

Connections

August 2018



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 8

2018 Youth Tour makes D.C. fun!

Your electric cooperative sponsored a high school student to attend the Youth Tour June 9-14. Electric cooperatives from across the U.S. sponsored 1,888 teens. Explore D.C. through the eyes of two local teens, who were among the 40 Minnesota students winning trips this year.

Sarah Holmberg's trip highlights

Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield, was sponsored by Federated Rural Electric. She is a 2018 graduate of Jackson County Central.

The Capitol visit

The visit to the Capitol was very different than any of the other places we experienced. We had the opportunity to go into the North Chamber, where the Senate meets. Sadly, we were not able to go on the tour of the Capitol. The representatives we met with answered questions about gun control, net neutrality, opioids and more.

Memorials

All of the memorials were very beautiful. Each one was different and unique as to why the memorial was created. One of my favorite memorials was the FDR Memorial. It was cool to see that part of history through murals, quotes and waterfalls. It was all outside so nature surrounded you everywhere, which was amazing.

Museums

The museums in D.C. covered anything you wanted to learn about. I thought it was interesting that most of the museums



Washington, D.C. came to life for Zachary Helget, New Ulm; and Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield. Each earned a free trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by their electric cooperative.

were free. The Smithsonians were very large and some had rare and expensive artifacts. I loved the fact that everyone in the public has the opportunity to see them.

Mount Vernon

I learned that the original property included about 8,000 acres, but now

consists of only 500 acres. I enjoyed the many interactive parts to Mount Vernon and the many buildings and gardens to explore. Also, someone is always around to answer questions.

Dance and musical

The Youth Tour Dance was very different from anything I had experienced. Most of that night was spent eating ice cream and talking to one of the speakers named Bobby, who went to Haiti a few times to install power lines and help teach the people there how to be a safe lineman. The musical we saw was very good! We saw "Scottsboro Boys," which is a true story about racism and injustice in the American South. I really enjoy musicals!

Speaker

One of the main speakers this year was Mike Schlappi. He told us how he was paralyzed at a young age. He had hard days, but in the end he earned four Olympic medals in wheelchair basketball. It was a very humbling story and I learned that a lot of bad things can happen to you in life and it's okay to have a few bad days, but be thankful for the life and experiences you have. Always use them to push yourself in life to help yourself and others.

New friends


I met so many great people! I have stayed in touch with a few of them and they live near me so hopefully I can see them soon.

— Continued on Page 6

At A Glance



'Water' you waiting for? Call us for your next electric water heater

If your water heater is more than 25 years old, you may want to consider replacing it now — before it leaks. Federated's energy-efficient water heaters come with a life-time warranty against leaks for the original owner! Cost is \$539, plus tax, which includes installation. We're your one-stop shop! 



Energy Wise

Farm energy audits eligible for 75 percent grant coverage thanks to Great River Energy

Agricultural producers are the focus of a new farm energy management program that is now available to local electric cooperative members.

Qualified participants will receive one-on-one assistance in identifying and prioritizing energy-efficiency opportunities. They will ultimately come away from the experience with an energy management plan to implement.

"We understand that each operation is unique and requires personalized assistance," stated the co-op's energy expert. "This program will take the guesswork out of where you should spend your time, money and efforts when it comes to energy management."

Audit outcomes will provide information ranging from simple, no-cost operational changes that can save you money to an analysis of your energy use, which equipment is using the most energy and what can be done to decrease your energy costs.

Your electric cooperative offers this opportunity with assistance from wholesale power provider Great River Energy (GRE); the United States Department of Agriculture recently awarded GRE a \$100,000 grant from their Rural Energy for America Program (USDA-REAP) to conduct these audits. Program participants only need to pay 25 percent of the cost of their agricultural audit; meanwhile, the other 75 percent is covered through grant funding. The average audit costs are approximately \$2,500, but can vary based on the ag producer or farm's operation size.

These audits can also be used as a qualifying audit for the USDA's



You can be happy too! Take the guesswork out of your energy expenses with an ag producer energy audit. Apply now for a grant that covers 75 percent of the audit's cost. Plus, your cooperative's energy-efficiency rebates will help offset the costs of new efficient lighting and equipment.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which offers financial assistance in completing an AgEMP-level audit and energy-efficiency project implementation. EQIP audit applications, which are due August 2018 for review and approval for 2019 audit funding; the 2019 deadline is tentatively anticipated for August as well. The EQIP funding can be used jointly with the cooperative's agricultural audit and energy-efficiency rebate funding, as listed on the co-op's website.

Do you have an energy-efficiency project for this year and don't want to wait for audit funding next year? Use the cooperative agricultural audit program to cover 75 percent of the AgEMP audit cost and immediately become approved for EQIP Implementation funding and cooperative implementation rebates.

Not sure where to start with the agricultural audit or USDA-EQIP programs? For more information call 800-441-8525 to verify eligibility and cost.

New baby seat mimics movements of mom

The MamaRoo Infant Seat is not just a baby swing. It mimics the way mommy moves. It bounces up and down and sways from side to side, just like parents do when comforting their baby.

Parents can select from five unique motions, like car ride and tree swing, and five different speeds. The swing also has four soothing sounds to go with the motions. Parents can also connect it to any MP3 player.

The MamaRoo reclines to multiple positions to allow baby to lie back and relax or sit up and play. The weight range runs from birth to 25 pounds (or when baby can sit up unassisted).


Bluetooth allows parents to control the motion, sound, speed and volume from



Take your baby swing into the future with the smart MamaRoo Infant Seat.

their smart device without disturbing the sleeping baby. The MamaRoo is compatible with all Apple devices newer than the iPhone 4s that are running iOS 9 or newer. The Android app is compatible with most Android devices that support Bluetooth Low Energy and are running Android 4.3 or newer.

Finally, an overhead toy mobile includes interactive, reversible toy balls. They keep the baby's attention with the sound of the crinkle ball, rattle or reflective mirror ball. The seat is also machine washable.

The MamaRoo Infant Seat is available on Amazon.com for approximately \$220. 

Safety

Which pole is more dangerous to you?



A

Picture A, courtesy of Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative, might seem like the obvious choice. In reality they're both equally deadly.

Picture B is certainly less dramatic than A — no burn marks, smoke or flames exist yet, but the lines lying on the ground in picture B still had electricity coursing through them at 7,200 volts. In fact, the ground itself could have possibly been energized around the pole. Before the line crew arrived to cut the power, anyone who ventured too close could have been killed.


When a call comes into your electric cooperative about a downed line, one of the main things that go through linemen's minds is to get there as quickly as possible. They want to get to the breaker and de-energize the



B

line before the downed line is a threat to anyone who happens to pass by.

When a farmer or driver is responsible for downed lines, they often call it in right away. In other situations, especially winter storms, lines can be knocked to the ground and remain live with little indication to electric cooperative linemen to the exact nature of the problem until they get to the location.

Luckily, no one was hurt during the situations in either picture, but these experiences serve as a reminder to always treat all power lines as if they are energized. Stay away from downed lines; keep others away and contact your electric co-op immediately. If a downed line crosses a road or high-traffic area, contact 911. 

Federated Focus

2018 Annual Meeting results



This issue went to the printer before the Annual Meeting August 1. Watch for meeting highlights

in the September *Connections* edition.

Apply for Operation Round Up

The next deadline is approaching for Operation Round Up — September 28. Find the application on our website (www.federatedrea.coop), call or e-mail us (info@federatedrea.coop) to request the application. Encourage local organizations to apply for funding for community service projects, community leadership programs, education/youth projects, environmental projects, emergency-energy assistance and disaster relief. The recipients will be announced in November.



Great grilling is thrilling!

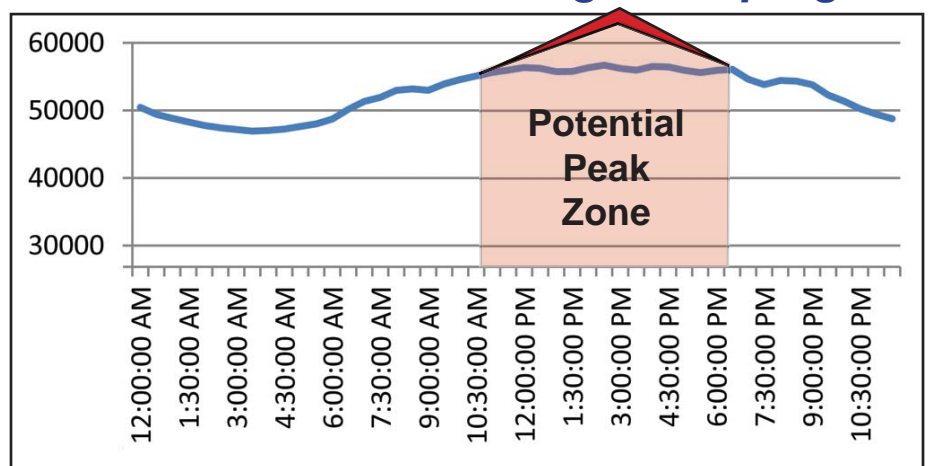
The secret ingredient to your next cookout is using an electric grill, which is purchased from Federated. We still have a great selection of tabletop, cart or even a rotisserie model. Enjoy juicy pork chops! Kids love how quick it is for the food to arrive. Grandpa loves not having to lift heavy bags of charcoal or LP tanks. Just plug it in and turn the dial to select your heat setting. Prices range from \$65 to \$172. See the display models in our Jackson office. ☎

Jackson County 4-Hers receive purple T-shirts



Purple T-shirts with the 4-H logo and “Grand champion efforts” were presented to 4-H members during entry day of the Jackson County Fair by Federated directors. Federated will do the same at the Martin County Fair August 13. Pictured are the Crooks children: Brendan, Wyatt, Tessa and Payton from Heron Lake.

The value of the load management program



The hot summer weather can lead to a high electric load for Federated as air conditioners work to keep homes and businesses cool. This can be costly for members when Federated purchases additional power on the open market when it is most expensive. This is where the load management program helps. Federated controls members’ water heaters and air conditioners during times of peak demand to reduce its peak as much as possible.

See image above. The blue line is Federated’s total electric load. The red area is where Federated’s peak might have gone without Federated’s load management program. Federated tries to use a two-prong approach to load management. It uses water heaters in the first wave of control to reduce the amount of time air conditioners or heat pumps need to be controlled. During particularly hot and humid weather, the control periods open wider to accommodate the peak. In the winter control periods are generally shorter and happen either in the morning or evening, rather than throughout the afternoon.

Federated thanks members who participate in its load management programs. Load management can save the cooperative membership tens of thousands of dollars per month that otherwise would be added to the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) on electric bills. If you want join the money-saving programs, give your electric co-op a call and ask about those bill credits. ☎

Federated upgrades the old warehouse, outside lighting & office to LEDs with CERT's grant & rebate

This spring Federated practiced what it preaches and saw the white light!

Federated upgraded its 1990s T8 fluorescent lights in the Jackson office to new LED lighting fixtures. This energy-efficiency measure is expected to save the cooperative about \$10,000 a year on its electric bill.

"We sorely needed to upgrade our Jackson office, inside and out, plus our old warehouse lighting," stated Jon Beckman, Federated's marketing specialist. "We removed the T8 fluorescent bulbs installed in 1995 and the entire fixture, including the yellowed 1970s plastic fixture covers. With the new LED fixtures we eliminated the ballasts and bulb-changing labor. We now have a nice, crisp, white, even lighting throughout the whole office. The oldest warehouse went from sodium vapor fixtures with an orange cast to white LEDs too. In the highway sign we changed out the 8-foot fluorescent bulbs to LED strips. The wallpacks on the outside of the building went from an orange cast to a white light with better coverage, along with LED fixtures installed on the light poles for the employee parking."

"Our lighting upgrade was something we wanted to do for a few years," Beckman added. "When we received a \$3,200 lighting grant from the Clean Energy Resource Teams, it gave us a timeline for 2018 completion. The Federated energy-efficiency lighting rebates, which we promote to our members, also helped; the rebates amounted to nearly \$5,000, reducing the upgrade costs to about \$31,000. Meanwhile, we expect to save 104,000 kilowatt-hours a year or about \$10,000 annually on the co-op's electric bill. This creates about a three-year payback window as our lights are on during business hours. To put this in perspective we like to see a four to six-year payback on lighting retrofit projects."

The 247 light fixtures, plus two occupancy sensors in the mail room and

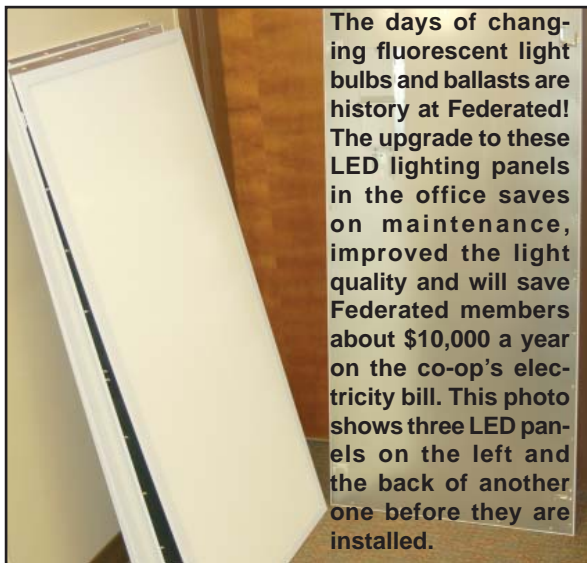


Wow! What a difference! The old lighting is on the right with an orange glow on Federated's Jackson office. The white LED lighting (on the left) provides better quality light and energy savings; check out the difference in the circles of light on the building. Federated offers LED lighting rebates to help offset the installation costs so you too can improve your lighting and decrease your electric bill.


vault, were upgraded over approximately 10 days by a local electrical contractor; this firm originally did the wiring to the building in 1970.

The office's quality of lighting improved as well. One method of measuring light is in footcandles. "The flame of one candle equals one footcandle," Beckman explained. "We had four offices that doubled their footcandles or brightness due to the LEDs. The first few days some employees thought they were too bright, but everyone adjusted and likes it now. The parking lot is also better lit at night for improved security and visibility."

Besides the energy savings for the Federated membership, Federated gained a showcase. "Now when members visit with me about LED lights, I can show them the examples



The days of changing fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts are history at Federated! The upgrade to these LED lighting panels in the office saves on maintenance, improved the light quality and will save Federated members about \$10,000 a year on the co-op's electricity bill. This photo shows three LED panels on the left and the back of another one before they are installed.

of our office, warehouse and outside lighting," Beckman said. "For members seeing is believing! I hope more members consider upgrading their business and farm lighting to LEDs and use our rebate. I'd be happy to answer any questions or mail them the rebate form, which is also found on our website www.federatedrea.coop." 

Youth Tour covers monuments, museums, memorials & more!

— Continued from Page 1
Thanks!

I would like to thank Federated Rural Electric and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association for sending me on this amazing trip! All of the chaperones we had were also wonderful! I would like to also thank a few of my friends, who previously went on the trip and encouraged me to apply. I would obviously recommend the trip to anyone. It is a great trip and you get to experience everything that D.C. has to offer and more (for free). Not only that, but you get to meet so many people from Minnesota and from around the country and you learn a lot about co-ops!

Zachary Helget's memories

Zachary Helget, New Ulm, was sponsored by Brown County REA. He will be a senior at Cathedral High School.

Capitol Visit

The Capitol was great! I was surprised at how many people worked there. We met with Rick Nolan, Jason Lewis and members from Collin Peterson's staff. We talked about gun violence and small business. However, the one thing we talked about with all the Representatives was the Farm Bill. We also met with Senator Tina Smith.

Memorials

The one thing that stuck out was the scale of the memorials. Pictures could never show how big many of these memorials actually are. My favorite one was the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial. We went to this one at night and the lights lit up the structures. When I saw this memorial in particular, it made me think about the horrible attack that happened right where I stood.

Museums

The thing I found most interesting



The 2018 Minnesota Youth Tour delegation pictured at the Lincoln Memorial. Sarah Holmberg and Zachary Helget are circled.

about the museums was all the history behind something. All of the works of art told a story and they all had some past. It was also amazing to think that some of the greatest painters to ever live painted some of these paintings that I enjoyed.

Mount Vernon

I learned that Washington was a very good business man, who was very smart with money and had lot of land. The thing that stood out was that they had many of the original things there from when he was still alive, like his bed, desk and many art pieces.

Dance and musical

The dance was literally crazy. There were so many people on the dance floor you could hardly move. The music was kind of old and was not very loud, but people still went crazy.

The play we saw was very good. The actors knew what they were doing and I did not see any errors. The play had a great deal of symbolism and a message that went along with it perfectly.

Speaker

Bobby was one of the speakers on the trip and he talked about his experience in Haiti. He went down there to put up power lines and give these people electricity. He was a volunteer and went with a group of guys who just wanted to help out the people down there. He spent months there putting up power lines and teaching people how to maintain them.

New friends

I made many new friends and will try to stay in touch with all of them.

Thanks

I would like to thank: the Brown County REA for sending me on this trip, my teacher Mrs. Dove for introducing me to program, Marcia Solie for picking me to represent Brown County on the trip and last, but not least, Gayle Karol for planning the whole trip.

Watch for details on the 2019 Youth Tour Contest in the December *Connections* newsletter. (C)

Got guac? Share your avocado recipes for healthy eating

How do you use avocados? Do you whip up some guacamole, add to sandwiches, enhance appetizers or make fries? Share with us your avocado recipes; send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by August 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

TIME AT THE LAKE IS A DREAM. A FLOODED BASEMENT IS A NIGHTMARE.

When it comes to a flooded basement, every second counts. Heartland Security's 24/7 monitoring will notify you as soon as a water sensor is triggered so you can find the problem and stop it. Heartland Security has the power to protect your home - from the bottom to the top.



Ham/Shrimp Jambalaya by Mary Ellen Stenzel, Heron Lake

- 2 slices bacon, diced
- ¼ c. green pepper, chopped
- ½ c. onion, chopped
- 1 T. flour
- 2 c. canned tomatoes
- 1½ c. water
- 2 c. shrimp or cubed ham or combination of both
- 1 c. Minute rice
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. thyme

Saute the bacon until it begins to brown. Add the green pepper and onion; saute until tender. Stir in the flour, when it has browned slightly, stir in the tomatoes and water. Bring to a boil. Stir in the shrimp/ham, rice and seasonings; bring to a boil again. Lower heat. Cover tightly and simmer about 20 minutes or until rice is tender, stirring occasionally to keep rice from sticking. 📧

Call Gopher State One 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 or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧

Your electric co-op
will be closed for Labor
Day September 2



Crews
will be
on call
for any
outages



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Summer construction slowed by rains

Early rains stopped several projects in their tracks. Mother Nature reminds us who's really in charge with storms and flooding. We had several poles go down with high winds in both counties and several lightning strikes that blew fuses and breakers.

One of the bigger projects this year is the underground project for the road move on County Road 4, installing 7 miles of underground cable that ends at the Round Lake substation. We

started this project and then the rains came. After about 2½ months this project is nearly completed.

So far this year we have installed 12 service extensions for new grain drying setups, installed service to 10 new hog barns, replaced roughly 45,000 feet of older underground cable and much more is yet to go; meanwhile, service rebuilds are down for this time of year at 12. We expect this to pick up and should be on pace for around 20. Crews are working in Round Lake to install service for the New Fashion Pork feed mill and the balance of time is spent on miscellaneous maintenance projects.

One final project involves a substation tie between our Heron Lake and Wilder substations. This provides redundancy and an emergency tie for the Heron Lake BioEnergy ethanol plant. We think it will be an extremely busy fall; if you have a project in 2018 yet, you might want to call us and get it scheduled.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved Alliant rate increase

You have heard me speak of this before and I promise this will be the last time for awhile. As you know, we have an Alliant power supply contract for our former Alliant members. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission recently reviewed our filing and approved it, which includes the two-year rate plan. Those rates went into affect as of August 1, 2018 with an overall 5 percent increase.

SENSUS system upgrade underway

We are receiving materials for our SENSUS metering tower upgrade as result of the propagation study. We will be installing six 110' wood poles at sites across the service area, plus use our communications tower inside the Lakefield Junction substation for the new equipment. We will install additional transmitting units on these poles to give us better coverage to transmit data back to headquarters, as well as sending signals to control devices. Right now, the load management system is one-way, meaning that we don't really know if the device received the signal; however, the new system will be two-way so we will know what's working. The new radio controls for our load management system will be a large user of this updated equipment. We expect deliveries this fall and hopefully can start changing them out as we need to upgrade about 5,000 units by 2025. It's a big project and we will have to be creative on how we approach it.



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.

Outside contractors will be needed to help us accomplish it.

Watching Farm Bill's Cushion of Credit

We are following the Farm Bill and are happy with the positive things for our ag community; however, one thing does not line up well with our business, which is referred to as "Cushion of Credit." Electric co-ops across America have loans with the Rural Utilities Service. It acts as an escrow account, allowing us to make sure we have the principal and interest money available. Federated annually puts funds into the Cushion of Credit account and draws from it, as needed, to make loan payments. The authors of the Farm Bill drastically lowered the interest rate we receive on those funds, which forces us to make changes to our financial plan; this could result in some services going short or not funded at all. We are encouraging the congressional leaders to give us a way to offset these losses so we can maintain our plans. This could be accomplished in several ways, but nothing is settled. Time will tell and we are anxious for some resolution.

2018 election year matters!

Be sure to vote in the August primary and again in November. Your vote plays a vital role in engaging candidates on issues that matter in our rural communities. 