

the power of human connections

sparks

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

a monthly newsletter from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric

December 2025

Your billing statement this month has a special line listing the amount of your electric sales less power costs in 2024. This is shown as **2024 PATRONAGE BASIS**. Capital credit equity you've been allocated for 2024 is shown as **2024 ALLOCATION**, if electric sales exceeded power costs. Also listed is the **CAPITAL CREDIT BALANCE**, which is the amount of remaining accumulated equity. Please save this month's billing statement if you will need any of those amounts for tax preparation. Only inactive accounts receive separate statements of equity.

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calendar of events

December

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| 7 | National Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day 24982 |
| 21 | First day of winter |
| 25 | Christmas Day
SWCE office is closed |

PowerOn Midwest open houses wrap up across southern Minnesota

Why it matters to Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric members

To inform and engage local communities, Great River Energy (GRE), Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale electric supplier, and its utility partners, hosted a series of in-person and virtual open houses in early November across southern Minnesota to introduce PowerOn Midwest to the area and answer questions from the public.

PowerOn Midwest is a series of new electric transmission projects anchored by a 765 kV backbone transmission line

being developed by GRE, ITC Midwest, Otter Tail Power Company and Xcel Energy. The projects will connect eastern South Dakota, southern Minnesota and the broader region, enhancing grid reliability in the Upper Midwest to meet growing and changing energy needs in the coming decades.

The PowerOn Midwest open houses provided:

- An overview of PowerOn Midwest,
(PowerOn Midwest continued on Page 8)



Price: **28¢ per kWh**

Idle Fees: **25¢ per minute**
beginning 15 minutes after
charging session ends.

Pre-authorization amount: **\$40**

Pay via card, on screen QR
code or Red E Charge app.

MANAGED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



SPARK PLUG

Powered by e RED E

Conversation was taking place, Oct. 22, as Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's EV chargers were being utilized for vehicles of all sizes. The co-op implemented charges for non-members, Oct. 1; SWCE members may charge for free from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

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 Owatonna MN 55060-0485

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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



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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

As the holiday season approaches and the air turns crisp, we're reminded that this truly is the season of giving.

Personally, I have always been a fan of the many holiday movies that celebrate being thankful and gracious. There are so many examples of true stories and make-believe from Hollywood that keeps exemplifying the faith of giving. No matter who we are, we can all benefit by being generous to each other with attitudes, words, and actions.

At Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric you've probably heard us talk about our concern for community. It's not just a nice phrase—it's one of the core principles that makes electric cooperatives like ours different from other utilities. We're not just here to keep the lights on (though of course, we're always working hard to do that). We're here to make life better for the people we serve—our members, our neighbors and our friends.

Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our co-op family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, to keep our communities strong and to build something better for the future. That spirit of generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season. 1095263

We're proud to support local students through our scholarship program and offering a Youth Tour opportunity for up to two students, where we send some of our communities' brightest young people to Washington, D.C., to see democracy in action and dream big

about their futures. That's giving in the most meaningful way—by investing in tomorrow's leaders.

And because we care deeply about safety, we also spend time visiting the communities we serve, holding demonstrations and teaching people of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We believe knowledge is a gift too—and we enjoy sharing it.

You'll also find our team out in the community beyond work—volunteering at local events, serving on non-profit boards, and partnering with our area Chambers of Commerce to keep our local economy strong. Because when you're part of a co-op, giving back isn't a requirement—it's just what you do.

While the holiday season is a festive time, we understand these can be tough times for many as a result of the recent federal government shutdown. If you need advice on saving energy to reduce your energy bills, want to explore payment plan options, or you simply have questions—please don't hesitate to reach out. Steele-Waseca has expanded our residential rebate opportunities, and our budget billing program can eliminate the peaks of energy usage during the cold months of winter and hot months of summer. We're here to help, not just during the holiday season, but all year long.

At Steele-Waseca, we believe concern for community is more than a value—it's the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we're especially grateful to be part of such caring, generous communities in our service area.

From all of us at Steele-Waseca, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.

 #swceTRUST



Wishing you a safe & happy holiday season!

Empowering the next generation in the energy sector

Internship program offers hands-on, real-world experience for students exploring their careers

A major shift is occurring for personnel in the energy sector.

The industry is growing 25% faster than overall U.S. employment and, over the next 10 years, one-third of skilled trades professionals will retire—leaving the workforce at a faster rate than younger workers can replace them.

To help bridge this gap and keep the electric grid safe and reliable, Great River Energy (GRE), Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric's wholesale energy provider, is continuing its efforts to educate young people about the diverse career opportunities provided by the electric industry, and specifically with electric cooperatives.

GRE's internship program has now taken on a more important role than ever, offering hands-on experience across several departments as part of the company's commitment to developing future talent.

"The purpose of our internship program is to provide a well-rounded experience for students by providing exposure to the business world, the utilities industry and our organization," said Heather Bittle, talent and outreach partner at Great River Energy. "Recruiting an engaged, innovative and inclusive workforce is part of our 'shape the future' strategic imperative and our intern program aligns with that."



Great River Energy welcomed 23 interns from 11 different colleges and universities to its internship program this past summer who worked in transmission, power supply, corporate and member services, and information technology.

Learning to navigate real-world challenges

This year, the co-op welcomed a dynamic group of 23 interns from 11 different colleges and universities who brought fresh perspectives, enthusiasm and a strong desire to learn throughout the summer.

The transmission division employed 15 of the interns who worked in substation engineering, operational system performance, regional transmission planning, transmission line engineering, project management, business strategy and development, and safety and human performance.

In addition to their daily work, Great River Energy hosted workshops to help interns learn more about the business, the cooperative and utility space. Interns were also required to participate in three informational interviews with GRE employees, giving them an opportunity to gain perspective on career options and receive advice.

They toured Great River Energy's HVDC converter station in Buffalo as well. Bittle said these sessions helped interns navigate real-world challenges while learning about confidence.

Beyond technical skills, interns were immersed in GRE's culture of collaboration and safety. They attended team meetings, contributed to ongoing projects and engaged with mentors who guided their professional development. The program emphasized not only learning but contributing as well.



Great River Energy's annual internship program concludes with a day of presentations that highlight all the work accomplished by the interns as well as what they learned.


Developing talent and interest in the power industry

Kseniya Kravchenko, manager of operational system performance at Great River Energy, oversaw two interns from St. Thomas University.

"The main focus of our internship program is to develop talent and interest in the power industry," said Kravchenko.

Ben Schwaller, manager of substation engineering, said interns in his department worked on several tasks including relay database updates and compliance initiatives, all the way up to small transmission projects. Often, Schwaller onboards interns as freshman and keeps them through their senior year. He said this allows them to increase the difficulty of their workload over time, lets them work through the school year, and helps them apply their knowledge from school to the workforce.

"Our internship program has also been a pipeline for talent into the group," said Schwaller. "We have three previous interns currently working in our group full time."

(Courtesy: GRE)  #swceLIFE+

One stop online shop for all things electric

Energy Wise MN Online Store undergoes enhancements

The Energy Wise MN Online Store has been completely revamped to make shopping for efficient and high-quality electric devices faster, easier and more streamlined than ever.


Great River Energy (GRE) and its member-owner cooperatives offer the Energy Wise MN Online Store to provide an easy online shopping experience for energy-efficient products as

well as electric vehicle (EV) chargers. The store provides an easy way to order items and offer rebates applied at the time of purchase, therefore lowering the price and eliminating the time and administration related to rebate reimbursements. 1071516

The updated store features a fresh new look, improved navigation and a wider selection of energy-efficient products

such as: LED lighting, smart thermostats, power strips, and EV chargers.

The Energy Wise MN Online Store offers cooperative members a one-stop destination for reliable, high-quality products that make a difference in their homes and on their electricity bills.

Visit the new Energy Wise MN Online Store at energywisemnstore.com.  #swceLIFE+

cookin' connection

Southern Apple Cream Pie

Marti Cox

New Richland


(1) 9" unbaked shell
2 c. chopped, peeled apples
3/4 c. sugar
2 Tbsp. flour
1 c. sour cream
1 egg

1/2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 c. butter
6 Tbsp. flour

Add 3/4 c. sugar and 2 Tbsp. flour to apples and mix well. Combine sour cream with egg and vanilla. Stir into apple mixture. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 400°F for 30 minutes. Combine remaining ingredients and sprinkle on pie. Bake 10 minutes longer or until nicely browned.

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 36 kWh credit per panel on this month's statement for energy generated during October 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 minimum electric bill credit of \$15 is being awarded among however many members find their account number. For example, if all numbers are found, a credit of \$15 will be applied to the members' following month's electric bill. If only one number is found, that member receives a \$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.

November issue of Sparks



Numbers found:

No members found their number

Numbers not found:

Gerald/Sherry Keating
Jessica Oeltjenbruns
Jane/Gregory Ferrian
Vincent/Leeann Byron
Jeffrey/Michelle VanReese



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.

• **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.

• **October temps** – The average high temperature for October was 63° F, while the average low was 43° F. This resulted in 421.5 Heating Degree Days (HDDs), and 37 Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). They compare to last year's average high of 68° F and average low of 42° F. This resulted in 333 HDDs and 17.5 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. For a complete list of residential rebates and their respective rebate form, visit swce.coop/rebates/. 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

Remember electrical safety when decking the halls

Check light strands and other decorations for signs of wear and tear

While decorating can be one more thing to mark off an extensive holiday to-do list, take a little extra time when using electrical light strands or other plug-in decorations and while using a ladder.

Holiday decorating-related injuries include those caused by falls, cuts and back strains, although they can also be related to electrical hazards. For example, “do not use a staple or nail to hang light strands, and always be aware of overhead power line locations when carrying or using ladders or stringing lights,” said Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity.

“Like with any home task, it is best to take your time, think before you start and make safety a priority, which includes assessing the condition of lights and other decorations powered by electricity,” she added.

Be on the lookout for damaged light strands, plugs and electrical cords, and discard items that are cracked or frayed. Safe Electricity provides these additional holiday decorating safety tips:

- When decorating outside, be aware of overhead power lines. Imagine a 10' circle around a power line, and do not let any body part or item (such as light strands or a ladder) enter that 10' area.

- When securing light strands, do not nail them into place; instead, use plastic hooks.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands that can be daisy chained (plugged into one another).

- Make sure lights and extension cords are properly rated; that is, those that are used outside should be rated for outdoor use.

- Before hanging lights, check the strands for broken bulbs as well as fraying or bare wires that could present electrical hazards. Always discard damaged strands.

- Turn off all lights before leaving home or going to sleep or ensure they are timed to do so.

- Do not run cords under carpets,

through doorways or in a way that could cause a tripping hazard.

- Plug lights and decorations that are used outdoors into an outlet with ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection. GFCIs detect and prevent dangerous situations where an electric shock could occur.

- When using holiday lights, whether indoors or out, look for certification by an accredited independent testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories.

- Puppies and other pets love to chew on electrical cords, including light strands and extension cords. Keep cords out of sight or hidden with a cord cover.

- Be careful when using extension cords around crawling babies and toddlers. Check for long electrical cords that span the floor and secure them with cord covers to avoid hazards. 47865

Here is to a happy and safe holiday season. For more information on electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org (<https://safeelectricity.org/>).

 #swceLIFE+

Keep Your Holidays

**MERRY &
BRIGHT**



Don't add stress to your holiday season. Knowing how to properly use and hang lights could prevent injury or fire.



Make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.



Unplug lights or decorations before changing a bulb or other parts.



Do not use cords or plugs that are damaged, frayed or cracked.



Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab.



In addition, consider LED lights when replacing old light strands. LEDs use 80 to 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

Learn more:  SafeElectricity.org

What to do when you lose power

Do you know how to check your breakers?

Power outages can strike without warning, whether caused by severe weather, equipment failure or scheduled maintenance. In those first few moments, knowing what to do can help you stay safe and avoid unnecessary stress.

Before calling Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, the very first thing you should do is check your breaker box. A tripped breaker is one of the most common reasons for losing power in just

part of your home or apartment.

To check, open the panel and look for any switches that are out of alignment—either fully off or stuck between on and off. Flip the switch completely off, then back on. This simple reset can often restore power immediately.

In single-family homes, breaker boxes are usually in the basement, garage or utility room, or sometimes mounted on an exterior wall. In apartments or

(Checking your breakers continued on Page 8)

ad connection

give away

FISH TRAP FRAME; METAL to build a fish house. 451-5456/call after 5 p.m.

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

WHEELBARROW & STEPLADDER. 213-1466.

SNOWPLOW TRUCK, ready to plow snow. 744-2512.

RECIPES for the **Sparks**, from members who have not had a recipe published in 2025; please use a 3x5 card; the member who has their recipe published earns a \$7 energy credit on their SWCE statement.

ISO TRANSFERABLE BUILDING RIGHT IN WALCOTT TWP. 651-260-9225.

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

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

FORD DIESEL SKID STEER. 330-1849.

LOOKING FOR CARPENTERS & REMODELERS! Flexible hrs, full- or part-time work, no experience needed, must have a valid driver's license, \$15-25 an hour. Set up an interview w/Eric. 676-4886.

HONDA H5518 SUBCOMPACT TRACTOR. 456-0210.

TOY TRACTORS, John Deere models, A through 80. 451-7091.

for sale

1939 CHEVY PICKUP CAB ONLY, front bumper, hood, front fenders, running boards, \$2500; **CHAINS FOR TRACTOR**, #2, 10'4" long, 28" wide, \$200. 491-4565.

REGISTERED HEREFORD COWS, due to calve March 1; **REGISTERED HEREFORD HEIFERS**, show quality. 456-8094.

SNOW REMOVAL FOR SURROUNDING AREAS ONLY: New Richland & Waldorf. 200-4674.

All area codes are 507 unless otherwise noted

MINI STORAGE UNITS, Blmg Prairie. 456-2957.

FAN ON WHEELS, like new, \$100; **RIDGID SHOP VAC ON WHEELS**, \$50; **PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR**, \$50. 330-3178.

BOAT/RV STORAGE (INSIDE). 334-5412.

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

VITAMASTER MAGNETIC RESISTANCE BIKE, \$30; **ROCKING HORSE**, \$20. 451-5456 after 5 p.m.

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

'91 MOBILE HOME, 16x80, buyer to move it, 3-bdrm, 2-ba, w/washer, dryer, fridge, dishwasher, at-tachd back entry way & front deck, buyer takes what they wish, NE of Mdfd school, \$30,000. 271-9970.

BOAT/RV STORAGE FOR RENT; 1999 CRESTLINER, 1-yr-old trailer, \$6900/obo; **SMALL STRAW & HAY BALES.** 475-2322.

3-PIECE LUGGAGE SET; REG.-SIZED BED w/ headboard; ANTIQUE SEED FOR DECORATION. 451-2687.

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

VINTAGE 10" CRAFTSMAN TABLE SAW, works gd, \$75/obo. 645-6286.

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.

MTD YD MACH. SNOWBLWR, 8 hp, 26" wd, elec. st., gd con.; **VINTAGE METL SNOW SCOOP**, perf. for collectrs, decor, or use, 30" wd; **SNAPPR SNOWBLWR**, 10 hp w/30" wd, elec. st., gd con. 451-4613.

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

WIN 300 WIN MAG, 150 gr. ammo, \$25 a box; **WIN 30-06 SPRG COPPER IMPACT**, 150 gr., \$25 a box; **FEDERAL 30-06 SPRG FUSION**, 150 gr., \$25 a box. 461-1191.

FEATHERLITE 4-PLACE SNOWMOBILE TRAILER OR ATV HAULER, tandem axle, new floor, tires, lights, bi-fold ramp back. 363-6601.

(2) BOSTITCH ROOFING NAILERS; BOSTITCH FRAMING NAILER, \$80/each/obo. 456-5130.

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

ARIENS ST824 SNOWBLOWER w/chains, exc. cond. 456-9409.

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

'19 CFMOTO ZFORCE 500 TRAIL, 810 mi., winch, incl. 60" KFI Flow Plow (new), all super clean, well maintained, great cond., \$6000. 612-207-4390/Fbo.

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

1994 IH STRAIGHT TRUCK w/18' freezer box, \$5100. 334-7177.

GRASS HAY BALES, full size, sm. sq. 451-2978.

FIREWOOD, seasoned mixed hardwood, \$100/qtr cord, \$375/cord. 651-357-5092/Nfld area.

JD 720, narrow front. 475-7022.

2016 CHEVY EQUINOX LTZ, AWD, 125,000 mi., silver, light gray interior, great cond., like new interior, new tires, \$4895. 330-2041.

(2) DOWNHILL ROSSIGNOL SKIS, vry well priced to sell. 678-978-7444.

WHIRLPOOL FREEZER, stand up; **SM. METAL DESK; CATTLE HEAD GATE; 2017 YAMAHA GOLF CART; 24" DUAL-STAGE SNOWBLOWER.** 213-0443.

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.

travel

SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE, Feb. 3-15, 2026. Round trip air from Mpls to Ft. Lauderdale, 10-day cruise on the Enchanted Princess, 6 ports of call & more! Starting at \$5,299 pp w/2 per room.

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, March 17-29, '26. Roundtrip Delta flights from Mpls to Honolulu, city tours incl. Pearl Harbor & Arizona Memorial, 8-day cruise aboard Pride of America. \$7,699 pp w/2 per room.

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 17-21, '26. Round trip Delta flights, 4 nights accommodations, 8 meals, guided Memorial & Monuments tours, Arlington Nat'l Cemetery & more! \$1,799 pp w/2 per room.

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



Sparks Free Classified Ad Form for all SWCE Members

Ads need to be received in our office by **December 3** to ensure being printed in the January **Sparks**. Please print neatly or type your ad of **20 words or less** on this form. We reserve the right to edit ad copy to allow space for more ads. Ads received after the 3rd will be printed in the February issue.

☐ For Sale ☐ Wanted ☐ Give Away

Phone # _____ Account # _____

Name _____

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

How do consumers find qualified professionals to conduct home energy audits?

Visit: energy.gov/energysaver/professional-home-energy-assessments

2026
THANKS
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT...
**STEELE-WASECA
CO-OP ELECTRIC**
Owatonna, MN 55060
507-451-7340 / 800-526-3514
www.swce.coop

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FREE 2026 Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric calendars are available at the co-op's office, 2411 W. Bridge St., Owatonna, while supplies last. You may pick them up during regular business hours. #swceAPPRECIATION

Non-Discrimination Statement

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

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

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

member connection

(PowerOn Midwest continued from Page 1)

including what is driving the need for the project and how it supports reliability and economic growth.

- Information on the regulatory process and the two permits required by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission: the Certificate of Need and the Route Permits.

- Opportunities for attendees to ask questions and share feedback directly with project staff.

Why it matters to Steele-Waseca members

PowerOn Midwest will benefit the entire Upper Midwest region, helping to ensure that electricity is delivered where and when it's needed every hour of every day—regardless of weather, generation source, or energy use levels. Additionally, the 765 kV project will be located in the Steele-Waseca service area, so some members may host a portion of the transmission line on their property. Great River Energy and its partners are in the very early stages of development so the route has not yet



PowerOn Midwest



been determined and there will be many opportunities as the process continues for cooperative members to provide input and have their questions answered.

Looking ahead

Great River Energy and its utility partners anticipate filing a Certificate of Need application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in February 2026. After that, there will be multiple opportunities for public participation in both the Certificate of Need and Route Permit phases. GRE and its Pow-

erOn Midwest partners are committed to early and proactive engagement, recognizing the importance of local voices in identifying the best location for the transmission line.

For more information, visit PowerOnMidwest.com.

 #swceGROWTH

(Checking your breakers continued from Page 5)

condos, they're often tucked inside a hallway closet or laundry area. If you're unsure where yours is, your building manager or maintenance team can help you locate it.

If your breaker box looks fine and power is still out, it's time to check with your neighbors to see if they're affected. If they are, report the outage to Steele-Waseca. While waiting for updates, unplug sensitive electronics to protect them from power surges when electricity returns. Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce fire risk. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to preserve food. 1114214

Being prepared for outages is just as important as knowing what to do when they happen. Keep a flashlight, extra batteries and a portable phone charger in an easy-to-reach spot. A battery-powered radio can help you stay informed during extended outages, and having your electric cooperative's contact information handy will make reporting issues faster and easier.

(Courtesy: Great River Energy)

 #swceLIFE+

How to Check and reset electrical breakers



Locate your breaker panel

Find the electrical panel in a basement, garage or utility room.



Identify the tripped breaker

Look for a switch that is in the middle or "off" position, or shows a red/orange indicator.



Reset the breaker safely

Firmly switch the tripped breaker to the "off" position then "on."



Check for recurring issues

If it trips again, unplug devices and call a qualified electrician.