



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

January 2023

Capital Credit Refund

Please check this month's billing statement for your 2022 capital credit refund. If you have any questions regarding your refund, please call Hlou Yang at Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

\$



inside connections

- 2 Manager Connection
- 3 Stelter reflects on finance division manager promotion; How electricity is delivered
- 4 Cookin' Connection; SWCE community solar update; Stray voltage questions
- 5 Winter storm preparation; Portable space heater safety
- 6 Ad Connection; 4-Seasons Vacations
- 7 Ad Connection; Types of space heaters, and figuring cost to operate
- 8 Applicants sought for 2023 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour

calendar of events

January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 SWCE office is closed in observance of New Year's Day
- 16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric awarding \$1,000 scholarships in 2023 to qualified high school graduates

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is providing \$1,000 scholarships to qualified high school seniors graduating in 2023.




The Steele-Waseca board of directors this past year voted to increase the scholarship amount effective for the eligible 2023 high school graduates. One scholarship will be presented at each participating school. Scholarship eligibility required by Steele-Waseca includes:

1. Applicants must currently be high school seniors, who will be continuing their education on a full-time basis at a two- or four-year technical school or college.

2. Applicants must be dependents of a Steele-Waseca member.

Each participating school is responsible for administering any other eligibility requirements, the selection of their school's Steele-Waseca scholarship recipient, and the disbursement of the scholarship dollars from Steele-Waseca.

All eligible high school seniors should contact their guidance counselor or scholarship administrator for more information. 1012420

In 2022, Steele-Waseca awarded \$500 scholarships to 17 high school senior graduates. The co-op's scholarship program has awarded \$198,250 in scholarships since the program was established in 1954. A portion of the funds to support these scholarships come from unclaimed capital credit equity.  #swceLIFE+

Great River Energy's wholesale rates projected to increase in 2023

Strategic decisions to stabilize wholesale electricity rates continue to serve Great River Energy's (GRE's) member-owners well, but broader economic challenges will impact energy costs in the year ahead.

GRE's average 2023 wholesale rate is projected to increase by an average of 6.2% from the 2022 budgeted rate; however, many of Great River Energy's all-requirements member-owners will see smaller increases. This is GRE's first budgeted increase to its average wholesale rate in five years.

"There are significant external pressures on energy costs around the world, and we worked closely with our members to temper the regional effects of those as much as possible," said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "Despite those challenges, our cooperative remains in a strong financial position and



expects to end 2022 with surplus margins that will be returned to members as cash refunds."

Many of the local distribution cooperatives that purchase wholesale electricity from GRE are facing their own cost pressures due to supply shortages and inflation.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), which closely monitors U.S. energy costs, reported nationwide retail electricity costs increased 8% in 2022 and further increases are expected in 2023. According to EIA's October

(Wholesale rates continued on Page 7)

Published monthly by
 Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric
 2411 W Bridge Street, PO Box 485
 Owatonna MN 55060-0485

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: www.swce.coop
 Email: 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
Secretary/Treasurer
- Gary Wilson District 6
President, GRE Director
- John Beal, *Vice President* District 7
- Ronald Sommers District 8
Acting Secretary/Treasurer
- Renee Malecha District 9

Management

Syd Briggs *General Manager*

Division Managers

- Kim Wilson *Member Services*
- Jon Stelter *Finance*
- Dan Meier *Operations*

Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

Operations Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

For Customer Service, Billing Questions and Power Outages Phone:

507-451-7340 or 800-526-3514

Before calling to report an outage

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

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

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

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

48-hour notice required for ALL underground cable locations

manager connection



By Syd Briggs,
 General Manager

Germany Kent, an award-winning American print and broadcast journalist

once said, “When you sign on to making a positive impact in your community, your story including your life experiences, skills and passions will provide inspiration to others.” I believe Ms. Kent captured the unique value we provide to each other when dedicated to a common goal together.

I believe the same can be said about Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, specifically with regard to our board members. They are community-minded individuals with a variety of skill sets. We rely on their many talents to help us make informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Our directors live in the co-op’s service area, and we consider them the eyes and ears of our co-op community because they provide perspective on important community issues. 26213

Steele-Waseca recognize it takes many people with different skills to create a well-rounded board that can represent the full spectrum of our co-op community. That’s why when we’re seeking director candidates, we want members with diverse perspectives, experience, expertise, and views. The co-op’s Nominating Committee is seeking members of the service area community, who can apply their unique talents, to benefit all our friends and neighbors. But above all else, we’re looking for members who love the area and want to see it thrive now and in the future.

What does it mean to serve on the board?

Serving on Steele-Waseca’s board of directors means you’re making a difference locally, using your individual talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that in turn benefit the larger community.

While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the members it serves. On a granular level, Steele-Waseca board members typically provide input and guidance on:

- budgets

- co-op goals and direction
- co-op’s community/charitable contributions
- capital investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- renewable investments and energy mix
- co-op’s role and involvement in economic development

In addition, Steele-Waseca board directors will participate in area school awards programs to present the co-op’s scholarship to an eligible recipient.

The energy industry is undergoing a major transition. Technology advancements and increased consumer preference for more renewable energy is driving change, but power reliability and affordability can’t be compromised.

Steele-Waseca is facing big decisions, and board members have an opportunity to help chart a course for our future. To serve the community best, we need input from a wide range of members that represent the broad spectrum of views within our co-op community.

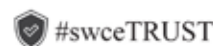
Opportunity to serve

Steele-Waseca’s Nominating Committee is presently seeking board candidates for districts 7, 8, and 9, which is in the Rice and Goodhue County service areas. The board election will be held during the co-op’s 87th annual meeting Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at Steele-Waseca’s headquarters in Owatonna. If you would like to serve, you may also contact Steele-Waseca, and a form will be sent to you. Nominations are also accepted during the business portion of the annual meeting.

While you don’t need to be an expert in electricity or business to run, you do need to have a passion for the co-op community, and a willingness to actively serve and learn. We’re looking for individuals who can represent the full gamut of the members we serve.

Our board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deep understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

To learn more about Steele-Waseca’s director election process and 2023 details, visit swce.coop or contact our office during regular business hours.



member connection

Stelter reflects on new challenges as Steele-Waseca's finance division manager

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's (SWCE's) Jon Stelter was promoted, July 1, to finance division manager and has been active transitioning to his new role with the co-op.

"The transition to finance division manager from controller has been a busy one," stated Jon. "The recent retirement of several long-term employees and the hiring of new employees has provided an opportunity to review the processes and procedures that we currently use to serve our members in the most efficient manner possible." He also noted, "Additional responsibilities involve working with the other departments and the board of directors to provide a great future for the cooperative."

According to Stelter, "The cooperative is currently budgeting and working on long range planning for the next four years. SWCE has developed a plan to manage cash flow to meet the rising costs of material and equipment to serve the membership."

With news of inflation and supply chain issues impacting the nation, Stelter was asked about its impact on Steele-Waseca. "The rising costs of materials and equipment along with lengthy delivery times has made this the most unpredictable and challenging time since I started with the co-op."

Jon began his employment with Steele-Waseca as an accountant on Jan. 1, 1989. He grew up with an older brother, Paul, on a farm near Echo, Minnesota. Stelter graduated from Echo-Wood Lake High School and attended Willmar Technical College, where he earned his accounting degree. Prior to joining Steele-Waseca, Jon worked as an accountant for Regis Corporation in Edina. In 2010, Jon completed the management internship program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Today, Jon and his wife, Cindy, reside in Owatonna. Cindy owns Central Park Framing and Finds in downtown Owatonna. The couple has a son, Gar-



Jon Stelter

rett, who is a sophomore at OHS, and is active in sports, DECA, and his youth group at church. 1057012

"I enjoy traveling and exploring new places with my family," stated Jon. "I also enjoy taking an annual fishing trip or two. I also enjoy attending my son's baseball and hockey activities."

#swceLIFE+

How electricity gets to your home, farm, or business

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

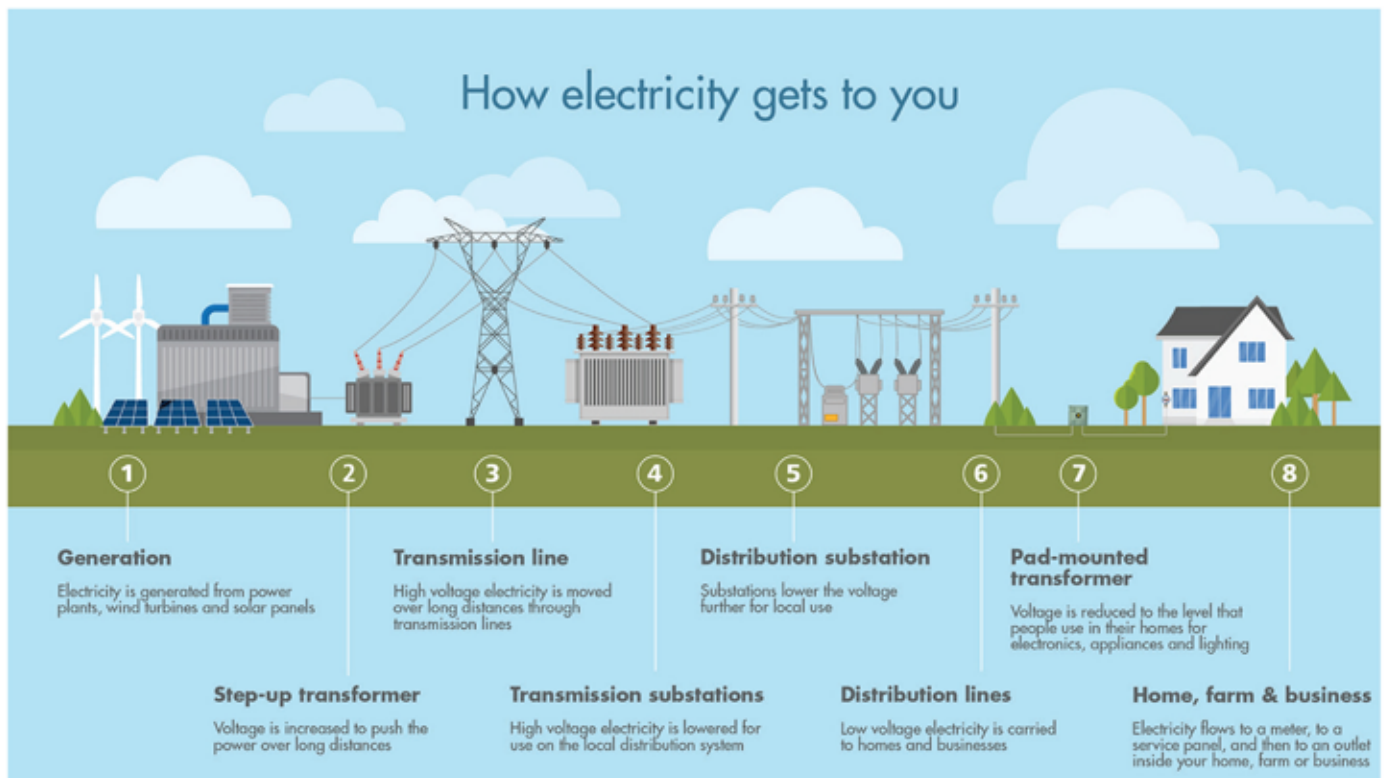
Whenever you flip a switch, charge your smartphone, or store food in the freezer, you're relying on the grid to

bring you reliable electricity.

At a basic level, the electric grid is a set of interconnected wires connecting places where energy is produced

to where it is used. Over time, the grid has become smarter, more dynamic, and increasingly interconnected due

(Delivering electricity continued on Page 7)



cookin' connection

Microwave Carmel Corn

Lois Nelson

Blooming Prairie

1/2 c. butter, melted
1/4 c. light Karo® syrup
1 c. brown sugar
1 tsp. baking soda

Combine butter, syrup, and brown sugar, and microwave for 3 minutes. Remove from microwave and stir in baking soda until it foams. Pour over 1 air popper of popcorn and stir. Microwave 1 minute and stir; again microwave 1 minute and stir. Continue to stir as it cools. Lois wrote, "So Good!! Enjoy"

Please use a 3 x 5 card when submitting your recipe. The member whose recipe is published will receive a \$7 energy credit.



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's solar subscribers will see a 16 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during November 2022. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, 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.

December issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Jon/Laurie Claeyes

Numbers not found:

Patrick/Silvia Whitcomb

Joseph/Valerie Lyman

Jill/Darren Rhodes

Jeremy/Cassandra Glende



Sparks in brief . . .

• **Want easy energy payments?** Sign up for **EnergyPay Plus**, our automatic payment plan, or **Energy Prepay**, our discounted advance payment plan. Contact our office for details. You may also pay your bill online at www.swce.coop. By entering your Steele-Waseca username and password you can also view a 13-month history of your account.

• **If you have changed or added phone numbers**, please contact SWCE to update your contact information.

• **Need a new water heater?** For information about our Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Butterfield at our office between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **November temps** – The average high temperature for November was 41° F, while the average low was 24° F. This resulted in 970.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 45° F and average low of 27° F, which resulted in 871.5 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – All ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), electric clothes dryers, dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, light emitting diode (LED) bulbs purchased (limit 5) are eligible to receive rebates (may not be combined with special promotions). Rebate request forms must be submitted within 90 days of purchase. Rebate forms are available at swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 800-526-3514.

• **SWCE's tree service contractor** – Carr's Tree Service, Inc., is contracted to do SWCE's tree trimming. To report a tree concern, phone:

507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514

LIVESTOCK OWNERS

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

Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



- Snowbrush
- Shovel
- Windshield washer fluid
- Cat litter for traction



- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Drinking water
- Nonperishable foods



- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher



- Reflective triangles
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)



- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Compass
- Car charger for cell phone



Source: NSC

Shopping for a space heater? Choose wisely

If your home heating system does not deliver the toasty warmth you want or you would like to dial down your thermostat to save on your energy bill, a space heater can help make up the difference.

Multiple types exist on the market, but the most important thing to remember is to buy one that you can operate safely.

Dispose of old space heaters with exposed coils, those that are dangerous to use (e.g., worn or cracked cords) or those that operate inefficiently. Many that are available today have safety features that older versions do not, such as timers, tip-over prevention or auto shut-off.

Before you purchase an electric heat-

(Space heaters continued on Page 7)

Feeling chilled?

HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY



Place on a flat, level surface

Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away



Make sure the cord is not frayed or cracked

Plug it directly into an outlet



Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which can overheat

Follow all instructions and use models endorsed by a reputable testing lab



Do not use around small children or pets



Do not use one with a damaged plug or prongs



ad connection

give away

(2) **TRACTOR TIRES**, 11-2-38. 456-0835.

WOODEN SPOOLS @ SWCE. 451-7340/Todd.

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

wanted

TRACTOR CAB for JD 3020. 330-3945.

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

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

BENCH SEAT for a 1981-87 Chevy pickup in any color. 330-3856.

IRIS you no longer want. 663-1275.

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

BOOK ENTITLED, "THE KAPLAN FAMILY HISTORY, FROM BOHEMIA TO AMERICA," published 1992 (it's a paperback book) by Reuben Kaplan. 451-7290.

for sale

1978 SHELBY GOOSENECK, 2 horse, straight load, sm. living qtrs, water heater, elec. fridge, cowboy shower, sink, \$7500. 456-0076.

FLARE BOX, hyd. lift, 2x8 treated extensions, exc. cond., \$575; **FLUORESCENT SHOP LIGHTS** w/ bulbs, \$5/each or \$25 for all; **50-GAL. BURN BARRELS**, \$15/each. 455-3881.

HOUSE CLEANING: kitchen, bathroom, floors, bedrooms, etc. 461-9422.

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

2-ACRE WOODED/SECLUDED BUILDING SITE. 210-5596.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

FIREWOOD, mostly oak, ash, & sugar maple, \$75 per truckload. 332-7590.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

ICE CREAM PARLOR TABLE & (4) CHAIRS, vry gd cond., \$200. 475-2814.

STORAGE UNITS FOR RENT. 456-1460.

ALADDIN PORTABLE KEROSENE HEATER, Model S481U, \$25. 334-2860.

TRANSFERRABLE BUILDING RIGHTS in Rice County, Webster Twsp. 612-919-4130 for details.

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

(3) **HAYFIELD DOUBLE HUNG WINDOWS**, new, 27.25x45, 31.5x45, & 35.5x45, \$300/each/obo; (6) **WINDOWS**, used, \$50/each/obo. 456-5130.

2005 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500 CREW CAB LT, 4 door, blk, gray interior, tonneau cover, 5.3L, many extras. 363-6601.

BARBIE HOUSE & stuff to go with it, used in gd cond., \$150/obo. 383-9149.

RENTAL, Izaak Walton League Bldg., 4 mi. south of Owat., seats 100, full kitchen, grill, Wi-Fi, \$150. 451-7946.

MF 50, 1960s?, new rear tires & rims, great cond. 744-5133.

VINTAGE IRON BED FRAME; VINTAGE WOOD TABLES; HALF TABLES; DAYBED FRAME; OLD COINS. 491-2667.

(1) **BOX WINCHESTER 38 SPECIAL 130 GRAIN FULL METAL JACKET**, \$20. 210-2074.

STEEL SHOP DESK, tan, 36x60, (6) drawers, gd shape, \$50/obo; **BLACKSMITH SHOP HAND DRILL PRESS**, antique, \$100/obo. 390-5222.

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

RIGID GAS-POWERED WHEELBARROW AIR COMPRESSOR, 9 gal., 135 PSI, vry gd cond., \$600. 461-1507.

(17) **RWF FEEDER CATTLE:** 9 bulls, 8 heifers, 450 lbs. 213-8670.

ALL-NATURAL SOAP, nothing artificial, www.dan-dellionnaturals.com, Hayfield. 261-4992.

1994 E350 VAN, 119,000 mi., 5.8L w/tow package, looks/runs great, \$2200. 330-5670.

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

BOSS DXT V-PLOW, 9'2" w/wings, \$5400. 334-7177.

1998 SPARTAN 16' ROLLER BOAT TRAILER, \$800/obo; **50-GAL. WATER HEATER; BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT.** 475-2322.

(2) **TIRES**, LT 275/70R18, Firestone Transforce, 10 ply, more than half the tread left, 17,700 mi. on them, \$200 for the pair—firm. 491-4565.

CANOPY-TYPE ENCLOSER w/roll-up sides, 20'x20'x10'H, HD tubing frame, exc. cond., \$275. 323-5870.

DOG KENNEL PANELS, 10'x6' Silver Series kennel side panel, galvanized steel construction, \$50/each. 612-247-5346.

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

1995 POLARIS INDY TRAIL SNOWMOBILE w/reverse. 688-9410.

MAYTAG 30" FREE-STANDING ELEC. CONVECTION OVEN, glass cooktop, blk w/stainless steel self cleaning, \$150. 414-403-3845.

INT 300 UTILITY LOADER TRACTOR, new front tires, gd rear tires w/chains, gd runner, gas, some extra parts, \$3500. 676-2802.

FIREWOOD, \$350/full cord; **POTATOES**, \$1/lb, Nfld area. 651-357-5092/Paul.

ANTIQUE 2-PERSON CUTTER, seat has new covering, \$800; **1941 FORD COUPE** to restore, \$3500. 612-719-4543/Lonsdale.

(2) **BOOKCASES** w/3 glass doors each. 744-2683.

BRWN EGGS, farm fresh, \$3/dozen/Mdfd area, \$3.50/dozen if delivered to Owat. 451-9535.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

PANAMA CANAL, Feb. 18-March 2. Round-trip air from Mpls to Ft Lauderdale on Delta Airlines, 10-day cruise on the Caribbean Princess, 7 ports of call. Starting at \$3,599 pp w/2 per room.

SAN ANTONIO, TX, March 18-26. By motor coach, 14 meals, Riverwalk Cruise, LBJ Ranch, 6th Floor Museum in Dealey Plaza, Magnolia Market at the Silos, Alamo & more! \$1,599 pp w/2 per room.

MONUMENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. April 28-May 2. Round trip Delta Airlines from Mpls to D.C., 8 meals, guided tours, tram ride thru Arlington National Cemetery, & more! \$1,699 pp w/2 per room.

Call 4-Seasons at 373-4705 or 373-2473, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, to learn more about their tour information.



Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **January 5** to ensure being printed in the February 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 5th will be printed in the March issue.

For Sale Wanted Give Away

Phone # _____ Account # _____

Name _____

Clip and mail to: SWCE, PO Box 485, Owatonna MN 55060-0485; deliver to SWCE, or email your ad to: sparks@swce.coop.

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

JD 6600 COMBINE, 3759 hrs, 404 diesel engine, 443 corn head, 220 bean head, & pickup head also avail. 651-600-7815.

ARIENS DELUXE 28" SNOWBLOWER, auto turn, 254cc, elec. start; **8' LOFTNESS SNOWBLOWER**, 3 pt, 540, single auger. 456-1629.

HAY BALES; MIXED GRASS ROUND BALES, 4x5. 390-0600.

(2) **DOWNHILL ROSSIGNOL SKIS**. 678-978-7444.

(3) **MULTI-POSITION LADDERS**, like new at half of new price; **TORO PUSH LAWN MOWER**; **IHC 720 PLOW**, gd bottoms, etc. 528-2252.

FARMALL H, \$1200/cash. 456-0835.

Ads need to be received in the Steele-Waseca office by Thursday, Jan. 5, to ensure being printed in the February 2023 Sparks newsletter.

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.

(Space heaters continued from Page 5)

er, determine the square footage of the space you want to warm and whether you have a safe spot to place it. Inefficient or excessively large options will only run up your electric bill without much benefit to you or your family.

Types of space heaters include the following:

- **Metal coil and fan:** Perhaps the most common and affordable type of space heater, this type uses electricity to heat a metal coil that is safely tucked inside. The fan(s) suck cold air from the room, heat it, and redistribute it at a higher temperature.

- **Ceramic radiant:** Similar to the metal coil variety, these space heaters also include ceramic plates inside. They absorb and store heat so that it radiates outward, even after you turn the heater off. Quick and long-lasting radiant heat makes these some of the most efficient space heaters.

- **Infrared:** These larger and usually more expensive space heaters use elec-

tromagnetic waves to heat objects in the room. In other words, your furniture, walls and you are heated up safely, so the increased temperature radiates out from everything. This technology is often used in fake fireplaces.

- **Radiator-style oil:** If you like the appearance of old-fashioned radiators or need something larger without a fan, consider an oil-filled space heater. An upside is that these radiate a lot of heat after they are turned off; the downside is that the unit itself can get quite hot and increase the risk of burns.

No matter what type of heater you choose, there are safety precautions you should follow. These will help prevent house fires, property damage, and injury:

- Use a space heater with a minimum of three feet of clearance on all sides.

- Do not put a heater in a doorway or high-traffic area in the home.

- Place the heater on a flat, safe surface.

- Consider using one with built-in safety features.

- Do not plug one into an extension cord.

- Never leave a space heater unattended; unplug it and put it away when not in use. 1110043

To learn more about electrical safety, visit Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's website, swce.coop, or SafeElectricity.org.

To figure the cost of operating a portable electric heater, multiply the device's wattage (typically 1,500W) by the number of hours the heater is used per day; divide by 1,000; multiply by the kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate. For a monthly total, multiply by the number of days in a month.

 #swceLIFE+

(Wholesale rates continued from Page 1)

Short-Term Energy Outlook: "Higher retail electricity prices largely reflect an increase in wholesale power prices, which are driven by higher natural gas prices."

Great River Energy's efforts to stabilize wholesale electric rates are insulating GRE and its member-owners from economic headwinds in the short term and position the cooperative for success.

“Our strategies are serving us well today, and our rate forecasts continue to show stable rates for many years,” said Great River Energy Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Michelle Strobel. “When we look at the next decade, we are still seeing wholesale electricity rates flat or declining as a result of the important decisions we have made regarding our power supply resources.”

 #swceSERVICE

(Delivering electricity continued from Page 3)

to advancements in technology along with additional wind and solar energy resources.

Great River Energy is the wholesale power supplier to Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, and uses the grid to move energy and information to ensure reliable electric and quick response times when there is an issue on the electric system.

But how does the grid work? Electricity is made by huge spinning turbines at generating stations using coal, wind, natural gas, or water. Electricity from these generators, located at places like power plants and windfarms, is pushed along high voltage transmission lines to substations where the voltage can be “stepped down” to lower, more usable levels. Then, it is sent along smaller distribution lines, like those owned by Steele-Waseca, to be delivered to neighborhoods.

sparks • january 2023

From there, smaller transformers reduce the voltage again to make the power safe to use in homes, schools, farms and small businesses. These smaller transformers may be mounted on poles or sitting on the ground (they're the big green boxes called pad-mounted transformers).

Electricity then runs underground from the transformer to your house and passes through a meter that measures how much each home or business uses. Then, it goes to a service panel where breakers or fuses protect the wires inside your house from being overloaded. Electricity then travels through wires inside the walls to the outlets and switches that we use every day in homes and businesses.

That's how reliable power gets to you in our increasingly power-dependent world.

 #swceSERVICE

youth tour connection

2023 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour scheduled June 13-18

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric seeking applicants, and 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 2023 Youth Tour, June 13-18.

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). 1088113
3. Return entries to: Steele-Wase-

ca Cooperative Electric, c/o Youth Tour 2023, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55060. Entries must be received in Steele-Waseca's office on or before Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. The two Youth Tour recipients will be notified by Friday, March 17, 2023.

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 2023? 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 13, presently at 9:30 a.m. An afternoon flight to Washington, D.C., will follow the session. *swce*

 #swceLIFE+



Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2023 — June 13-18

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 2023 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 # _____