




the power of human connections

# sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from **Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric** **December 2024**

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## calendar of events

### December

- 7** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 21** First day of winter
- 25** Christmas Day  
**SWCE office is closed**



## New record established with retirement of capital credit equity approved by SWCE board of directors

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors, during their Oct. 24 meeting, approved the co-op's latest record-breaking retirement of \$2.303 million in capital credit equity allocated in 2001, 2002, 2023 and estimated estate settlements for 2024. The previous record was \$2.135 million retired in 2023.

All current and former member-owners who received electric service from Steele-Waseca during the years listed above are eligible for the refund if electric sales exceeded power costs.

For convenience and to save on check processing and mailing costs, current member-owners eligible for this year's refund will have the amount of their equity applied as a credit on their Steele-Waseca bill received next month (December 2024).

All former member-owners eligible for a refund will have their equity mailed to them by check.

Capital credit equity comes from the cooperative's margins or profits. The co-op's margin each year is determined by subtracting operating expenses from operating revenue collected during the year. 1090324

Your equity is reserved for you, even


### Did You Know?


Electric cooperatives have retired \$21 billion to members since 1988 - \$1.3 billion in 2022 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



if you move away from the area. That's why it is important for you to make sure Steele-Waseca always has your current address and phone number.

Until it's refunded to members, the equity is used to finance new construction and system improvements. Using members' equity helps Steele-Waseca provide electric service at a lower cost than if all construction funds were borrowed from other resources. 

 #swceTRUST

## Steele-Waseca board of directors learn of co-op's line crew assistance in South Carolina and Florida

The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric board of directors during their regular meeting Thursday, Oct. 24, learned of the co-op's four line crew member's experience in restoring power to hurricane-ravaged areas in South Carolina and Florida.

Steele-Waseca had four line technicians and two trucks leave Wednesday evening, Oct. 2, for Laurens, South Carolina to assist Laurens Electric Cooperative. Representing Steele-Waseca was



Steele-Waseca Line Technician Carlos Cruz works on hanging new wire to a pole as part of the effort to restore power in South Carolina following Hurricane Helene.

*(Line crew assistance continued on Page 8)*



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 2411 W Bridge Street, PO Box 485  
 Owatonna MN 55060-0485

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Website: [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop)

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



### Board of Directors

- PJ Duchene, *Vice President* . . . District 1  
 Geraldine Lienke . . . . . District 2  
 Neil Schlaak . . . . . District 3  
 Dennis Ringhofer . . . . . District 4  
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 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 hope you took notice of the front page of this month's *Sparks* newsletter. The Steele-Waseca Coop-

erative Electric board of directors approved the retirement of \$2.303 million in capital credit equity allocated in 2001, 2002, 2023 and estimated estate settlements for 2024.

Our average retirement, or refund, over the past five years has been \$1.762 million which makes this year's refund \$541,000 more than the average.

The seventh cooperative principle is Concern for Community. Steele-Waseca carefully makes contributions each year to community organizations like United Way and food shelves, along with scholarships to a number of our graduating high school seniors. We have been diligent in maintaining a healthy equity ratio in recent years and were able to increase the refund for this year. We will also maintain our great history of retiring equity in future years.

Every year Steele-Waseca receives questions from our member-owners regarding capital credit equity. For those who are new to a cooperative, or not familiar with how capital credit equity works, keep in mind that when you signed up to receive electric service from Steele-Waseca, you became a member of an electric co-op. 1110985

With investor-owned utilities returning a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an at-cost basis. This means Steele-Waseca allocates 100 percent of its margins or profits (revenue less expenses) to its members who purchased electricity during the year, and retires or pays back those margins at a future date to those very members.

Instead of returning the margins to people or companies who had little or nothing to do with the generation of those profits, or who probably don't even live in the same region or state that you do, Steele-Waseca returns margins to those who actually purchase and use our product. Steele-Waseca allocates and retires capital credits based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

**Where does the money come from?** Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate funds to pay operating costs, make payments on any loans, and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, the co-op subtracts operating expenses from operating revenue

collected during the year. The balance is called an operating "margin."

**Can we get our retirement of capital credits sooner?** The board of directors has the responsibility of balancing the amount of equity with the cost of debt, and therefore, the amount of capital credit retirements each year. The higher the equity we maintain, the lower the debt, and the less we have retired in capital credits. However, the cost of our debt is one of the major components in our rates. Most co-ops attempt to maintain an equity-to-asset ratio between 30% and 50%; Steele-Waseca is at 48%. Our overall objective is to reward both past and current ratepayers with a balanced approach of retiring past and current capital credits each year, and maintaining the most manageable level of debt possible.

At Steele-Waseca, the board of directors make a decision in the fall of each year to retire capital credits. The co-op has retired over \$26 million in capital credits to its members since 1966.

**I did not have electric service from Steele-Waseca during 2001, 2002, or 2023. Will I get any retirement?** No. This year capital credit retirements are only being made to members who purchased electricity from Steele-Waseca in 2001, 2002, and/or 2023.

**How will the retirement of capital credit equity work?** Inactive or former members, who no longer purchase electricity from Steele-Waseca (but purchased electricity during the years being retired) will receive a check. Due to the expense involved with processing and mailing printed checks, current members eligible to receive capital credit equity will have that amount credited to their Steele-Waseca account on their bill coming in December 2024.

**What if I moved?** If you move or no longer have electric service with Steele-Waseca, it is important you inform the cooperative of your current address, so future retirements may be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity from Steele-Waseca during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a capital credit retirement, even if you move out of Steele-Waseca's service area. If Steele-Waseca has your current address, then the co-op will send your retirement check by mail.

If you have additional questions regarding your equity, please feel free to contact Steele-Waseca during regular business hours.

 #swceTRUST



# Options for paying your Steele-Waseca electric bill

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric encloses an envelope in their monthly statements for members to mail in their payment so it is received at the co-op's office by the due date.

However, if you wait until the due date to pay, the postal service won't be able to deliver it on time. Listed below are options for you to consider if you wish to pay your bill on time and avoid a late charge:

- **Sign up for auto pay.** Steele-Waseca has an option for members to pay from a checking or savings account (see form below), or a debit or credit card. The auto pay option for checking or savings accounts is processed by the Steele-Waseca office on the 5th of the month, unless the 5th falls on a holiday or weekend, then it is processed on the next business day. 19446

For auto pay from a debit or credit card, Steele-Waseca accepts Visa, Mastercard, or Discover. Payments are processed on the due date listed on your statement. If the due date comes during a holiday or weekend, payments are processed on the next business day. The co-op does not assess additional charges for payments with a debit or credit card.

Regardless of which auto pay option you choose, Steele-Waseca has a form for you to complete as written authorization is required for the co-op to access your account for payment. The co-op will mail or email the requested auto pay form, or you may download it from Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), and mail or email the completed form to the co-op's office.

- **Call the Steele-Waseca office to make your payment.** Member service

### Please locate your account

*Required response\**

Account Number:  
  
Account Number must be a minimum of 3 alpha-numeric characters

First Name:

Last Name:

-- OR --

Account Number:  
  
Account Number must be a minimum of 3 alpha-numeric characters

Business Name:

SEARCH

Welcome

Fill out the form on the left and click Search.

**What can you do here?**

- Pay by checking/ savings/ credit card
- Opt out of paper bills
- Print receipts

**Need help?**

If you can't find your account, please contact Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, MN (Utility) at 507-451-7340 to ask them to provide your account information.

If you are experiencing difficulty with the system, please contact Payment Service Network Customer Support at 866-917-7368.

representatives at the co-op's office are available weekdays by phone from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., to process payments from a checking account, or debit or credit card. For after-hours payments, representatives with the Cooperative Response Center will be able to process your payments by phone.

- **Visit [swce.coop](http://swce.coop) to pay online.** Members may follow the directions on Steele-Waseca's website to register their account, or may use the bill payment option found on the website's home page (see image above right).

- **Utilize your financial institution's bill pay service.** Keep in mind that while your bank may take out the

money from your account as soon as you authorize it, it doesn't electronically get transferred to Steele-Waseca. Often it goes to a processing center where a check is prepared, then mailed to Steele-Waseca. You are encouraged to submit your bill pay seven to 10 days before the due date. If you go with this option, please use the co-op's mailing address of P.O. Box 485, Owatonna, MN as Steele-Waseca doesn't have a mailbox at its street address of 2411 W. Bridge St., in Owatonna.

- **Utilize the co-op's drop box near the main entrance to Steele-Waseca.** The drop box is adjacent to the flagpole and is checked twice daily.

- **Stop in the co-op's office to drop off your payment.** Steele-Waseca's office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We enjoy receiving payments in person from our members. If you arrive too early or late, put your payment in the drop box.

If you have questions, or need additional information regarding bill payment options, please call Steele-Waseca during regular business hours. [swce.coop](http://swce.coop)

**EnergyPay Plus Automatic Payment Plan**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SWCE Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print as it appears on SWCE statement) (use a separate form for each account)

Home Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell Phone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Name and phone # of Financial Institution \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Institution Routing Number \_\_\_\_\_  
\*\*\* (attach voided check) \*\*\* (Between symbols : ; on the bottom of your check)

Financial Institution ( checking \_\_\_ or savings \_\_\_ ) Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric and the financial institution named above to initiate entries to my checking or savings account on the 5th day of each month (if the 5th is on a weekend or a holiday, the transfer will be made the next business day). This authority will remain in effect until I notify Steele-Waseca in writing. Cancellation must be made in such time as to afford the financial institution reasonable opportunity to act on it. I may stop payment of any entry by notifying my financial institution six (6) days before my account is charged.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric**

2411 W Bridge St  
 PO Box 485  
 Owatonna MN  
 55060-0485

(507) 451-7340  
 (800) 526-3514

[info@swce.coop](mailto:info@swce.coop)  
[www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop)



## cookin' connection

### Quick & Easy Bars

Cindy Jensen

Ellendale

- 1/2 c. butter, melt
- 1 pkg white cake mix (without pudding) (classic)
- 2 c. miniature marshmallows
- 6 oz. chocolate chips
- 2 c. Rice Krispies® cereal
- 14 oz. sweetened condensed milk
- 1 c. nuts

Melt butter, add to cake mix, put in 17x11 pan. Add the following in order: marshmallows, chocolate chips, nuts, Rice Krispies, drizzle condensed milk on top. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes.

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 43 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during October 2024. Learn more about community solar and The Sunna Project by visiting Steele-Waseca's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop). #swceINNOVATION

### Was your account number in Sparks?

Each month five account numbers are printed in Sparks and a total of \$35 in energy credits is divided among however many of those numbers are found. For example, if all numbers are found, a credit of \$7 will be applied to the members' following month's electric bills; or, if only one number is found, that member receives the full \$35 credit. Members finding their numbers who have a load management receiver on their dual fuel, electric water heater, air conditioner, or genset will receive an additional \$7 credit. When you find your number, phone our office no later than the 7th of the month following receipt of the Sparks, or the amount will be forfeited.

## November issue of Sparks



- Numbers found:**  
Mary Frazier  
Marty/Karla Prins
- Numbers not found:**  
Ernest/Helen Kraudy  
Laurie Brandt  
Andrew/Melissa Valentyn



## Sparks in brief . . .

- **Want easy energy payments?** Sign up for **EnergyPay Plus**, our automatic payment plan, or **Energy Prepay**, our discounted advance payment plan. Contact our office for details. You may also pay your bill online at [www.swce.coop](http://www.swce.coop). By entering your Steele-Waseca username and password you can also view a 13-month history of your account.
- **If you have changed or added phone numbers**, please contact SWCE to update your contact information. 30189

• **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.

• **October temps** – The average high temperature for October was 68° F, while the average low was 42° F. This resulted in 333 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 17.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 59° F and average low of 40° F. This resulted in 495.5 HDDs and 36.5 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](http://www.swce.coop). For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 446-4204 or 800-526-3514.

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

**507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514**

**STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE**

**866-878-7964**

TO BE USED TO REPORT ANY CRIME OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY ANONYMOUSLY

COVERS ALL OF STEELE COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITIES OF:

**OWATONNA ELLENDALE BLOOMING PRAIRIE MEDFORD**



## health & safety connection

# Prevent holiday fires by practicing safety around your home

Keep your family safe and your holiday season merry with these fire safety tips.

### *Cooking safety in the kitchen*

The kitchen is often the heart of holiday celebrations, but it can also be a hot spot for fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for nearly 20% of holiday-related incidents. Here's how to stay safe:

- **Never leave burners or the oven unattended.** Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies.

- **Ensure children stay away from the kitchen,** where hot appliances and sharp utensils can pose risks.

- **Install smoke detectors** at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances and test them monthly to ensure they're working.

### *Be aware of holiday fire risks*

The combination of candles, fireplaces, and flammable decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

### *Candle safety*

- Only burn candles where you can

keep an eye on them.

- **Extinguish candles before going to bed,** leaving the room or leaving the house.

- **Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles,** placing them out of reach of children and pets.

- **Keep candles away from flammable items** like trees, decorations, curtains, and furniture.

- **Opt for battery-operated candles** near flammable objects.

### *Christmas tree fire prevention*

A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.

- **Choose a fresh tree.** Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a sticky trunk bottom.

- **Keep the tree away from heat sources** such as fireplaces, space heaters, and vents.

- **Check the water level daily** to prevent the tree from drying out.

- **Place the tree away from high-traffic areas** and doorways.

- **If using an artificial tree,** ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.

- **When discarding a real tree,** place

it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

### *Holiday lighting safety*

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key:

- **Purchase lights from reputable retailers** and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.

- **Only use lights designed for outdoor use** when hanging outside.

- **Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)** for outdoor lights.

- **Avoid water and snow** when using extension cords and outdoor lights.

- **Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines** while hanging lights.

- **Check for broken sockets and frayed wires** before use.

- **Avoid plugging too many devices** into a single outlet.

- **Turn off indoor and outdoor decorations** when going to bed or leaving the house.

### *Fireplace safety tips*

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- **Decorate wisely.** Avoid hanging flammable decorations like stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.

- **Perform annual maintenance.** Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.

- **Use a screen.** Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.

- **Burn responsibly.** Never burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.


By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.



## Deck the Halls SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use.**
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs).**

For more holiday safety tips visit:

 Safe Electricity.org



## ad connection

### give away

**INDOOR KITTENS**, very cuddly, 1st shots given. 977-7027.

**WOODEN SPOOLS** at SWCE. 451-7340/Todd.

**MANX BOBTAIL KITTEN**, born Sept. 5, calico, mostly blk, litter-box trained. 583-2173.

**15-GAL. FISH TANK**, includes stand, heater, filters, food chemicals, & numerous guppies. 634-7988.

**PAIR OF ADULT HOUSE CATS**, litter mates about 6-yrs-old, 1 female, 1 male, would prefer to keep them together, both butterscotch colored, spayed or neutered. 358-5109 or [jondoe52@hotmail.com](mailto:jondoe52@hotmail.com).

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

### wanted

**BALE FORK** for large square bales. 413-2560.

**PASTURE TO RENT FOR 2025**, enough for 6 cows. 649-0420.

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

**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.

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

**IH 55 CHISEL PLOW; HORSE-DRAWN BOBSLED FOR PARTS**. 581-0470.

### for sale

**55-GAL. STEEL DRUMS; ALUMINUM FUEL TANKS; BALE SPEAR; KID'S ELEC. 4-WHEELER**. 380-4291.

**GOLF BAG**, new w/clubs, \$150; **WADERS**, like new cond., 9.5 or 10, \$35; **KNEE BOOTS**, \$10. 210-2074.

**JD 5205**, 2WD w/521 loader, blade, & double-auger snowblower, 3-point quick hitch, always shedded. 461-0241.

## All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

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

**1979 MF 2705**, clean, new cab kit, \$9500; **A-C WD**, 3 point, \$1750; **A-C WD45**, overhauled 5 hrs ago, 3 point, \$2450. 456-1181.

**DANUSER PYTHON BARBED-WIRE WINDER** on hyd., 3-point hitch. 330-5135.

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

**JD 4-BTM PLOW; 14' DISC; FLATBEDS; A-C TRACTORS C, B, CA; SMOKER; TRACTOR TIRES; WHEELS; 8' TOPPERS; ALUM. PALLETS**. 402-7679.

**MIXED HARDWOODS FIREWOOD**, \$350/cord, Nfld area. 651-357-5092/Paul.

**SUPER B AS8 GRAIN DRYER**, 150-bu. batch, single phase, LP, stored in shed, \$2750. 649-0420.

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

**USED MOTORS & TRANSMISSIONS** for cars, trucks, used auto parts, 30-day warranty on engines & trans. 332-2300.

**A-C WD45 TRACTOR**, wide front, gd shape, gd rubber, new 3 point, \$2500. 213-1277.

**2001 FORD F-150 PLOW TRUCK**, \$1500; **A-C 180 GAS TRACTOR**, \$1500; **ARCTIC CAT Z120**, \$2000. 390-1082.

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

**BALDWIN LOW RISE PIANO**, gd cond.; **BUESCHER ALTO SAXOPHONE**, gd cond.; **LARGE CHINA HUTCH**, 2 pieces. 553-3816.

**SCOOTA TRAILER**, used for hauling elec. wheelchair, enclosed, \$1000. 612-242-1289.

**SEASONED SPLIT HARDWOOD**, you pick up, \$300/full cord. 581-0867.

**50' BALER CONVEYOR**, new chain, nice shape, \$1200; **TREK 7300**, 24 spd, 700x35, men's, F.S. Fork, \$150; **TREK NAVIGATOR 100**, women's, 21 spd, 26x175, nice, \$100. 330-3178.

**AUSTRALIAN SHEP. PUPS**, purebred, registered, vaccinated, dewormed, farm family raised, parents on site, ready to go 11/29/24, exc. dogs. 456-3419.

**RED WING BOOTS**, men's; **SEED FOR DECORATION; RED WAGON**. 451-2687.

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

**2011 SUBARU OUTBACK 2.5L PREMIUM**, green, 105,949 mi., 4WD/AWD, auto, super clean, gd cond., needs head gasket, \$3000. 612-207-4390/Fbo.

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

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

**GRASS HAY**, small sq. bales by Waldorf. 327-3672.

**LP WHITE HEATER**. 676-5239.

**(2) LIVE LARGE BLK WALNUT TREES TO BE CUT DOWN & REMOVED**, best offer. 612-716-7587.

**TROJAN TANK HEATR**, LP gas, best offr. 462-3698.

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

**GLASSWARE HUTCH**, older style w/2 glass sliding doors, 2 drawers & 4 doors. 213-0443.

**ALUM. WALKER**, like new, \$15; **(4) OAK CHAIRS**, \$50. 744-2709.

**BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT**. 475-2322.

**CARLISLE UTV TIRES** from 2012 Arctic Cat Wildcat, set of 4, 75% tread, 9x26/12 (front), 11x26/12 (rear), \$175. 202-4844.

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

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

### travel

**SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE**, Feb. 6-18, 2025. Round trip 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.

**CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATRE**, Feb. 12, 2025. Fun-filled musical, "Grease." Meet in Albert Lea, depart at 8:45 a.m., price includes performance, lunch, dessert and transportation. \$139 pp.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, April 25-29, '25. Round trip Delta flights, 4 nights accommodations, 9 meals, guided Memorial & Monuments tours, Arlington Nat'l Cemetery & more! \$1,799 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 **December 5** to ensure being printed in the January 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 February issue.

For Sale  Wanted  Give Away

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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



## ad connection

(For Sale ads continued from Page 6)

(3) PATIO HEATERS; VANITY BATHROOM SINK; OLD TIN. 334-7756 or 581-3901.

2002 POLARIS SNOWMOBILE, 550 fan-cooled twin, 2442 mi., looks like new, been a few yrs since used, ran great, might need carbs cleaned, \$2500. 676-2802.

(4) LIFEMASTER SKID LOADER TIRES, 12x16.5, about 1/2 tread, 10 ply, \$400/obo. 323-4362.

FIREWOOD, cut & split, \$99/pickup load; 1970 SKIDOO, \$99/obo. 210-5353.

'99 DODGE 1500, needs trans., \$2200; '95 DODGE 2500, HD Fisher blade for it, \$2500; NH 479 HAYBINE, \$600; NH 479-488 HAYB. PARTS; JD 3116 PLOW, \$100; HYD. CYLINDERS, \$75/ea. 783-9240.

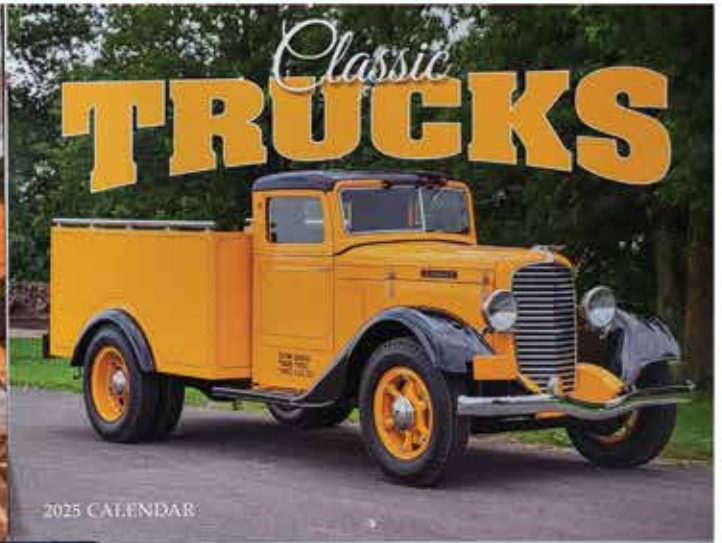
2012 FORD FUSION CAR, AWD, 92,000 mi., some rust, \$5000/firm. 332-2516.

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

MF ALL-HYD. LOADER, 4-way hyd. valve, built-in reservoir, hoses, mounts incl., vry gd cond., \$375; PICKUP BOX, 8', HD, late 1960s, gd cond., \$375. 455-3881.

ST. JOHN LUTH. CHURCH COOKIE WALK, Sat., Dec. 14, 9 a.m. to noon, 1301 Lincoln Ave., Owat., hundreds of cookies & Christmas goodies, complimentary coffee & hot cocoa, most items \$6/dozen.

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 Cooperative Electric**  
2411 West Bridge Street, PO Box 485, Owatonna, MN 55066  
507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514 • www.swce.coop

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**FREE 2025 Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric calendars are available at the co-op's office, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, while supplies last. You may pick them up during regular business hours. #swceAPPRECIATION**

## Non-Discrimination Statement

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is the recipient of Rural Development funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## member connection

(Line crew assistance continued from Page 1)

Line Foreman Kevin Kjersten, Assistant Foreman Adam Davis, Assistant Foreman Jake Jablonski, and Line Technician Carlos Cruz.

Steele-Waseca's crew was among 18 Minnesota electric co-ops that sent lineworkers to help restore power after Hurricane Helene caused outages for more than 1.25 million co-op members in the southeastern U.S.

Kevin remarked among their biggest challenges was finding hotel rooms in South Carolina. He noted the area had endured 24 hours of rain before the winds created the damage causing the power outages.

Kevin detailed their first day involved a safety orientation and working with a coordinator "Bird Dog," assigned to their crew. He noted how communications wiring for cable TV and telephones were also part of the power poles. The "Bird Dog" and SWCE's crew had different terminology regarding equipment and made fun of the Minnesotan vocabulary, but Kevin remarked how the area residents were "super nice;" and "Really happy to see us."



Assistant Foreman Jake Jablonski needed to utilize a boat to transport line to a power pole in South Carolina.



Steele-Waseca's line technicians who assisted power recovery efforts following Hurricanes Helene and Milton are pictured during their last day in South Carolina, Oct. 10, with their "Bird Dog" John Earl Thomas (second from right). Steele-Waseca's line crew included (left to right): Line Technician Carlos Cruz, Assistant Foreman Jake Jablonski, Assistant Foreman Adam Davis, and Line Foreman Kevin Kjersten.

Jake reported how they had to utilize a boat from a neighboring residence to bring a power line across water. Adam noted the roads in South Carolina didn't have ditches, which made navigating the roads "very interesting."

After a week, the Steele-Waseca line crew left South Carolina at 3 p.m., and were in Dade City, Florida by 1 a.m. to assist Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative following Hurricane Milton. FEMA had set up a camp for assisting line crews, Jake remarked of how there was free water, Gatorade, and laundry service.

Kevin detailed the work that was completed in restoring power in that area of Florida. The co-op they assisted had 150 employed line technicians.


Jake noted their array of equipment, including boats, allowed their line technicians to respond to any number of situations.

"Every day we were in water," said Adam.

"Every day it was rising," said Kevin. He noted how they had to go back to restored locations and disconnect the power due to the rising water going into houses. 1056093

The crew headed back to Minnesota Oct. 15, and appreciated the opportunity to assist. "I'd go every year if I could," said Kevin, noting the people's appreciation of their efforts, even though workdays were often from 6 a.m. to past 9 p.m.

Steele-Waseca board members expressed their appreciation for the line crew's willingness to serve, citing the cooperative principle, Cooperation among Cooperatives, and the potential need of their crews to help Steele-Waseca if a situation takes place. <sup>SWCE</sup>

 #swceCOOPERATION



SWCE's line crew captured a photo of the damage in Florida following Hurricane Milton.