



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric November 2024

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric had a number of members report they had mailed their payments for the balances due Sept. 12, but were not credited for their payment. The mailed payments were not received by Steele-Waseca, so those payments were not processed. As challenges continue for the Postal Service, please consider calling in your payment, dropping it off at the co-op's office in Owatonna, or consider signing up for auto pay through a checking or savings account, or with a debit or credit card. Auto pay forms are available at swce.coop.

inside connections

- 2** Manager Connection
- 3** SWCE conducts Town Hall meetings in Owatonna
- 4** Cookin' Connection; SWCE community solar update; Steele County Tip Line; Who found their SWCE account number in last month's Sparks?
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- 6** Ad Connection; 4-Seasons Vacations
- 7** Ad Connection; SWCE house for sale; Reminder to turn your clocks back with end of daylight saving time; SWCE conducting sealed bid auction for dump truck; SWCE sends four line technicians to South Carolina
- 8** Roetman details NRECA International experience

calendar of events

November

- 3** Daylight saving time ends
- 5** Election Day
- 11** Veterans Day
- 28-29** Thanksgiving holidays
SWCE office is closed

Roetman reflects on power restoration experience in Jamaica

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Field Technician Gabe Roetman was among a team of nine volunteer lineworkers from eight co-ops across the United States who traveled to Jamaica in August to help restore power to residents impacted by Hurricane Beryl in July.

Roetman explained his interest in participating in the power restoration effort, "The last time I did an international project in 2016 in Haiti I enjoyed the experience, so I really wanted to do it again."

The Category 4 storm—one of the most powerful to ever hit the country—swept along the island's southern coast bringing more than 12 hours of heavy rain, leaving thousands of people without power, and heavy flooding in farm areas. The Jamaica Public Service (JPS) reached out for assistance and when NRECA International turned to the co-op network for help, the response was quick.

"Ingrid Hunsicker from NRECA International sent a mass email to people with previous experience with the international program looking for volunteers. I received the email August 6 and I was actually the last spot available that filled," wrote Gabe. 27885

"We have a very active network of



A pole top view of the damage sustained in southern Jamaica, July 4, as a result of Hurricane Beryl.

volunteers and many lineworkers were ready to pack their bags right away," said Hunsicker, NRECA International's senior program manager who oversees the robust volunteer program.

"Some of the buildings had roofs missing and a lot of trees were tipped over," said Gabe upon their arrival in Jamaica. "The area we worked in St. Elizabeth

(Roetman in Jamaica continued on Page 8)

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric announce 2025 Nominating Committee appointments

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors have approved appointments to the 2025 Nominating Committee.

It is the nominating committee's responsibility to prepare the list of director candidates, and post it at the cooperative's office at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting scheduled Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

Director election results will be announced during the business portion of the annual meeting, held at Steele-Waseca's headquarters, located

(Nominating Committee continued on Page 3)

District 2

Matt LaCanne	412-7143
Daniel/Stacy Maas	210-3738
Casey/Natalie Roeker	380-8443

District 4

Ralph/Leann Miller	451-3249
Rene/Pam Koester	645-8914
Bert Wiersma	684-9665

District 6

Bruce Rumpza	583-2091
Charlie Peters	744-2118
Douglas Starks	451-8844



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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



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Board of Directors

PJ Duchene, *Vice President* . . . District 1
 Geraldine Lienke District 2
 Neil Schlaak District 3
 Dennis Ringhofer District 4
 Rodney Krell, *President* District 5
 Gary Wilson, *GRE Director* . . . District 6
 John Beal District 7
 Ronald Sommers District 8
Secretary/Treasurer
 Scott Carlson District 9
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

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

I was pleased to see the hundreds of members who attended our four town hall meetings over a two-week span in early September and late September/early October at Torey's Restaurant & Bar in Owatonna.

Among the topics addressed was regarding reliability. Even though the reliability shared involved the co-op's tree trimming program, I wish to share the reliability being addressed by our wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy (GRE). 108672

Utilities and electric cooperatives are incrementally moving away from fossil fuels toward more renewable energy. At the same time, power providers are in the midst of transforming the electric grid in the Midwest region to assure electricity can be reliably transported from where it is produced to where it is needed.

The utilities and cooperatives who own high voltage transmission lines in the Upper Midwest region are currently developing approximately \$10 billion worth of transmission line projects to bolster the electric grid and ensure continued reliability into the future. This first set of projects approved in July 2022 by the region's grid operator, MISO, was essentially low-hanging fruit. These were "no regrets" projects needed for reliability as our power supply evolves.

A second set of projects—this time worth \$21-27 billion—is expected to be approved by MISO by the end of 2024. This portfolio, which is not final, but is in its "near-final" stages, currently consists of several 345-kilovolt (kV) and 765-kV transmission lines in Minnesota, essentially creating a new 765-kV backbone for the MISO region to support the evolution of the system. The 765-kV lines would work in conjunction with the other power lines to move power from generators across the Midwest to be used in each of our local communities.

Depending on how much attention you pay to power lines, you may realize that a 765-kV transmission line would be something new for Minnesota. GRE believes the timing is right for this as

there are important benefits to 765-kV transmission. This is tried and true technology that is used in other parts of the country and the world. Great River Energy has been working closely with MISO through their planning process to advocate for the transmission projects that are in the best interest of its member-owner cooperatives.

The Minnesota electric grid has reached a point where there is so much change required that a different approach is needed to maintain the reliability of the grid in a manner which is most affordable and least impactful. Much like the situation in the 1960s when the federal highway system was first developed, Minnesota needs a new transmission superhighway for power to flow through Minnesota and the broader Midwest region.

One of the most important benefits of a 765-kV transmission is the efficiency of land use, which is critical to cooperative members who host so much electric infrastructure on their property. Just one 765-kV transmission line can take the place of six single-circuit 345-kV transmission lines, which means there would be much less land and public impact to move the same necessary amounts of power.

Although there could still be changes to the "near-final" portfolio before it is approved at the end of the year, GRE isn't expecting many more changes. All projects in the portfolio will require regulatory permits and will go through a rigorous routing and siting process where public input will be deeply valued. Depending on what is finalized, Great River Energy may be involved in one or more of these projects.

Like the initial stretches of the federal highway system, the likely 765-kV transmission is a big step for Minnesota, but one which sets up the state's grid for generations to come. Creating this superhighway will ensure Minnesotans have continued access to affordable, reliable, and carbon-free generation.

#swceSERVICE

member connection

Members updated on co-op activities during four town hall meetings in Owatonna

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members had the opportunity to be updated regarding the co-op's activities during four town hall meetings conducted in September and early October at Torey's Restaurant & Bar in Owatonna.

In total, approximately 480 members and guests were in attendance for the meetings conducted Sept. 10, 12, 30, and Oct. 2. The emcee was General Manager Syd Briggs. Among the topics covered were changes at the co-op, tree trimming to maintain power reliability, rebates, the co-op's association with Carr's Tree Service, and capital credits.

Briggs highlighted the changes to the districts in Steele-Waseca's service territory made with the intent of adding more balance to the number of members in each district.

He reflected on the bylaw changes approved by the attending membership at the 2023 annual meeting, and how it allowed mail-in voting for 2024 with the intent of continuing the same system for balloting in 2025.

Operations Division Manager Dan Meier detailed the co-op's tree trimming practices and how it has impacted power reliability.

He explained Steele-Waseca has a nine-year rotation with the nine districts in the service territory, which consists of 2,200 miles of line. Meier said the co-op has reduced outages from trees by 50%



Steele-Waseca General Manager Syd Briggs explained the redistricting approved by the board of directors to those in attendance for the Sept. 30 town hall meeting.

in the last nine years. The 2024 budget for tree trimming is \$675,000.


GIS/Staking Supervisor Jeff Daley highlighted the recommended distance of planting trees near power lines and poles. He also detailed the importance of clearance near padmount transformers in maintaining accessibility for line technicians and keeping those transformers from overheating due to the proximity of flowers, shrubs, etc.

Information was shared regarding residential rebates with emphasis on heat pumps, and the availability of commercial, industrial, and agriculture energy

rebates.

Briggs explained Steele-Waseca's ownership stake in Carr's Tree Service, which the co-op utilizes for tree trimming services. The co-op's board of directors approved a 5.6% ownership of Carr's in 2016. Briggs explained the return of the investment has yielded 7% each year, and those dividends are allocated to Steele-Waseca members.

An update on capital credits was presented by Briggs, and he encouraged members to look for their retired capital credit equity this year on their statements coming out in December.

Each town hall meeting provided an opportunity for members to ask questions before concluding by 8 p.m. 

 #swceAPPRECIATION



Steele-Waseca Operations Division Manager Dan Meier detailed tree trimming practices at the co-op during the Sept. 10 town hall meeting.

(Nominating Committee continued from Page 1)

at 2411 West Bridge Street in Owatonna. The election of directors will be conducted by mail-in ballot similar to what was utilized last year. Once again, there will no voting for directors at the annual meeting.

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

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

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

nominated.

The Nominating Committee will conduct two in-person meetings. The first is scheduled Monday, Nov. 25. The second meeting is scheduled Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025. The committee would appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping them select director candidates.

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


The Steele-Waseca board of directors during their meeting Thursday, June 27, approved the adjustment of the district boundaries of the director districts to provide generally equivalent representation to all members in accordance with the bylaws of Steele-Waseca.


The districts with directors up for election in 2025 include the following:

• **District 2:** Dunbar and Lura Townships in Faribault County; and Maple-

ton, Danville, and Medo Townships in Blue Earth County; and Freeborn, Hartland, and Bath Townships in Freeborn County; and Alton, St. Mary, Freedom, Wilton, Otisco, Vivian, and Byron Townships in Waseca County; and Lemond Township in Steele County. (Represented by Geraldine Lienke)

• **District 4:** Deerfield, Owatonna, Meriden, Aurora, and Somerset Townships in Steele County. (Represented by Dennis Ringhofer)

• **District 6:** Medford, Clinton Falls, Merton, and Havana Townships in Steele County. (Represented by Gary Wilson) 

 #swceTRUST

cookin' connection

Orange Jello Salad

Sandi Jones

Faribault

- 6 oz. pkg orange Jell-O gelatin
- 20 oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 small cans mandarin oranges
- 1 large container small curd cottage cheese
- 2 containers Cool Whip whipped topping

Mix pineapple and Jell-O together in large bowl. Add cottage cheese and stir by hand. Then stir in thawed Cool Whip and gently fold in mandarin oranges. May chill in fridge to set or eat right away.

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

October issue of Sparks



- Numbers found:**
Eric/Kristine Ekstrand
- Numbers not found:**
Bradley Twedt
Kathleen Julian
Loranna Aguirre
Andrew Nickel



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. 71460
- **Need a new water heater?** For information about our Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone Cindy Butterfield at our office between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 446-4204 / 800-526-3514.

• **September temps** – The average high temperature for September was 78° F, while the average low was 54° F. This resulted in 65 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 100.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 77° F and average low of 56° F. This resulted in 70 HDDs and 124.5 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 www.swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514.

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

507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514

STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE

866-878-7964

TO BE USED TO REPORT ANY CRIME OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY ANONYMOUSLY

COVERS ALL OF STEELE COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITIES OF:

OWATONNA ELLENDALE BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD

Make Time for Safety

AVOID HAZARDS WITH OVERHEAD POWER LINES

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

SAFE ELECTRICITY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING HARVEST SAFETY TIPS:

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

Learn more at:

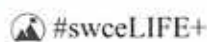


#swceLIFE+



Fire extinguisher safety

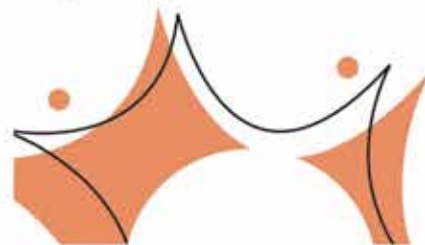
Owatonna Fire Department personnel were at Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Monday, Sept. 23, to instruct employees and board members on the proper usage of fire extinguishers. Steele-Waseca Finance Division Manager Jon Stelter (pictured left) utilized the fire extinguisher to put out a fire prepared by the firefighters, as did Operations Assistant Cindy Butterfield (adjacent right photo).



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually.

Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles.



ad connection

give away

PAIR OF ADULT HOUSE CATS, litter mates about 6-yrs-old, 1 female, 1 male, both butterscotch colored, spayed or neutered. 583-7974 or jondoe52@hotmail.com.

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.

PULL-BEHIND LAWN ROLLER. 456-1617/text.

JUNKERS & REPAIRABLES, top \$ paid for used cars, trucks, SUVs, some farm equip. 332-2300.

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

FARMLAND TO RENT, small-time farmer, no field too small. 676-5685/Shawn.

SPIKE-TOOTH DRAG, 2-4 sections w/tow bar or just the sections. 213-8925/John.

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

RECIPES for the **Sparks**, only from members who have not submitted a recipe in 2024; please use a 3x5 card; the member who has their recipe published earns a \$7 energy credit on their SWCE statement.

for sale

NARROW MOUTH QUART-SIZED CANNING JARS; SLIGHTLY USED CHARCOAL GRILL w/3 bags of charcoal, best offer on both. 456-1617/text.

'23 **POLARIS RANGER 1000 PREMIUM** w/heater, signals, mirrors, doors, & rear panel, 2400 mi.; '16 **YETTI EXTREME FISH HOUSE**, 2 furnaces, insulated whl wells, 2 TVs, new brakes, \$23,000. 456-4458.

BOAT WINTERIZING, SHRINK WRAP, & STORAGE, Owat. 456-2652.

BURR OAK FIREPLACE WOOD, all split, fill your trunk for \$100; **LARGE GARFIELD COLLECTION**. 451-5172.

2018 **STIHL MS 291 CHAINSAW, EXTRA BAR, & CHAIN**, like new, used less than 4 hours, \$450. 837-9986.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

JD 4-BTM PLOW; 14' DISC; FLATBEDS; A-C TRACTORS C, B, CA; SMOKER; TRACTOR TIRES; WHEELS; TOPPERS; ALUM. PALLETS. 402-7679.

HOSPITAL BED, fully electric, exc. cond., used only a few months, \$300. 995-4074/leave message.

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

POLYPAY EWE LAMBS FOR BREEDING STOCK, 5- to 6-months old. 612-396-2223.

16' SQ. BALE ELEV. w/elec. motor, \$100; **BALDOR 2-HP ELEC. MOTOR**, 230V reversible, cord & pulley, \$175; **MARATHON 1.5 ELEC. MOTOR**, 115/230V reversible cord & pulley, \$150. 465-8566.

STIHL MM56 TILLER, used once, \$450. 327-9965.

BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT. 475-2322.

(2) **40' X 80' POLE SHEDS AVAIL. FOR STORAGE**. 213-8842.

USED MOTORS & TRANS. for cars, trucks, used auto prts, 30-day warranty on eng. & trans. 332-2300.

1974 **JD 4430 TRACTOR** w/cab, heat, air & duals, clean & stored inside. 838-8855.

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

OWAT. HOSPITAL BAZAAR, Fri., Nov. 1, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Sat., Nov. 2, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., at St. John Luth. Church, 1301 Lincoln Ave., Owat. 451-6563.

NORTHSTAR WOOD SPLITTER, 20 ton, 6.5 Briggs & Stratton, horizontal & vertical setting, exc. cond., \$650/firm. 456-2634.

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

2022 **RAM TRADESMAN**, 3/4 ton, 4x4, long box w/9.2 Boss V-pow, 1760 mi., like new, \$55,000/obo. 323-4420.

WHITE 588 SEMI-MOUNTED PLOW, 4 btm, 20"; **MAYRATH GRAIN AUGER**, PTO, 8"x61" w/hydraulic lift; **BALZER STALK CHOPPER** w/windrower, 6 row, 30"; **INT 470 DISC** w/wings. 475-1392.

FORD 801 SELECT-O-SPEED TRACTOR, gas, gd body project? Offers negotiable. 456-0766/Mdfd.

MURRAY 2-STAGE SNOWBLOWER, 27" wide, \$150; **KOLPIN UTV SWITCHBLADE SNOWPLOW**, 1-yr-old, \$450. 612-309-4995.

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

INT 45 FIELD CULTIVATOR w/wings; **GRAVITY WAGON** w/fertilizer auger; **ROUND BALE FEEDER** w/skirt; **GRAVITY WAGON** w/E-Z Trail running gear. 676-8040.

1980 **14' ALUMACRAFT BOAT**, (2) Evinrude Sportwin motors (1 runs, 1 for parts), tank, 2 seats w/floor, \$900; **CHICKEN BROODER**, 4x4, works, \$75. 676-2802.

2004 **ROCKWOOD**, 28', \$5000; **1977 FORESTER**, 20', \$1800; **STARCRAFT**, 8'x12', \$1100. 330-5670.

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

45" ROUND CLAWFOOT ANTIQUE DINING TABLE, (8) 10' leaves w/storage rack, gd cond., \$299. 330-0326.

ARMSTRONG TRACTOR TIRE, 18.4R42, gd usable cond. 612-703-4660.

VINTAGE WOOD DOORS; 26" MEN'S ALUM. CANNONDALE BIKE; WOOD PALLET BENCHES; DINING ROOM HUTCH, 66x48x15. 330-0729.

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

MOBILE HOME FOR RENT, neat & clean, well maintained, 3 bdrm, 2 ba, on a wooded acreage (hunter's paradise!), adjacent to owners 40-acre CRP parcel, \$1200/mth. 273-8400/Mike.

HVY DUTY ALUM. RAMP, 4' wide by 10' long, \$350. 491-4565.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

HOLIDAY BRANSON, Nov. 13-17. Deluxe motor coach, 8 meals, 7 shows incl. Texas Tenors Christmas, Matt Gumm & Co. Comedy Show, & Doug Gabriel Christmas Show. \$1,199 pp w/2 per room.

PANAMA CANAL CRUISE, Jan. 9-23, 2025. Delta flights from Mpls, 12-day cruise on the Emerald Princess, Panama Canal new locks, 6 ports of call incl. Aruba & Cartagena. \$4,199 pp w/2 per room.

SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE, Feb. 6-18, 2025. Roundtrip Delta airfare from Mpls to Ft. Lauderdale, 10-day cruise on the Enchanted Princess, 6 ports of call, & more! \$4,399 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.



TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE. LOVE YOUR VACATION.

Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **November 5** to ensure being printed in the December **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 January 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 6)

18' DIGGER w/cylinder, gd teeth, \$275. 456-7614.

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

STEEL GRAIN BIN, 24x16 in gd shape, make an offer. 456-9409.

FRONT-MOUNTED SNOWBLOWER for JD 710 lawn mower, has chains, bracket for weights, \$350. 744-2709.

TREK BIKE, 16x175, training wheels, \$40; **TREK BIKE**, boy's, 20x175, \$40; **TREK 6-SPD BIKE**, girl's, 20x175, \$40. 330-3178.

LOT, 150' behind French Lk, 1/3 acre, cabin fixer upper, 2 sheds, elec., water, & septic on site, great view of lake, no lake access; **1980 MERCURY COUGAR**, gd shape. 479-0576.

4-PLACE FEATHERLITE SNOWMOBILE TRAILER, tandem axle, new tires/floor/paint; **2022 YANMAR SIDE-BY-SIDE**, dump box, windshield, turn signals. 363-6601.

CABELA'S VACUUM SEALER, like new, used vry little, \$65; **1969 PICKUP BOX TRAILER**, 8' box, hvy duty, \$395; **MF 235 LOADER**, all hyd., incl., 4-way valve, 4 cylinders, \$275. 455-3881.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

JOTUL #3 FREE-STANDING WOOD-BURNING STOVE, brown enamel, gd cond. 451-2019/lv. msg.

Ads need to be received in the Steele-Waseca office by Tuesday, Nov. 5, to ensure being published in the December 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.

Steele-Waseca among electric co-ops sending lineworkers to aid power restoration after Hurricane Helene

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is among 18 Minnesota electric co-ops sending lineworkers to help restore power after Hurricane Helene caused outages to more than 1.25 million co-op members in the southeastern U.S.


Steele-Waseca sent four line technicians and two trucks Wednesday, Oct. 2, to Laurens, South Carolina to assist Laurens Electric Cooperative. 1072313

Minnesota crews will be working to

restore power for three electric cooperatives. The others include Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and Broad River Electric Cooperative. These lineworkers joined others from at least 18 states who converged on the storm-ravaged region to rebuild systems after the massive devastation.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association began coordinating efforts with the South Carolina statewide association on

Oct. 2, and by 6 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 3, trucks and crews were rolling toward South Carolina.

Representing Steele-Waseca are Line Foreman Kevin Kjersten, Assistant Foreman Adam Davis, Assistant Foreman Jake Jablonski, and Line Technician Carlos Cruz. 

 #swceCOOPERATION



House for sale to be moved

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric has a house for sale that needs to be moved. The house is located at 1748 69th St. NW, Medford, MN. If interested, please call 507-446-4224.

 #swceGROWTH



SWCE dump truck for sale

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric (SWCE) is conducting a sealed bid auction (minimum bid \$20,000) for their 2008 Freightliner M2, 6.7 Cummins, 6-speed manual dump truck with a 14' Crysteel contractor's box. The box was installed new in 2013 (each side pictured adjacent right) with 209,200 miles. Sealed bids must be received at Steele-Waseca's office, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, by noon Thursday, Nov. 21. If you would like to see the truck, please call the SWCE office at 507-451-7340 to schedule an appointment with Matt. If you have questions, please call SWCE at the number above and ask for Matt. The person with the winning bid will be notified by phone at the end of the day Friday, Nov. 22.



 #swceLIFE+

member connection

(Roetman in Jamaica continued from Page 1)

Parish is known as the breadbasket of Jamaica. A lot of agriculture in that parish. It was not like the agriculture we have around here. Very few mechanized farms. Very little row crop farming. Most of the farming is hand labor and a few farm animals from what I saw. Sugar cane was probably the biggest farms I saw, and the cane was raised for Appleton Estates rum. Some of the work we did was in more of a in town urban area.”

The team worked hand in hand with employees from JPS. A day after they arrived, they all traveled to St. Elizabeth Parish, located about 3.5 hours from Kingston. Communities in this region suffered great loss, and needed help to restore power, and their livelihoods. The challenges were obvious from the time they arrived.

“Most of the work we did was rehang- ing wire after the new poles were set,” stated Gabe. “Most of the work was done off climbing gear. The typical workday started around 8 and we were back at the villas between 7 and 8 most days. The temperature was typically 90 to 95 de- grees and very humid. It would typically rain for about 30 minutes in the middle of the afternoon most days, but aside from cloud cover for the brief rain shower— sunny.”

When asked to characterize the people in the area, Gabe responded, “The Jamaican people in the area we worked were very nice. Some of them would give us gifts of watermelon and coconuts. We were a little worried going in because JPS had wrote an article on their website condemning acts of violence towards JPS



Steele-Waseca's Gabe Roetman (middle) collaborated with fellow team members in Jamaica hanging wire after new poles were set.

workers, but we never encountered that.”

Even though the people in their area were very nice, Gabe explained communicating with them was the most challenging part of his experience, “They speak English, but it is very different than American English and difficult to understand. Staying cool and hydrated was a little challenging, but nobody developed any hydration issues.”

With the intent to restore power, Gabe said the most rewarding part of the experience was turning people’s power on. “They were out of power for close to six weeks,” stated Gabe. “They would come out of their house with thumbs up and say ‘thank you’.”

Gabe explained his group returned to the U.S., close to a week earlier than projected, as they returned Saturday, Aug. 31.

With the team traveling from across

the country, and many met for the first time at the Atlanta airport. That did not get in the way of working seamlessly as a strong team, and by the time they landed in Kingston, the bond was evident.

“The other volunteers were great people,” said Gabe. “Very hard working and great to get along with. We all had the same mindset of working hard and getting as many people on as quickly as possible, so we all meshed well with a common goal.”

“We are fortunate to represent a community almost 900 electric cooperatives who have a culture of supporting one another during times of crisis,” said NRECA International Senior Vice President Dan Waddle. “And this culture has extended to provide assistance to neighbors in need beyond U.S. national boundaries.”

“I would volunteer again if an opportunity came up,” stated Gabe. “Both of my trips with the international program have been driven because of hurricanes in places with existing power. I would like to be involved in a project of building a power grid in a place that has never had electricity.” 1092944

“NRECA International is a great experience, and I hope other people volunteer at SWCE to partake in future projects,” wrote Gabe. “I’m very glad and thankful that SWCE board members and managers supported my efforts in this project. It means a lot to feeling valued as an employee here.” *swce*

(Supplemental information courtesy Zuraidah Hoffman, NRECA International)

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Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Field Technician Gabe Roetman (back row, third from left) joined other electric co-op lineworkers for a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International power restoration project in Jamaica during August. Pictured in the adjacent right photo is a plaque recognizing the team’s volunteer efforts in Jamaica.

