

the power of human connections

# sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

October 2025



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## calendar of events

### October

- 6** Child Health Day
- 5-11** National Fire Prevention Week
- 13** Columbus Day
- 16** National Boss's Day
- 19-25** National Teen Driver Safety Week
- 20-24** National School Bus Safety Week
- 31** Halloween

**Breast Cancer Awareness Month**



## Cold Weather Rule notification

216B.097 Cold Weather Rule; Cooperative or Municipal Utility

**Subdivision 1. Application; notice to residential customer.** (a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or

below 50 percent of the state median household income.

2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 1 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

**Subd. 2. Notice to residential customer facing disconnection.** (a) Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following infor-

(Cold Weather Rule continued on Page 3)


## Is your dual fuel system ready for cold weather?

If you have a dual fuel heating system, also known as an off-peak system, now is the time to be sure your off-peak controls are functioning, and your backup system is prepared. Your fuel supply should be checked and chimneys cleaned.

Summer storms can damage equipment controls within off-peak heating systems. It is the member's responsibility to contact an electrical contractor should the system not be functioning correctly. 1026413

Dual fuel is a controlled heating program offered at a reduced (off peak) electric rate. During the heating season,

the electric heat portion of your dual fuel system can be shut off for up to 12 hours at a time, typically during periods of extremely cold weather, or when the demand for electricity is high.

The dual program helps control electric demand during peak usage periods, which is why an adequate backup system is required. For more information, visit Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's website, [swce.coop](http://swce.coop), or call Cindy Butterfield before 3:30 p.m. weekdays. 

 #swceSERVICE

## Is my off peak/dual fuel being controlled today?

Visit Steele-Waseca's website at [swce.coop](http://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.

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**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)



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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*

In October, electric cooperatives across the country take time to recognize National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative.

It's also the perfect time to thank you—the members who make it all possible. For us, it's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

As general manager, I see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you—our members, our neighbors, and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make. 1119906

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering safe, reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric does that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service.

We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible—because we know how much rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And when storms hit or outages occur, Steele-Waseca crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines. Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, youth programs, or volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought—it's part of our mission.

We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer—you're an owner, a stakeholder, and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected, and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be *your* local electric cooperative.



*Syd*

#swceTRUST



## cold weather rule connection

(Cold Weather Rule continued from Page 1)

mation to a customer:

(1) a notice of proposed disconnection;

(2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;

(3) a list of local energy assistance providers;

(4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and

(5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

(b) At the same time that notice is given under paragraph (a), the utility must also give written or electronic notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider and the department.

**Subd. 3. Restrictions if disconnection necessary.** (a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected remotely using advanced metering infrastructure or physically at the property being disconnected between October 1 and April 30 for failure to comply with Subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

(1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;

(2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;

(3) when utility offices are closed; or

(4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 30 days after the notice required in Subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) The customer must not be disconnected until the utility attempts to confirm whether the residential unit is actually occupied, which the utility may accomplish by:

(1) visiting the residential unit; or

(2) examining energy usage data obtained through advanced metering infrastructure to determine whether there

is energy usage over at least a 24-hour period that indicates occupancy.

(c) A utility may not disconnect a residential customer who is in compliance with Section 216B.098, Subdivision 5.

(d) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

(e) For the purposes of this section, "advanced metering infrastructure" means an integrated system of smart meters, communication networks, and data management systems that enables

two-way communication between a utility and its customers.

**Subd. 5. Cost recovery.** A municipal utility or cooperative electric association may recover the reasonable costs of disconnecting and reconnecting a residential customer based on the costs of providing notice to the customer and other entities and whether the process was accomplished physically at the property being disconnected or reconnected or remotely using advanced metering infrastructure.

 #swceTRUST

### SWCE Area Energy Assistance Phone Numbers

#### Blue Earth County

507-345-6822  
800-767-7139, x2433

#### Dodge County

507-864-7515  
800-944-3281

#### Faribault County

507-345-6822  
800-767-7139, x2433

#### Freeborn County

507-864-7515  
800-944-3281

#### Goodhue County

507-316-0610  
800-277-8418

#### LeSueur County

507-345-6822  
800-767-7139, x2433

#### Rice County

507-316-0610  
800-277-8418

#### Steele County

507-864-7515  
800-944-3281

#### Waseca County

507-345-6822  
800-767-7139, x2433

### 325E.028 Utility payment arrangements for military service personnel

**Subdivision 1. Restriction on disconnection; payment schedules.** (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if such a residential customer:


(1) has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility under which the residential customer pays 10 percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or

(2) has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "household income" means household income measured after the date of the orders specified in paragraph (a).

**Subd. 2. Annual notice to all customers; inability to pay forms.** (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must notify all residential customers annually of the provisions of this section.

(b) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must provide a form to a residential customer to request the protections of this section upon the residential customer's request.

**Subd. 3. Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.  #swceTRUST

# Cinnamon Swirl Cake

Barb Beaupre

Owatonna

1 box yellow cake mix (15.25 oz.)      4 eggs  
 3/4 c. vegetable oil                              1 tsp. vanilla  
 1 c. sour cream

Combine together. Mix on low for 30 seconds. Raise speed to medium and mix for 2 minutes. Pour into a 9x13 greased cake pan. Whisk together: 1 c. brown sugar, 1 Tbsp. cinnamon, using a butter knife gently swirl mixture into cake dough (don't over swirl). Bake at 325° for 35-40 minutes. Cool 15-20 minutes. Whisk together: 1 c. powdered sugar, 1.5 Tbsp. milk. Pour over slightly warm cake. Allow icing to set before eating.

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 32 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during August 2025. 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 3rd of the month following receipt of the *Sparks*, or the amount will be forfeited.

## September issue of Sparks



**Numbers found:**  
 James DeGezelle  
**Numbers not found:**  
 David Heine  
 Mark/Tara Meili  
 Dale/Ione Sette  
 Cressenda Youngs



## 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), or register your account with SmartHub. For instructions to use SmartHub, visit [swce.coop/smarthub](http://swce.coop/smarthub).

• **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 the SWCE office weekdays between 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., or email [rebates@swce.coop](mailto:rebates@swce.coop).

• **August temps** – The average high temperature for August was 77° F, while the average low was 59° F. This resulted in 127 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs) and 35.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 78° F and average low of 59° F, which resulted in 136 CDDs and 20 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](http://www.swce.coop). For more information or to receive a rebate request form, email [rebates@swce.coop](mailto:rebates@swce.coop) or call 507-451-7340 or 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](http://www.minnesotastrayvoltageguide.com).

# Four best bets to stay cyber safe

Courtesy: National Cybersecurity Alliance

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Protecting yourself online doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A few simple habits can dramatically reduce your risk of falling victim to cybercrime. While you can never be "hackproof," you can become resilient in the online world.

At the heart of online safety are four essential behaviors the National Cybersecurity Alliance call the Core 4. These simple steps will help shield your personal information, protect your online accounts, and keep your devices secure.

**1. Use long, unique, and complex passwords.** Your passwords are the first line of defense between a criminal and your sensitive information. Here's how to have amazing passwords:

- **Every password must be long, unique and complex.** Nowadays, every password should be at least 16 characters long, which significantly overwhelms password-cracking programs. Use a random mix of letters, numbers and symbols.

- **Don't reuse passwords.** Every account needs a unique password. Unfortunately, making small changes, like adding numbers or switching out an S with an \$, doesn't count as a unique password. 1100043

- **Use a password manager to store**

**and generate strong passwords.** If you're wondering how to manage so many unique, long passwords, the answer is a password manager! There are many free, secure options. Password managers are the safest way to store your passwords. If you prefer to keep a password notebook, treat it like cash.

**2. Enable multifactor authentication (MFA).** Multifactor authentication (sometimes called 2FA) adds an extra security layer by requiring something more than just your password to log in. Think of it as using two locks on your digital door instead of only one. This could be:

- A one-time code sent to your phone.
- A biometric scan like a fingerprint scan or FaceID.
- A physical security key.

Enable MFA on your accounts—especially email, banking, and social media. It's a simple way to supercharge the security on your accounts. Also, never share MFA codes with anyone—this includes not sharing them over the phone, through texts, or via email. Only scammers will ask for MFA codes.

**3. Keep software updated.** Software updates don't just bring new features.

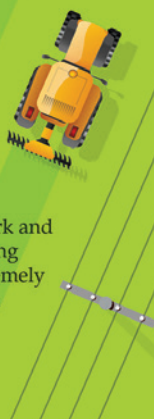
*(Cyber safety continued on Page 7)*

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Do you know the warning signs of an energy scam? Scammers will often use **high-pressure tactics** that create a sense of urgency. They may also ask for **unusual payment methods** such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. **Dodgy communication** is typically associated with a scam, including poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. If you spot any of these warning signs, take a moment to pause and determine if it's legitimate or if it's a scam.

## Tips for a Safe Harvest

Harvest season brings hard work and can be an exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:



-  Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.
-  Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.
-  Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.
-  Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
-  If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.

Source: SafeElectricity.org





## ad connection

### give away

**KITTENS**, Manx breed, bobtails, born July 31, wonderful house pets. 583-2173.

**TREES TO BE CUT DOWN & HAULED AWAY**, mostly adult trees, a mix but mostly ash. 475-2795.

**ROLLTOP DESK; OAK BOOKCASE**. 455-3468.

**FIREWOOD**, mostly dry & logged out, you cut & haul. 380-3958.

**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

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

**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 with Eric. 676-4886.

**CENTER SPINAL** for a Brush Hog 15' 3-blade cutter. 210-3958.

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

**ATTN: FARMERS & AUTO SHOPS—GOT USED/ WASTE OIL?** Call Quentin to get it picked up (200 gal. min.). 420-7429.

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

**TRACTOR TIRE**, 12.4-38. 456-2528.

**FORD SKID STEER**, diesel. 330-1849.

### for sale

**JD 2510 GAS TRACTOR**, wide front w/JD 148 loader. 475-7022.

**SET OF 4 USED FIRESTONE TIRES**, 255/65R17, \$150. 465-8244.

## All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

**CHEV. EQUINOX LTZ**, AWD, 125,000 mi., silver, light gray interior, great cond., new tires, \$6495. 330-2041.

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

**WOMEN'S HUSKY BIKE**, 3 spd, \$25; **(3) TENNIS RACKETS**, \$10/each; **ROCKING HORSE**, \$20. 451-5456 after 5 p.m.

**1000-GAL. LP TANK**, \$2000/obo; **1200-GAL. POLY TANK**, \$250/obo; **500-GAL. LP TANK** converted from anhydrous tank, \$600/obo. 390-5222/Owat.

**CANON EOS REBEL T16 PREMIUM KIT**, EFS 18-200mm image stabilizer lens, Rockfish UV filter, unopened, \$400. 970-818-1107.

**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.

**STORMOR GRAIN BIN**, 24' dia., unloading auger, fan, false floor, \$1650; **STORMOR 8000-BU. TOP LOADING BATCH DRYER**, 24' dia., pwr unloading auger, pwr sweep, stairway, \$7499. 318-9735.

**JD 2810 5-BTM PLOW**, vry gd cond., \$3000; **JD 1450 4-BTM PLOW**, \$750; **TIRES**, P265/70R16, 80% tread left, \$150/obo. 319-7782.

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

**HAY**, grass & alfalfa/grass mix, full size sm. sq. bales, no rain. 451-2978.

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

**2005 POLARIS RANGER** w/heated cab, & plow. 210-1826.

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

**(2) 20" BLAUPUNKT FOLDABLE HENRI E-BIKES**, new in box. 456-2634.

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

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

**(4) NEW 4.00 X 6 UTILITY TIRES ON WHEELS**, for 1/2" or 5/6" axles, \$40. 684-3081/Ellendale.

**IBANEZ GIO & SORRENTO ELEC. GUITARS**, 1 case, 1 stand, great for beginners, Behringer amplifier, can sell separately, funds go to disabled veteran; **STATIONARY TRAINER BICYCLE**. 332-0264.

**2-DOZEN QUART CANNING JARS; ALUM. WALKER** w/wheels, like new, \$10; **BATHTUB SEAT**, white, like new, \$10. 744-2709.

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

**CASIO KEYBOARD**, CT-636 Tone Bank, vry gd cond.; **LEGO SETS**. 684-2144.

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

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

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

**THERALUXE HD OLYMPIC FULL-SIZE BED; 8' FARM KING SNOWBLOWER; DINING ROOM TABLE; 1992 S&S HORSE TRAILER**. 213-0443.

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

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

**2004 WINNEBAGO VECTRA**, 40', model WK-S40AD, 350 Cummings, red top, diesel pusher; **2009 SMART CAR PASSION CABRIOLET CONVERTIBLE**, gas. 213-0869/leave message.

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

**MEN'S SOREL WINTER BOOTS**, size 13, gd cond., \$15. 363-6333.

(For Sale ads continued on Page 7)

### travel

**THE ARK ENCOUNTER**, Oct. 20-25. Deluxe motor coach, 5 nights accommod., 11 meals, Ark Encounter & Creation Museum, Patriot's Landing, riverboat cruise & more! \$1,399 pp w/2 per room.

**NYC SPECTACULAR**, Nov. 11-15. Roundtrip Delta flights, 4 nights in Times Sq., 7 meals, Broadway musical, New York city tour, 911 Memorial & Museum, & more! \$2,999 pp w/2 per room.

**SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE**, Feb. 3-15, '26. Roundtrip air to Ft. Lauderdale, 10-day cruise on Enchanted Princess, 6 ports of call incl. Dominica, Barbados & more! \$5,299 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 **October 3** to ensure being printed in the November *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 December issue. 1070962

☐ 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)

**SET OF 44 RUBBER STAMPS** w/variety of themes, \$15; **SET OF 10 RUBBER ROLLERS** in new or gd cond., variety of themes, incl. roller holder, 3 ink cartridges, \$15. 993-3556/cash only.

**ROUND BALES**, last year's & this year's, 4x5 net wrapped. 390-0600.

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.

(Cyber safety continued from Page 5)

They often fix security flaws that criminals exploit. It usually takes a few minutes, but updates are worth it. Here are some tips:

- Turn on automatic updates when possible for your devices and apps. You can usually find these options in your Settings menu.

- Install updates promptly for your operating systems, browsers, antivirus tools and apps.

- Don't click Remind Me Later—the security is worth it.

- Remember your phones, smart-watches and tablets are computers, so keep those devices updated as well!

**4. Looking out for phishing and scams.** Phishing remains the most common online threat. Criminals send fake emails, texts or social media messages

to trick you into revealing sensitive information or clicking malicious links. These messages aim to get you to click before you think by playing your emotions. Scammers will even call you! Here's how to look out for phishing and scams:

- Be highly skeptical of unexpected messages, especially those urging immediate action or asking for personal details.

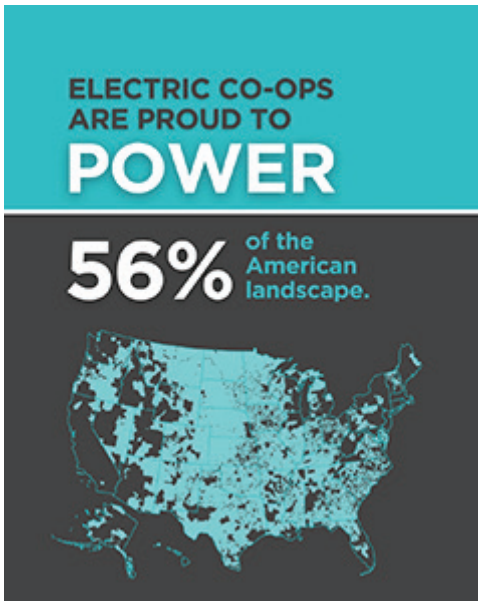
- Phishing emails can light up positive emotions ("You've won our sweepstakes!") or negative ones ("You've been hacked!").

- Don't click suspicious links or download unexpected attachments.

- Report phishing attempts to your email provider, social media platform, or IT department.

- If you're unsure if a message is legit, ask a friend, coworker, or family member. A second set of eyes can be invaluable in spotting scams. 32981

 #swceLIFE+



### Savings for home energy upgrades ending soon

If you're a homeowner with plans to make any energy-efficient upgrades, now is the time to see if those projects qualify you for a federal tax credit before they expire.

If you've been thinking about installing new windows, purchasing an electric vehicle or even conducting a home energy audit to see what improvements you could make, here is a rundown of the available tax credits and the date they expire.

Category	Description	Tax credit amount	Date of expiration
Electric vehicle	For the purchase of a new or used EV	Up to \$7,500 for new, up to \$4,000 for used	Sept. 30, 2025
Energy efficient home upgrades	For the purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances or building envelope components	Up to \$2,000 for heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, \$1,200 for insulation/air sealing, \$600 for windows	Dec. 31, 2025
Clean energy systems	For investments in renewable energy for your home	Equals 30% of qualifying costs for rooftop solar, battery storage and geothermal heating installation	Dec. 31, 2025





## Neurons boost grid capacity

*Great River Energy and Heimdall share dynamic line rating project results*

One year ago, Great River Energy (GRE) started the largest dynamic line rating (DLR) deployment in the United States with the goal of getting more capacity out of its existing transmission lines.

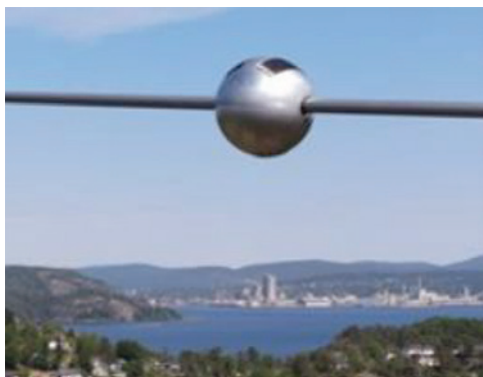
The cooperative partnered with Heimdall Power to install 50 “Neurons” on 10 transmission lines spanning 175 miles.

Now, after 12 months with the DLR sensors at work, Great River Energy has found major capacity gains and projects \$3.175 million in avoided congestion costs over five years.

Heimdall’s sphere-shaped DLR sensors collect real-time information about the line and its environment with the goal of increasing capacity, or the amount of electricity that can flow down the line. They can be easily installed by autonomous drones or line technicians on energized high-voltage power lines to adjust the line’s capabilities to current weather conditions.

“We are laser focused on achieving our mission of providing affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners,” said GRE Vice President and Chief Transmission Officer Priti Patel. “This technology will help us unlock grid congestion and achieve additional transmission capacity from our existing infrastructure, which our members have already invested in.”

By understanding the real-time capacity of power lines, Great River Energy can set safe, new operational limits to keep costs low and integrate more resources, including renewable energy, into the existing grid. This makes elec-



The Heimdall Power “Neuron” pictured above is allowing Great River Energy to increase the capacity of electricity on their transmission lines. (Courtesy: Great River Energy)

tricity more reliable and affordable for member-owners. It also can help the cooperative delay or eliminate capital investments in some new transmission lines, allowing those dollars to be reprioritized toward other projects the cooperative’s members need.

In August, GRE and Heimdall Power released a report, “Grid Optimization Gets Real: One Year Inside America’s Largest DLR Deployment,” that highlights the real-world benefits of DLR—benefits that are especially critical in an era of rising demand, aging infrastructure, and increasingly extreme weather. In the first year, Great River Energy unlocked up to 63% more transmission capacity during peak demand.

“DLR has promised more capacity for decades, but we needed to know if it could actually deliver for our system under real conditions,” said Michael Craig, GRE’s manager of energy and distribution management systems. “One year later we’ve gained real, operational value—not just theoretical gains—and a solid foundation for extending that value across more of our grid.”

The results of the project are encapsulated in the report, which outlines how Great River Energy scaled Heimdall Power’s end-to-end DLR solution to deliver measurable value to its member-owner cooperatives and 1.7 million customers.



Heimdall Power uses autonomous drone installation technology to place its Neuron sensors on live transmission lines.



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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Leaks reduce indoor comfort and lead to higher heating costs.

If you can see daylight around the edges of a window frame or if a window rattles slightly when touched, air is likely leaking.

Caulking and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows. These materials are available in a variety of compounds and forms, each designed for different types of surfaces. Choose the right product and apply it properly to reduce heat loss, improve comfort and lower energy bills.

