



the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric September 2025

inside connections

- 2 Manager Connection
- 3 Cooperative Careers Camp;
Enhancing renewables with
batteries;
Are we controlling today?
- 4 Cookin' Connection;
SWCE community solar update
- 5 Back-to-school safety;
Safety for college students;
Using a spotter to avoid power
lines
- 6 Ad Connection;
4-Seasons Vacations
- 7 Ad Connection;
Home power station benefits;
Be wary of solar energy scams
- 8 Understanding overhead and
underground electric service;
SWCE security light program;
Energy efficiency tip

calendar of events

September

- 1 Labor Day
SWCE office closed;
Final day of Minnesota
State Fair
- 3-7 The Defeat of Jesse
James Days, Northfield
- 6-7 Mantorville Marigold Days
- 11 Patriot Day 16630
- 18 Steele County Ducks
Unlimited Fall Bash, Owat.
- 19 National POW/MIA
Recognition Day
- 22 First day of autumn

Steele-Waseca

Cooperative Electric will be conducting Town Hall meetings during September. Look for a postcard in the mail for the meeting scheduled for your district. Each of the meetings will be at Torey's Restaurant & Bar, 208 N. Cedar Ave., Owatonna.

Late July storms cause 1,300 outages in Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's service territory


Late Monday night, July 28, storms in Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's service territory contributed to 1,300 meter location outages.

Operations Division Manager Dan Meier reported outage calls started around 10:30 that night. The area most impacted was in Rice County with lots of trees in the lines.

Steele-Waseca received assistance

from crews with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, BENCO Electric Cooperative, and Brown County Rural Electric Association.

Meier reported outages as a result of the storms were restored by 1 p.m., Tuesday, July 29. ~~9/2~~

 #swceTRUST

Steele-Waseca among southern Minnesota cooperatives celebrating 10 years of landmark acquisition

Courtesy: Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA)

July 31 marked the 10-year anniversary of the successful acquisition of Alliant Energy's Minnesota service territory by Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC).

The \$127 million deal, completed in 2015, represents the largest-ever acquisition of an investor-owned utility (IOU) service territory by electric cooperatives in the United States.

The historic achievement brought together 12 electric distribution cooperatives, including Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, spanning across southern Minnesota, united under SMEC to acquire approximately 43,000 electric accounts and facilitate the seamless transition of 70 Alliant Energy employees into the member-owned cooperatives.

The acquisition meant thousands of former Alliant Energy customers became active participants in a democratic, not-for-profit system. Some of these individuals now serve as co-op board members—making decisions in the best interest of their cooperative and the local communities. Several cooperatives experienced significant growth, with some doubling or tripling their size.

Alliant Energy's willingness to sell its Minnesota territory as a single unit presented a complex challenge: how could multiple cooperatives structure a collaborative purchase without fragment-

 **smec**
Southern Minnesota
Energy Cooperative

ing the transaction? SMEC was formed to address this challenge, providing a single point of contact for negotiations while preserving the individuality and autonomy of its member cooperatives.

The acquisition process required regulatory approvals from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, Iowa Utilities Board, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—taking more than two years to complete. Upon finalization, SMEC was recognized with a national award from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for the groundbreaking effort.

As SMEC's 10-year power purchase agreement with Alliant Energy has ended, the cooperatives celebrate the value of local governance and the cooperative business model.

"This milestone is about more than recounting history—it's about celebrating cooperative principles at work," said Darrick Moe, CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

The 12 SMEC cooperatives in addition to Steele-Waseca are BENCO
(SMEC anniversary continued on Page 7)

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

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Website: www.swce.coop

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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

When we flip a light switch, we expect a light to turn on.

We usually don't give much thought to the processes or people behind it, until the light doesn't turn on because of a power outage.

Severe weather is the top cause of power outages in the United States. There certainly has been episodes of severe weather nationwide this past year. When storms cause the power to go out, we depend upon our electric cooperatives or utilities to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

Line technicians are the front line, but they do not work alone. In fact, behind every flick of a light switch or press of an electronic appliance button, there is an entire team of utility personnel working hard to make sure electricity is delivered safely and reliably to homes, farms, and businesses.

In addition to our line technicians, your electric cooperative has team members with various needed areas of expertise to provide energy in more resilient and efficient ways, updating grid systems, operational planning and design. Our safety manager schedules training to keep co-op personnel safe, which in turn benefits the safety of consumers.

Member service representatives answer questions on outages and billing, communication efforts provide consumers information on safety, efficiency, and outage updates. Dispatchers relay vital information to line crews. Managers connect team members and work to keep the co-op running as efficient as possible in its efforts to meet the goals and expectations of members.

Together, all of the employees form the infrastructure of their electric cooperative/utility. They work daily to provide enough power to meet a community's needs, manage load, minimize the possibility of power outages, restore power, provide education on safety and efficiency topics, and more. While many of these employees work behind the scenes, they all play a role in helping power communities and people's lives.

As a member and electric consumer, you are part of the team as well. From reporting power outages and downed lines to taking advantages of opportunities to learn more about safety and efficiency—doing your part helps your community as well. 1101200

While frustration can be experienced when there is a disruption of electric service, remember—co-op employees are there to help. The processes and rules they follow have been established for safety, reliability, and fairness of the system.

The inconveniences of wait times and power outages are not their fault. The time it takes to restore power can vary widely depending on the extent of a storm's destruction, the number of outages, and when it becomes safe for line technicians to get to the damaged areas. Whether it is minutes, hours, or even days, you can help do your part by being prepared.

When you have the chance, thank the co-op personnel you meet, whether on the phone, online, or in person. They play a key role in your community as they work to keep the lights on and people safe.

#swceTRUST



- Engineering and Operations
- Business Administration
- Community & Economic Development
- Information Technology
- Member Services
- And many more!

Join the cooperative family today by visiting
touchstoneenergy.com/careers



Sparking an interest with Cooperative Careers Camp

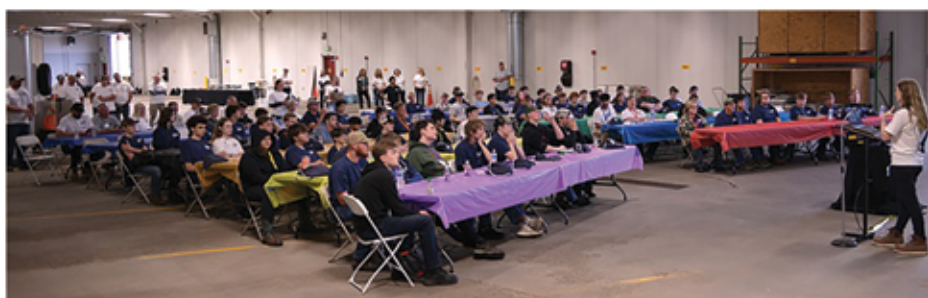
Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, jobs in the energy industry are growing 25% faster than overall employment in the country.

"We are seeing a generation of skilled workers retiring from our industry," said Great River Energy Talent and Outreach Partner Heather Bittle. "Now is the time to spark an interest in energy careers among teenage students who are starting to think seriously about what lies ahead after high school."

In late June, GRE hosted a day-long camp focused on careers in the electric utility industry. More than 60 high school students visited Great River Energy's Elk River campus for an introduction to the wide range of job opportunities available in the field.

GRE employees provided interactive presentations and offered hands-on



More than 60 high school students visited Great River Energy's Elk River campus for an introduction to job opportunities available in the field.

demonstrations of the type of jobs that go into powering homes, businesses, and communities. 33449

"Energy careers are challenging, exciting and rewarding—and many of them do not require a four-year degree," said Great River Energy Field Services Manager Melissa Philips. "Some of these Career Camp students will go on to careers in our industry, but all of

them left the camp with a better understanding of all that goes into the electric service that powers their communities."

GRE offers information and resources to young people considering careers in energy at greatriverenergy.com/powerful-potential.

#swceLIFE+

Unlocking the full potential of renewables with batteries

As the world moves toward cleaner energy solutions and states continue implementing carbon-free policies, renewable resources like wind and solar will play an increasingly significant role in powering our lives.

But these resources inherently come with a challenge: the variability of their production. Wind and solar are not dispatchable resources by themselves—meaning they cannot simply be switched "on" when the grid needs electricity—making it difficult to align energy generation with demand. That's where batteries represent a possible solution.

Energy storage systems, particularly large-scale batteries, are becoming a key part of an increasingly renewable-powered grid. They enable utilities to store surplus energy generated during times of high production and release it during periods of low output or peak demand. This capability not only balances supply and demand but also enhances the reliability and stability of the electric grid.

"Batteries will be important in creating a robust, resource-diverse grid that can fully harness renewable resources," said Zac Ruzyski, director of resource planning at Great River Energy (GRE), Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale power provider. "Without the characteristics that energy storage brings, there is a level of inefficiency in the system that doesn't allow us to make the most of the clean energy generated on our grid, from both an economic and reliability perspective."

Exploring battery solutions

Great River Energy has been at the forefront of exploring innovative battery storage solutions to support its member cooperatives. These systems provide dual benefits: They help maintain a reliable electricity supply while also helping GRE meet Minnesota's requirement for utilities to provide 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.

One of Great River Energy's most ambitious projects to date involves the

implementation of a long-duration battery system. Unlike traditional batteries that discharge energy for a few hours, the cooperative's Cambridge Energy Storage Project can potentially provide power for up to several days. This capability is crucial for addressing extended periods of low renewable generation, such as a multi-day stretch with minimal wind or cloudy skies.

"Long-duration energy storage doesn't just support renewables, it holds the potential to transform them into dependable, on-demand resources," said Ruzyski. "That type of technological potential strengthens our ability to deliver affordable, reliable power to our members."

In addition to enhancing grid reliability, batteries also offer cost-saving benefits. By lowering energy costs during peak demand, energy storage provides economic advantages to both utilities and cooperative members.

#swceINNOVATION

Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

Visit Steele-Waseca's website at swce.coop, move your cursor over MEMBERS and click on "Are We Controlling Today" to learn what the co-op's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy, is planning for load management.

cookin' connection

Chewy Walnut Squares

Lucy Coleman

Medford

1 unbeaten egg or 2 egg whites
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. flour
1 c. chopped walnuts

1 c. packed brown sugar
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt

Grease 8 x 8 in. square pan. Stir together egg, brown sugar and vanilla. Quickly stir in flour, baking soda and salt. Add walnuts. Spread in pan and bake at 350° for 18-20 minutes. Cool in pan on rack.

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 41 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during July 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 3rd of the month following receipt of the *Sparks*, or the amount will be forfeited.

August issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

Edward/LaVonne Cervenka
Doug Gerlach

Numbers not found:

Kathleen Queen
Theodore/Kathryn Leon
Chris/Amanda Weaver

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, or register your account with SmartHub. For instructions to use SmartHub, visit swce.coop/smarthub.

- **If you have changed or added phone numbers**, please contact SWCE to update your contact information. 25111

- **Need a new water heater?** For information about our Westinghouse Electric Water Heater Program, phone the SWCE office weekdays between 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., or email rebates@swce.coop.

- **July temps** – The average high temperature for July was 82° F, while the average low was 63° F. This resulted in 238.5 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs), and 8 Heating Degree Days (HDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 80° F and average low of 62° F. This resulted in 198.5 CDDs and 2.5 HDDs.

- **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 www.swce.coop. For more information or to receive a rebate request form, email rebates@swce.coop or call 507-451-7340 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

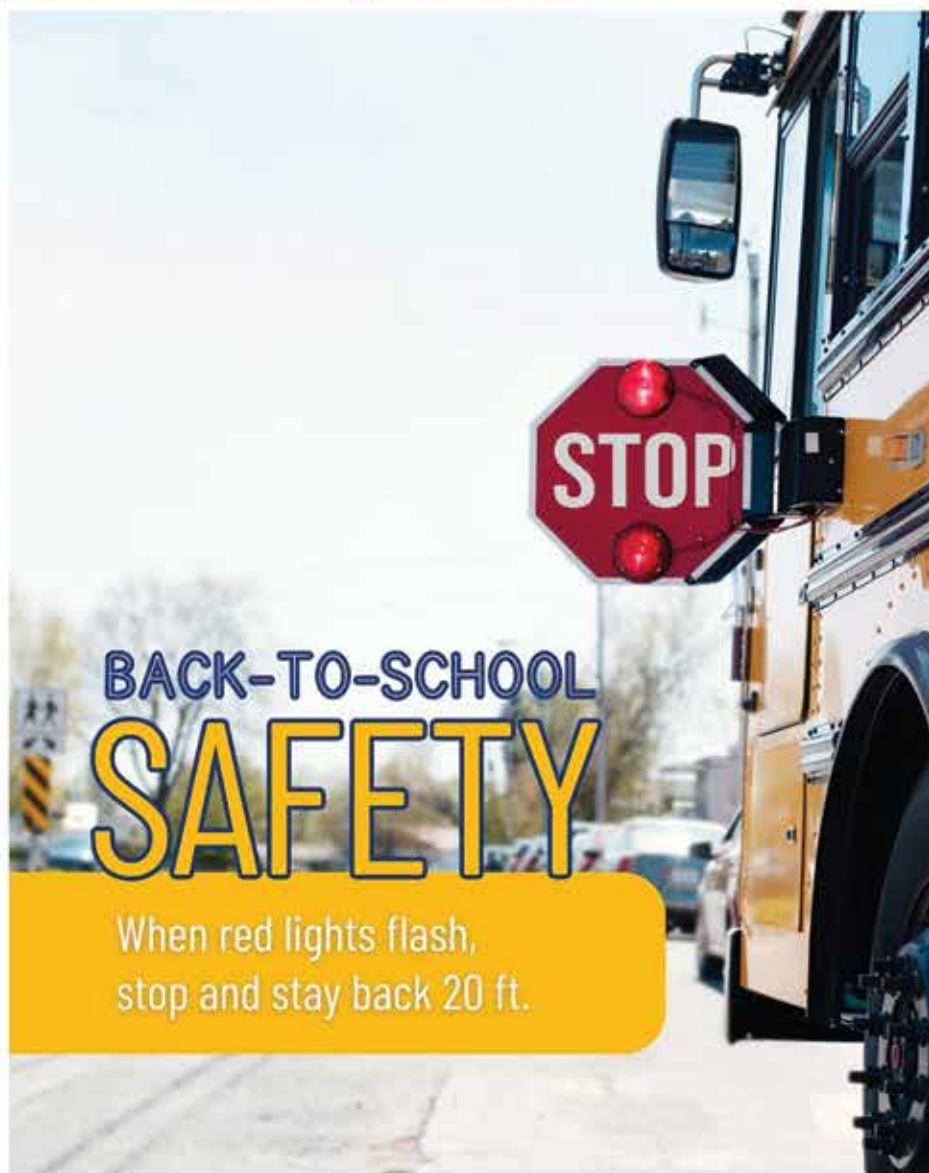
STEELE COUNTY TIP LINE

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



Safety Tip

Always use a spotter when there is potential for equipment to encroach overhead power lines. A spotter's perspective provides a much broader vantage point than the view from a cab. If your equipment brushes or contacts a power line or pole, stay in the cab and call 9-1-1.



Safe
Electricity.org®

Sending a child to college? Discuss safety first

When you are shopping for dorm room supplies, decor, snacks and other back-to-campus items, take a moment to discuss safety tips with your child before hugs and goodbyes.

Here are some safety topics to help keep your college student safe.

Electrical safety tips

- When shopping for items that run on electricity, look for a safety endorsement label, such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories).
- Do not put a cellphone under a pillow or place it on or under bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.
- In the dorm or apartment, make sure outlets near water sources are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If they are not, contact the resident assistant, campus housing staff or landlord. (Look for a test and reset button on the face of the outlet.)
- Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power if too much current is drawn.
- Avoid overloading extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- Do not hang decorative lights with nails or tacks; always use plastic hooks.
- Do not run electrical cords across traffic paths or under rugs.

General safety tips

- Find out what type of public safety department is on campus and how it functions; ask which services the department offers and the steps it takes to prevent crime.
- Locate emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
- Walk with a friend, especially at night.
- When attending events or parties, go with at least one person you know and

(College student safety continued on Page 7)

ad connection

give away

WOODEN BABY CRIB, complete, 0 to 6 years. 583-7848.

ORANGE KITTENS. 451-2978.

MOTHER CAT & 3 KITTENS, house broke, 2 blk & white, 1 orange tom kitten, mother cat 1.5 yrs old w/ all colors, cat & kittens are not fixed nor have their shots, gd w/dogs. 782-3895 or 838-0171.

ALUM. WALKER w/wheels & skids; **LOCKING EL-EVATED TOILET SEAT** w/padded arms; **ALUM. 5' STEPLADDER**. 451-9614.

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

DRAG TOW BAR OR EVENER for a 2- or 4-section drag. 213-8925 or 213-0395.

TO BUY A TRANSFERABLE BUILDING PERMIT IN WALCOTT TWP. 838-1284.

DECENT USED MINI VAN, under 100,000 miles. 993-7742.

FORD SKID STEER, diesel. 330-1849.

8' CAMPER for pickup truck. 688-9410.

LOOKING FOR CARPENTERS & REMODELERS! Flexible hrs, full- or part-time work, no experience needed, must have a valid driver's license, \$18-25 an hour. Set up an interview w/Eric. 676-4866.

HVY METAL DOCK, 30-40' long. 720-299-0937.

TDR TRANSFER DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS IN ERIN & FOREST TWSPS, CPI vs CER calculation, are you losing them? Sell & transfer off before deadline. 612-756-0271/Dan.

JUNK & UNWANTED APPLIANCES, free drop-off. 210-6728/Dan.

55-GAL. WHITE PLASTIC DRUM TO USE FOR RAINWATER, no fuel or oil use w/bungs that tighten. 339-1190.

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

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

for sale

VANITY BATHROOM SINK; (3) PATIO HEATERS. 581-3901.

GARDEN TILLER, gd cond.; **COUNTRY HOME FOR RENT**, (4) bdrm, ref. & stove furnished, new wood floors, east of Mdfd. 455-1502.

JD 7800 MFW TRACTOR, \$45,000; **JD 3020D TRACTOR**, \$8000; **BOBCAT 500 SKID LOADER**, runs, \$3500. 330-3945.

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

STEEL RAILING, new; **TRACTOR TIRES; FLAT-BEDS; TILT TRAILER; A-C C TRACTOR; CA w/ mower; CHEVY 2500-3500 TRUCKS**. 402-7679.

TRUCK RIMS, set of 4, 16.5 x 8 bolt, \$100; **CABELLA'S VACUUM SEALER**, like new, used vry little, \$65; **10' GRAIN DRILL**, \$1100. 455-3881.

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

CUT MIXED FIREWOOD, you load, will assist, \$50 per pickup load. 684-9665.

TIRES, P26570R16, 80% tread left, \$150/obo; **JD 2810 5-BTM PLOW**, vry gd cond., \$3000; **JD 1450 4-BTM PLOW**, \$750. 319-7782.

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

HAY, sm. sq., grass or alfalfa mixes. 271-9129.

FRONT CASTER WHEEL, 13.5 x 6 w/tube for Ex-mark or Toro mower, \$50. 451-5121.

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.

GRAIN STORAGE SITE, Greenvale Twp, 160,000+ bu., dryer, all bins have self unloader, 8 acres. 612-597-2444.

'92 JEEP CHEROKEE, vry gd cond., all new parts & paint, \$8000; **MICHELIN TIRE**, LT245x75/R16 Load Range E, \$100; **LAWN TRACTOR TIRE**, 23x8.5x12 & pair of wheel weights, \$35 & \$50. 451-0996.

BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT. 475-2322.

YARD FORCE GARDEN TILLER, \$500. 838-6612.

(2) CEMETERY LOTS at Meadow Ridge, Fbo, \$500/each/obo. 451-3462.

2004 WINNEBAGO VECTRA DIESEL PUSHER, 40', Model WKS40AD, '21 ATC ENCLOSED TRAILER, 18' + 2 alum.; **'09 SMART CAR PASSION CABRIOTET CONVERTIBLE/GAS**. 213-0869/lv. msg.

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

36' BALE CONVEYOR on transport w/E motor; **(3) SHEEP FEED BUNKS; BALE SPEAR; MANURE BUCKET** for Case IH loader. 451-2722.

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

WEED BURNER w/tank, \$35; **RUG SHAMPOOER**, fits Kirby vac., \$60; **BED**, reg. size, \$25. 451-2687.

2014 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LIMITED, looks & runs great, \$7500. 291-0333.

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

SCHWINN MOAB MTB, 24 spd, 26x175, F.S. Fork, easy fire shifting, \$400; **RALEIGH ROWDY MTB**, 6 spd, 20x175, \$40; **TREK GIRL'S BIKE**, 6 spd, 20x175, \$40. 330-3178.

PICKUP TOPPER, full size, gd cond.; **HANDMADE WOOD BENCHES & END TABLES; RHUBARB PLANTS**. 330-0729.

DUMP TRUCK AVAILABLE to deliver rock, gravel, dirt, etc., 15.5-ton capacity. 456-7774.

SET OF 6 HANKOOK DH07 14-PLY TIRES, 225/70R19.5, good shape, half tread, \$300/obo. 323-4362.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

travel

SMOKY MOUNTAINS, Sept. 25-Oct. 2. Deluxe motor coach, 15 meals, city tour of Nashville, Grand Ole Opry, tour of Great Smoky Mountains Nat'l Park & more! \$2,199 pp w/2 per room.

AUTUMN IN NEW ENGLAND, Oct. 2-11. Delta flight to NY, 9/11 Memorial Museum, Broadway performance, 7 night cruise on the Enchanted Princess, & more! Starting at \$4,999 pp w/2 per room.

HOLIDAY BRANSON, Nov. 4-8. Deluxe motor coach, 9 meals, Osceola Cheese Factory, 7 shows including The Haygood's Christmas & more! \$1,199 pp w/2 per room.

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



Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by Sept. 3 to ensure being printed in the October 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 3rd will be printed in the November 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)

2007 VOLVO SEMI, condo sleeper, Cummins, gd rubber & runs well, \$10,000/obo. 456-5703.

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

1000-GAL. LP TANK, \$2000/obo; **1200-GAL. POLY TANK**, \$250/obo. 390-5222.

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

2005 27' INNSBRUCK CAMPER, vry clean; **17' ALUMACRAFT CANOE**. 465-8566.

70', 8" GRAIN AUGER; GRAVITY WAGONS, 400- & 500-bu. 475-1392.

1-TON CHAIN HOIST w/dolly for I-beam; **I-BEAMS**, miscellaneous lengths. 210-4225.

2020 R-POD RP-195 TRAVEL TRAILER, exc. shape, 1 owner, no smoking or pets, water leak, or accidents, \$15,000. 208-8304.

HOUSE CLEANING: kitchens, bathrooms, etc.; **ROUGH-CUT MAPLE BOARDS**. 461-9422.

DMI 627B RIPPER, always in shed, same owners, \$11,800. 451-9614.

CHEST FREEZR, 23"x41", \$100/obo. 612-685-8666.

1992 S&S HORSE/CATTLE TRAILER, has up-to-date license tabs. 213-0443.

PADDLEBOAT, fiberglass w/alum. pontoons, \$400. 651-485-2579/Shieldsville area.

PYGMY KID GOATS. 475-1468.

OLDER GLEANER F2 & K, may need carb cleaned, but does run, use for sm. farm; **ROUND BALES**, 4x5 net wrapped, last yr & this yr; **55-GAL. BURNING BARRELS**. 390-0600 or 676-6094.

PADDLEBOAT, plastic, clean, shedded in winter, \$200; **CHAINS FOR TRACTOR TIRES**, #2, 10'4" long, 28" wide, \$200. 491-4565.

1938 FORD PICKUP, customized, professionally built, sweet ride, primer ready for your color, \$28,999. 327-2741.

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.

(College student safety continued from Page 5)

trust. If your friend leaves, do not stay.

- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid being distracted (listening to music, texting, and so on) while walking on campus.
- Find out what types of mental health services or counseling the campus offers.

To learn more about electrical safety tips, go to <https://safeelectricity.org/>.

#swceLIFE+

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Solar energy is rising in popularity, and so are solar scams. If a salesperson knocks on your door promising free solar panels at zero cost or that you'll never have to pay your energy bill again, it's likely a scam. If you're interested in solar panels for your home, do your research, get multiple quotes from licensed providers who are reputable, and most importantly, take your time to ensure a smooth process.

Source: Federal Trade Commission



Consider adding a home power station to your outage toolbox

Courtesy: Great River Energy (GRE)

Batteries, flashlights, and bottled water are all traditional items kept in an emergency kit to potential outages, but adding a portable power station (pictured right) can help keep you connected until electricity is restored.

More convenient and affordable than a generator, rechargeable power stations can serve as a handy backup during short-term power outages. They also require minimal maintenance and are safe to use both indoors and outdoors.

Depending on the model and its capacity, you'd be able to power several types of devices simultaneously—such as laptops, smartphones, tablets—and even small appliances, like portable heaters and fans, allowing you to stay comfortable as well as up to date on outage information from your local cooperative.

Larger portable power stations are even able to keep a refrigerator running for hours, ensuring that your groceries stay fresh while waiting for the lights to come back on. 1055316

Charging these types of power stations is easy: The simplest way is to plug them into any 120V wall outlet. This works the same as charging a laptop or phone and is relatively fast, usually taking four to eight hours for a full recharge depending on its capacity.

The portable nature of these power stations also makes them a great tool



for off-grid outdoor adventures such as camping and road trips. Many of them can also be recharged by plugging into a 12V car, truck, or RV, letting you top up the charge as you drive or travel.

To make sure you're set up for success if the power does go out, here are a few tips to keep in mind when shopping for a portable power station:

- Make a list of which devices and/or appliances you would want to power during an outage.
- Determine the total wattage needed by adding up the wattage of the devices.
- Consider the capacity of the portable power station to determine how long it can run these devices.

#swceINNOVATION

(SMEC anniversary continued from Page 1)

Electric Cooperative, Brown County Rural Electric Association, Federated Rural Electric, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, Nobles Cooperative Electric, People's Energy Cooperative, Redwood Electric Cooperative,

Sioux Valley Energy, South Central Electric, and Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

#swceGROWTH

Yours, mine, or ours?

Questions about the ownership of transformer poles, meter loops, wires, and breaker or fuse panels are usually answered during new construction. But, when existing equipment is damaged by storms, old age, or overload, who owns what? In most cases, on an overhead service all wires beyond the top of the meter pole belong to the member.



Overhead electric service

Steele-Waseca is responsible for:

- a. Wires coming onto the yard to the transformer.
- b. The transformer/meter pole.
- c. The meter.
- d. Connections of wires to the transformer.

Member is responsible for:

- a. The meter loop (service on the pole including the meter socket, pipe, wire, and disconnect switch) and the connections of the wires.
- b. Wires leaving the meter pole to other locations and the connections for those wires.



Underground electric service

Steele-Waseca is responsible for:

- a. The transformer and meter.

Member is responsible for:

- a. The meter post and meter socket.
- b. The pipe and wire from the transformer to the meter socket (non-development). In developments, Steele-Waseca owns the wires up to the meter socket on the house.
- c. Wires leaving the meter location to other locations and the connections for those wires.
- d. Any disconnect switches, fuses, or breaker panels at the meter site.

Steele-Waseca recommends that you have your portion of the service done by a qualified licensed electrical contractor, unless you are qualified to perform this work. We have a Master Electrician employed at Steele-Waseca who can assist you with your complete electrical wiring needs. If you have any questions or would like to speak with our electrician, please phone our office.

Security yard lights

Light-emitting diode (LED) security yard lights are available for rent from Steele-Waseca. All rental lights are weatherproof fixtures with built-in photo-electric controls.

These LED lights have 41-watt bulbs.

Lights rented from Steele-Waseca can only be mounted on existing transformer or meter poles. Installation and maintenance of rental lights are done during normal business hours. Contact the Steele-Waseca office for more information.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.



The Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Sparks newsletter will be inserted in the billing statements coming in September 2025. Thank you for your patience and concern during this transition:)

