

# Connections

April 2018

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 4

## Co-op directors & staff visit state legislators

Electric cooperatives bring a unique perspective to legislative issues as their customers own the utility. Your co-op's annual spring visit occurred to voice members' concerns at St. Paul March 15.

This year electric co-ops do not see a lot of pressing energy issues on the docket. However, they took the time to update legislators on some issues that may be coming next year after the election of a new governor and House.

"Battery storage of electricity is the new hot topic at the Capitol with a dozen bills introduced," stated Jim Horan, Minnesota Rural Electric Association's (MREA) director of government affairs. "None apply to co-ops at this point, probably because cooperatives are working on energy storage solutions without mandates."

Deregulation is a topic, Horan added. "Third-party wind and solar entities are pushing to bypass the utility to sell energy right to commercial/industrial customers. This is not deregulation for everyone, but cherry-picks certain high dollar loads. The result is those loads don't pay for the infrastructure they still use, leaving the costs for everyone else to pay. The cost shift increases rates for regular members and means less investment in grid reliability."

"Move-over" legislation seeks to clarify a 2015 law. "The legislation requires drivers to move over and slow down when passing utility vehicles working along the road with four-lane



**Power of the people...** Electric cooperative directors and staff visited with their legislators on issues regarding electric cooperative member-owners and their electricity; topics ranged from renewables' mandates, safety and energy conservation. Pictured above are Federated Rural Electric directors, spouses and General Manager Scott Reimer with Senator Bill Weber (seated, second from left).



Brown County REA also conducted similar visits with Senator Gary Dahms (right). Directors and CEO Mike Heidemann attended.

highways," Horan explained. "This year we're asking that the legislation add two-lane roads in this bill. We've been lucky in Minnesota that none of our line crews were injured by drivers who are either distracted or going too fast, but we've had close calls. This legislation is for the safety of our crews."

The co-ops also educated legislators on the expected issues next year

with the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) and renewables. "CIP requires utilities to reduce energy usage (1½ percent each year) by offering rebates. Many energy-saving measures we've used are occurring naturally now or aren't cost effective to incentivize. The current CIP is unsustainable and actually discourages — **Continued on Page 7**

### At A Glance



**22-watt LED light bulb inside shops, garages & machine sheds for \$39.50**

Federated now sells an LED bulb that works in these locations; it replaces a 150-watt incandescent. Remove the CFL's slow start during the cold weather and replace with a bright, white LED. You will love that the rebate is factored into this price! Buy yours from the Jackson office today.



# Cold climate ductless heat pumps heat & cool for home additions, all-electric homes, cabins

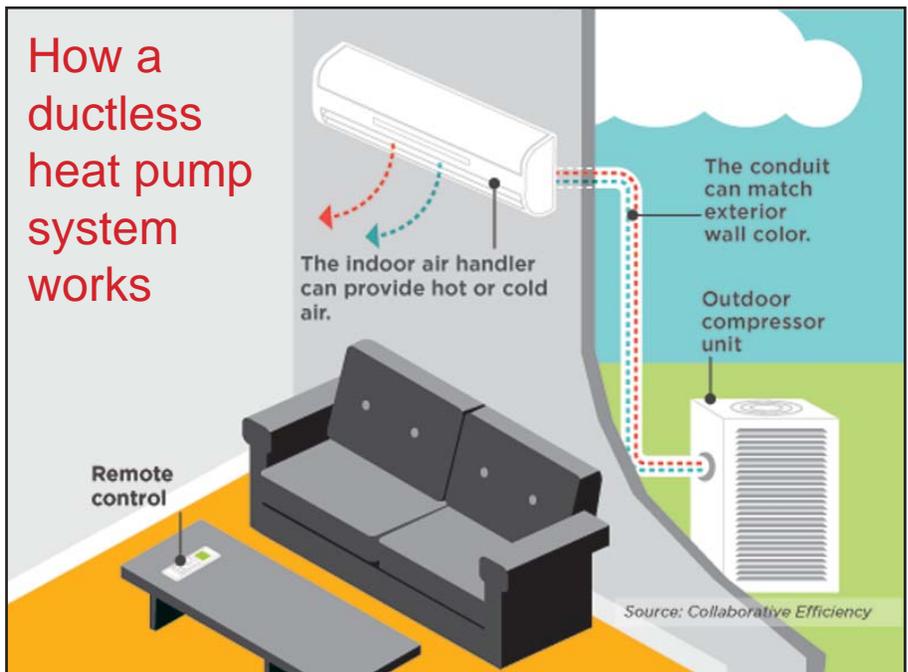
Tired of sweating it out in the summer because you don't have central air? Maybe you don't have ductwork or an addition to the house caused the existing central air to not keep up.

Ductless heat pumps could be your cooling solution, plus supplement your heating system with energy efficiency up to 230 percent.

A ductless heat pump has two parts: the outdoor unit/condenser and the indoor unit/evaporator that's near the ceiling. They are connected together by refrigerant linesets and control wiring. No duct work is needed so it works best in an open area that maximizes the coverage area; for example, it works well with an open kitchen, dining room and living room. Perhaps, it's a cabin with no ductwork. Maybe it's a house with all electric baseboard heat or mini-boiler system that has no ductwork. Ductless heat pumps will work great in these areas.

A recent study by the Center for Energy Efficiency and Environment (CEE) studied ductless cold climate heat pumps on two homes in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The grant was funded by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Great River Energy and the Electric Power Research Institute.

In the study Mitsubishi Ductless Hyper Heat units of 1.5 tons and two 1-ton units were installed. Both were installed in homes that had electric baseboard heat. They studied how often the ductless heat pumps ran and down to what temperatures. The ductless heat pumps provided heat as low as -13°F. "One homeowner was so pleased that he



**Add air conditioning comfort even if you do not have duct work! Cold climate ductless heat pumps add energy-efficient cooling and heating in buildings without duct work. The cold climate technology provides energy efficiency up to 230 percent! Check out the cooperative's rebate to add to the cool savings!**

removed several baseboard electric heaters," stated Ben Schoenbauer, a senior research engineer from CEE. "One home cut their energy use by 52 percent thanks to the ductless system, while the other one experienced 54 percent energy reduction that was required to meet the same electric heating load. One saved \$610 a year and the other one saved \$349/year."

The reason is that electric baseboard, miniboilers and plenum heat are 100 percent efficient. Meanwhile, these ductless heat pumps have a Seasonal Coefficient Of Performance

(COP) of 2.3 or 230 percent efficiency. Of course, the savings vary as it's based on the size of the home, existing heating system and insulation. Keep in mind that if you have an old LP furnace that the efficiency could be 60 to 80 percent.

Consider installing a ductless air source heat pump to solve your cooling and heating needs. Your electric cooperative even offers ductless heat pump rebates; see Page 4 for details.

For more information on this study go to [mncee.org](http://mncee.org) and click on research projects. ☺

## Cordless screwdriver makes jobs easier

Are you planning on doing some remodeling projects once the weather warms up? Speed up such projects with the Tacklife Cordless Screwdriver.

Features include:

- 31 drill bits (including extension)
- Recharge this screwdriver with a regular USB charger. It is a great advantage for your convenience and no need to worry about losing the charger.
- LED light with four beads which is brighter than other tools.
- Flashlight in the base of tool provides a bright working environment.
- Forward/reverse switch to loosen



The Tacklife Cordless Screwdriver makes do-it-yourself projects easier with its handy design and LED lights.

very tight screws or firmly tighten screws easily and freely.

- Torque adjustment ring lets you drive screws without stripping, which is suitable for small screws and more precision jobs. Enjoy the six torque settings.

- Screwing up is not a problem. Portable and lightweight size fits your hand perfectly. The handle angle is adjustable, allowing you a better grip to improve working efficiency.

- Not for heavy-duty projects or to be used as a drill.

The Tacklife Cordless Screwdriver is approximately \$30 on Amazon. 

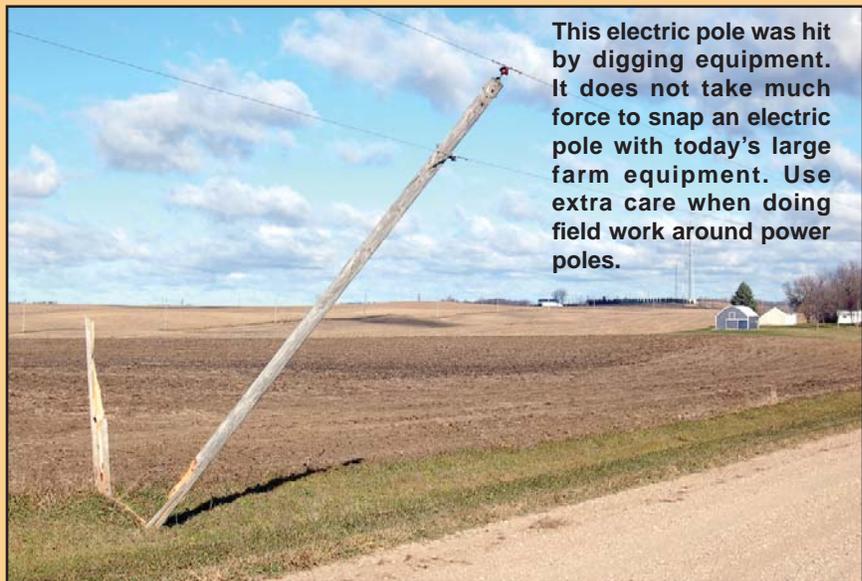
## Safety

### *Beware of poles during spring planting season*

It's that time of the year again. Farmers are anxious to get back in the fields to plant. Your electric co-op urges farmers to not get in such a big hurry that they forget about the electric poles along the edges of their fields. Today's bigger equipment makes it easier than ever to knock an electric pole down. Take extra care when working end rows. If will end up saving time in the long run for both you and your neighbors, if you cause an outage. Plus, hitting a pole can affect one's wallet, as well. Farmers who clip poles are responsible for paying the replacement costs to fix the issue.

What do you do if you hit an electric pole and are afraid to get out of the tractor because you may be in contact with a powerline?

The best thing to do, if there is no immediate danger, is to stay in the tractor and call your electric co-op.



This electric pole was hit by digging equipment. It does not take much force to snap an electric pole with today's large farm equipment. Use extra care when doing field work around power poles.

If fire is a danger, then you must exit the tractor. Make sure you do not touch the ground and the tractor at the same time. The best way to exit the cab is to hop from the tractor and

land on both feet away from the tractor. You can then hop out of the immediate area until you are safely in the clear.

Be safe this planting season! 

# Federated Focus

## Home Show Prize winners

Thanks for stopping by our March Home Show booths. Gary Beseke, Alpha, won the grand prize (free trip for two on the Basin Tour July 10-12). The two 22-watt LED light bulb winners were Elmer Wendt, Fairmont; and Greg Post, Lakefield.

## Go on Basin Tour July 10-12

We still have open seats for the power plant, lignite mine, synfuels plant and riverboat ride. Price is \$138 for one Federated member or \$275 for a Federated couple. The price includes air conditioned charter bus, hotel, all meals and snacks too! Call Federated to sign up: 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520; ask for Andrea and provide your credit card number or mail a check to reserve your seats. Money is refundable if you have to cancel.

## Ductless heat pump rebate \$300



Federated offers a \$300 ductless air source heat pump rebate. (See the story on Page 2).

Visit Federated's website to download the form ([www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)) or call/e-mail Federated to request it. The rebate must have a copy of the receipt with it. It will be posted as a credit on your electric bill.

## High school seniors earn \$700!



Apply for one of the nine Operation Round

Up scholarships by April 11. Find the application on our website or with local school counselors. Must be the son or daughter of a current Federated member. Scholarship is awarded after successfully completing the first semester of higher education with a 2.0 GPA and proof of spring semester registration. ☎

## 3 local students awarded the \$1,000 Federated/Basin/L&O scholarships



Jessica Christoffer



Hannah Johanson

Federated congratulates the three local students receiving the 11<sup>th</sup> annual \$1,000 Federated/Basin Scholarships.

Jessica Christoffer, Round Lake, earns a \$1,000 Basin/Federated scholarship. Christoffer is a senior at Jackson County Central High School. Christoffer will attend South Dakota State University and major in Food

Science and Technology. She is the daughter of Dean and Andrea.

Hannah Johanson, Elmore, receives the \$1,000 Federated/L&O/Basin Scholarship. Johanson is a freshman at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge; she graduated from Granada-Huntley-East Chain High School. Johanson is majoring in Dental Hygiene. She is the daughter of Greg and Rochelle.



Nicholas Resch

"These scholarships come from two of our power suppliers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative based in Bismarck, North Dakota; and L&O Power Cooperative in Rock Rapids, Iowa," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "We are members of both cooperatives since 2008. Basin awards 136 of these scholarships to local electric cooperatives. Federated is excited to award the \$1,000 scholarships to Jessica and Hannah."

In addition, Nicholas Resch, Spirit Lake, earned an employee dependent \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric. Cooperative employees with graduating seniors can submit the same application to Basin where 20 employee scholarships are awarded. Basin serves electric cooperatives in nine states. Resch is a senior at Spirit Lake High School. He will attend South Dakota State University majoring in Ag System Technology. Resch is the son of Mike and Julie.

The scholarship is available to Federated members with high school seniors and college students who will be enrolled full-time in an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school working on an undergraduate or master's degree. Federated received 18 applications. Each applicant completed a two-page application, wrote an essay, submitted grades, a reference checklist and college test scores.

These scholarship applications were judged by retired school personnel Rosemary Schultz, Lakefield; and Sharon Rosen, Welcome. ☎

## Kilen Woods State Park GreenTouch clean up May 5

Help spruce up Kilen Woods State Park north of Lakefield. Saturday, May 5, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Paint, rake, pick up litter and clean! All ages welcome. Federated provides a free hot dog lunch. RSVP so we have enough food; call 847-3520 or e-mail [info@federatedrea.coop](mailto:info@federatedrea.coop). ☎



# Nina Walter recalls all of her co-op memories during her accounting career as she retires

Nina Walter worked nearly four decades at Federated in accounting. After her second day on the job (March 13, 1979) she didn't know if she would come back.

"I was hired to read meters and do accounting," she explained. "On my second day at Federated it was a blizzard; the roads were bad and I was being trained on how to read meters by Glen Hemiller. He hit a snowdrift and the pickup was pointed up in the air. The Welcome line crews had to come and rescue us. I wondered what I had gotten myself into!"

Federated is thankful that Walter came back for day three, as it turned into 39 years at Federated. "I started out doing accounts payable, general ledger and capital credits," Walter added. "It was all done with paper, pencil, a 10-key calculator and sometimes a large eraser. I also read meters five days a month: three days for the large power accounts to reset the demand and two days for those members who hadn't turned in a reading for two months in a row. One day was also spent on collection calls and disconnecting meters."

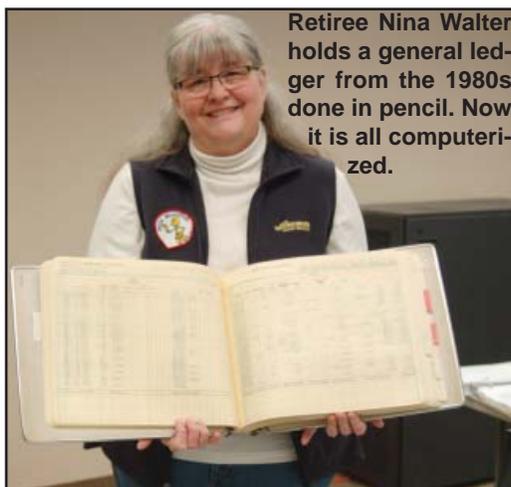
Her job changed after coming back from maternity leave due to one employee retiring and another who was injured in a car accident. "I then took over the work orders and inventory," she explained. "I no longer had time to read meters.

"When I started we had a punch card system for billing," Walter said. "It read the holes on each member's card. Then in the early 1980s Federated added its first AS400 system, which was upgraded multiple times. We had Stewarts write the programming for the bills and purchased the accounts payable and general ledger inventory software from Daffron. Over the years working with our programmers, they would call and tell me the steps to key in the programming so I learned how to write a query to find information for different reports."

Walter was self taught too. "I took an Excel class, but then the office manager gave me a book on 'Visual Basic for Dummies.' From that I created a linemen timesheet that we uploaded to the AS400 so that way we did not have to re-enter all of the information again."

Another milestone was when the first PC was purchased in the mid-1980s. Five of us in billing shared it, along with Member Services for energy-efficiency loan billing.

Other billing milestones involved adding the Alliant customers into billing in 2015 and the conversion to PCS for the billing and accounting software this past year.



Retiree Nina Walter holds a general ledger from the 1980s done in pencil. Now it is all computerized.

As Federated added services to the members, Walter added billing and accounting for these, including load management programs, Rural TV, CTV, long-distance telephone service and Exede internet.

Walter recalls the worst Federated storm was the April 2013 ice storm because it started with 2 inches of freezing rain and then 5 inches of snow. Federated had more than 2,000 without power at the peak. "I was called back to answer outage calls in the evening of April 9," Walter stated. "At one point we didn't have any trucks to respond to outages as

so many trucks were stuck; it was a sinking feeling as storm outages usually last a few hours. Day two I remember coming to work and seeing line trucks all around our office. Over the weekend I helped deliver meals to the line crews with my husband; it was amazing to see all of the downed lines. While the outages lasted a week, the accounting paperwork was done, redone and filed multiple times with the Federal Emergency Management Agency — that process lasted four years before we finally received our FEMA funding."

Walter wore different hats as she became the co-op's senior accountant, then interim office manager and finally as assistant office manager.

"Nina is truly one of those loyal employees that puts our members and Federated's interests above her own," said Office Manager Julie Resch. "The few years that I've worked with her, I've known her to always go the extra mile. It's been fascinating to hear her stories as a meter reader and the changes that came about as the cooperative moved from paper records to computer systems. Her depth of knowledge is immeasurable as she always has the answer for any question that we may have. Personally, I am grateful that she stayed on an extra few years to help me learn the ropes. Her experience and leadership will be missed, but we all wish her the best in her retirement — truly she had an impressive career."

Before coming to Federated, Walter graduated from Lakefield High School, attended Willmar Vocational Technical School for accounting and worked at a flax straw plant in Windom doing weekly payroll.

Walter's last day at Federated was March 30. Walter is looking forward to "doing what I want, when I want," she added. "I may get a part-time job or do volunteer work." Either way, this avid baker and sewer will keep busy with her husband Wayne, son Matthew and his wife Paula, who live in Moorhead.

Thanks again for the dedicated service Nina! 🇺🇸

# Tree trimming keeps powerlines in the clear

When tree limbs and power lines come together it can lead to blinks, outages and downed wires. Your electric co-op uses Carr's Tree Service to trim problem trees in the co-op's service area.

Throughout the year linemen and members can also notify the electric co-op and take note of trees that could be potential problems. Carr's then comes in and takes care of them when in the area. This maintenance prevents numerous problems from developing. Trees in electric lines can create shock and fire hazards. If a tree is dead or dying, it could pull down power lines when it falls. This is especially true during storms. In addition, trees



that grow into power lines can be hazards to climbing children.

Regular tree maintenance helps ensure safe and reliable service. Take advantage of your electric co-op's crew of tree professionals, rather than trying to do the job yourself if you think you have a tree that could potentially cause problems with powerlines around your home.

Carr's tree trimmers have marked trucks. If you are unsure of their identity, contact your electric cooperative. Sometimes tree-trimming scammers operate in the state.

If you have a tree you that concerns you, please call your electric cooperative today. ☎

## Look for Carr's Tree Service to be operating in your area this season

Carr's Tree Service will be in Federated service area from January to June.

Carr's Tree Service will be in BCREA's area from July to August and was there from January to March too. ☎

## Linemen Appreciation Day April 9, 2018

Thank you line crews for keeping on our electricity on & braving bad weather to restore it, whether it's meal time or bedtime!

Share your thanks on our Facebook page  
or #ThankALineworker



## Don't scrimp on the shrimp recipes! Share yours with us today

Share with us your impressive shrimp recipes. Share with us recipes for scampi, stir fry, skewers, Alfredo, as appetizers and main courses. Share your favorite shrimp recipes and send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by April 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

### Beef Taco Chili Soup by Mary Sue Lenort, Fairmont

Brown beef and onions. Then add the everything to the slow cooker. Cook on high for about four hours.

3 lbs. ground beef	14½ oz. can diced tomatoes
2 c. diced onions	1 pkg. taco seasoning
2 - 15½ oz. cans pinto beans	1 pkg. chili seasoning
15½ oz. can kidney beans	1 pkg. ranch dressing mix
14½ oz. Mexican-style stewed tomatoes	16 oz. can kernel corn

Serve with taco chips, grated cheese and sour cream. ☺

## Electric cooperative legislative visits

— Continued from Page 1

many of the new technologies that can use energy more efficiently. Electric co-ops and municipal utilities are working with stakeholders on a sustainable CIP path.”

Plus, the renewable energy standard's mandate may change with a new governor. Now the goal is to have 25 percent renewables by 2025. “While utilities are on track to meet it, groups are proposing to raise the goal,” Horan said. “Again, let us make the right decision based on the marketplace and not force mandates and higher rates.”

The 50 electric cooperatives' delegates also listened to the six declared major party governor candidates. This was the first time all six candidates were on the same stage from both parties. The candidates discussed their positions on various topics ranging from education, guns, health insurance and more. ☺

## Sump pump failure?



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A subsidiary of your electric co-op

What if you go on a two-week vacation and your sump pump fails? You don't have to worry with a Heartland Security System. Heartland Security systems do more than sound the alarm. They can also monitor your home for flooding and more. Other features include:

- Smoke sensors detect fires and then dispatch the fire department.
- Carbon monoxide detectors pick up the presence of this odorless “silent-killer” gas emitted by malfunctioning furnaces or running vehicles.
- Water sensors alert you to a failing sump pump, drain, toilet or sewer back-up before costly damage occurs.
- High/low temperature sensors alert you to extreme changes. ☺



April showers bring  
May showers and  
June showers and...

Keep your showers going and going with a new electric water heater from your electric co-op. Our water heaters have a limited-lifetime warranty for the original owner. Call us today! ☺

Pick up the phone  
before the shovel;  
call before digging!

1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can

also register at [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺

## Sarah Holmberg wins the Youth Tour Contest & the D.C. trip



(Seated): Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield, won Federated's free trip to Washington, D.C in the Youth Tour Contest. Lydia Steinhaus, Fairmont, won third place and \$100. (Inset photo) Emily Paplow, Lakefield, won second place and \$150. (Back): Other finalists were: Eric Head, Fairmont; and Amber Ruthenbeck, Okabena.

Federated salutes the winners in its 2018 Youth Tour Contest.

Winning the grand prize was Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield; she won Federated's free trip to Washington, D.C. June 9-14. Holmberg is the daughter of Mark and Ramona. Sarah is a senior at Jackson County Central. She will be among 1,500 teenagers from across the U.S. participating in Youth Tour, which is sponsored by electric cooperatives. She will tour the D.C. memorials and sites, witness Congress in session, visit with legislators and enjoy an evening dinner theater, while learning about cooperatives.

Second and third place awards of \$150 and \$100 were awarded to Emily Paplow and Lydia Steinhaus. Paplow received second place. She is the daughter of Cory and Lisa, Lakefield. She is a senior attending Jackson County Central High School. Steinhaus is a sophomore at Martin Luther High School. She is the daughter of Paul and Lynn, Fairmont.

Each applicant completed an application and an essay on an energy-related topic. Eight students entered the contest. The applicants also received a \$20 gift certificate to Amazon.com. The finalists were called back for personal interviews March 19.

The other two finalists were Eric Head, Fairmont, and Amber Ruthenbeck, Okabena. Head is a junior at Fairmont Senior High School and is the son of Jim and Amy. Ruthenbeck is a freshman at Heron Lake-Okabena; she is the daughter of Les and Lori. ☺

## Federated Rural Electric

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The Board of Directors generally meets the last business day of the month at 9 a.m. at the Jackson office. Regular board meetings are open to the membership. Members interested in discussing business items should contact the general manager or president three days before the meeting.

## Twins Play Ball Free Clinic May 12 at Lakefield's King ballfield by the city pool



**6-9 year-old boys/girls 9 a.m.**  
**10-13 year-old boys/girls 10:30 a.m.**  
**706 Menage Ave., Lakefield, MN**

Play Ball is sponsored by the Twins Community Fund, Great River Energy and Federated Rural Electric. No registration required, but parents must complete a waiver on-site. The equipment is provided, but bring your glove. Learn the fundamentals of hitting, throwing and fielding. In case of inclement weather the clinic will be moved into the Jackson County Central Middle School gym. Kids: register to win one of five \$10 Dairy Queen gift cards from Federated. Thanks Jackson County Central Community Education for hosting! ☺