING JUGS. 491-2667.**

**NH RUNNING GEAR, gd tires, nice shape; INT 55 HIGH CLEARANCE 10-TOOTH CHISEL PLOW. 390-5508.**

**NH 273 HAY BALER w/thrower. 381-4130.**

**MILLER PRO 500 SPRAYER, Demco yellow tank on front w/controls. 649-1228 after 6 p.m.**

**KITTENS for house pets, 11- to 15-wks-old, Siamese blk & spotted. 234-6865 for more info & photos.**

**'84 CUTLASS CIERA, V6, diesel, rust free, very rare, have receipts for parts & maintenance for 30 yrs, runs & looks vry gd, \$3500; GUNS: Win. 61; 25, 12 ga.; 12, 20 ga. 451-7755.**

**JD GRAIN PICKUP HEAD, \$1200; NH 311 BALER w/kicker, \$3700. 524-4637.**

**CHICKEN EGGS from non-caged chickens, chemical-free food, \$3/dozen. 461-9422.**

**WOODEN STEP, \$5; 8" TRAILER TIRE on rim, 245/75R16, rim & tire like new, new 5-hole, \$50/obo. 210-6728/Dan.**

**1938 FORD PICKUP, drives like a new one, \$27,900; LUND 16' FISHING BOAT, trailer, 25-hp Mercury, \$2450. 327-3626.**

**20' SHOREMASTER PONTOON LIFT w/canopy, located at French Lk, Fbo, gd cond., \$4500/obo. 651-983-8410/Ron.**

**1990 H-D HERITAGE SOFTAIL in great cond., \$5000. 456-5466.**

**BOAT LIFT CRANK WHEEL, \$50; STAMPING SUPPLIES; QUILTED WALL HANGINGS, new. 334-6362.**

**(4) DAKON ROLLING CULTIVATOR SHIELDS; WIDE GRAIN ELEVATOR END PIECE; TRACTOR TIRE CHAINS, 11' long x 22" wide, for D17 tractor. 339-8577.**

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.

## Portion of Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members to receive survey in June


Next month, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will be partnering with Power System Engineering to assess how Steele-Waseca can better serve our members and prepare for our future.


Select members will be receiving a survey either in the mail or through email from Steele-Waseca via Survey Monkey on Wednesday, June 8. The survey will ask about:

- Satisfaction with Steele-Waseca.
- Perspectives on conservation and climate change.
- Interest in participating in energy-saving rates and programs.
- Interest in and use of electric vehicles, renewable energy, and energy-efficient technologies.

hicles, renewable energy, and energy-efficient technologies.

Your opinions and feedback are extremely valuable as Steele-Waseca determines the rates and programs the co-op will offer in the future. The survey will take 7 minutes to complete. All respondents will be entered into a drawing for a bill credit. 1052342

Don't miss out on your chance to help shape Steele-Waseca's future! If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Steele-Waseca at 507-451-7340 during regular business hours. 

 #swceTRUST


Your billing statement this month has a special line listing the amount of your electric sales less power costs in 2021. This is shown as **2021 PATRONAGE BASIS**. Capital credit equity you've been allocated for 2021 is shown as **2021 ALLOCATION**, if electric sales exceeded power costs. Also listed is the **CAPITAL CREDIT BALANCE**, which is the amount of remaining accumulated equity. Please save this month's billing statement if you will need any of those amounts for tax preparation. Only inactive accounts receive separate statements of equity.


 #swceGROWTH

(DeVries retirement continued from Page 3)

Customers would have to manually read their meter each month no matter what the weather was or how busy they were. If meter readings were not mailed to the office, the meter reading had to be estimated, sometimes causing inaccurate usage."

Darla said while things have changed, the goal of providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity has been the "main goal" of Steele-Waseca employees, managers, and directors. "Sometimes I think young people shy away from electric cooperatives for a career because they think it's an old, boring business model—nothing could be further from the truth. It's a constantly changing industry with a lot of opportunities for all."


Steele-Waseca congratulates Darla for her years of dedicated service and wishes her a rewarding retirement. 

 #swceLIFE+



### April 12 storm damage

Straight-line winds on Tuesday, April 12, resulted in approximately 1,200 outages in Steele-Waseca's service territory restored by line technicians due to damaged poles, lines, and trees falling on lines. The pictured storm damage was two miles south of Cannon Lake near Faribault. Complicating the response was the co-op's outage management system was not properly operating, which prevented members from reporting or obtaining outage information from the co-op's website.

 #swceTRUST

## member connection

### Low-carbon future comes into focus

Sale of Coal Creek Station and high-voltage direct-current transmission system closed May 2

If you were to start an electric company from scratch, what would it look like?

Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau has described his vision for the ideal power provider for Minnesota's cooperative members.

"You would start with a portfolio of renewable energy resources at locations throughout the Midwest," said Saggau. "You would back those up with modern, flexible natural gas peaking plants—and you would have ready access to the electricity market to purchase additional energy when you need it."

That vision is becoming a reality as a result of changes Great River Energy (GRE) has made gradually over the past decade, including closing two power plants.

The latest step in this transition is the sale of GRE's Coal Creek Station power plant and high-voltage direct-current (HVDC) transmission system to Rainbow Energy Center and Nexus line, respectively. The transaction closed Monday, May 2. Rainbow Energy Center will continue to operate the 1,151-megawatt (MW) power plant, and Great River Energy will operate and maintain the HVDC system for Nexus Line under a 20-year contract.

As part of this agreement, Great River Energy will purchase 1,050 MW of power from Rainbow Energy Center through early 2023, at which time the purchase amount decreases to 350 MW for eight years.

By reducing its coal-based energy and more than doubling its renewable energy, GRE will reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by more than 80% by 2032, achieving Minnesota's emissions target nearly two decades ahead of schedule.

"The power supply of Great River Energy reflects the values of our membership and advances Minnesota toward its energy and environmental goals," said Jon Brekke, GRE's vice president and chief power supply officer. "We are transitioning from a historically coal-dependent cooperative to one with low carbon intensity. The balance in the new portfolio, including peaking, wind and the purchase of energy from Rainbow, is important for reliability and risk mitigation."

#### *A 'no compromise' plan*

As Great River Energy transitions to a largely renewable portfolio of energy re-

sources, cost and reliability remain paramount.

GRE's wholesale power rates are well below the weighted regional average cost of electricity and projected to remain stable.

The cooperative's transmission reliability is excellent as well, achieving record levels in eight of the company's 10 reliability measurements in 2021.

"There is no compromise in the direction we are heading," said GRE Vice President and Chief Transmission Officer Priti Patel. "We provide a remarkable product—electricity—and we push ourselves to ever-higher standards of service to our member-owners."

#### *Foundation for a clean economy*

As Great River Energy supplies cleaner, more affordable energy, the cooperative and its member-owners are committed to electrifying the economy.

Cooperatives play an important role in fostering electric transportation, home heating and cooling, business applications, agriculture, manufacturing techniques and more.

"Smart electrification is efficient, affordable and the future," said GRE Vice President and Chief Corporate and Member Services Officer Mark Fagan. "We are living our mission to provide member-owners with affordable, reliable energy in harmony with a sustainable environment."

#### *Planning for the future*

While providing excellent service today, GRE regularly tests technologies and business strategies to improve the way it will serve members long in the future.

The cooperative's Cambridge Energy Storage Project is a multi-day battery with the potential to turn variable sources of renewable energy into dependable, dispatchable energy resources. A battery that discharges over several days could provide electricity long enough to outlast most periods of extreme weather, which can pose challenges to the electric grid.

Great River Energy also works with its member-owner cooperatives to develop local renewable resources as well as deploy energy efficiency and demand response programs that make electricity more sustainable, affordable and reliable.

📍 #swceSERVICE

## annual meeting

• Plan to arrive at **86 Years** Steele-Waseca Cooperative *Lighting The Way*

Electric (SWCE) early enough (doors open at 9 a.m., Tuesday, June 7) to be registered by the time the meeting begins at 10:30 a.m. **Remember to bring your pre-mailed registration card.** If you are arriving via Interstate 35, you will want to take the Bridge Street exit (#41) and head west. There is a roundabout at the nearest intersection with SWCE, so just follow the West Bridge Street sign. The co-op's headquarters are located at 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna. 1021832

• **Parking** will be available on the property surrounding the building. **Miner's Outdoor & Rec**, located at Highway 218 South, Blooming Prairie, will be supplying several golf cars to shuttle you to and from the meeting.

• **There will be two Early Bird prize drawings prior to the start of the annual meeting.** There will also be Grand Prize drawings for gift cards and flowers on the stage at the conclusion of the business meeting.

• **SWCE will be collecting donations for an area county food shelf.** Please bring non-perishable food items or monetary donations with you to the annual meeting at the SWCE booth and receive (1) free LED bulb.

• **If you are new to Steele-Waseca or have never attended an annual meeting,** please pick up a complimentary copy of the co-op's 75th anniversary book and DVD entitled, "Making the Connection," at the SWCE booth. Additional copies and/or purchases during regular business hours are available for \$7/each.

• **Lunch will be served after the annual meeting.** The menu will include: smoked pork chops, vegetables, potatoes, salad, dinner rolls, coffee, milk, water, with Dairy Queen Dilly® Bars for dessert.

📍 #swceAPPRECIATION