



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

June 2024



2023 Annual Report

88 Years
Lighting The Way

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calendar of events

June

- 1-2** Morristwn Dam Days cont.
 - 4** SWCE Annual Meeting,
Office closed until 2 p.m.
 - 13-15** Mdfd Straight River Days;
Heritage Days in Faribault
 - 14** Flag Day
 - 16** Father's Day
 - 19** Juneteenth
 - 20** First day of summer
- National Dairy Month**

SWCE's 88th Annual Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 – 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 the meeting and prizes; optional drive-thru available for those unable to attend the business meeting

9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.Popcorn and co-op display booth

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.....Rodney Krell, Vice President

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.....Ron Sommers,
Board Secretary/Treasurer

Acceptance of 2023 Reports as printed in *Sparks*.....Gary Wilson,
Board President

Board of Directors

Nominating Committee Report.....Denise Bartness, Cmte Chair

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

Washington, D.C. Youth Tour presentations.....Randy Sobrack,
Member Services Supervisor

Guest Introductions.....Syd Briggs, General Manager

SWCE Report.....Syd Briggs, General Manager

Employee Introductions.....Syd Briggs, General Manager

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

Adjournment

Grand Prizes.....Gift cards and flowers

11:45 a.m.Lunch catered by Hy-Vee, Owatonna

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Board of Directors

- PJ Duchene District 1
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer
- Geraldine Lienke District 2
- Neil Schlaak District 3
- Dennis Ringhofer District 4
- Rodney Krell, *Vice President* District 5
- Gary Wilson District 6
President, GRE Director
- John Beal District 7
- Ronald Sommers District 8
Secretary/Treasurer
- Scott Carlson 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

message to our owners



*By Syd Briggs,
 General Manager*

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is making final preparations for welcoming member-owners and their guests to the co-op’s 88th annual meeting Tuesday, June 4, with the doors opening at 9 a.m., and the meeting starting promptly at 10:30 a.m.

The purpose of the annual meeting is to provide information and report on last year’s activities, and to announce the three directors elected for a three-year term. With the bylaw changes approved by members at last year’s annual meeting, this year’s election is by mail-in ballot only. Members would have received their ballots in late April and need to have that ballot received in the post office box of Survey & Ballot Systems by 10 a.m., Friday, May 31, in order to be counted.

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.

There isn’t any preregistration or call in before the meeting. Steele-Waseca is mailing registration cards 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 4.

At the annual meeting, Steele-Waseca will be collecting non-perishable food items and donations for a local food shelf. For those wishing to donate, they will receive (1) free LED lightbulb in appreciation of their donation.

Steele-Waseca’s 2024 Youth Tour Delegate Langston Richter will be introduced as he prepares to join 33 other students and six chaperones in Minneso-

ta’s delegation heading out, June 18, to Washington, D.C. They will be among 1,900 other delegates from across the country participating in the Youth Tour.

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

Financially, Steele-Waseca had another very good year. Our average number of meters grew from 11,795 in 2022 to 11,902 in 2023, and we experienced an excellent increase in energy sales of 13.4%. 1018360

Our operating expenses can vary greatly from year to year due to storm activity and different expense cycles in our long-range planning. This year’s operating expenses increased 9.05%, however, our four-year average is under a 2% average increase per year.

Equity increased \$3.6 million, and long-term debt increased \$3.2 million.

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

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

Changes continue to evolve in the electric industry and I look forward to providing a brief update along with how it impacts Steele-Waseca and member-owners like you.

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, I’m looking forward to seeing each of you again. If you have questions about our financials, the changes to our election process, or any business at all, please feel free to contact me.

• #swceAPPRECIATION



Steele-Waseca employees were introduced to attendees at the annual meeting last year (adjacent photo). Similar plans are in place for the annual head meeting Tuesday, June 4, at the co-op’s headquarters in Owatonna.

Heat pumps offer benefits for consumers, the environment

Many companies and homeowners are placing an increased emphasis on reducing their use of fossil fuels by looking for new ways to use electricity to help them achieve their goals.

This strategy of replacing direct fossil fuel use with electricity in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs is called “beneficial electrification.” It’s made possible as utilities, including Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, continue incorporating more carbon-free sources of energy into their power supply portfolios.

There are many opportunities for beneficial electrification across the residential and commercial sectors, including making the switch to an electric vehicle or an electric heating system—as long

as the end-user and environment both benefit from the change.

One home appliance that provides the opportunity to reduce fossil fuel use and replace it with electricity is the heating system. Heat pumps have become increasingly popular as the technology advances to support heating in colder climates. 1059956

Like an air conditioner, a heat pump can cool your home. What makes them unique is that they can also provide heat. Unlike other electric heating options, air source heat pumps (ASHPs) do not use electricity to create heat but instead use it to move heat from outdoor air and transfer it indoors. With today’s ASHP technology, this process of moving heat is extremely energy efficient even when

it’s cold outside.

According to Rewiring America, a nonprofit advocacy group, heat pumps can achieve more than 300% efficiency, while even the most efficient gas-powered furnace fall short of 100% efficiency. It is common for homeowners who install an ASHP to save hundreds of dollars per year.

Your local electric cooperative provides incentives for ASHPs throughout the year. Be sure to check with your cooperative prior to purchase to confirm what options are available and to ask any additional questions.

(Courtesy: Great River Energy)

#swceLIFE+

YOUR SOURCE FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HEATING AND COOLING.

ENERGY WISE  MN

Take advantage of our additional \$\$\$ promotional rebate when you install a qualifying, energy-saving ducted/hybrid air source heat pump!

Ducted/Hybrid ASHP Efficiency Rating Requirements	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
≥14.3 SEER2 & ≥7.5 HSPF2	\$500.00	\$750.00
≥15.2 SEER2 & ≥8.1 HSPF2	\$800.00	\$1,000.00

An air-source heat pump (ASHP) uses electricity to heat and cool. It works like an air conditioner to cool, and works in reverse to move warmth from outside air into your home to heat. It heats a home up to three times more efficiently than forced-air and electric-resistance heating systems.

Learn more at:

energywisemn.com/air-heat-pumps

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and promotional dates vary by cooperative. Contact your cooperative to confirm system requirements and rebate amounts.

#swceLIFE+



Great River Energy: Powering what's possible for Steele-Waseca

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale power



provider, Great River Energy (GRE), continues to transition its power supply portfolio to serve members and adapt to a changing market, while charting a path to achieve carbon-free energy requirements—all while recording the strongest financial results in the organization's history.

GRE again rewarded its members' investment in the cooperative by issuing \$25 million in patronage capital returns. Historically strong 2023 margins allowed the cooperative to meet annual financial goals and reserve nearly \$30 million to offset rates in the years ahead.

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Great River Energy operates at cost to keep rates low for its members. Its competitive advantage widened again in 2023 and GRE currently offers wholesale electric rates approximately 20% below the weighted regional average.

Making electricity in new ways

Great River Energy has been thoughtfully planning and executing the transition of its power supply portfolio for more than a decade.

GRE began in 2023 by adding two new wind agreements to its growing

portfolio of renewable resources that will collectively add more than 300 megawatts of nameplate generating capacity—and zero emissions.

Great River Energy now has power purchase agreements for the output of nine wind facilities located throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas. Its portfolio of renewable resources combined with the ability to retire earned renewable energy credits puts the cooperative in a strong position to achieve Minnesota's carbon-free standard.

Advancing the electric system

By making strategic investments in the grid, Great River Energy and its member-owners are helping keep electricity reliable and affordable as it reduces carbon dioxide emissions.

The Midwest grid operator identified an assortment of transmission projects that will be needed to continue safe and reliable electric service as the regional power system continues to evolve. GRE is teaming up with Minnesota Power to build the Northland Reliability Project, an approximately 180-mile, double-circuit 345-kilovolt transmission line between northern and central Minnesota. When completed in 2030, the line will bolster the power grid in northern and central Minnesota by allowing more renewable energy sources to be delivered

where needed.

Great River Energy is a member of Grid North Partners, a group of utilities that collaborate on projects to improve the electric system. The coalition announced 19 transmission upgrade projects that will reduce system congestion and allow the most economic generation, such as low-cost renewable energy, to serve an area.

Pursuing federal funding

Collaboration is not only a cooperative principle, but an important characteristic in Great River Energy's pursuit of funding opportunities.

GRE, along with a majority of its member-owners, filed a Letter of Interest with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to participate in its Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program to become eligible for nearly \$1 billion in federal funds to advance the work of Minnesota's electric cooperatives in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and modernizing the region's power grid.

The \$9.7 billion New ERA program was created as part of the Inflation Reduction Act with the goal of helping rural America transition to cleaner, reliable, and more affordable electricity.

#swceCOOPERATION

Integrated resource plan gets OK from Minnesota PUC

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) gave the green light to Great River Energy's integrated resource plan (IRP), which outlines the cooperative's 2023-37 generation portfolio investments.

The plan is aimed at maintaining costs for GRE's 27 member-owners, which includes Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, while significantly increasing the amount of renewable energy. It was unanimously accepted by the commission, March 7, after being submitted more than a year ago.

IRPs serve as strategic roadmaps for utilities, outlining their anticipated electricity generation methods over the next 15 years, with the PUC providing advisory guidance.

Under the accepted IRP, Great River Energy plans to procure or construct

more than 1,200 megawatts (MW) of wind power, 200 MW of energy storage, and 200 MW of solar energy capacity by 2037. With this trajectory, the cooperative is poised to achieve its 30% carbon-free objective by 2025, with an expected 90% reduction in carbon emissions by 2035 compared to 2005 levels.

Commissioner Joseph Sullivan commended Great River Energy's efforts and the outcomes contained in the IRP.

"When you look at the high levels, the numbers are quite impressive," said Sullivan. "You're going to be reducing carbon emissions by 90% by 2031. If everybody were reducing their carbon emission by 90% by 2031, I would feel a lot better about where the world is going."

Commissioner John Tuma also praised GRE and its efforts during the IRP process.

"I really appreciate the outreach you did compared to previous IRPs I've seen," said Tuma. "There was a lot of good outreach to your members, the general public and stakeholders. It was a good piece of work."

The PUC asked Great River Energy to submit its next IRP by April 1, 2026, with an interim update scheduled for 2025. The update will cover expanding solar resources, electric vehicle adoption rates, and updated carbon pricing models.

#swceINNOVATION



GRE's integrated resource plan outlines its plan to procure or construct more than 1,200 megawatts of wind power by 2037.

swce 2023 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 6, 2023. The meeting was called to order by President Gary Wilson (hereinafter referred to as Chairman) who presided.

At an early bird drawing, two members each won a \$250 certificate toward a vacation with 4 Seasons Vacations, and a \$100 certificate to Nagel Sod or Boonie's Restaurant. Everyone in attendance received a \$30 Member Perks certificate and a \$50 Energy Star® gift certificate.

The Color Guard and the Faribault Middle School presented the colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. Board Chaplain Duane Edwardson gave the invocation.

There were more than 50 members present (their attendance having been verified), the number needed to constitute a quorum within the meaning of the bylaws of the cooperative. President Wilson declared there was a quorum and instructed the secretary to file the list of members in attendance, establishing a quorum.

The Chairman asked for a motion to adopt the agenda as printed. A motion was made, seconded, and carried.

Rodney Krell, secretary-treasurer of the board, read 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 accept the Proof of Mailing as read, and to waive the reading of the minutes and accept them as printed.

The Chairman asked the membership to read the general manager's report, the financial report for the year ending Dec. 31, 2022; the Great River Energy report and the minutes printed in the an-

nual report. The membership was asked if they had any questions pertaining to the reports. There being no questions, a motion was made, seconded, and carried.

Attorney Tricia Lancaster presided over the election of the directors. Lancaster stated there were three districts in which directors were to be elected. Nominating Committee Chairperson Denise Bartness reviewed the bylaws concerning director election and summarized the minutes of the Nominating Committee meetings held Nov. 9, 2022, and Jan. 18, 2023; a copy of said minutes was attached to these minutes. Bartness introduced the candidates by name and district, and presented a biographical summary of each. Attorney Lancaster then called for nominations from the floor.

Additional nominations for District 7 were called, there being none; nominations were declared closed.

Additional nominations for District 8 were called, there being none; nominations were declared closed.

Additional nominations for District 9 were called, there being none; nominations were declared closed.

Each candidate was given the opportunity to speak to the membership before the voting was concluded.

Lancaster and General Manager Syd Briggs reviewed the proposed revisions to the bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, and answered any questions the membership had pertaining to the changes. Each member was mailed a copy of the proposed revisions on May 22, 2023. The membership was asked to vote on whether to approve the revisions and ballots were collected by auditors from Clifton, Larson, Allen who tallied the results.

The 2022 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour Delegate Nathan Seykora shared

a presentation on his experience of the Youth Tour.

SWCE Communications Specialist Randy Sobrack introduced the 2023 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour Delegate Fred Klokonos, and presented him with a gift and certificate.

Briggs introduced visiting guests and welcomed them to the annual meeting. He also acknowledged retired directors and retired employees who were present.

Briggs updated the membership on current issues pertaining to SWCE, and reviewed the past year's Member Focus marketing initiative.

Briggs introduced current employees and staff, along with their years of service.

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

District 7: John Beal was declared elected by acclamation.

District 8: Ron Sommers 256 votes; Bryan Finley 131 votes.

District 9: Scott Carlson was declared elected by acclamation.

The bylaws and Articles of Incorporation vote was: Yes—339; No—47.

Chairman Wilson called for any unfinished business, there being none. He called for any new business, there being none. He then asked for any questions the membership might have.

There being no further business to be conducted, the Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that the meeting be adjourned. ~~9/2~~

#swceTRUST

Five common myths about how to save energy at home

by Leslie A. Jones, Energy Star® Certified Products

In the age of the internet, you can find lots of advice on ways to save energy at home.

However, while energy efficient products and technologies have evolved over the years, sometimes the advice you encounter has not. See what the experts at Energy Star have to say about five common myths about how to save energy at home:

Myth 1: Changing habits and behaviors is the best way to save energy in your home.

While adjusting your habits to be more conscientious of your energy consumption can certainly be helpful in reducing energy waste, some of the most significant choices you can make may not require any behavior changes.

One of the most impactful choices

you can make as a homeowner and consumer to reduce your energy usage is to simply choose energy-efficient products when selecting items for your home.

When you choose products that have been Energy Star certified, you're choosing a product that has been independently verified through third-party lab testing to be more efficient than

(Common energy myths continued on Page 7)

swce 2024 board of director nominees

May 2024



The 2024 Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees for the Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors. Committee members include: Matt LaCanne, Faribault; Daniel/Stacy Maas, Faribault; Dale/Lynn Groskreutz, New Richland; Denise Bartness, Owatonna; Rene/Pam Koester, Nerstrand; Bert Wiersma, Ellendale; John/Lylia Iverson, Medford; Charlie Peters, Lonsdale; and Bruce Rumpza, Blooming Prairie. Steele-Waseca members received mail-in ballots the week of April 29. They need to be received in Survey & Ballot Systems post office box by 10 a.m., Friday, May 31, in order to be counted. Results of the mail-in ballot election of directors will be announced at Steele-Waseca's 88th annual meeting, Tuesday, June 4, at the co-op's headquarters, 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna. 1084431 #swceTRUST

District 1



PJ Duchene, incumbent, and Steele-Waseca board of directors assistant secretary/treasurer, resides and operates the family farm in Wells Township, west of Faribault. He has a son, Patrick, and daughter, Sumer. PJ also works as the shop foreman with the Rice County Highway Department. As for why he wishes to continue to represent District 1 on the Steele-Waseca board of directors, PJ responded, "I feel I can be a very good voice for the member-owners of the co-op. I also enjoy learning new things." He is a Credentialed Cooperative Director. As for the qualities he brings to the board, PJ stated, "I'm young and outgoing. I enjoy being involved in my community."



Dan M. Hansen, and his wife, Kathleen, live in rural Ellendale. "I was born and raised on the farm which I still live on," stated Dan. "I know just about everyone here in Lemond Township," and feels he has "...a great relationship with all the families here." Dan worked for a natural gas meter repair facility for 45 years, working with customers all around the Midwest. He retired in 2020, farms part time and raises some beef cattle. He rents most of his crop land to a neighbor. "I am very good dealing with people," wrote Dan. "I consider myself as friendly and have common sense." Dan wishes to represent the district on the Steele-Waseca board of directors, "...to have the families in Lemond Township and other areas of Dist. 3 to continue getting the great service which they currently have."



Ralph F. Miller, and his wife, LeAnn, live in rural Owatonna. Ralph worked at the Gainey Farm, Gainey Conference Center, and Meridian Behavioral Health over his 49-year career. He was property manager for 33 of those years, and credits his experience in decision making among his qualities and abilities he could bring to the Steele-Waseca board of directors. He decided to become a board candidate after receiving a letter inquiring his interest. "I think it would be different and interesting," wrote Ralph.

District 3



Neil R. Schlaak, and his wife, Jill, live in rural New Richland. He is the interim District 3 director appointed to the board Oct. 26, 2023 by the Steele-Waseca board of directors, as they filled the seat vacated with the death of Duane Edwardson. "I was born and raised on a farm," stated Neil. "I started out in agriculture as a hog producer and in 1988 exited the hog industry and started crop farming." He has served on numerous boards including church council, school board, WFS co-op board, and presently serves on the Freeborn County co-op board and treasurer for the New Richland Township for the past 30 years. Neil has 35 years of experience with ag business services. "I have sold feed, seed, John Deere for different companies," wrote Neil, adding, "I've always have thought working for ag companies off farm has helped myself be a better board member." When asked why he wishes to represent his district on the Steele-Waseca board, Neil wrote, "I know it is very important to have a good company to continue to serve customers. It takes good management to run companys so is the leadership of a board to keep and support management."



Anton H. Seykora, and his wife, Chantelle, live in rural Ellendale. Anton grew up in Owatonna, attended college and graduated with a degree in ag production. "A small town boy that just wanted to farm," stated Anton. He currently is a corn, soybeans, and sweet corn farmer. Anton has a partnership with a local canning company hauling sweet corn. He also owns a trucking operation with a semi and trailers. "I would like to represent Steele Waseca Cooperative Electric as I am a people person," wrote Anton. "Very easy to talk to. I will bring concerns to the board. I want to make sure people feel like their voices are heard. I want to be an integral part of hearing bylaws with shared decision making." As for qualities and abilities he could bring to the board, Anton wrote, "I have experience on MN Farm Bureau Promotion & Education Committee. Served 6 yrs and for 1 yr I was on the Board of Directors as the Chairman. This gave me leadership and experience on a State & National level. I have an open mind and would love to serve as a board member on SWCE board of directors."

District 5



Rodney D. Krell, incumbent, and Steele-Waseca board of directors vice president, resides with his wife, Michelle, in Blooming Prairie Township. Rodney is a fourth generation farmer to operate the Krell family farm. Their diversified crop farm raises corn, soybeans, sweet corn, and peas. The couple has two adult children: son, Justin; and daughter, Jenna. Rodney currently is a member of the Blooming Prairie school board, Blooming Prairie Education Foundation board, Blooming Prairie FFA Alumni Association, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, and Steele County Agricultural Society. Rodney serves as Eucharistic Minister at his church. Honors include the 1996 Steele County Soil and Water Conservation Farmers of the Year, and the 2012 Steele County Farm Family of the Year.

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 [Neil Schlaak](#))

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 [Scott Carlson](#))



Steele-Waseca's 2024 Nominating Committee

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's bylaws require the board of directors 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. Steele-Waseca's 2024 Nominating Committee included the following members (front row, left to right): Lylia Iverson, Medford; Denise Bartness, Owatonna; Lynn and Dale Groskreutz, New Richland; and Matt LaCanne, Faribault. Back row (left to right): Bruce Rumpza, Blooming Prairie; John Iverson, Medford; Pam and Rene Koester, Nerstrand; Bert Wiersma, Ellendale; Stacy and Daniel Maas, Faribault; and Charlie Peters, Lonsdale. Steele-Waseca wishes to thank all of the committee members for their time and service. 1109833  #swceCOOPERATION

(Common energy myths continued from Page 5)

the standard requirements for that product. By making your choices count, saving energy is baked into your everyday life without you having to consciously change your habits.

Myth 2: It's more energy and water efficient to handwash your dishes instead of running your dishwasher.

It can feel counterintuitive to think that running an appliance is more energy-saving than washing things by hand.

However, appliances like dishwashers have been engineered to use energy and water efficiently over the years, helping you save energy, water, and time. This is also partly because it's easy to underestimate how much water is coming out of your faucet while hand-washing—and using your water heater to also heat that water uses a lot of energy.

Energy Star estimates that using a dishwasher that has earned the Energy Star label over handwashing your dishes can cut your utility bills by an average of \$210 per year.

Additionally, dishwashers that have earned the Energy Star are approximately 20% more energy efficient and 30% more water efficient than your standard dishwasher.

Myth 3: Running longer cycles on appliances like your dishwasher and clothes washer will use more energy, whereas using shorter cycles will help you save energy.

Although using a "quick cycle" means that your appliance will be running for a shorter period, quick cycles are meant to save you *time*—not energy, water, or money.

Counter to what you might expect, some of the technologies in newer appliances may require that it runs for a longer period, yet it can be significantly more efficient. A good example of this would be a heat pump dryer—which has a longer drying cycle but is around 30% more efficient than a standard clothes dryer.

Heat pump dryers dry clothes at a lower temperature, which saves energy and ends up being gentler on your clothes. Ad-

(Common energy myths continued on Page 16)



financial report for year 2023

On Oct. 10, 1936, when Steele County Cooperative and Waseca Cooperative Electric voted to consolidate, there were 860 members. By the end of 2023, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) service locations had grown to 11,902.

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 2,192 miles of line, 20 substations in service, and 900 square miles of service area.

In 1950, SWCE had 2.6 members per mile of line. Currently, SWCE has 5.4 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, 2023 AND 2022

ASSETS	2023	2022
UTILITY PLANT		
Electric Plant in Service	\$102,924,169	\$98,588,860
Construction Work in Progress	216,484	891,080
Total	103,140,653	99,479,940
Less: Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	(36,760,420)	(35,579,822)
Net Utility Plant	66,380,233	63,900,118
OTHER ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS		
Investments in Associated Organizations	25,297,855	21,325,117
Investments in Related Companies	711,192	711,223
Other Investments	3,040,355	2,646,456
Notes Receivable - Net of Current Portion	613,845	782,817
Special Funds - Deferred Revenue	3,500,000	2,500,000
Total Other Assets and Investments	33,163,247	27,965,613
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,022,607	739,506
Accounts Receivable, Net of Allowances of \$11,198 in 2023 and \$10,520 in 2022	5,354,009	4,374,649
Materials and Supplies Inventory	1,717,450	1,757,931
Interest Receivable	191,067	22,720
Current Portion of Notes Receivable	168,973	244,059
Total Current Assets	10,454,106	7,138,865
DEFERRED DEBITS	812,527	895,036
TOTAL ASSETS	\$110,810,113	\$99,899,632
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES		
EQUITIES		
Patronage Capital	\$48,813,792	\$45,580,476
Memberships	-	17,346
Other Equities	1,565,940	1,134,856
Total Equities	50,379,732	46,732,678
LONG-TERM DEBT, Less Current Maturities		
RUS Mortgage Notes	35,254,377	30,780,785
CoBank Notes Payable	6,512,525	7,818,145
Total Long-Term Debt	41,766,902	38,598,930
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	2,587,978	2,236,519
Accounts Payable	4,475,667	2,956,837
Consumer Deposits	181,070	188,000
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	1,551,650	1,342,610
Total Current Liabilities	8,796,365	6,723,966
DEFERRED CREDITS	9,867,114	7,844,058
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$110,810,113	\$99,899,632

financial report for year 2023

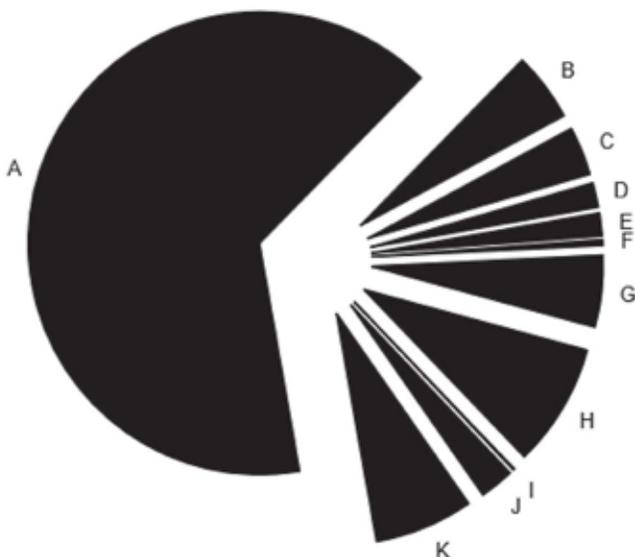
STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
OPERATING REVENUES	\$43,242,331	\$38,282,535
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Cost of Power	28,150,246	25,558,331
Distribution Expense - Operation	2,088,010	1,707,576
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	1,483,345	1,283,413
Customer Accounts Expense	719,201	676,449
Customer Service & Informational Expense	695,640	647,833
Sales Expense	171,594	170,712
Administrative and General Expense	2,148,310	2,156,178
Depreciation	3,722,750	3,570,205
Other	31,819	18,830
Total Operating Expenses	<u>39,210,915</u>	<u>35,789,527</u>
OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE FIXED CHARGES	4,031,416	2,493,008
INTEREST ON LONG-TERM DEBT	<u>1,049,727</u>	<u>874,055</u>
OPERATING MARGINS AFTER FIXED CHARGES	2,981,689	1,618,953
GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION & OTHER CAPITAL CREDITS	<u>1,776,295</u>	<u>678,556</u>
NET OPERATING MARGINS	4,757,984	2,297,509
NONOPERATING MARGINS		
Investment Income	547,841	123,251
Other Nonoperating Margins	62,102	5,434
Total Nonoperating Margins	<u>609,943</u>	<u>128,685</u>
NET MARGINS	<u>\$5,367,927</u>	<u>\$2,426,194</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 2023, the average SWCE member had power for 8,758.97 hours out of a possible 8,760 hours. That's a reliability record of 99.99 percent!

For each dollar received from consumers, 6.9 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 6.9 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 2023 CONSUMER DOLLAR PAID FOR

A.	65.1%	Purchased Power
B.	4.8%	Operations
C.	3.4%	Maintenance
D.	1.7%	Billing & Collection
E.	1.6%	Customer Information
F.	0.4%	Sales
G.	5.0%	Administrative & General
H.	8.6%	Depreciation
I.	0.1%	Other Income Deductions
J.	2.4%	Interest on Long-Term Debt
K.	6.9%	Margins

financial report for year 2023

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, 2023 AND 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net Margins	\$ 5,367,927	\$ 2,426,194
Adjustments to Reconcile Net Margins to Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities:		
Depreciation	3,894,512	3,570,205
G & T and Other Capital Credits	(1,776,295)	(678,556)
Loss on Sale/Disposal of Assets	(5,254)	(4,618)
Gain (Loss) on Equity Investments	393,898	(253,544)
Interest Income Credited to Cushion of Credit	-	(147)
Interest Expense Paid by Cushion of Credit	-	250,919
Changes in Assets and Liabilities - (Increase) Decrease in:		
Accounts Receivable	(1,147,707)	(98,971)
Materials and Supplies Inventory	40,481	(508,501)
Deferred Debits	82,509	259,366
Increase (Decrease) in:		
Accounts Payable	1,518,830	(428,283)
Deferred Credits	1,023,056	188,188
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	209,040	(11,890)
Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities	<u>9,600,997</u>	<u>4,710,362</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Construction and Acquisition of Plant	(6,369,373)	(6,105,169)
Change in Other Assets and Investments	(393,868)	253,427
Cash Received from Retirement of Patronage	803,557	626,972
Cash Paid for Investments	(3,000,000)	(7,400,000)
Payments Received on Notes Receivable	244,058	309,657
Net Cash Used by Investing Activities	<u>(8,715,626)</u>	<u>(12,315,113)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Increase (Decrease) in Memberships	(17,346)	124
Retirement of Capital Credits	(2,097,425)	(1,811,473)
Change in Customer Deposits	(6,930)	14,435
Proceeds from Issuance of Long-Term Debt	5,764,000	7,000,000
Principal Payments on Long-Term Debt	(2,244,569)	(1,554,946)
Net Cash Provided by Financing Activities	<u>1,397,730</u>	<u>3,648,140</u>
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	2,283,101	(3,956,611)
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of Year	<u>739,506</u>	<u>4,696,117</u>
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 3,022,607</u>	<u>\$ 739,506</u>
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION		
Interest Paid	<u>\$ 1,005,251</u>	<u>\$ 580,758</u>
NONCASH FINANCING ACTIVITY		
Principal Payments on Long-Term Debt Paid by Cushion of Credit	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 425,065</u>

financial report for year 2023

STATEMENTS OF PATRONAGE CAPITAL AND OTHER EQUITIES YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND 2022

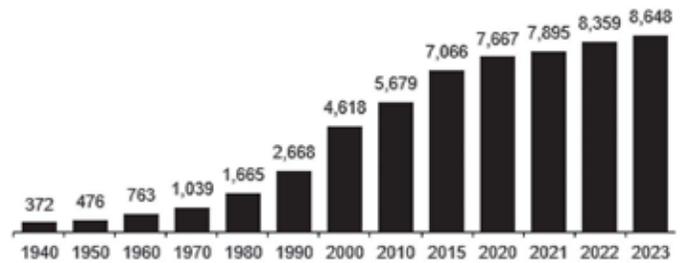
	<u>Memberships</u>	<u>Patronage Capital</u>	<u>Other Equities</u>	<u>Total</u>
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2021	\$17,222	\$45,004,028	\$1,350,127	\$46,371,377
Unassigned Current Year Margins	-	2,426,194	-	2,426,194
Net Loss on Available-for-Sale Securities	-	-	(253,544)	(253,544)
Retirement of Capital Credits	-	(1,695,346)	-	(1,695,346)
Estate Settlements	-	(154,400)	38,273	(116,127)
Membership Changes - Net	124	-	-	124
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2022	17,346	45,580,476	1,134,856	46,732,678
Unassigned Current Year Margins	-	5,367,927	-	5,367,927
Net Gain on Available-for-Sale Securities	-	-	393,901	393,901
Retirement of Capital Credits	-	(1,981,172)	-	(1,981,172)
Estate Settlements	-	(153,439)	37,183	(116,256)
Membership Changes - Net	(17,346)	-	-	(17,346)
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2023	\$ -	\$48,813,792	\$1,565,940	\$50,379,732

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

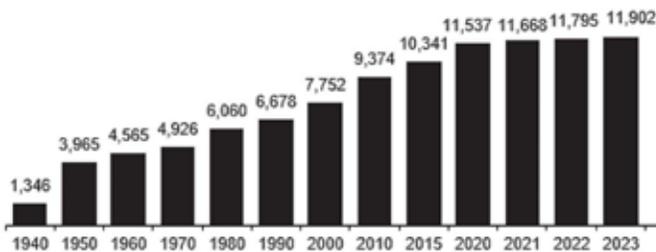
The balance sheets, statements of operations, patronage capital and other equities, and cash flows were taken from complete financial statements which were audited by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Certified Public Accountants, who expressed their unmodified opinion on those statements.

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

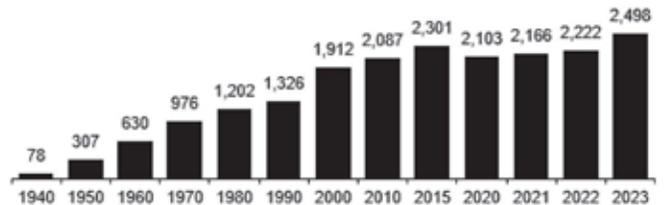
PLANT \$ INVESTMENT PER CONSUMER



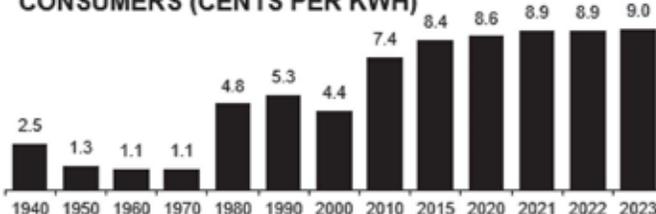
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS



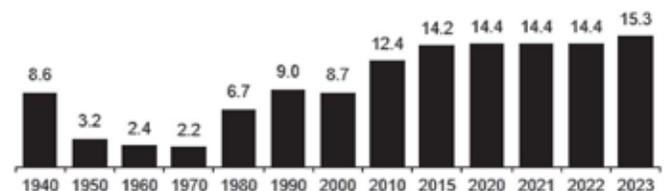
AVERAGE KWH USED PER CONSUMER (PER MONTH)



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



AVERAGE ELECTRIC RATE TO RESIDENTIAL CONSUMERS (CENTS PER KWH)



cookin' connection

BBQ Muffins

Mary Ann Michels

Faribault

- (1) 10 oz. tube Pillsbury buttermilk biscuits
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 c. ketchup
- 1 T. cider vinegar
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 T. brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder

Separate dough into 10 biscuits and flatten into 5" circles. Press into bottom and sides of greased muffin cup. In skillet, brown ground beef. In a bowl mix ketchup, brown sugar, vinegar, and chili powder until smooth. Add to meat and mix well. Divide meat—1/4 c. top each muffin cup and top with cheese. Bake 375° for 18 to 20 minutes. Cool 5 minutes before serving; 10-serving size.

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 35 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during April 2024. 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.

May issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Robert Starman
Do Ann Hromadko

Numbers not found:

James Mrachek
Jeremy/Jackie Drager
Brian Ziesmer



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 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 58° F, while the average low was 37° F. This resulted in 515.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and 0 Cooling Degrees (CDDs) for April. They compare to last year's average high of 55° F and average low of 35° F, which resulted in 620 HDDs and 20.5 CDDs.

- **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2024, 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 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

Richter to represent Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric in Washington, D.C., for the 2024 Youth Tour

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric will be represented at the 2024 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., by Langston Richter (adjacent photo), a sophomore at Bethlehem Academy.



Langston is the son of Sherry Richter of Faribault. He submitted a video application for this year's Youth Tour, which was a change implemented by Steele-Waseca to encourage more creativity in the application process. His video will be presented during the cop's annual meeting Tuesday, June 4.

Langston stated the Youth Tour is, "...a fantastic opportunity to learn more about cooperatives and dive deeper into one of my greatest passions which would be government."

Bethlehem Academy Social Studies Teacher Christian Bjornson stated in his letter of recommendation, "Langston has continuously impressed me with his curiosity, intellect, character, and determination to succeed."

Last spring, Langston's National History Day project was chosen to advance to state competition at the University of Minnesota, where he received an honorable mention.

Langston has challenged himself this school year in studying for the Ad-

vanced Placement test in U.S. History.

Bjornson noted Langston is "heavily involved" in the Northfield chapter of Youth in Government and Model United Nations. "He has sought to grow membership in the program by delivering presentations to my classes and others at BA, encouraging his fellow students to take active leadership roles while having fun and meeting new people in the process," wrote Bjornson.

Northfield Area Family YMCA Youth in Government Delegation Director Brent Horwart wrote, "Langston stands out among 80+ students in the Northfield Delegation because of his tendency toward servant leadership. Langston works hard not for himself, but for the benefit of his peers, and to uplift the rest of the delegation around him."

Horwart also noted Langston's empathy. "Langston does his best to put himself in others' shoes. He works hard to remove obstacles that might make it harder for others to participate. He sincerely cares about enhancing the experience of his peers in any context, whether they be in our local delegation or strangers at a statewide conference."

Langston has participated in the Cannon River Watershed Cleanup effort, and as a teen advisory board member for the Buckham Memorial Library in Faribault.

School activities include six years in band, two years in the pep band, Knowledge Bowl, and FFA. In addition, he has



been involved with 4-H.

Langston is a bird enthusiast as he has identified and documented over 350 species of birds.

Steele-Waseca will be recognizing Langston at this year's annual meeting. He will be among 34 students and six chaperones representing Minnesota's delegation, June 18-23.

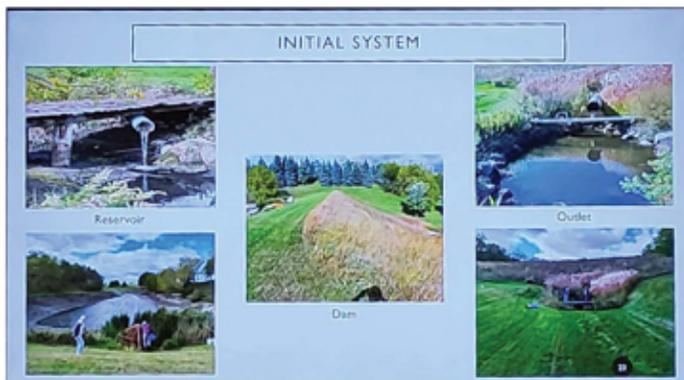
Editor's Note: SWCE sponsors two high school sophomores or juniors, whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are members, for the all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. It's an opportunity to learn about cooperatives, our government, tour historical sites, and have fun meeting new friends from Minnesota and across the nation.

#swceLIFE+



Hydro power generation project

Minnesota State University-Mankato mechanical engineering students (seated left) presented their findings to Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric personnel, April 12, on the design of a hydro power generation system at Steele-Waseca Member Ron Maas' residence in rural Faribault. Maas sought technical assistance from Steele-Waseca in attempting the renewable generation. Steele-Waseca applied with MSU-Mankato to see if such a project would be possible and/or feasible. The students determined the payback on the investment would not make the project feasible. "I thoroughly appreciate your input from your side of the fence," said Maas. The students expressed appreciation for the applicable experience outside of the classroom. Steele-Waseca was honored to have the opportunity to work with these outstanding students at MSU-Mankato.



#swceINNOVATION

ad connection

give away

TWIN LONG BED FRAME & HEADBOARD, new mattress (only used 2 months). 413-2659.

FULL-LENGTH CAR RAMPS; ANTIQUE WHEEL LIFT 10' DIGGER & 8' DISC; LARGE DOG INSULATED DOGHOUSE. 461-0241.

QUEEN-SIZE WATERBED FRAME HEADBOARD w/lights & mirror, (2) cubby holes, (6) drawers each side. 649-1686.

CYBEX FITRON STATIONARY BIKE, exc. cond. 952-843-3245.

DOWNED & DEAD TREES, you cut up & clean up. 451-7837.

LADIES ROLLER SKATES; PULL GOLF CART. 451-2687.

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

USED/WASTE OIL, 200-gal. min. 420-7429/Quentin.

INDIAN HEAD COINS, call w/offer to buyer, \$ paid on the spot. 676-0970.

TO TRADE NEW HUSQVARNA 46" LOWER GRASS CHUTE FOR A NEW 48" LOWER GRASS CHUTE. 612-594-0916.

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

JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES, top \$ paid for trucks, cars, motorcycles, & SUVs. 332-2300.

THOSE SEEKING ASSISTANCE IN THEIR HOME, retired P.T.A. will assist w/personal cares, exercises, light housekeeping, meal prep, errands, 30-years experience. 456-0076.

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

for sale

6 X 12 CHAIN LINK DOG KENNEL, \$75. 334-8827.

E-Z TRAIL GRAV. BOX w/dry fertilizer auger; **GEHL 1865 RD BALER; IH 4000 SWATHER.** 684-3136.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

'04 SUNDOWNER HORSE TRAILER LQ, exc. cond., (2) owners, always stored inside, 3-horse slant, rear folding tack, shower, toilet, heat, AC, newer tires w/ low mi., new brakes, \$19,000. 612-756-4534/Lynda.

55-GAL. PLASTIC & STEEL BARRELS w/covers, \$5-\$15; **220-GAL. POLY TANK** w/valve in forklift frame, \$75. 421-2521.

INT DIGGER, 14' w/extensions, \$700; **14' INT DISC**, \$800; **JD 316 PULL-TYPE PLOW**, \$650; **13' SPRING-TOOTH**, no wheels, \$350; **3-POINT BLADE**, \$350. 210-1006.

BARNYARD CHICKS, will lay colored eggs. 475-1468.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

WEBER TRAVELER GRILL, used very little; **RE-ESE 18K 5TH WHEEL HITCH** for Ford F-350 factory pucks. 213-6582.

BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT. 475-2322.

14' HAY WAGON painted red & white, wooden sides on each end, shedded when not used. 330-1154.

SHINGLING; LIGHT CONSTRUCTION; TREE REMOVAL (free estimates). 456-0296.

1994 JAYCO EAGLE SERIES 265BH TRAVEL TRAILER, 26', bunk beds, stored inside, no mice, gd cond., \$5000. 612-282-5794/rural New Richland.

A-C TRACTORS, C, B, CA MOWERS; ZERO-TURN EXMARK; FLATBEDS, new/used; **JD 4-BTM PLOW, DISC, 3-PT MOWER.** 402-7679.

B-BALL HOOP/STAND, \$35. 684-3081/Ellendale.

USED ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS FOR CARS, TRUCKS, & SUVs, all have 30-day warranties. 332-2300.

LIVESTOCK GATES: (1) 50" height, 120" length, steel frame, 7 rail, \$100; (1) 50" height, 45" wide, steel, 7 rail, \$65. 612-247-5346.

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

LATHAM RASPBERRY PLANTS, you dig them, \$1.50/each; **MARY WASHINGTON ASPARAGUS ROOTS**, \$1/each. 581-2301.

1988 16' SYLVAN FISH & SKI BOAT w/90-hp Evinrude, canvas cover, live well. 301-1194.

MS1102 FRONTIER MANURE SPREADER, ground driven, 25 c. ft galvanized steel, new tires, gd working cond. 676-6600.

(2) 6' CHURCH BENCHES, \$10; **BEIGE/BLUE PLAID ROCKER-RECLINER LOVE SEAT**, \$25; **BLUE RECLINER COUCH**, \$25. 528-7400.

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

NEW 550-GAL. FUEL TANK, complete pump, filter system, hose, automatic nozzle, \$2985. 383-1215.

NAPA BUMPER HITCH, fits F-250, 10,000-lb. pull, never used. 363-6266.

DUMP TRUCK AVAIL. for your hauling needs, 15.5-ton capacity, rock, dirt, gravel, etc. 456-7774.

18K SLIDER 5TH WHL HITCH, \$800; **DODGE PKUP PUCKS**, best offer; **DODGE VENTED TAIL-GATE**, \$200; **PRONTO M51 SURESTEP ELEC. WHEELCHAIR**, needs batt., best offer. 210-6084.

1990 HARLEY-DAVIDSON HERITAGE SOFTAIL MOTORCYCLE. 456-5466.

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

1994 28' ROCKWOOD w/bump out, \$4500; **1972 20' FORRESTER**, \$2500 (both are clean, no leaks). 330-5670.

(20) PLAS. DUCK DECOYS w/weights, \$50; **SM. STEEL ENCL. TRLR**, \$100. 461-0241.

HEWITT BOAT LIFT, \$1000. 612-590-0632.

(48) 4X8 GLASS WINDOW BLOCKS. 676-5239.

55-GAL. METAL BARRELS for burning, \$8; **1975 GMC**, 454 motor, auto, runs gd, 87,000 actual mi., \$3000/obo. 676-6094.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 15)

travel

NIAGARA FALLS, June 17-23. Deluxe motor coach, 6 nights accommodations, 9 meals, Niagara on the Lake, Maid of the Mist, Greg Ferwin Magic Show, & more! \$2,199 pp w/2 per room.

ALASKA TOUR & CRUISE, July 15-27. Delta round-trip flights, 5 nights on land, Denali Nat'l Park, 7-day cruise on the ROYAL Princess, 3 ports of call, & more! Starting at \$6,599 pp w/2 per room.

NASHVILLE GET-AWAY, July 20-25. Deluxe motor coach, Country Music HOF, cruise on the General Jackson Showboat, reserved seats at the Grand Ole Opry, & more! \$1,799 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.



Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **June 5** 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 5th 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.

ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 14)

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

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

TRLR FOR FISH HOUSE, 6'3"x9'10" floor measurement, rims but no tires, \$300/obo. 390-0493.

PRIDE JAZZY EVO 613 ELEC. WHEELCHAIR, blk, used only a few times, indoors only, \$2200. 583-6679.

TORO RIDING LAWN MOWER, 44" deck; **1995 SKI-DOO FORMULA 3**; **1996 ARCTIC CAT Z440** (\$500 each). 676-5283.

(2) MOBILITY SCOOTERS, newer batteries, \$395/each; **TV CABINET**, will fit 24x32 TV, w/doors & 2 drawers, \$15. 465-8194/Rick.

STEEL FENCE POSTS; TIRES, 4-255-70R-17". 213-7978.

SMALL BOARDS & SHINGLES from old outhouse, best offer. 528-2383 or 210-3750.

(2) SMIDLEY 6-, 8-, & 10-HOLE SINGLE SIDE FEEDERS. 338-8896.

4# 1-GAL. JUGS OF (HVY DUTY DIESEL ENGINE OIL BOTH) SHELL ROTELLA T4 (SAE 10W-30 BOTH); 2# 1-GAL. VALVOLINE BLUE SYNTHETIC BLEND, \$10/gal. 491-4565.

VINTAGE NATIONAL CASH REGISTER, Model 126(8)X, for repair or parts, will text picture or call for info. 213-6427.

ADULT PEDAL TRICYCLE, 3 spd, red, hand brake, large seat, rear basket. 363-6601.

HUNTING BLINDS, weather/rodent proof, insulated & more. 330-2452.

AIR COMPRESSOR on wheels. 451-2687.

'52 CHEVY CAR, 4 door, new tires, runs, vry little rust, retrofitted w/powerglide trans. & the orig. manual trans. is avail., orig. engine also avail., always stored inside, interior is nice, best offer. 456-9546/text.

MF 235 LOADER, all hyd., incl. 4-way valve, built-in reservoir, 4 hyd. cylinders, gd cond., \$275; **8' PICK-UP BOX TRAILER**, 1969 Chev. box, hvy duty, \$395; **PET CARRIERS**, sm. & large, \$35/ea. 455-3881.

VERMEER ROUND BALER, 5'-6" bales, \$8500; **NI 279 CUTDIONER**, new knives, \$1800. 456-1181.

Ads need to be received in the SWCE office by Wednesday, June 5, to ensure being published in the July 2024 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.

YOUR SOURCE FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HEATING AND COOLING.

ENERGY WISE  MN

Take advantage of our additional **\$100** promotional rebate when you install a qualifying, energy-saving ductless air source heat pump!

Ductless ASHP System Size	Efficiency Rating Requirements	Regular Rebate	Promo Rebate
≤ 1 ton	≥14.3 SEER2 & ≥7.5 HSPF2	\$100.00	\$200.00
≤ 1 ton	≥15.2 SEER2 & ≥8.1 HSPF2	\$200.00	\$300.00

An air-source heat pump (ASHP) uses electricity to heat and cool. It works like an air conditioner to cool, and works in reverse to move warmth from outside air into your home to heat. It heats a home up to three times more efficiently than forced-air and electric-resistance heating systems.

Learn more at:

energywisemn.com/air-heat-pumps

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and promotional dates vary by cooperative. Contact your cooperative to confirm system requirements and rebate amounts.

 #swceLIFE+



member connection



Niagara Conservation outdoor water-saving products are 30% off

energywisemnstore.com/save30%

Niagara Conservation rain gauges, hose nozzles and hose timers use less water without affecting your stream or pressure. It's a true win-win you'll notice in your utility bills. And now, for a limited time, you can get these outdoor water-saving products for 30% off!



ENERGY WISE MN



Offer valid
May 1 through June 30, 2024

No coupon code necessary.
Discount applied at checkout.
Customer assumes responsibility
for all sales tax. While supplies last.

(Common energy myths continued from Page 7)

ditionally, heat pump clothes dryers do not need to vent outside, so there is more freedom where laundry can be located in the home—meaning fewer constraints when constructing or remodeling.

Myth 4: If you want to save money on your heating and cooling costs, the best thing to do is set your thermostat and then leave it alone.

It's no wonder Dad is so protective of the thermostat. Your home's heating and cooling costs account for nearly half of your annual energy use—which, for the average American household, is approximately \$900 per year.

While Dad's quest to guard temperatures is indeed noble, it may not necessarily be the most efficient—or comfortable—experience for your household. The most efficient way to manage your heating and cooling is by using a smart thermostat, which can learn your temperature preferences and automatically adjust for comfort or energy efficiency without you having to manually monitor and adjust things.

While your thermostat, in and of itself, does not use much energy, it's a key factor in saving energy at home as it controls your heating and cooling systems which are the biggest energy users.

Simply upgrading your thermostat to an Energy Star certified *smart* thermostat is a relatively inexpensive project that can reduce your heating and cool-

ing bill by about \$50-\$100 a year on average. And for residences that you're not consistently occupying (rental or vacation home) those savings jump to about \$300 a year.

Myth 5: Your energy bill is only impacted by the products that plug into your power source and use electricity.

When thinking of ways to reduce energy waste in your home, your home envelope may not even be something that comes to mind. However, while these elements are not “connected”, they're a critical part of home efficiency and can greatly influence the performance and efficiency of other elements of your home.

It is estimated that 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated—and unlike when your air conditioning or water heater have issues, where you know immediately if you have a problem, inadequate sealing and insulation is something that easily flies under the radar.

By sealing air leaks around your home and making sure you have adequate attic insulation, you can cut your total home energy use by 10-11% and reduce your heating and cooling costs by about 15%. These energy savings can be even greater for colder climates.

For more tips from Energy Star on how to save energy at home, browse their full collection of *Ask the Expert* articles (<https://www.energystar.gov/products/ask-the-experts>).

#swceLIFE+

annual meeting

• Plan to arrive at **88 Years** Steele-Waseca Cooperative *Lighting The Way* Electric (SWCE) early enough (doors open at 9 a.m., Tuesday, June 4) 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.

• **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. 28338

• **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