

Connections

January 2019



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 23, Issue 1

Election results affect electric co-ops

Turnout for November's mid-term national elections were at a 104-year high. An estimated 114 million voters went to the polls, significantly higher than the 83 million who voted in the 2014 elections.

The results? Voters delivered a divided Congress, with Democrats taking control of the House and Republicans holding the Senate.

What do the results mean?

With a divided Congress, governing will become more difficult in the next two years unless there is more bipartisan cooperation. Small factions of the majority parties will use their leverage to affect legislation and leadership strategies. Additionally, with more than 70 new members of the House, new dynamics will emerge. It remains to be seen whether a growing block of centrist Democrats will attain significant influence or whether the new wave of progressive members will drive the party's strategy.

Electric cooperatives' role in this election

Electric cooperatives encouraged their member-owners to register and vote as part of a nationwide effort to ensure strong political engagement. Through *Co-ops Vote*, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) nonpartisan political engagement effort, more than 100 candidates attended electric cooperative functions or met with co-op staff. Several statewide associations sponsored or hosted a debate or forum for gubernatorial candidates. Electric cooperatives across the country also sponsored newsletter stories to encourage participation, while others created videos and social media content to encourage citizens to vote.

Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the most divided of them all? This past November's election delivered a split Congress. How will this affect electric co-ops and energy issues?



"Now, we must continue to communicate the issues that matter to your cooperative and community to newly elected members of Congress before they take office in Washington," said NRECA's CEO Jim Matheson.

"Even though Democrats won the House, the thin margin they have over Republicans will make moderate voices even more important in the next Congress," Matheson said. "We should lean into issues like expanding our critical infrastructure that have been stalled in this Congress,

but will likely be areas of agreement next year."

One way electric cooperatives communicate their issues is through contributions. Electric cooperative employees, directors and member-owners contributed \$3.6 million to the political action committee (PAC) of America's electric cooperatives during this two-year election cycle. Annual contributions to the PAC from nearly 37,000 individuals, averaging approximately \$50, form the backbone of ACRE's ability to support candidates who support the priorities of electric cooperatives. ACRE, one of the largest grassroots PACs in the nation, contributes to candidates from both parties who support electric cooperatives and the communities they serve.

ACRE contributed \$1.5 million to 358 House candidates and \$124,000 to 27 Senate candidates, for a total of more than \$1.7 million in this two-year election cycle. ACRE also returned more than \$1.5 million to state-based political action committees to support candidates for state and local offices.

Approximately 94 percent of ACRE-supported House
— Continued on Page 6

At A Glance



**Apply for the
2 \$1,000 Basin
Scholarships by
January 30**

High school seniors and college students with a year of college left...apply for two \$1,000 Basin Scholarships by January 30, 2019. Applications are on Federated's website, at our office or from school counselors. Must be the son or daughter of a Federated member. Previous winners are not eligible. 



Energy Wise

Is your second refrigerator a thief?

You have a thief in your house. The thief might be in your garage. The thief might be in your basement or a utility room. Security systems do not stop this thief either. You might not even notice what this thief steals unless you are looking for it, but every month this thief is stealing money from your pocketbook. The thief is a second refrigerator, usually an older model second refrigerator that is used to store extra food or drinks.

Do you have a second refrigerator in your garage or basement? If so, it enjoys plenty of company. About 30 percent of American households have a second refrigerator, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, a number that's doubled over the last 20 years.

That's not cool when you consider that more than half of these devices are 10 years old or older and very inefficient by today's standards. While technology advances have made today's refrigerators more efficient than ever, the growing trend of homeowners buying a new model and keeping the old energy guzzler is wiping out those efficiency gains.

Flip that fridge

If you have a second refrigerator, get rid of it. It'll free up space in your home and on your energy bills. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that you can save up to 1,200 kWh a year or about \$155 in annual energy costs by removing and not replacing a second refrigerator.

Recycle the old refrigerator

When you send that extra fridge packing, make sure it's recycled properly. About 95 percent of refrigerator parts can be recycled and used to make other products. How do you



People don't want thieves to enter their home, but what if one is already inside? That second refrigerator could be stealing money from you on a daily basis. Get rid of it!

recycle a refrigerator? The EPA's Responsible Appliance Disposal (RAD) program provides some tips. Of the more than 9 million refrigerators and freezers disposed of in the U.S. each year, about 10 percent are managed under RAD guidelines.

Reach for the Energy Star

If you're looking for a new fridge, make sure it's Energy Star® certified. Energy Star refrigerators are about 10 percent more efficient than standard models. Use the Savings Calculator to find out exactly how much money you'll save by replacing your existing refrigerator (www.energystar.gov; search for refrigerator savings calculator). Use it to also learn how much that second refrigerator is costing too.

Plus, keep in mind that your electric cooperative offers an Energy Star rebate for new refrigerators and freezers with the recycling of the old one. See Page 4 for details. (E)

— Information courtesy of Questline

Energy Tips

Did you know these fridge facts?

- Refrigerators 15 years or older use twice as much energy as a new Energy Star refrigerator.
- You can save as much as \$260 over the next five years and reduce your carbon footprint by 8,200 pounds when replacing an old refrigerator with Energy Star.
- New Energy Star refrigerators come in a variety of styles — from side by side and French door to bottom freezer and four door — whatever you need to meet your needs and match your kitchen décor. (E)

Warm heart, but cold hands? Why not enjoy both?

If your hands keep getting cold in the winter, it might be time to take your gloves up a notch with USB-rechargeable heated gloves from Milwaukee Tool.

These heated gloves are engineered to keep your hands warm and outlast the elements. GRIDIRON Ripstop polyester protects the heated work gloves from abrasion and tearing, while the leather palms and fingers allow for full dexterity without sacrificing durability. GRIDIRON ripstop polyester is three times more durable and 25 percent lighter than 12-ounce cotton duck fabric to survive the outdoor work.

These battery-heated gloves offer up to six hours of continuous runtime, providing warmth in cold weather. The length of time also depends on what setting used while wearing the



Give your hands a hand in keeping warm this winter season with rechargeable heated gloves from Milwaukee Tool.

gloves. At their highest setting the batteries can run out sooner. Plus, built-in SMARTWIPE index fingers allow touch-screen use on devices, like phones and tablets, without removing your gloves.

Other features include:

- Built-in terry cloth sweat wipe

- Extended cuff
- Red Lithium USB batteries, split USB charging cable and wall plug enables you to charge both gloves at once. It takes approximately two hours to charge the batteries to full capacity. The gloves are available on homedepot.com for approximately \$185. 

Safety

Snowmobilers: be alert for electric co-op equipment

Your electric co-op reminds snowmobile enthusiasts of all ages to be cautious while snowmobiling. Heavy snow and drifting can bury electrical equipment, causing dangerous situations for snowmobilers.

Most snowmobile accidents occur along roads and ditches where riders encounter culverts, signs, mailboxes...and even electric cooperative equipment.

Please remember to be safe by keeping these tips in mind this snowmobiling season.

- Watch out for power poles, guy wires and electrical equipment that can be hidden in the snow. Heavy snowfalls can often bury transformer boxes and cabinets.

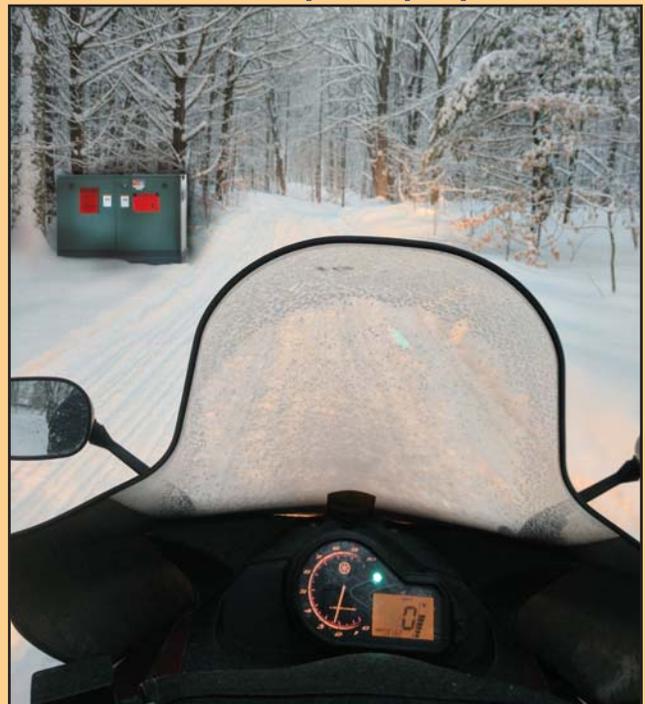
- Slow down, know the area where you are snowmobiling and stay on the trails.

- If you see a downed power line, stay away from it; call your electric cooperative to report it. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized just by looking at it. Always assume it is live and can carry currents strong enough to kill.

- Always wait for help to arrive before you approach an accident scene where a power line may be involved.

- Don't drink and stay alert.

- Share this important information with family, friends and anyone you know who rides a snowmobile. 



Stay alert when snowmobiling. Watch for electric cooperative equipment like this green transformer box.

Federated Focus



Iowa complaint process posted

If you have a concern or complaint regarding Federated Rural Electric, it should be addressed to: Scott Reimer, general manager, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or call 507-847-3520.

If Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from: Utilities Board, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple St., Des Moines IA 50319-0069 or call 515-281-5979.

If your complaint is related to service, rather than rates, and Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division.

New year: new fridge or freezer?



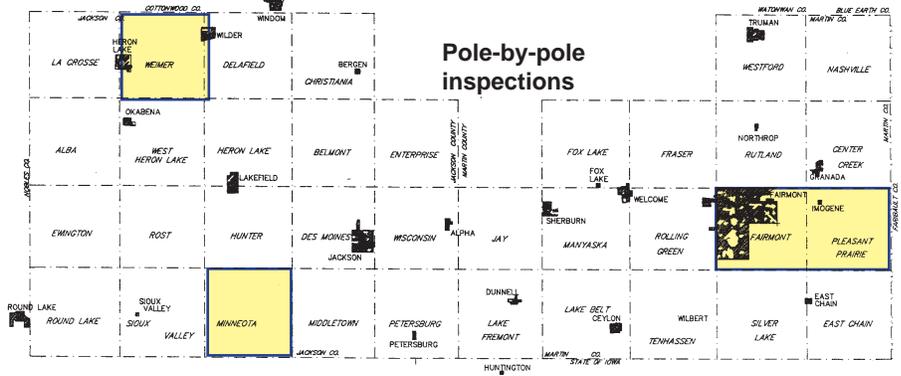
If buying a new refrigerator or freezer is one of your New Year's resolutions, remember Federated's rebate.

Receive a \$50 bill credit for buying an Energy Star refrigerator or freezer with proof of recycling the old unit. Find the rebate form on our website; otherwise, call (847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520) or e-mail us at info@federatedrea.coop to request the form.

Your contact info correct?

Look at your electric bill. Do we still have you listed with a landline phone number that was dropped? Tell us your new cell phone number(s). We can list up to three phone numbers on your account. Plus, tell us your e-mail address. Then we can communicate with you for planned outages. E-mail us (billing@federatedrea.coop) or call us during business hours! This helps us serve you better. (6)

Watch out for Federated trucks driving slowly



Line crews will drive all of the lines this winter looking for maintenance issues. See story on Page 6. They will also do pole-by-pole inspections in the yellow highlighted townships. (6)

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Add Federated's annual meeting to your new 2019 calendar. Federated's Annual Meeting will be Thursday, August 1 at the Martin County West High School in Sherburn.

AUGUST
THURSDAY 1

Federated Annual Meeting

Registration and the pork chop supper will begin at 5 p.m. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. Cast your vote on the director and nominating candidates. Receive your attendance gift. Play Bingo during registration too!

High school students: win co-op's free D.C. trip

Who: High school 9th-12th graders.
What: Win a free trip to D.C.
Where: Travel to D.C. via airplane!
When: June 15-20, 2019
Why: Travel with teens sponsored by their electric co-ops. See the sites, Capitol, museums, visit legislators; make friends and memories!

How: Write a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic and fill out the short application by February 4. Five finalists will be interviewed March 18 in Jackson. The first 15 to apply receive \$20 Amazon.com gift cards. (6)



Find the application and details at www.federatedrea.coop or from local high school counselors

Federated outside crews add Worklete to routine

Movement matters. Poor movement leads to an increased likelihood of injuries, whether it's over time or one bad moment.

Worklete is a training program for Federated's line crews, electrician and warehouseman that has been underway for more than a year.

"It is NOT an ergonomics program or a stretching program," stated Lidia Jacobson, director of safety and loss control from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA). "Nor is it an AFTER the injury or physical therapy program. Worklete is a training program so employees do not get hurt on the job and do not wear out their bodies.

"Worklete teaches proper body movement with a new topic every two weeks and builds muscle memory over time," Jacobson explained. "The first week each person watches a two-minute video and completes a short online quiz. The second week they practice the movement and watch each other throughout the week. Worklete teaches employees how to move in the strongest, safest and most efficient positions making them stronger, while doing the work, instead of breaking down their bodies over time. The unique part is Worklete lessons were filmed at two Minnesota electric cooperatives so we can see how it directly relates to the job."

"Linemen often do a lot of repetitive motions, such as lifting, pushing and tightening," explained Kyle Koerselman, Federated journeyman lineman and Worklete leader. "It's athletic training for industry specific jobs. If we see someone doing something the wrong way on the job, we'll holler 'Worklete!' so they stop what they were doing and correct their form."

"The older linemen like this program because this work becomes harder on the bodies as we age," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "I've heard them say they wish they had known this when they were younger."

The Worklete results are helping employees be more aware of how they work and avoid costly workers' compensation injuries and down time. Keeping line crews healthy helps



Journeymen Linemen Kyle Koerselman (left) and Jeff Broitzman (right) demonstrate proper Worklete form when lifting supplies to the back of the truck: straight backs, bent legs and one foot slightly behind for bracing.

Federated provide reliable electric service to you, our member-owners.

Federated was one of six cooperatives that joined Worklete in the Fall of 2017. Now 10 Minnesota co-ops use the program with two more joining in 2019.

Worklete also provides training for industries like drivers and warehouse workers. 

Congratulations on becoming journeymen linemen!

Federated congratulates two employees on achieving their journeymen linemen status.

Leigh Aspelund received his certificate from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry October 16, while Levi Ekstrom earned his July 3. Aspelund is a Jackson County lineman, while Ekstrom works in Martin County.

Both journeymen linemen completed the Merchant Job Training and Safety Program. They completed testing on topics ranging from overhead, underground, metering, safety, transformers and more. In addition, they had to achieve 7,500 hours of on-the-job training in these areas as well.

Federated recognized both at a December employee meeting. Congratulations and best wishes on a long, safe career! 



The co-op congratulates Leigh Aspelund and Levi Ekstrom on becoming journeymen linemen recently.

Elections shape electric co-ops' focus

— Continued from Page 1

candidates running in this general election won their races, while 81 percent of ACRE-supported Senate candidates were elected.

The Congress do list of priorities

There is a long do list awaiting Congress, including finalizing spending legislation for many agencies, addressing expiring tax provisions and making technical corrections to last year's tax package, plus confirming judicial and executive branch nominations.

NRECA will be focused on protecting the business and community interests of electric cooperatives:

- promoting co-op priorities in the remaining spending bills;
- promoting our broadband priorities;
- passing bipartisan pension legislation to reduce the premiums paid by electric cooperatives;
- and fixing inadvertent tax law changes that potentially impact co-ops that receive federal broadband, disaster recovery or other grants.

Much remains to be decided about the priorities for the House and Senate this year. Incoming committee chairs will consult with colleagues about their priorities, set their legislative agendas and determine priorities for hearings. Watch for a "first 100 days" sprint of legislative activity, particularly in the House given the change in control.

Energy and environment focus

With the change in control of the House, look for increased focus on renewable resources, energy efficiency and emerging technologies, such as battery storage. Climate change will likely become a more frequent topic of hearings in the House.

The Senate likely will continue to focus on expanding

domestic energy production on public lands and modifying rules governing endangered species.

Infrastructure goal for both

One potential area of bipartisan interest involves infrastructure legislation. Plus, both parties have an interest in rural broadband. Both parties campaigned on the need to improve our nation's roads, bridges, broadband, aviation and other infrastructure, but the issue took a backseat over the past two years to other priorities. House Democrats may work with President Trump to reinvigorate efforts in this area.

Regulatory relief and congressional oversight

The Senate likely will work to backstop the administration's efforts to reduce regulations, while the House will likely seek opportunities to block the executive branch's efforts. Therefore, a legislative standstill is likely, but the House will take every opportunity to exercise oversight hearings on a variety of topics. Many expect the EPA and Department of the Interior to be prime targets for oversight hearings early in 2019.

Looking ahead to 2019 session

America's electric cooperatives will continue to serve as a constructive voice for the interests of the communities they serve as the next Congress convenes in January.

"Our political strength is based on the strong ties and trust that elected officials have with their electric cooperatives," Matheson added. "By establishing relationships throughout this campaign season, we are in a strong position for the new Congress. We will make sure your elected leaders know we expect them to represent all of the people we serve. Everything we want to accomplish as co-ops involves political advocacy for our communities." 

Minnesotans also elect a divided State House & Senate

More than 64 percent of Minnesotans headed to the polls this past November to cast their votes — the highest in the country!

The elections resulted in many changes across the state and nation; one of the biggest changes in Minnesota was the House flipping from Republican to Democratic control.

Now that the election results were certified, legislators are moving into their new offices and preparing for the session to convene in January. A whopping 37 of the 134 members in the House of Representatives will be sworn in for their first term January 8. That is nearly 30 percent of the House! The DFL majority will be led by Speaker-elect Melissa Hortman and Majority Leader Ryan Winkler. Kurt Daudt,



the former Speaker of the House, will serve as the Minority Leader.

The new leadership has already announced the 33 new House committees and has named all of the committee chairs, but the full committee assignments will be released soon. Electric cooperatives are watching closely and looking forward to learning who the new energy committee members will be. Rep. Jean Wagenius was named chair of the Energy and Climate Finance and Policy Committee. Her counterpoint in the Senate will continue to be Republican Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Chair David Osmek.

Electric cooperative leaders and directors will work with legislators to educate and inform them on the issues that will impact the co-op member-owners' electric bills. 

Don't be blue...Share some blueberry recipes with all of us!

Go with the "winter blues" and enjoy some blueberries. Blueberries are healthy and versatile when it comes to the many ways they can be used. Share your blueberry recipes with us, whether they are in pies, cakes, sauces, oatmeal, fruit salads and more! Send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by January 28. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for shar-

WE PROTECT YOU FROM EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

Sump Pump Failure/Flooded Basement • Frozen Pipes • Fire Intrusion • Carbon Monoxide Detection • Medical Alert

Our smart home security systems mean you can head south for the winter, knowing your home is safe.



Heartland Security
 1-888-264-6380
 heartlandss.com
 A subsidiary of your electric cooperative

Edna's Chicken & Noodles

by Elizabeth Shimon, Granada

- 2 lbs. chicken breasts
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 2 cans chicken broth
- 1 stick butter

Put all ingredients in a crockpot and cook on low for six hours. Shred the chicken. Add one package of frozen egg noodles and cook 1½ hours more; stir occasionally. Serve over mashed potatoes. ☺



The cost to cook a family meal on low for four hours — 10 cents! ☺

Linemen hit the streets on patrol



Linemen are always busy ensuring that you have reliable electric service. Even in the winter, when it is too cold to continue with construction work, your electric cooperative's line crews are out inspecting the power lines for potential problems, making sure meters work and more.

If you see an electric co-op line truck moving slowly down the road, be careful and give them space. Crews are performing their annual line patrol.

During line patrol, the linemen will exit their vehicles and test poles for replacement. Line trucks may also pull into your yard to inspect the service and hardware. Our linemen try to be as unobtrusive as possible during such visits. Please watch out for them as they are watching out for you by performing their duties.

Thank you for your cooperation. ☺

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. ☺

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

2019 will be an interesting political year

We are all going to have a different view politically so I won't even go there. What may be a satisfactory view for your personal lives, may not always align with your electric cooperative's view, which we look at as a protective layer for our entire membership and maintaining a healthy business model. We rely on elected leaders both in St. Paul and Washington, D.C. to help protect their constituents, as well as our members, which are the same in many cases from adverse

conditions that will affect you regarding the service we provide. I see two big potential topics regarding electricity at the state level.

1. CIP or Conservation Improvement Program: The current practice is over 25 years old now and was designed under much different circumstances. Both cooperatives and municipals would like the legislature to update the plan and make it more sustainable as an industry.

2. Renewable energy: Currently Minnesota has a 25 percent renewable plan by 2025; now we see renewed interest to ramp that up to achieve even more. We have always been supporters of renewable energy; however, we know that an "all of the above" approach is the most realistic goal. What I mean is there is likely no way that a 100 percent only renewable approach is going to allow us to maintain our way of life for at least the foreseeable future. We have a growing appetite for electricity and when we need it, we want it. That can be a mixture of sources made up of renewables, such as wind and solar, along with something to back them up such as coal and natural gas with some diesel too.

The ultimate goal for some would be to eliminate fossil fuels and the use of enhanced battery storage will cover the demands. I am about as realistic as the next person and this is a very heavy lift no matter how you slice it. We have virtually eliminated dirty coal plants and we aren't building any new ones. As soon as the current U.S. coal fleet burns the last of the supply, we need to have a very stable supply in place to fill the gap. Natural gas is now readily available and will likely take over as that dispatchable resource once shared by coal.

This country has been working very hard to systematically enhance our electric grid for the future and I have confidence they will get it right. Minnesota will likely be on an aggressive "California-like" path to energy independence. However, as recipients of that effort we need to ask ourselves is it sustainable, affordable and the right thing to do?

If you have opinions one way or the other, we encourage you to reach out to us here or contact your board member. We are of the opinion that whatever we do must benefit the membership as a whole and not force subsidization between rate classes.

I hope your New Year is off to a great start! ☺



Rural Electric

Official monthly newsletter published

77100 US Hwy 71, PO Box 69

Jackson, MN 56143-0069

E-mail: 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.

Co-op posts annual nondiscrimination notice for the public



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, at any USDA office or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7742 or e-mail atrogram.intake@usda.gov. ☺