

Connections

June 2018



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 6

Touchstone Energy celebrates 20 years, which is the electric co-ops' national brand

Touch*stone: a test or criterion for determining quality of genuineness

En*er*gy: the strength and vitality required for sustained activity; abundant power

Touchstone Energy: the power to bring people together to stand as the gold standard for electric cooperative culture and performance

For 20 years Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives have stood as the powerful brand of electric co-ops; this is now a network of more than 730 member electric cooperatives that proudly strive to stand as the touchstone in the industry. Together we have a core belief in demonstrating credibility, trustworthiness, solid values and a bold vision for the future centered on serving you, the member-owners, of your electric cooperative.

Being a part of Touchstone Energy provides us with resources to reach this standard of excellence and serve as your source for power and information.

- Maybe you have caught a TV or radio ad sponsored by Touchstone Energy on the local, state or national level. This *Connections* newsletter uses these ads, photos and graphics as well. For example, see the ad on Page 6.

20TH



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

- Digitally, your electric cooperative uses the website template from Touchstone Energy for a professional design without the extravagant cost, along with social media content.

- Touchstone Energy also offers training for employees ranging from customer service to key accounts and conferences too. Trained, knowledgeable employees are the front line for serving you, our member-owners, using the latest technology and high customer service standards.

- Your cooperative offers Touchstone Energy booklets ranging from energy-saving tips to buying your next heating/cooling system, along with the website: www.togetherwesave.com. Check out the

energy tips, videos and other information about the electric cooperative differences.

- Plus, Touchstone Energy conducts research with surveys and case studies that electric cooperatives can use for benchmarking and planning.

- Touchstone Energy sponsors the #whopowersyou contest, which is a two-year old program to recognize local volunteers.

By standing together as a network, electric cooperatives can accomplish more together and operate more effectively than ever before. Electric cooperatives realize that being best in class takes more than just keeping the lights on. It's also about demonstrating our values in the way we treat our member-owners, collaborate and build our communities. Simply put, it's the Cooperative difference.

As cooperatives move into the future together, your electric cooperative and the other members of Touchstone Energy are committed to serving you with a passion for innovation, a commitment to service excellence and an authentic promise to never underestimate the power of human connections.

At A Glance



We're pumped up on the larger heat pump rebates so you stay cool!

Time for a new cooling system? Don't go with central air; take the next step in energy efficiency with an air source heat pump. Federated is offering larger rebates (up to \$1,500) this summer to cover the cost difference. Ductless heat pump rebates are \$500, while ground source are \$350/ton.



Environmentally-beneficial electrification works to make the grid greener every year

Many Americans prefer that their energy comes from renewable sources, such as solar or wind power, rather than fossil fuels. As electric utilities shift to more options that include renewable energy sources and make existing generation technologies cleaner, electricity uses less fossil fuel per kilowatt-hour of energy produced. This idea of "environmentally beneficial electrification" means that innovations in energy technology are creating new ways to use electricity, instead of on-site fossil fuels, such as propane, natural gas and fuel oil.

Environmental groups, such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), recognize the value of this concept. Sheryl Carter, Co-Director of NRDC Energy Program, commented that, "Beneficial electrification will continue to play a big role in accelerating this transition in an effective and economic way, to the benefit of consumers, energy resilience and the environment."

Electric appliances can become greener over time

As a practical matter, beneficial electrification means that electric appliances, like your water heater, clothes dryer and oven, have the potential to become greener over time. When your electric co-op takes advantage of advances in technology and the wholesale market at the generation point, it means those efficiencies are inherently passed along to you, the co-op member.

Because large appliances have a typical lifespan of 15 to 20 years, it means that you benefit from the flexibility of the grid, besides the increased efficiency of the particular appliance. In other words, the high-efficiency electric oven you have today could be powered by renewable sources three years from now. This would not be the case with gas appliances, as you are essentially locked into the technology of that gas appliance for 15-20 years. As your co-op taps into more renewable options in the future, member-owners benefit from this trend through using electric appliances.

Small steps to reduce carbon footprint

For consumers looking for more environmentally-friendly energy options, choosing electric appliances over those powered by fossil fuels is an easy solution. Whether through electric lawn mowers, blowers and weed whackers (plug-in or rechargeable) or through electric water heaters and other

Innovations in energy technologies are creating new ways to use electricity rather than on-site fossil fuels, like propane, natural gas and gasoline.



Beneficial electrification suggests that the use of more all-electric appliances and equipment, like water heaters, weed trimmers and electric vehicles, provide consumers with greener products and benefits the environment.

appliances, beneficial electrification reduces greenhouse gases and helps the environment.

Electric co-ops across the country are using more renewable resources, bringing wind, solar and geothermal energy into the electric grid; this means electricity is becoming greener. As the overall energy sector evolves, your electric co-op progresses with the advancing technology and the opportunities as they become available. Co-ops can then offer a wider range of renewable power supply sources, while delivering safe, reliable and affordable power.

As NRDC's Carter further observed, "The successful transition to a clean energy future will require substantial reliance on efficient electric technologies like electric vehicles, heat pumps or grid-interactive electric water heaters, powered by an increasingly cleaner and more flexible electric system."

Contact the co-op's energy expert to discuss energy options and learn ways to save energy.

Give your tired feet a break with your own foot massager

What's better than a foot massage?

Not much...

Now you don't have to go to the masseuse or trade foot massages with your spouse. The Manur Foot Massager can do the job for you.

The Manur Foot Massager uses a combination of air compression and rolling massage. Two air pockets are built into each heel and instep. Enjoy full coverage and deep muscle massage when you use it. Multiple massage heads also enable manipulation of acupuncture points. The massager even has a shiatsu mode to alleviate foot pain, aches, knots and muscle tension.

Other features include:

- A heat option will warm and relax tired feet.
- The electric foot massager will auto-off after 15 minutes.
- The foot massager fits up to size 10 shoes.
- Removable cover provides easy washing.

Note: women who are pregnant or menstruating should not use the shiatsu foot massager. People with osteoporosis or other feet-related diseases should only use the foot massager after consulting their doctors.

The Manur Foot Massager costs approximately \$115 on Amazon.com. 



Get a foot massage in your easy chair. The Manur Foot Massager features shiatsu mode and heat options.

Safety

April showers bring May flowers bring June lightning powers

While lightning is most common in the summer, it can strike year round. According to the National Weather Service, on average, 55 people are killed each year and hundreds of others are injured by lightning in the United States. It is extremely important to take lightning seriously and to stay educated on lightning safety.

Your electric co-op urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children also understand the importance of lightning awareness and how to stay safe. Don't be fooled by blue skies. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. That is why the National Weather Service has adopted the saying: *When thunder roars, go indoors!* Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area where it is raining, even if you don't see clouds. This means if you can hear thunder,



Beware of lightning this summer season. It injures hundreds of people each year.

you're within striking distance. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

If caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and cannot take shelter in a building, take the following precautions:

- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles, such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light

— **Continued on Page 6**

Federated Focus

Candidates announced



The Nominating Committee created a slate of candidates for the 2018 Annual Meeting

August 1. District 1 Director: Perry Cranston, Heron Lake; and Glenn Dicks, Lakefield. District 2 Director: Richard Erickson, Lakefield; and Darvin Voss, Lakefield.

District 3 Nominating Committee: Gary Vanderwerf, Windom; and Chris Winter, Alpha. District 4 Nominating Committee: Harold Knutson, Jackson; and Robert Moffitt, Welcome.

Nominated for Trust Board Directors, which goes to the electric board for approval: Maryls Runge, Lakefield, for District 1; and Craig Rubis, Lakefield, for District 2.

83rd Annual Meeting notice



The Annual Meeting of the stockholders of Federated Rural

Electric will be August 1, 2018, at the Martin County West High School, Sherburn, Minnesota. Registration occurs from 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m. The meeting will be called to order at 6:30 p.m. for:

1. Determination of quorum.
2. Reading the meeting notice, together with proof of the due publication of mailing.
3. Presentation and reading of unapproved minutes of previous meetings of the members and the taking of necessary action.
4. Election of directors and nominating committee members.
5. Presentation and consideration of, and acting upon, reports of officers, directors and committees.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Adjournment. ☺

Federated Rural Electric 83rd Annual Meeting Wednesday, August 1

In the air conditioned Martin County West High School gym & cafeteria, Sherburn, MN

Park in the high school or elementary school lots, on side streets or south of the football field. Catch a ride on one of the Federated golf cart shuttles to the high school.

Registration: 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

- Register to receive your member attendance gift (pictured below).
- Enjoy the pork chop with cheesy hash browns, baked beans & cookies/bars with lemonade or coffee.
- Visit Federated, Basin Electric & Heartland Security booths.
- Play Bingo and win prizes from 5:30-6:15 p.m. in the gym.

Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.

- Business meeting/report
- Election of Directors and Nominators
- President and General Manager's reports



Drawing for 40 door prizes:

- \$300 Federated bill credit
- 4 Valley Fair tickets (\$184 value)
- \$100 Federated bill credit
- \$100 Welcome TV gift certificate

Total prizes valued at \$2,500

Kids, register for prizes too! 3 bikes will be given away. One for ages 3-5; another for ages 6-8 and a third bike for ages 9-10.

Register at meeting to win door prizes.

Must be present to win 40+ door prizes & kids' prizes.



Member attendance gift

Magnetic worklight: This LED 6" worklight features a seven-position magnetic pivot stand, a pivoting hook and a non-slip easy grip. Hang it, attach magnetically to the vehicle or stand it up for use

in the garage, home, camping or emergencies. Use the 300 lumens side light with two settings or the 45 lumens flashlight near the hook. Includes four AA batteries.

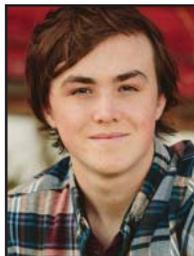
Congrats grads! Nine students awarded \$700 Operation Round Up scholarships



District 1:
Cobie Engbarth,
Brewster, grand-
daughter of Roger
& Shelly Brunk



District 2:
Ean Hohenstein
Lakefield,
son of
Lance & Dawn



District 3:
Lane Hansen,
Jackson,
son of
Paul & Tara



District 4:
Logan Potthoff,
Dunnell,
son of
Neal & Dawn



District 5:
Emma Behrends,
Welcome,
daughter
of Kim



District 6:
Jazlyn Meyer
Fairmont,
daughter of
Joel & Dawn



At-Large District:
Matthew Holm
Dunnell,
son of
Tim & Tammy



At-Large District:
Austin Yonker,
Bingham Lake,
son of
Ed & Nikki



At-Large District:
Jessica Christoffer,
Round Lake,
daughter of
Dean & Andrea

Nine high school seniors received a \$700 Federated Operation Round Up Scholarship. 44 students completed the Federated scholarship application.

This is the 16th year students applied for it. A scholarship was awarded to each co-op district, plus three more where remaining applicants had a second chance of winning. These are the same districts used for director elections.

This is the 28th consecutive year Federated dedicated funds to high school scholarships and the 23rd year that the scholarships are from Operation Round Up. This totals \$102,700 in Federated scholarships.

Congratulations to these and all high school graduates! 🎓

Kilen Woods spruced up by GreenTouch volunteers

30 volunteers added their GreenTouch to Kilen Woods State Park near Lakefield May 5. Federated is among 15 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives across the state that sponsored a clean-up day at the State Parks.

"It was a beautiful day to be outdoors enjoying the spring weather and making a difference at Kilen Woods State Park," said Andrea Christoffer, Federated's marketing & communications manager. "Volunteers picked up litter on trails, cleared overhanging branches on the trails, picked up downed branches in the campground, raked leaves at tent sites, moved gravel off the paved areas; they also replaced sod ripped up from snow removal, cleaned the office and park shelter, plus raked up leaves around the amphitheater seats."

"Thank you Federated and all of



Thanks for lending your helping hands to spruce up the Kilen Woods State Park. A special thanks goes to the Lakefield Girl Scouts troop for their help May 5!

the volunteers who participated in GreenTouch," added Jason Honkomp from Kilen Woods. "It shows that people care about our natural resources and Kilen Woods State Park. Federated and the volunteers help us get ready for the summer picnics, hiking and camping season, donating nearly 90 hours of work this spring. It was

especially helpful this year due to the late spring weather."

The volunteers received a free hot dog lunch from Federated.

Federated has sponsored the GreenTouch event since 2000. About 350 volunteers have contributed more than 1,200 hours of work with only one year rained out completely. 🌧️

Follow these tips to stay safe during electrical storms

— Continued on Page 6

or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least 20 feet apart.

- If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat down low to the ground with your head between your knees making yourself the smallest target possible.

- Plan outdoor activities around the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if the weather turns threatening. If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows with the shades drawn.

- Avoid water, electric appliances and other objects that could conduct electricity; use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls.

- A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables and plumbing.

- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears — never during. Don't expect a surge protector to save appliances from a lightning strike; unplug it as well.

- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers,

power tools and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.

- Turn off your air conditioner to protect the compressor from a power surge and avoid a costly repair job.

- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Plus, avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.

- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.

- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.

- Don't forget your pets. Dog houses are not lightning-safe, and dogs chained to trees can easily fall victim to a strike.

- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim. More information on lightning safety can be found at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. 

— Information courtesy www.safeelectricity.org



Working side by side

Touchstone Energy cooperatives work side by side with member-owners to make decisions locally that best serve your area. That's the way we've always done it and the way we'll always do it.

**Touchstone Energy
Cooperatives.
Your source of power
and information.**



Let's eat a whole lot of granola so share your favorite recipes

Granola is a tasty, healthy treat. It tastes great on yogurt, topped with milk or can even be enjoyed by the handful while watching TV. Share with us your granola recipes; send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by June 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺



Confetti Cake Batter Cookies

by Lois Lendt, Sleepy Eye

½ c. butter, softened

2 large eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

1 pkg. Funfetti cake mix

In a large bowl beat the butter, eggs and vanilla until combined. Beat in the cake mix. Refrigerate covered two hours or until firm enough to roll.

Preheat the oven to 350°. On a well-floured surface roll the dough to ¼" thickness. Cut with a floured round 2½"-cookie cutter. Place 1" apart on ungreased baking sheets. Remove from pans to wire racks. Bake 8-10 minutes. Decorate as usual.

Freezing option: transfer dough to a resealable plastic freezer bag and freeze. To use thaw dough in the refrigerator until soft enough to roll. Prepare and bake cookies as directed. Decorate as desired. ☺

Move Over Bill signed by Gov. Dayton



Electric line crews are working ahead as you drive down the road. What do you do?

According to a new Minnesota law passed and signed May 19, you need to move over. The Move Over bill was passed by the Senate and House, plus was signed by the Governor.

In 2015 Minnesota electric cooperatives promoted and the legislature passed, legislation that expanded Minnesota's Move Over law to include parked utility vehicles with their emergency or warning lights activated. This legislation applied to a highway having two lanes in the same direction (four-lane highway).

The new legislation this year adds to the statute streets or highways having only one lane in the same direction (two-lane roads). The legislation requires that drivers slow down, maintain a safe speed for traffic conditions, and operate the vehicle at a reduced speed until safely past the parked utility or emergency vehicle.

Safety is a priority for electric cooperatives, who have employees working alongside roadways every day. Traffic is always an issue. This additional piece of legislation will further increase the safety of our line crews. ☺

**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.gopherstate-onecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

What a tough spring planting season!

We finally received a little sunshine and some favorable planting conditions only to be deluged with well over two inches of rain lately, bringing planting to a screeching halt. Hopefully, everyone can finish without too much trouble from here on out. Our underground line construction was also impacted by this tough spring.

Annual Meeting August 1 approaches

The nominating committee met twice in May and developed a slate with two directors and two nominating committee positions for you to cast your ballots at the upcoming Annual Meeting. (See Page 4 for details.) We will have a special edition coming next month with all of that information for you.

Changing monthly meter reading & billing cycles — food for thought

We need your thoughts on something if you're one of our legacy cooperative members with your bill being due on the 10th of the month. We would like to propose a change with bills due on the 20th of the month. Here's why... The day that Federated reads meters is not the same as when our wholesale power suppliers read theirs; so consequently it forces us to estimate usage for a few days, as well as estimating what the power supply bill is going to be. It's difficult to get this correct and forces us to submit a monthly power cost adjustment (PCA), which results in the PCA swings you now see.

With the proposed method the billing cycle would run from the first of the month through the last day of the month. This is how we currently bill the former Alliant accounts; it seems to be working out pretty well and their PCA is trued up semiannually. With the PCA treatment fixed for six months and then trued up for the next six-month cycle, it helps us mitigate the PCA swings currently occurring. It is our goal to have as small a PCA as possible keeping your rates flat; this is one way of doing that. We have work internally to sort out before any proposal would go to the board for approval; however, we think it would be a good plan for everyone. Your input will be helpful as we consider for this; call us (1-800-321-3520) or e-mail billing@federatedrea.coop.

Wholesale power rate outlook for 2019 looks good

I will touch on our power supply contracts and the short-term forecast. Our two largest suppliers, Basin Electric and Great River Energy, both indicated that rates should remain flat or we may see increases of less than 1 percent each year over the next five-year period. In this fickle energy market we can't be too certain about anything though. Alliant's formula rate is a cost-based rate, which will have the most volatility; however, historically it hasn't been too bad. We will see anywhere from 3-4 percent here. Finally, our hydroelectric contract is at or below market and is a great asset in keeping rates manageable. This is all subject to change, but I do think things look good for the future.



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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.

Renewable power supply update too!

Federated and our energy suppliers are always looking at opportunities in either wind or solar to add to the portfolio. Wind is the predominant source simply due to the fact it has a 45 percent availability factor. Solar is becoming more cost effective and produces a 16 percent availability factor. Regardless, we will meet and exceed the current Minnesota 25 percent renewables standard by 2025. Serious discussion exists about increasing that amount to 50 percent renewables by 2030; however, no legislative action was taken yet. It will be a loftier goal with challenges. We will make it work.

2018 Farm Bill heads up...

Rep. Tom Emmer (MN-6) underscores the impact depressed commodity prices and drops in net farm income had on the lives of farmers and ranchers around the country. The STRESS Act, a measure he introduced, is included in the 2018 Farm Bill and helps address the mental and emotional strains of farming against the backdrop of today's lower farm economy. The bill needs to come back for reconsideration by June 22; however, no procedures for that have been established as of yet according to the House's Committee on Agriculture spokesperson.

Thank you all and have a great month and a safe summer! ☺