

# Connections

September 2018

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 9

## Co-ops Vote — let your voice be heard

In 2016 rural America played a big part in our national elections — 500,000 MORE rural voters went to the polls than in 2012. This is an incredible story, as many in small towns and communities across our country went to the polls to ensure their voices were heard. The elected officials took notice. However, elections matter EVERY year.

2018 will be no different; electric cooperatives and their members have the opportunity to play a vital role in encouraging rural voter turnout and engaging on issues that matter most to us. This year let's build on the momentum started in 2016 to join with 42 million members of electric cooperatives around the country; let's remind our elected officials that rural issues matter. Be sure you vote in November.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit energy providers that are owned by the members they serve. Electric co-op members are used to voting on the directors who represent members on the local cooperative's board. Nationally, electric co-ops provide coverage for 88 percent of our nation's counties. They are a foundation in their communities and their members make a difference with their voices on issues like rural infrastructure and broadband, plus maintaining access to affordable, reliable electricity. This means that you, a cooperative member and citizen, should vote this fall!

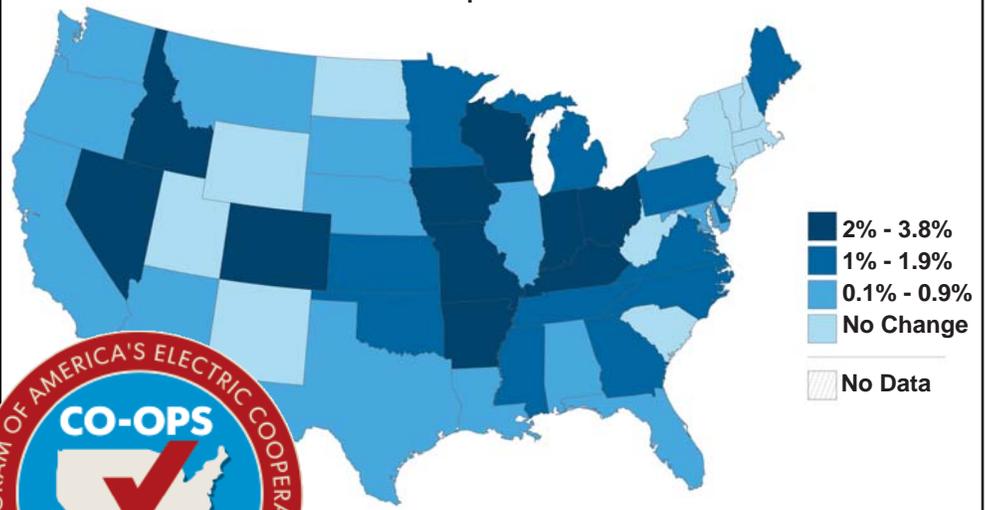
To ensure that all electric co-op members continue the drumbeat that started in 2016, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) will continue the Co-ops Vote program. This is a non-partisan initiative that remains

### CO-OPS VOTE 2016 RURAL TURNOUT



#### RURAL VOTE vs. URBAN VOTE

This data demonstrates where rural counties had a higher voter percentage turnout in 2016 than their urban and suburban counterparts.



quite simple at its core: to ensure that members are registered to vote and they go to the polls for every election to ensure rural issues remain part of the national discussion.

Your electric cooperative encourages co-op members to continue sending a resounding message that all candidates — at all levels — will need to put rural America's concerns front and center in order to earn our vote. We proved in 2016 that with millions of electric co-op members speaking out with one voice, we can have a major impact in making our top issues part of the national conversation.

We encourage everyone, regardless of their political beliefs, to join America's electric cooperatives in this national effort. Let's continue to stand up for the priorities of the rural electric co-op community — it's more important now than ever. Learn more at [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop).

#### At A Glance



**Next Operation  
Round Up funding  
deadline slated for  
September 28**

Belong to a local organization, fire department or school group that could use funding for equipment? Fill out the Operation Round Up application found on our website ([www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)), e-mail ([info@federatedrea.coop](mailto:info@federatedrea.coop)) or call (847-3520 or 728-8366) to request it; ask for Andrea.



## Energy Wise

# Do your research; choosing the right appliance from the start can reduce your energy bills

Your energy use varies month to month so it can be difficult to see how much difference an appliance purchase makes. It's best to view the purchase over the lifetime of the equipment. In a *Consumer Reports'* test the most efficient refrigerator used \$68/year less electricity than the least efficient model. Multiply that difference over a decade or two; the lifetime energy savings could be greater than the up-front cost.

Appliance energy use on average is usually less than home heating and cooling bills, but can total several hundred dollars each year. Your appliance use depends on the model, how often you use it, the settings and even the time of day it is most used.

Over the last few decades new appliances became more energy efficient. Standards created by the U.S. Department of Energy save consumers over \$60 billion yearly. Appliances must include an Energy Guide label that shows estimated energy use and operating cost per year. These labels help you compare different models and calculate the initial cost against the long-term savings.

When shopping, look for appliances that feature an Energy Star label. This indicates the appliance is substantially more efficient than the minimum standard. Your greatest energy-saving opportunities come from replacing an old appliance with an Energy Star-rated appliance. Removing a refrigerator that's 20 years old and replacing it with a new Energy Star model can lower the monthly electricity cost by 75 percent,



**Keep your cool! Be a smart shopper! A new Energy Star fridge/freezer can use 70 percent less energy than a model that's 10 years old. Models with the fridge stacked over the freezer are also two-thirds more efficient than side-by-side models.**

from \$16.50 to less than \$4.

The appliance's design also makes a difference. For example, a side-by-side refrigerator/freezer uses about 70 percent more energy than other configurations, with the most efficient models having the refrigerator stacked on top of the freezer. Meanwhile, all 36 of the most efficient clothes washers in 2018 were front-loading models.

In addition, the more you use the appliance the greater your savings will be from choosing a more efficient model. If you use the appliance less or have a small household, you may get by with a smaller refrigerator or freezer, which will save you money.

Make the most out of your appliance energy use with a little research before buying a new model and a few easy adjustments to how you use them. <sup>(1)</sup>  
— Courtesy of [www.collaborativeefficiency.com](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com)

## Energy Tips

### *Appliances' operation also impacts energy savings*

#### **Refrigerator/freezer**

- Set your refrigerator at 35 to 38 degrees and your freezer at 0 degrees.
- Maintain adequate air flow between the wall and the back of the unit.
- Keep the refrigerator relatively full when possible.
- Replace the seals around the doors if they appear to be leaking air.
- Defrost the refrigerator and freezer regularly.

#### **Stove/oven**

- Use the correct size of burner to fit the pan.
- Use smaller devices like a microwave or slow cooker, instead of the oven.

#### **Dishwasher**

- Use the most energy-efficient and shortest setting that cleans your dishes.
- Air dry, rather than using the heated-dry function.
- Wait to run a load until the dishwasher is full. <sup>(1)</sup>

## Electric fireplace features barn door slides

Electric fireplaces have numerous benefits: no wood to chop, no ashes and no smoke. Now electric fireplaces are becoming more attractive, as well. The Chestnut Hill media console incorporates sliding "barn doors" to give the fireplace a rustic look.

This media console fits most flat screen TVs up to 60 inches or 75 pounds. The sliding doors reveal a 23" infrared quartz electric fireplace with a digital thermostat that can warm up to 1,000 square feet with realistic flame effects. Spectrafire flame technology offers three blue and three amber-effect options (with or without heat) to create your ideal fire.

Safety features monitor the temperature of the plug to prevent electrical fire and whether or not the heater is obstructed. The fireplace also comes with a remote.

The Chestnut Hill media console fireplace is available at Home Depot for approximately \$400. 



### Safety

## Beware by being aware of power lines

Harvest season is again upon us. Make sure you don't reap what you sow by being unsafe around power lines. Look up and beware by being aware!

Today's bigger farm equipment makes field work quicker and more efficient, but bigger farm equipment also makes it easier than ever to snag overhead lines, either when working a field, entering or leaving a field or even moving machinery around the yard.

- Always use extra caution when working end rows that are bordered by power lines.

- Always make sure you are safely away from power poles and guy lines when lowering the wings of tillage equipment.

- Always have your auger lowered as far as possible when moving around the farm.

If you are in a tractor that comes into contact with an electric power line, stay inside and call your electric co-op for help. Your tires safely ground you. The only time you should exit the tractor is if there is a danger of fire.

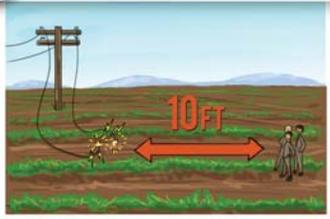


# OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY




- 1

Stay at least 10 feet away from fallen power lines.


- 2

Keep self and equipment 10 feet away from all overhead power lines.


- 3

Do not touch anything that is in contact with the power line.


- 4

Lower equipment apparatus before driving.



In that case, jump from the tractor as far as you can, land on both feet and hop out of the danger zone.

Following these tips can help make your harvest safe to make it home to your loved ones each night. 

# Federated Focus

## Annual Meeting prize winners!

4 Valley Fair tickets: Marlene Gettler, Sherburn; \$100 Welcome TV Gift Certificate: American Legion, c/o Jim (Vickie) Milbrath, Okabena; Electric blower/vacuum/mulcher: Roger Fritz, Ceylon; Instant Pot Cooker: Daryl Anderson, Sherburn; Nutra Ninja Blender: VerJean Skrove, Jr., Jackson; \$75 Federated Electricity Gift Certificates (GC): Garen Paulson, Jackson; Shirley Skogerboe, Sherburn; & Dean Tlam, Sherburn; Loc'N Go Electric Grill: Rich Erickson, Lakefield; Shop Vac: Larry Philipp, Welcome; \$50 Bergen Meats GC: Mary Jo Manzey, Sherburn; \$50 Lakefield Butcher Shop GC: Ron Berkness, Jackson; \$50 Welcome Meats GC: Cordell Kolander, Lakefield; \$50 Federated Electricity GCs: Walter Ulbricht, Lakefield; & Joan Adams, Winnebago; \$50 Center Creek Orchard GC: Charlotte Murphy, Fairmont; 22-watt LED Bulbs: Dave Freking, Heron Lake; & Roy Jensen, Dunnell; \$50 Round Lake Vineyards GC w/4 Federated wine glasses: Linda Craig, Welcome; \$50 Vet's Whoa & Go GC: Judy Balcom, Fairmont; \$50 Sunshine Foods GC, Courtesy of Karian-Peterson Power Line Contractor: Harold Knutson, Jackson; \$50 Cup & Saucer GC: Lenort Feedlot, c/o Mark Lenort, Fairmont; \$50 Sherburn Nursery GC: Dave Berlin, Heron Lake; \$50 Bergen Bar & Grill GC: Laurence Lau, Fairmont; \$50 Hi-Lo Club GC: Terry Prom, Sherburn; \$50 Horse Barn & Hunt Club GC: Beverly Roben, Sherburn; \$50 Korte's Bar & Grill GC: Doug Peters, Sherburn; \$50 Tami's on the Avenue, GC: Roger Block, Truman; \$50 Tri-County Implement GC: Ron Montgomery, Welcome; \$50 Okabena Liquor Store GC: David Brodersen, Sherburn; \$50 Sherburn Liquor Store GC: Gary Warriner, Welcome; \$50 Legends II Pub & Grill GC: Enterprise Town Hall, c/o Art Benda, Jackson; \$50 Casey's GC: Ardis Brolsma, Sherburn; \$50 The Still Bar and Grill GC: Duane Sukalski, Sherburn; Federated bags w/solar/crank flashlight/radios: David Swenson, Windom; & Arlin Mattison, Jackson; \$25 Subway GC: Ruth Carlson, Granada; \$25 Old Alley Quilt Shop GC: Timothy Schwager, Sherburn; Bottle Round Lake wine & 8 Federated wine glasses: Bonnie Vrchota, Lakefield; & Joyce Reigel, Sherburn; BBQ tool grilling sets: Todd Mathews, Ceylon; & Lawrence Warriner, Granada; Palm plants: Julie Schulz; Welcome; & Robert Swanson, Welcome. Heartland Security Umbrella: Danyelle Swanson; Lakefield. (U)

# 650 pork chops se



**Top: Congratulations go to our Annual Meeting grand prize winners August 1: \$300 Federated electricity bill credit, Bonnie Hedquist, Wilder; and \$100 electricity bill credit, Patrick Feely, Welcome.**



**Left: Bingo was a hit with members during registration, as they won prizes during the registration period.**

**Bottom: Ready to roll! The bike winners in the children's prize drawing were: Chloe Koerselman, Sherburn; Cody Koerselman, Sherburn; and Braydn Evans, Windom.**



# Arrived at 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting



The American flag greeted members as they arrived for the Annual Meeting via golf cart or walked into the Sherburn High School.



Scott McClure and Gary Beseke collected ballots from the crowd. More than 300 members voted. Members re-elected Directors Glenn Dicks, Lakefield, for District 1; and Darvin Voss, Lakefield, for District 2. Members also elected Chris Winter, Alpha, District 3; and Harold Knutson, Jackson, District 4, to the Nominating Committee.



Members raved about the pork chop supper! Thanks Martin County Pork Producers for grilling and Gerhardt's Catering for the rest of the meal.



The 2018 Annual Meeting crowd listens to General Manager Scott Reimer's report.



Hayley Clarke, 9, posed as a lineman at the Annual Meeting as her dad Brandon Clarke is a Federated lineman. 

# Cold weather rule outlines process to avoid winter disconnection and loss of electricity

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule guides utilities on winter disconnections, as long as customers follow these three main guidelines.

## Residential customer notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. The electric cooperative may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy-assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any public assistance, including energy assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;

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

3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. In addition, an electric cooperative must, between August 15 and October 15 of each year, notify all residential customers of these provisions.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer between October 15 and April 15, an electric cooperative must provide:

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection;
2. A statement with the customer's rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy-assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
5. A statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

## Restrictions for disconnection

1. If a customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with residential disconnection provisions, it must not occur on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by the electric cooperative;

2. The disconnection must not occur on a weekend, holiday or the day before a holiday, when utility offices are closed, or after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative

## Local emergency energy-assistance agencies provide help to member facing disconnection

Blue Earth County .....	507-345-6822
Des Moines Valley Human Services (Jackson & Cottonwood) .....	847-4000
Martin County Human Services .....	238-4757
MN Dept. of Energy Svcs (Ask for fuel assistance) ....	1-800-657-3805
Minnesota Valley Action Council .....	1-800-767-7139
Brown County .....	354-3138
Martin County .....	238-1663
Nicollet County .....	934-5224
Sibley County .....	237-2981
Watonwan County .....	375-5748
Nobles County Family Services Agency .....	372-2157
Renville County Family Services .....	320-523-5522
Salvation Army's Heat Share (Jackson, Martin & Brown Co.) .....	1-800-842-7279
Sibley County Human Services .....	237-4000
SW Health & Human Services (Redwood Co.) .....	1-888-234-1292
SW MN Opportunity Council, Inc. (Nobles Co.) .....	376-4195
United Community Action Partnership (Jackson, Cottonwood & Redwood Counties) ....	1-800-658-2448
Watonwan County Human Services .....	375-3294

**If you live in an area that is not listed,  
call your electric co-op for details**

from the electric cooperative who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment and continue service offers a payment agreement to the customer; and

3. If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the home is occupied. If the unit is occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy-assistance provider before disconnecting. If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved. (6)

## Military personnel: bill payment options

Minnesota law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and an annual notice to cooperative members. Similar to the state's Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It's available for military personnel with active duty, deployed or a permanent duty station change. Call or e-mail us for more details about the active duty military payment options and a form to sign up. (6)

## Brrr! Warm it up with burritos recipes for breakfast or supper

Spice up your next meal with burritos, regardless whether it's for breakfast, supper or even a snack. Share with us your favorite burritos recipes; send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by September 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

## Co-op members win grills at Farmfest



Thanks for stopping by the Touchstone Energy booth at Farmfest August 7-9. Two local electric co-op members won one of the six grills in the booth's drawing; 436 registered. Top: Federated members Darren and Donna Johnson, Jackson, won. Bottom: Brown County REA member Alice Walter, Sleepy Eye, poses with granddaughter Sarah Seifert and BCREA General Manager Mike Heidemann. The four other winners were: Merle Zimmerman from Redwood Electric; Calvin Aarons from McLeod Electric; David Kimper from Lyon-Lincoln Electric and Richard Kelly from South Central Electric. The electric co-ops' booth featured an electric car, the Chevy Bolt, along with a chance to win a Big Horn electric pellet grill. ☺



## FCC requires CTV to change frequencies; viewers must rescan channels in Sept.-Oct.

CTV viewers will see some channel disruptions from late September into October. CTV will try to keep these to a minimum, but the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is requiring CTV to move off some of the channels to new channels. CTV will install new equipment to accommodate the needed changes. Please continue to rescan your tv during this time period. Viewers will experience short periods of time that the rebroadcasting of channels will be off, but hopefully not for long. This is a big change for CTV. We appreciate your patience during this process and continued support of CTV. Watch channel 16.1 for updates. ☺

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



Scott Reimer

## Manager's Message

### The secret to our fast outage response...

Did you ever wonder how our operations personnel knows your power is out before you do or at least close to when you do? Federated uses an outage management system that alerts us when something happens so we respond immediately. Each of us has an app on our smartphone or tablet that allow us to see at a glance what's happening, how many might be affected, as well as where the nearest service truck is located so we can dispatch quickly. The

system has been in place for a while and with some recent updates its made a world of a difference. If your power goes out, you should still contact us, especially after hours; however, we may have crews on the way. It's just one more way that we can show our commitment to your well being and allowing your business to succeed. If the power is not on, you're not operating and we take that seriously.

### Thanks for attending the Annual Meeting & completing the surveys

With the Annual Meeting now behind us for another year, we reflect on what we can do better and your comments help us out immensely. Some comments that we received: *love the Bingo, food was great, was informative and interesting.* Yet, we can always improve. The sound system always ranks right up there with the "we need to work on this one." Just when we think we have it, I put the mike on my lapel and not my collar so it's too far away. We can get an astronaut to the moon, but can't project sound throughout the auditorium evenly so everyone can hear us. We'll take several constructive comments to heart, but there's one comment that caught my eye and that was the need to talk more about solar.

### Annual Meeting comment about solar

As you know, the cost of solar and other renewables have become more affordable with several of our members installing them. Currently, we have about a dozen distributed generation sites on our system with about 10 being what we call "sized to load". This means that the system provides what they need and not much more. A couple other sites are installed as a revenue generating asset for the owner. Federated has looked at solar on many occasions; however, due to restrictions in our wholesale power contracts we can't simply generate to offset purchases, like our members can. This makes it more difficult for us to do, while not adding cost to our members' bills. As you know, we do have the 2.1 megawatt wind turbine near Welcome, which is within our Great River Energy contract. We sell this wind energy to them and buy it back for our members. It reduces our peak demand if things match up coincidentally and it provides us with Renewable Energy Credits, which help us comply with the state mandate of 25 percent renewables by 2025. I'm not trying to make this sound gloom and doom. However, we are cognizant of other comments, which target our overall rate charge to you. We want that to be as low and stable as



## Rural Electric

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77100 US Hwy 71, PO Box 69

Jackson, MN 56143-0069

E-mail: [info@federatedrea.coop](mailto:info@federatedrea.coop)

Website: <http://www.federatedrea.coop>

Facebook.com/Federated

Phone: 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520

Office hours: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Scott Reimer, General Manager

David A. Hansen, President — 847-3530

David Meschke, Vice President — 238-1122

Darvin Voss, Secretary/Treasurer — 662-6679

Bruce Brockmann — 447-2463

Glenn Dicks — 840-1075

Jon Saxen — 236-7027

Scott Thiesse — 399-6427

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.

possible. Adding other risks into the power supply portfolio may have the wrong impact we desire.

### Attend Minnesota Energy Summit

Two board members and I recently attended the Energy Summit in St. Cloud. It's a fantastic way for us to learn and network with other Minnesota electric cooperatives. Topics included: Balancing Change; Risk and Healthy Governance; New Approaches to Broadband: A Panel Discussion; What is Energy Productivity; A Strong Foundation — an Excellent Future in a Changing Power World; Project Tundra and Bitcoin; and Kurt Daudt: Energy Policy Outlook. We always end the session with some motivation and a team building presenter: Eric Maddox: Innovation and Strategy Change capped things off. I listed the link to the YouTube video of Eric Maddox's presentation, which I think you'll like, as it chronicles his journey as an interrogator leading up to the capture of Saddam Hussein. <https://youtube/IR5EUEWpH0Y>

### Have a safe fall!

I will end with a safety message. We all know that the streets and highways will become a little more congested as school gets underway and very soon the fall harvest starts. Please be safe out there. Thanks and feel free to contact me about items of concern you have. ☺