



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

April 2025

Starting with your SWCE statement received in March, Steele-Waseca is having the return address on your payment envelope come to the co-op's P.O. Box 485 in Owatonna. Please don't send any payments to the dropbox in St. Paul, as that service is being discontinued.

inside connections

- 2** Manager Connection
- 3** National Lineworker Appreciation Day;
SWCE seeking assistance finding former members
- 4** Cookin' Connection;
SWCE community solar update;
Stray voltage questions;
Members who found their account number in the March 2025 *Sparks* newsletter
- 5** Safe Digging Month;
Energy efficiency with laundry
- 6** Ad Connection;
4-Seasons Vacations
- 7** Ad Connection;
Effort to end nuclear moratorium
- 8** GRE partners with transmission line construction plans;
Finding qualified energy auditors

calendar of events

April

- 10** Minn. Tornado Drill Day
- 14** NRECA Nat'l Lineworker Appreciation Day
- 15** Income tax filing deadline
- 18** Good Friday 30544
SWCE office is closed
- 20** Easter
- 22** Earth Day
- 23** Administrative Professionals Day
- 25** Minnesota Arbor Day
- 30** Vietnam War ended in 1975

Steele-Waseca board candidates for 2025 announced by co-op's Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee for Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric have announced their selection of candidates for the board seats up for election in Districts 2, 4, and 6, as election results will be announced at this year's annual meeting scheduled Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at the co-op's headquarters, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna.

The committee first met Nov. 25, 2024, at Steele-Waseca's headquarters.

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

Lancaster highlighted areas of the board of director position description with the committee. She also addressed potential questions a candidate may have, highlighting the time commitment it takes to be a board director.

General Manager Syd Briggs reviewed the selection process with the committee. He explained the nominating committee policy and the rotation plan for the committee which works on a rotation system always keeping six experienced members on the committee, and adding three new members each year.

A list of members in each district was handed out and reviewed. It was suggested that committee members from each district meet together to search for candidates and review the information given to them.

Nominations for committee chairperson for the January meeting were opened, and Charlie Peters was nominated by Daniel Maas. After the nomination was seconded, Briggs declared Peters nominating committee chairperson. After no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The Nominating Committee conducted their second meeting, Jan. 22, at Steele-Waseca's headquarters.

Board President Rodney Krell called the

meeting to order and appointed Executive Assistant Jenifer Shimpach as recording secretary.

Lancaster reviewed the director duties, standard of conduct policy, and qualifications for eligibility for service on the board of directors policy.

Briggs reviewed the director position description, highlighting director responsibilities, board-manager relations, board-cooperative member relations, and board-community relations.

The names of the following candidates were announced. They will appear on the mail-in ballot sent during the week of April 27 to members, and mailed back by members so they are received at the return mailing address by 10 a.m., Friday, May 30:

• **District 2:** Lianne M. Possin, New Richland; and Anton H. Seykora, Ellendale.

• **District 4:** Dennis C. Ringhofer (incumbent), Owatonna.

• **District 6:** Alex Ebenhoh, Claremont; Michael T. Herman, Owatonna; and Weston L. Wilson, Owatonna.

A profile of each candidate will appear in the May 2025 *Sparks* newsletter. Additional candidates may be listed on the ballot if they obtain the signatures of 200 Steele-Waseca members and submit it within 50 days (April 14) of the annual meeting.

This year's Nominating Committee consisted of the following Steele-Waseca members: District 2—Matt LaCanne, Faribault; Daniel/Stacy Maas, Faribault; and Casey/Natalie Roeker, New Richland; District 4—Ralph/Leann Miller, Owatonna; Rene/Pam Koester, Nerstrand; and Bert Wiersma, Ellendale; District 6—Douglas Starks, Owatonna; Charlie Peters, Lonsdale; and Bruce Rumpza, Blooming Prairie.

#swceTRUST

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: www.swce.coop
Email: info@swce.coop



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



Even though the calendar says it's spring, anyone with time spent in Min-

nesota knows snow and ice storms can still create havoc into the month of May.

Nevertheless, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Homeland Security and Emergency Management will be educating residents regarding Severe Weather Awareness Week, April 7-11, with a Tornado Drill Day scheduled Thursday, April 10.

As general manager, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance to electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

When your power does go out, it may just be at your home or a small section of a neighborhood. We have great technology in place which, most of the time, notifies us where and when an outage exists. Many times our members call to report an outage and we are proud to inform them we are already on the way. However, there is always a chance we may not know about it and it is always good to report just in case. We also utilize your observations before the power went out, whether it was a loud boom, noticed lightning in your area, a fallen tree on the power line, or simply the power went out without warning.

When your power goes out, Steele-Waseca employees work together to have our line technicians get power restored as quickly and safely as possible. Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment may need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, what materials will be needed, and a plan to fix the problem(s) which may compromise electric service to others so our line technicians can safely get power restored.

Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get power restored to in the shortest amount of time. Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals, then we

complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.

Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving vehicles. (If you ever drive past one of our trucks, please do so slowly.)

Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.

We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life-support purposes, you must have a back-up plan—remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know your Steele-Waseca team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by calling Steele-Waseca, or use the co-op's website or app to report, but please don't use Facebook to report it as it won't get into our outage management system.

In this *Sparks* issue, we are recognizing our line technicians. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) is recognizing lineworkers on the second Monday in April, which this year is April 14. 1020275

Our line technicians are committed to going out in all sorts of weather conditions, day or night, and restore power when conditions or circumstances interrupt power for our members.

Lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of our service area. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

#swceSERVICE

lineworker appreciation connection



National Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 14

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has recognized the second Monday in April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day since 2015. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric is recognizing our lineworkers for their dedication in serving the co-op and its member-owners. The line crew with their Steele-Waseca experience includes (front row, left to right): Line Foreman Troy Pederson, June 1999; Line Technician Collin Wencil, May 2020; Line Foreman Kevin Kjersten, October 2012; and Assistant Foreman Adam Davis, July 2013. Back row (left to right): Assistant Foreman Jake Jablonski, September 2013; Line Technician Tanen Holzem, July 2019; Assistant Foreman Marshal Madery, September 2016; Line Foreman Pete Hines, October 2012; Line Technician John Olson, June 2023; Line Technician Carlos Cruz, September 2016; and Apprentice Line Technician Riley Grunwald, October 2024. 1108067

#swceSERVICE

Assistance sought in locating former Steele-Waseca members

Capital credit checks for the following former Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members have been returned to the co-op due to their mailing address no longer being valid.

If you know any of the following former members and can provide information about them, please call Customer Service Representative Hlou Yang at the Steele-Waseca office weekdays between 8 a.m., and 4 p.m.

Anderson, Donald E.	Northfield
Barr, David J./Nicole	Northfield
Baumgarten, Jason L.	Warsaw
Chandler, Emily	White, GA
David, Robert E.	Orr
Di Dio, Gary M./Michelle R.	White Lake, MI
Finch, Gregg C./Donna L.	Madison Lk
Forsman, Teddi Jo	Medford
Gilbertson, Darrin W.	Morristown
Grabinger, Daniel J.	Kenyon
Klassen, Klenn C.	Burnsville
Krauth, Myron S.	Medford

Krauth, Stacey L.	Faribault
Kuster, David L.	Hayfield
McWilliams, John	New Prague
Miller, Stacey D./Sharon Y.	Richfield
Oldenkamp, Kelly R.	Crosby, TX
Osnes, Russell N.	Eagan
Phelps, Kent D.	Owatonna
Piepho, Keith/Catherine	Owatonna
Plante, Connie A.	Faribault
Prouty, Thomas/Kristine	Lonsdale
Quay, Thomas/Susan	Tavares, FL
Cox Quirk, Kathleen	Minneapolis
Rafdal-Vaupel, Roxane E.	Owatonna
Reinke, Jeremy/Sara	Ellendale
Remmey, Jayne	Faribault
Sack, Donald F./Susan M.	Madison Lk
Sammon, Jerry/Mary	Apple Valley
Schweich, Loraine M.	Montgomery
Sinning, John E. III/Susan N.	Nfld
Shimek, Chris	Prior Lake
Sjoberg, Bradley	St. Paul
Smythe, Christine A.	Manly, IA
Stark, Keith D.	Owatonna
Steinle, Jay E./Kathy	Faribault
Stremcha, Jeffrey J./Leanne	Duluth

Swanson, Craig A.	Colorado Spr., CO
Thiele, David A./Renee	Faribault
Tiede, Robert O.	Waseca
Tollefson, Jonathan R./Renee	Nfld
Traxler, Dwight T.	Amboy
Traynor, Charles P.	Minnesota Lake
Tufte, Marty	Phoenix, AZ
Tuma, Joseph L./Delores M.	New Prague
Tupy, Joseph A.	Owatonna
Ulrich, James P./Sharon B.	Owatonna
Utzinger, Dave	Monticello
Van Thomme, Jeffrey A.	Faribault
Vignati, Valerio	Kure Beach, NC
Vivant, Edward P.	Minneapolis
Voracek, James J./Kathy	Owatonna
Welch, Dr. Carlyle D.	Lincoln, NE
Westphal, Michael E./Jolynn	Grand Rapids
Wingen, Shelley A.	Faribault
Wollin, Todd J.	Faribault
Zincke, Keith A./Paula D.	Rochester

#swceAPPRECIATION

cookin' connection

5 Minute Fudge

Christy Strobel

Kilkenny

1 2/3 c. white sugar
1 Tbsp. butter
16 large marshmallows
1 c. chopped nuts

2/3 c. evaporated milk
6 oz. pkg. of chocolate chips
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Combine sugar, evaporated milk, and butter in medium-sized saucepan. Bring to boil and cook five minutes, stirring constantly. Add chocolate chips and cook until melted. Remove from heat, stir in marshmallows, vanilla and nuts. Mix well, pour into 8" pan. Cool and enjoy.

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



Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's solar subscribers will see a 26 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during February 2025. 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.

March issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Roger/Jane Kubinski

Numbers not found:

Dan Budach

Brent Fuchs

Heather/Russell Pudas

Melissa/Jason Underdahl

KEEP
LOOKING!

Sparks in brief . . .

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

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

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

• **February temps** – The average high temperature for February was 25° F, while the average low was 6° F. This resulted in 1,394 Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and 0 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 42° F and average low of 21° F, which resulted in 964 HDDs and 0 CDDs.

• **ENERGY STAR® Rebates** – In 2025, all ENERGY STAR refrigerators/freezers (with recycling), electric clothes dryers, dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air and ground source heat pumps, light emitting diode (LED) bulbs purchased (limit 5) are eligible to receive rebates (may not be combined with special promotions). Rebate request forms must be submitted within 90 days of purchase. Rebate forms are available at swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, phone Cindy Butterfield at 800-526-3514.

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

507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514

LIVESTOCK OWNERS

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

No foolin': April is safe digging month

Courtesy: Safe Electricity®

Spring showers bring May flowers but digging on your own this spring could spell big trouble.

Even if you think you could get lucky or that digging one small hole (or two) won't matter, don't take for granted what lines might lurk beneath the soil in your yard or easement.

Before you use that post hole digger or other unearthing tools, STOP and call 811 to request buried electric, gas, cable and other live lines in or near your yard be marked. The service is free but digging in an unmarked yard may not be. 1066468

You might think you don't have time for that and ask yourself, *what's the worst that could happen?*

YOU COULD DIE OR BECOME SERIOUSLY INJURED.

It doesn't make that yard project quite as pressing, does it?

Other consequences of blindly digging and taking a chance? You could cause a power outage. You could hit a gas line and get burned or cause an evacuation in your neighborhood. You could be fined. If you hit a telephone line or fiber optic, you might lose your telephone, cable TV or internet service. Worse yet, it could interfere with your neighborhood's emergency assistance technology.

Although it all seems like "your" yard, utilities have the right of way to the live lines lurking under the ground in places where you might dig. In fact, an underground utility line is damaged once every nine minutes across the nation because someone decided to dig without getting their yard properly marked, according to data collected by Common Ground Alliance. You may think one or two "small holes" won't matter, but that's what the person thought who hit a line nine minutes ago.

Take a deep breath, look over your landscaping or fence plans, and call 811 before you dig. Each state has its own call center to help you get digging safely (in Minnesota it's Gopher State One Call). You might know the service in your state by a different name, but 811 is the one-call-fits-all in the U.S. By calling 811 or your state's digging call center directly, utilities or the companies they contract with will come to your home and mark your yard before



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

you dig.

Safe Electricity reminds you call 811. call811.com lists the name and contact information for each state's digging notification service. The site also lists the advance notice required for marking services, which is usually two days, not including the day you call.

So tiptoe through the tulips this spring and summer, both literally and figuratively. Know what's underneath that flower bed and everywhere else in your yard.

As call811.com says, "Know what's below." Then dig safely. For more about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

(Editor's note: Gopher State One Call is not responsible for contacting locators to paint or flag your private facilities. Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric also doesn't locate private underground facilities that are the homeowner's responsibility. Private underground facilities usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills. Other private facilities include natural gas farm taps, private water systems, data communication lines, and invisible fences.)

The contact information for a number of locating companies who will locate privately owned underground facilities on your property can be found in the industry directory at www.gopherstateonecall.org/homeowners, then click on "Private Utility Locators." This list is by no means an exhaustive list or a list of locators recommended by GSOC. For additional locators, consult an online search engine or refer to the Yellow Pages under "Utilities Underground - Locating." Remember, private locators will charge a fee for their services.)



#swceCOOPERATION

sparks • april 2025

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Turn your suds into savings. Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time.



ad connection

give away

WOOD, you cut up & haul. 213-7978.

WOODEN SPOOLS at SWCE. 451-7340/Todd.

MIXED TREES TO BE CUT DOWN & TAKEN AWAY, mostly ash, all mature. 475-2799.

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 REAR-TINE GARDEN TILLER. 612-210-3144.

HELP UNLOADING HAY DURING SUMMER, bales weigh 30-40 lbs, live by Roberts Lk, \$20/hr to unload & \$25/hr to stack it. 332-7590.

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

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

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

RETIRED THERAPIST WILL PROVIDE HOME CARE SERVICES FOR THOSE NEEDING PERSONAL CARES: light housekeeping, exercise, errands, etc. Owat., Md'd, Fbo areas. 213-9502.

TDR TRANSFER DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS in Erin & Forest Twps, CPI vs. CER calculation, are you losing them? Sell & transfer off before deadline. 612-756-0271/Dan.

for sale

PURE ALFALFA, (19) sm. sq. bales, \$6/bale; NICE 2ND CROP GRASS/CLOVER MIX, (75) sm. sq. bales, \$4/bale (everything baled dry). 456-9546/text/ near Blmg Pr.

TIME-SHARE, Ft Lauderdale, Fla, 2 bdrm, \$5000. 444-9949.

100-BU. SMIDLEY STEER STUFFER, \$600; OMC 229 HAYBINE, 9' in working order, rubber rollers gd. \$1100; JD SEMI-MOUNT STEERABLE PLOW, 4-16 w/cylinder, \$350. 676-7381/leave message.

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

UPRIGHT PIANO, \$20/obo. 676-8189.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

HONEYWELL AIR PURIFIER, \$75; FRIGIDAIRE DEHUMIDIFIER, \$75 (both used vry little). 456-0255.

17' ALUMACRAFT CANOE; 2005 28' GULF STREAM INNSBRUCK TRAVEL TRAILER, vry clean, shedded in winter. 465-8566.

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

TREK 7100 HYBRID STEPFOLLOW, 700x35c, 21 spd, women's \$150; SCHWINN TRAILWAY, 700x35c, 21 spd, men's hybrid, \$100. 330-3178.

(2) JD 953 WAGON RUNNING GEARS, \$275/each or both for \$500; 1000-LB FAIRBANKS MORSE SCALE on wheels, \$75. 456-7614.

OAK TABLE, (2) CAPTAIN CHAIRS, (4) CHAIRS; STIHL TILLER, used once, too much for me, \$400. 327-9965.

RENTAL, Izaak Walton League Bldg., 4 mi. south of Owat., seats 100, full kitchen, grill, Wi-Fi, \$175. 451-7946.

INNOVA INVERSION TBL, like new, \$50. 995-9733.

"160 ACRES: GROWING UP ON A MINNESOTA DAIRY FARM," newly-published book, author SWCE member, available on amazon.com.

TROY-BILT PONY ROTOTILLER, 5 hp w/elec. start, \$350/cash. 952-652-2949/Nfid.

'97 5TH WHEEL JAYCO CAMPER, 25'. 688-9410.

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

FIREWOOD, mostly hardwood, \$50 per container (approx. 1/4 cord); CANNED GOODS; OTHER "FINDS." 456-4589.

HAY, alfalfa & grass mix, 4x5 net wrapd. 213-8670.

WHEELCHAIR, like new, used inside house most of the time, \$150. 583-6679.

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

TEAC REEL-TO-REEL PLUS (18) TAPES, like new. 491-2667.

MINI STORAGE UNITS in Morristown, any size. 330-4776.

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

1994 IH STRAIGHT TRUCK w/18' freezer box, \$5800. 334-7177.

'77 MIRROCRRAFT ALUM. BOAT, Evinrude 9.5 hp motor (wrks forward, not reverse), trolling motor, Shorelander trailer, fuel tank & more, \$750. 461-3324.

GRASS HAY, small square, Fbo. 384-2910.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

KING KUTTER YD RAKE, 5', 3 pt, \$200. 838-6612.

USED MOWERS. 213-7978.

SHINGLING & LIGHT CONSTRUCTION, free estimates. 456-0296.

BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT. 475-2322.

OLD VAN-STORAGE TRAILER, no title, \$1200/cash; SOME 53' STORAGE TRAILER w/title, \$3500/cash; OTHER TRAILERS: flat, end dumps, no hoists, flat grain trailers, \$6500 to \$15,000. 456-1181.

2" RECEIVER MOUNT PLATE, quick attach for skid steer; LINDSEY 4-SECTION DRAG; JD 12' DIGGER; JD 10' DISC. 213-0443.

FORTUNE CREEK TRL LOTS, the covenant allows for a pole shed, starting at \$75,000. 332-4623/John.

GRASS HAY, small square, no rain. 210-1158.

MF LOADER, all hyd., 4-way valve, hoses, mounts, vry gd shape, \$325; PICKUP BOX TRAILER, 8' box, hvy springs, gd shape, \$325. 455-3881.

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

GRASS HAY, 4x5 round bales, net wrapped. 390-0600.

51' HUTCHINSON 6" GRAIN AUGER, ALSO 33', choice, \$400; RONK PHASE CONVERTER, 30-hp continuous rating, gd cond., \$1900. 380-2759.
(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

CAPE COD & MARTHA'S VINEYARD, June 14-22. Deluxe motor coach, 15 meals, guided tour of the "Outer Cape," and historic seaside towns, JFK Museum and more! \$1,899 pp with 2 per room.

ALASKA TOUR & CRUISE, June 16-28. Round trip Delta flights, riverboat on Chena River, Denali Nat'l Park, 7-day cruise on the Sapphire Princess, & more! Starting at \$6,999 pp with 2 per room.

CANADIAN ROCKIES with Calgary Stampede, July 6-13. Round trip Delta flights, 9 meals, city tours of Jasper, Banff, & Calgary, narrated cruise to Spirit Island, & more! \$5,799 pp with 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 April 4 to ensure being printed in the May 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 4th will be printed in the June 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)

HARRIS 24' PONTOON w/25-hp Mercury motor, has canopy & power tilt, no furniture, w/trailer, \$3500; **BOAT OR PONTOON LIFT** w/top, \$2500. 330-3945.

LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES & SERVICES; STUMP GRIND.; LAWN TRAILERS, TILER & POLE SAW RENTAL; MULCH, DIRT, SAND, GRAVEL, ROCK. 200-4674/New Richland.

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

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Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance calls for end to nuclear moratorium to secure clean energy future

Alliance members include Great River Energy and Minnesota Rural Electric Association

A diverse coalition of Minnesota businesses, utilities, labor unions, and environmental advocates is calling on state lawmakers to lift Minnesota's 30-year-old moratorium on new nuclear power development.

The Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance (MNEA) asserts that nuclear energy is critical to achieving the state's ambitious 100% carbon-free electricity goals by 2040 while ensuring reliable baseload power and creating high-quality jobs.

"We're proud to help lead this broad, bipartisan coalition of Minnesotans working together to ensure a reliable, carbon-free energy future," said Darrick Moe, president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association. "This is an urgent conversation, and lifting the moratorium is the first step in securing the affordable, clean and reliable energy Minnesotans need."

"Minnesota construction workers take pride in our work building and maintaining Minnesota's critical energy infrastructure," said Tom Dicklich, executive director of the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council. "Lifting the moratorium is an important next step in our energy transition that will help our state meet the 100% carbon-free standard while putting thousands of our members to work."

"Our members have been operating nuclear plants safely in Minnesota for over 50 years, providing decades of carbon-free affordable electricity for families and businesses," said Kurt Zimmerman, business manager of IBEW Local 260. "Lifting the nuclear moratorium provides a critical opportunity to create new high-wage union jobs for utility workers."

The case for nuclear energy

Nuclear energy is uniquely posi-

tioned to address Minnesota's energy challenges:

- It already generates roughly half of Minnesota's current carbon-free electricity.

- For over 70 years, U.S. nuclear operators have safely stored all spent fuel with significant federal and state oversight.

- Potential to provide thousands of good-paying jobs in a safety-first work environment.

- A new generation of advanced nuclear technology, offer enhanced safety features, flexibility in siting, and a smaller footprint, making them ideal for Minnesota's future energy needs.

- While state and regional electrical demand has been historically stable or declining, recent trends in electrification and technology demands have resulted in projected increase in 24x7 electrical power needs.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has identified the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, which includes Minnesota, as being at high risk of capacity shortfalls within the next decade. NERC's 2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment highlights the urgent need for firm, reliable power sources like nuclear energy to maintain grid stability and meet increasing demand.

Ending Minnesota's outlier status

Minnesota is the only state with an outright ban on all new nuclear reactor construction. Lifting the moratorium would allow stakeholders to have productive conversations about how ad-

vanced nuclear technology could contribute to the state's clean energy future.

"Thirty-three nations have now pledged to triple nuclear power by 2050, with America leading the charge. Congress has appropriated billions in federal funding for states ready to build. But Minnesota—with our world-class engineering talent and manufacturing base—is stuck on the sidelines because of a 30-year-old law that prevents us from deeply considering nuclear projects," said Eric Meyer, executive director of Generation Atomic.

About the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance

The Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance (MNEA) is a partnership of over 30 organizations representing labor, business, utilities, trade associations and environmental groups. Members are committed to securing Minnesota's clean energy future through the development of safe, reliable and carbon-free nuclear power.

The Alliance respects the Prairie Island Indian Community's concerns about lifting Minnesota's nuclear moratorium and is committed to working with them to address their concerns. The Alliance believes an open dialogue is essential to ensuring both safe storage and a sustainable energy future and welcomes the opportunity for constructive discussions that move Minnesota's energy path forward.

For more information, visit mnuclearenergyalliance.org.

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Great River Energy, ITC Midwest and Xcel Energy move forward with Upper Midwest's first 765-kV electric transmission backbone

Project will bolster regional reliability and minimize environmental impact

Several energy providers launched their plan to provide long-term electric reliability for customers by developing the Upper Midwest's first 765-kilovolt (kV) transmission project, which will meet the significant growth in electricity use projected in the coming decades and improve access to new energy sources needed to serve communities throughout the region.

Great River Energy (GRE), ITC Midwest, and Xcel Energy have filed Notice of Intent to Construct, Own and Maintain the new 765-kV electric transmission line with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. This notice kicks off the permitting, public outreach and environmental review process overseen by the Commission and is the first step in project development. Similar notices will be filed in other states as part of the development process.

"This transmission line will provide significant benefits to our communities, ensuring we meet the unprecedented growth in their demand for electricity while keeping costs low for homes, farms and businesses," the companies said. "Some estimates project electric use to double over the coming decades in our region. The 765-kV line is key to maintaining reliability while maximizing the efficient use of land and reducing the overall impact to landowners."

Great River Energy, a wholesale electric power cooperative; ITC Midwest, an independent transmission developer; and Xcel Energy, an energy company serving 1.8 million electric customers in the Upper Midwest, will develop the 765-kV transmission project in several segments. The line will connect to the existing transmission grid in eastern South Dakota and travel approximately 410 miles across southern Minnesota to Wisconsin, also connecting into the re-

gional grid in Wisconsin and Iowa. The line will connect the Lakefield, Pleasant Valley and North Rochester substations in Jackson, Mower and Olmsted counties.

The transmission line was one of several approved in December by the region's grid operator, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), as part of the second set of projects in its Long Range Transmission Plan. In this historic portfolio, MISO approved 24 projects totaling \$21.8 billion in transmission investment including several 345-kV projects in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as this 765-kV transmission backbone infrastructure. The companies worked with MISO and other stakeholders for several years to develop these transmission solutions as part of a multi-phase plan to bolster the reliability of the region's electric grid.

While this would be the first 765-kV transmission line in the Upper Midwest, this extra high voltage has been used in other parts of the United States for decades. A single 765-kV electric transmission line can deliver approximately the same amount of electricity as six 345-kV transmission lines with similar land impacts and structure heights as existing high-voltage transmission lines.

"This new 765-kV transmission line will ensure reliability every hour of every day for our member-owner cooperatives," said GRE President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "By building this high-capacity line, we can minimize the environmental and community impact to cooperative members while strengthening our grid infrastructure. This is an important step for Minnesota's energy landscape and one that sets us up for the future."

"Modernizing the electric grid provides tremendous benefits for electricity consumers through improved reliability, increased capacity and greater access to diverse generation resources," said ITC Midwest President Dusky Terry. "We are committed to working with landowners, local communities and our utility partners throughout the process to meet the growing demands on the electric grid across Southern Minnesota."

Public review and opportunities for community participation

The regulatory process provides many opportunities for public participation and community input.

Two permit approvals are required before a new transmission line of this type can be built: a Certificate of Need outlines the need for the project and the benefits the state and region will receive if approved, and a Route Permit determines where the transmission line will be located. 1000359

The companies expect to file a Certificate of Need application in Minnesota in early 2026 and will work closely with landowners and communities throughout the project area to help determine the best locations for the route to include in their future Route Permit application. Each application's review process takes approximately 12-18 months and includes public information meetings and hearings throughout the project area. The transmission line is anticipated to be in service by 2035.

Additional information on the 765-kV line and 345-kV lines approved by MISO in 2024 is available at grid-northpartners.com.

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