

Connections

February 2018



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 2

Believe it or not: your electric bill can 'talk' to you with reminders



We are busy people. Who has time to keep track of billing details?

Your electric cooperative's billing system can keep in touch with you. The reminders will help you avoid late payment penalties too! Sign up once and pick whether you want one or up to five automatic notices.

Just go to your cooperative's website. Have your electric bill handy as you will need your account number or electric (meter) number. Federated members should click on "Online Pay" icon at www.federatedrea.coop. Brown County REA customers should click on "Online Bill Pay" at www.browncountyrea.coop. Call billing if you have any troubles signing up and we'll assist. Sometimes if you use a different e-mail than what we have saved on your account, you'll receive an error message.

Click on "alerts" tab after signing in with your name and password. Then click on which notifications you would like e-mailed to you.

1. Bill notification: notify the customer when the bill is available. Select from electronic (e-mail) or electronic and paper (both).
 2. Payment received: notify customer that payment was posted.
 3. Payment due soon notification: notify the customer three days before the due date.
 4. Payment due now: Notify the customer when the payment is due.
 5. Credit card expiring: Notify the customer when the card is about to expire.
- You can also pay through the cooperative's Online Pay website or sign up for automatic monthly payment by calling the cooperative's office.

Taking just a few minutes now, provides you timely, hassle-free reminders. ☺



Help us find these missing members

These members are lost in the "Where-Are-Ya" Triangle. It is a mysterious location marked by three points: members moving, leaving no forwarding address and now they have Capital Credits checks that need to be sent to them. (See Page 6).

Help us locate these missing members. Their capital credits check was returned — address unknown. If you know the current location for any of these members, call or e-mail the appropriate co-op with their new address and/or phone number. We can then mail their checks to them.

Unclaimed capital credits checks are donated to a tax-exempt organization. BCREA and Federated give unclaimed capital credits to their Operation Round Up program. Brown's Round Up Trust Board donates to programs that benefit their rural residents and local communities. Federated's Round Up Trust Board awards high school scholarships. ☺

At A Glance



Calling high school seniors: apply for Federated's 9 \$700 scholarships

Watch your February electric bill for the 2018 Operation Round Up Scholarship application. See Page 4 for details. Applications are due back by April 11. The application is also on our website, with local school counselors or call. Must be the son/daughter of an active Federated member. ☺



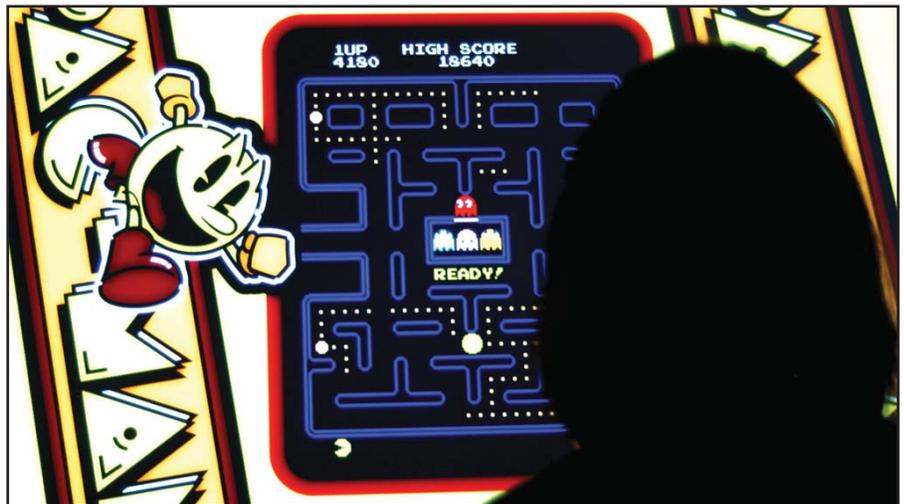
Game on! Configure game consoles to use less energy & win

The latest game consoles bring together many exciting new features, such as voice control, gesture recognition, connectivity, wireless controllers and the ability to stream live Internet content. However, many people may not realize that most of these new features draw power even when they are not using them. When all features are maximized, today's game consoles can consume as much energy as all of the homes in the city of Houston or the equivalent of the electricity delivered by four power plants.

Do you want to game on with the newest innovative and intuitive features without wasting energy? With just a few simple steps you can make the most of your system's energy-saving features without missing any of the action. Reduce your game console's energy use, save money, and help protect the environment.

Activate power-saving settings

Xbox One comes set-up to listen for the "Xbox On" command to turn on and allow other devices to access it via the network. By configuring the "Energy-saving" Power Mode, you can disable such features and drop the Xbox One's standby power use by 98 percent! The PlayStation 4 (PS4) with software updates enters a low power "Rest" mode after one hour of inactivity, which can be reduced to save even more. Users can also enable time limits for USB power charging when the PS4 is in "Rest" mode. The Wii U's power consumption is already optimized in all non-gaming modes, consuming less than half a watt when your console is standing by.



Pac-Man isn't the only one eating power pellets when you play video games. Game consoles use a lot of energy. Learn how to use them more efficiently.

Turn off the controllers

The PS4 includes a useful feature that allows the controllers to turn themselves off when not in use. You can choose to turn off your controllers automatically after 10, 30 or 60 minutes, depending on your gaming habits.

'Dis-Kinect' when not using it

Xbox's Kinect accessory can instantly recognize your body movements. This feature can use up to 14 watts when the game console is in use. So if you don't use Kinect often, consider disconnecting it.

Keep up on your updates

For example, with a previous Sony update, the PS4 powered down automatically and the USB ports enter a much lower power state once connected controllers are fully charged, dropping the power consumption by

over 65 percent.

For the best efficiency choice, plug your set-top box cable directly into the first HDMI port on your TV and connect the Xbox to a secondary HDMI port on your TV. Plugging your set-top box into your Xbox requires the Xbox to consume power even when you are not gaming — almost as much power as your TV.

Rethink your streaming source

Streaming through a game console uses up to 10 times more energy than streaming on a laptop or tablet. Consider using another kind of device to stream, like a Blu-ray player, set-top box or smart TV that has earned EPA's ENERGY STAR, which also uses comparatively less energy.

So let the games continue while you rack up energy-saving points! 
— Courtesy www.energystar.gov

Smart surge protectors save energy

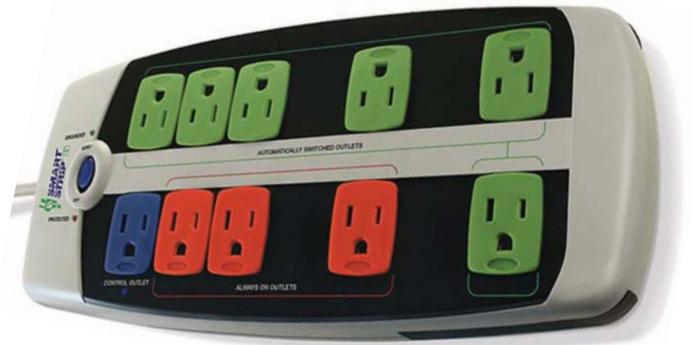
Plug your computer or home entertainment center into the Smart Strip's 10 outlets. When you power down your computer or TV/sound system, the Smart Strip automatically shuts down the power to your computer and entertainment center's devices. This feature saves you money by defeating "vampire" electronics, which use power even when "off."

Unlike most power strips, the Smart Strip itself uses very little energy. It uses one watt of power when fully engaged and less than one-fourth of a watt when the automatically switched outlets are off.

A passive current sensor ensures an ultra-safe, ultra-clean switching off and on of your peripherals, giving you added peace-of-mind that your valuable electronics will remain safe.

The possible hazards of power surges are prevented with 4380-joule surge protection and 84,000-amp protection — both employ a three-way design to give you the ultimate protection for your valuable equipment.

The Smart Strip widely spaced outlets give you the space and ease to connect all necessary equipment. The four-way wall-mountable design, 90° space-saver plug, and heavy-duty four-foot power cord offer the versatility



The Smart Strip does more than protect electronics from surges. It saves energy by cutting power to electronics not in use.

to place the power strip wherever it is most convenient, so it never gets in the way of your footpath or your home décor. A lighted power switch keeps the strip visible, so you're never left fumbling in the dark.

The Smart Strip is backed by a two-year warranty. It is available for approximately \$40 on Amazon.com. (E)

Safety

Slippery roads, cars and poles dangerous combination

Winter wonderlands are beautiful, but they can be a driving nightmare. Snow, slush, ice and wind make it stressful and difficult to drive. These driving conditions also make it more likely that your car will skid off the road. Losing control of your car may seem like the worst-case scenario, but if you do not know what you are doing, the moments following an accident could potentially be more dangerous than the accident itself.

In an accident a car may slide off the road and into a power pole. The pole may fall down, lines may fall on your car or nearby; the area around your car may become charged with electricity. If you stepped out of the car in this scenario, your body would become the path to ground for the electricity and you could be electrocuted.

While downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, this is not always the case. Power lines do not always show signs that they are live, but are just as lethal.

Stay in the car after an accident with a power pole.



Warn those who try to come near your car to help that they must stay far away. Call 911 for help and wait until a professional from the electric utility tells you it is safe to leave the car.

The exception to this rule is if your car is on fire. In that case, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop away with feet together. This way there will not be a voltage difference between your two feet, which would give electricity the chance to flow through your body.

If you witness a car collision with a power pole, do not approach the accident. By trying to help, you put your own life at risk. The best thing to do is contact emergency responders and stay far away from the accident.

Power lines may be difficult to see if they are covered in snow or ice so be cautious if you must be out driving after a winter storm.

Snowmobilers: watch for guy wires and poles too! (E)
— Information courtesy of safeelectricity.org

Federated Focus

February 21: next Operation Round Up application deadline



The spring deadline for Operation Round Up is weeks away — February 21.

If you know of or belong to a local organization in need of funding for a community service project, community leadership, education/youth project, environmental, emergency energy-assistance or disaster relief, consider applying. The application is available on our website www.federatedrea.coop, e-mail, call or stop by Federated's office. Recipients will be announced in April.

See us at March Home Shows

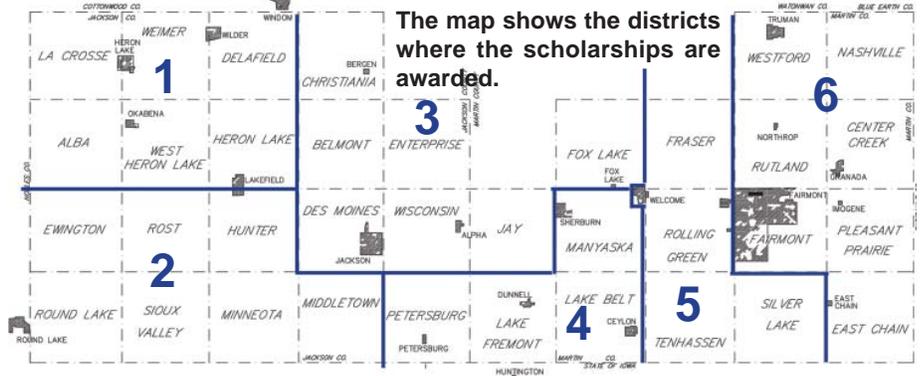


Look for us at the Fairmont Home Show March 2-4 at the mall and then the Jackson Home Show March 17 at the Jackson County Central High School. Stop by our booth and register to win the grand prize of a free Basin Tour (power plant trip for two July 10-12). Pick up our 2018 rebate forms, learn about our water heater program and bring us your questions!

"Water" you waiting for? Buy next water heater from co-op

How old is your water heater? Is it time to replace it? Go with an energy-efficient, insulated water heater from Federated. The water heater costs \$539, plus tax; installation is included by Federated's technician. The stainless steel tank comes with a lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner. ☺

High school class of 2018: apply for nine \$700 Operation Round Up scholarships by April 11



High school seniors: the Operation Round Up Scholarship application is now available. The application came with the February electric bills; Otherwise, find the application on Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop), call or e-mail; plus, stop by your school counselor's office for it. The student must be the son or daughter of a current Federated member.

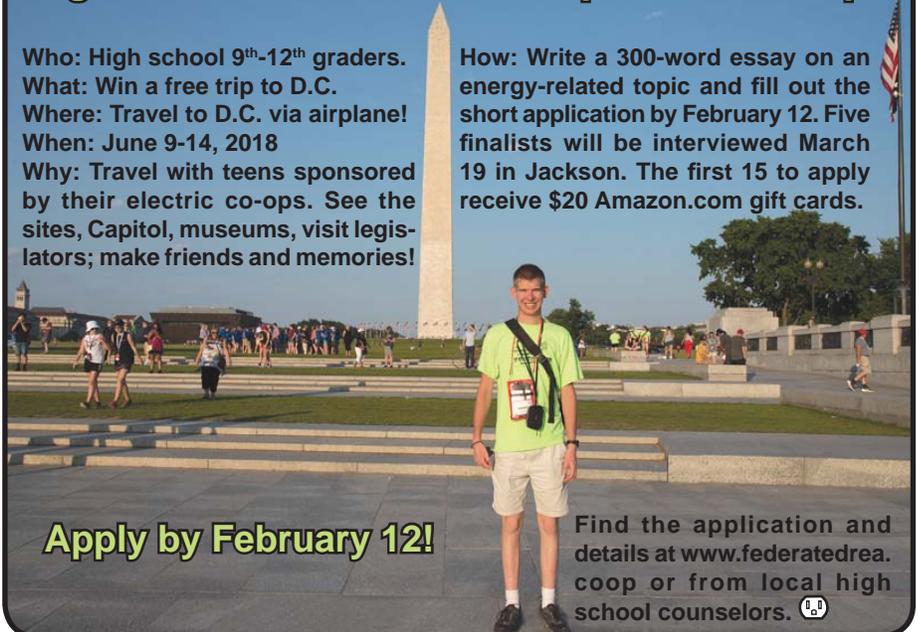
Federated's Trust Board approved awarding one \$700 scholarship for each of the six Federated districts and then three more from the remaining applications combined for additional chances to win one for a total of nine scholarships. The applications are due back at Federated's office by April 11, 2018. All nine recipients will be notified by May 1 with their photos published in the June *Connections* newsletter.

Students will receive the scholarship check after completion of the first semester of higher education with a 2.0 GPA or higher and submit proof of registration for the next semester. The scholarship check will be jointly issued to the school and student. ☺

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 9-14, 2018
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 12. Five finalists will be interviewed March 19 in Jackson. The first 15 to apply receive \$20 Amazon.com gift cards.



Apply by February 12!

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

Bravo! 160 years of experience recognized

Last month Federated recognized employees and a director who achieved service awards in 2017.

- Kerry Ella, journeyman lineman, 40 years. He also retired in 2017.
- Mike Scheff, journeyman lineman, 30 years.
- Andrea Christoffer, marketing & communications manager, 25 years.
- Julie Edlin, customer service representative/billing, 15 years.
- Kollin VanDeVere, journeyman lineman, 15 years.
- Brandon Clarke, journeyman lineman, 10 years.
- Jon Saxen, director, 10 years.
- Jake Soderholm, journeyman lineman, 10 years.
- Mike Kleinschmidt, journeyman lineman, 5 years.

Federated thanks you for your many years of dedicated service. 📧



2017 years of service awards were recognized last month for employees, director and spouses. Seated: Andrea and Dean Christoffer with Jon and Jen Saxen. Standing: Lisa and Kollin “Mort” VanDeVere, Stacy and Jake Soderholm, and Kerry Ella. For the complete recipient listing see the adjacent story.

Place your bid in the Federated silent auction



2012 hybrid Chevy Volt electric/gas hatchback car with 32,600 miles. Heated seats, central air, nearly 30 miles range on a charge with 110-volt cord. 1.4 liter four-cylinder gas engine. Tan and black interior. Minimum bid: \$8,500.



Above: 1966 Clark propane-powered forklift. 5,000 lb. lifting capacity. New battery. Minimum bid \$500.

Century wire welder 90-amp with cart and argon tank. Minimum bid \$150. 📧

Federated is selling the following used equipment. Place your bid by 4:30 p.m. March 23, 2018. Place this coupon in a sealed envelope marked “Silent Auction.” Mail to Federated Rural Electric, ATTN: Silent Auction, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or drop off at Federated’s office or payment drop box. Items may be viewed/test driven during office hours 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address/city/state/zip _____
 I bid \$ _____ on _____
 Signature _____

Help us find these former co-op members lost in the 'Where-Are-Ya' Triangle!

Former Federated

members: Call 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520; ask for Angie or e-mail billing@federatedrea.coop.

Alexander, Jim	Jackson
Adams, Eric	Dunnell
Adams, Jacklyn	Fairmont
Adams, Tony	Lakefield
Babcock, Brenden	Winnebago
Barker, Merva	Fairmont
Batt, Kim	Welcome
Beckel, Thomas	Lakefield
Carlson, Rev. Bruce	Estero, FL
Carlson, Shawn	Fairmont
Cegelske, Juanita	Granada
Christensen, Ben	Welcome
Crane, Melvin	Mankato
EGge, Jim	Lakefield
Ehlers, Jennifer	Jackson
Fleming, Duane	Ceylon
Fowler, Charles	Surprise, AZ
Glenn, Mike	Lakefield
Herman, Robert	Wilder
Hill, Erin	Ankeny, IA
Holmes, Nathan	
% Brian Green	Worthington
King, Jay	Ames, IA
Kuberka, Lowell	Kailua Kona, HI
Lambert, Richard	Truman
Larson, Andy	Welcome
Looft, Steve	Granada
May, Ray & Pam	Maquon, IL
Meyer, Miranda L.	Heron Lake
Miller, Randy	Garvin
Missing, Jeff	Jeffers
Newton, Esther	Welcome
Noble, David B. & Gary	Windom
Peters, Mark	Brandon, SD
Pohlman, Orpha	Heron Lake
Ramsey, Don & Bonnie	Fairmont
Rosa, John	Fairmont
Ruby, Mike	Eagan
Stratton, Ronald	Rochester
Wolter, Vanita	Welcome
Worden, Raymond E.	Truman

Former Brown County

members: Call and ask for Dorine at 794-3331 or 1-800-658-2368. Otherwise, e-mail bcrea@bcrea.coop.

Abbas, Phyllis M.	Mankato
Anderson, Jennifer	New Ulm
Bauer, Lois	Darwin
Betsch, Leigh T.	Estelline, SD
Black, Rick	Winthrop
Bonnes, William M.	Cedar Rapids, IA
Braam, Jerry L.	Fairfax
Cano, Juan R.	
%Oscar Surita	Crystal City, TX
Collum, Calvin C.	New Ulm
Cruz, Ruben	Laredo, TX
Cunningham, Bob	St. James
Delite Outdoor Inc.	St. Paul
Frederick, Thomas	Mankato
Gieseke, Carol	Montgomery
Gluth, Willard E.	New Ulm
Gonzales, Jesus	Hanska
Gonzalez, Janpalach	Elgin, TX
Green, Benhard A.	
%LeAnn Miller	Iona
Hall, Joshua	Forest Lake
Havemeier, Darwin & Wayne	New Ulm
Hazelton, Robert	Ogema
Huhn, Albert	New Ulm
Jensen, Judy	New Ulm
Jones, David Grant	Sleepy Eye
JTI, %Jason Tauer	Mankato
Kautzman, Rebecca	Hutchinson
Kenefick, Thomas L.	Lena, WI
Kiecker, Allan B.	New Ulm
Kruse, Wayne W.	Bigfork
Lamecker, Oleda	New Ulm
Lebens, Christine	Chaska
Lee, Martin & Candace	Webster
Lenzen, Dennis J.	New Ulm
Matthew, Mark R.	Omaha, NE
Means, Daniel L.	Baxter, IA
Meyer, Bryan J.	New Ulm
Meyer, Karyl A.	Mankato
Miller, Leland L.	New Ulm
Montanye, Harry R.	Chaska

Mosenden, Joan	Hanska
Nelson, Robert P.	Little Falls
Olson, Allen E.	New Ulm
Parsons, Lonnie D.	International Falls
Paschka, Joel & Tara	Alexandria
Ramirez, Herbert	Madelia
Ramirez, Viviana	Sleepy Eye
Rasmussen, Christine J.	New Ulm
Reim, Dan	North Mankato
Rodriguez, Jose L.	Sleepy Eye
Sadler, DeWayne	Winthrop
Sanchez, Orlando	Sleepy Eye
Schroeder, Duane R.	New Ulm
Sirovy, Thomas R.	Backus
Smith, Robert L.	Lakeville
Spicer, Debbie L.	New Ulm
Stolt, Gerald	Plymouth
Svoboda, Larry M.	Martin, ND
Thomas, James L. & Diane P.	New Ulm
TinaJero, Araceli Y.	New Ulm
Torres, Nancy	Sleepy Eye
Triax Midwest Ass., L.P.	Denver, CO
Twenty 1st Century Wireless	Edina
U S West Communications	Denver, CO
Warnke, Donald J.	Plainwell, MI
Wenzel, John	Lenexa, KS
Werner, Kenneth A.	Altamonte Springs, FL
Woodward, Laurie	Eugene, OR
Worden, Jerry L.	Linwood, NE 



Thanks for helping us locate these former members to reunite them with their unclaimed capital credits check!



Roll into some great roll recipes; sink your hands into this dough

A warm roll on a cold winter day warms the heart and tummy! Share with us recipes for rolls: cinnamon, crescent and dinner rolls, whether its grandma's recipe or for a bread machine. Share your favorite roll recipes and send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by February 23. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 

January freeze creates high bills that make you say 'Oh geez!'

Back in January we had 16 days of below zero temperatures. The average temperature was 10 degrees colder in 2018 than January 2017.

That kind of cold takes your breath away in two ways. First, when you walk outside and secondly when you open your electric bills a month later. During those kinds of cold snaps, it's a simple fact that we use more energy to stay warm and toasty. So don't be surprised if your electric bill is higher.

Did you run a space heater? Running one space heater for 10 hours adds \$1.50/day so over a month that's \$45.

Did you run an engine block heater? Running one for 12 hours adds \$1.20 a day. Over those 16 cold days that adds nearly \$20.

Do you have livestock tank heaters? Those range in wattage from 300-1,200 watts. Maybe you own a heated pet dish, although that features a lower wattage.

Did you have more family members home between Christmas and New Year's? That's more showers, meals and dishes, which add up too.

Insulation is a great tool to fight the cold. According to www.energystar.gov,



Space heaters add to higher electric bills during the deep freeze last month. gov, homeowners adding insulation can save an average of 18 percent in our region on heating and cooling costs by air sealing and adding insulation in attics, floors over crawl spaces and accessible basement rim joists. 



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before the shovel;
call before digging!**

1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register at www.gopherstateonecall.org. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

2018 off to a cold, snowy start!

2018 is starting out on a positive note for us here at Federated. I hope the same goes for all of you in our membership. The snowstorm was a great reminder that Mother Nature really does call the shots; the beauty of fresh fallen snow is something to behold.

Congrats Larry Burmeister on 38 years here

I want to start with a huge congratulations to Larry Burmeister on his retirement from Federated after nearly 38 years. Larry's

last day at Federated was January 24, although his dedication fades slowly as he was here the 25th as well. I would like to point you to January's *Connections* newsletter where our Marketing and Communications Manager Andrea Christoffer chronicled Larry's career very nicely. If you haven't seen it, it's worth a second look. We are going to miss Larry, but he has done a great job in portraying the importance of attention to detail and perfection to his fellow employees.

Place a bid on our silent auction for electric car, welder & forklift

See Page 5 for a silent auction form. We are offering a couple of larger items, including a Chevy Volt. Please take a look at that and if it's something that appeals to you, we welcome your bid. If an offer is not received for the minimum bid, we will trade it in on another vehicle.

2018 budget/work plan in the works

The staff works hard at putting together the 2018 work plan; it contains much-needed equipment upgrades and replacements. We are putting great efforts into items that yield us the best performance with reliability and safety being major factors. That document will be presented to the board in February and creates a strategy for our crews having more time for routine maintenance, pole changes, service rebuilds and generally enhancing the distribution system and substations we have.

When you think about our core competencies or goals: reliability, rates, safety and member service always rise to the top and always will. Generally, most members want things to work and would just as well never be without power ever again. We share that thought and are always challenging the status quo and wanting to do better. Challenge us with your thoughts.

Accordingly, we evaluated our work practices and decided to maximize our line crews time by contracting out the installation of our underground work. We are currently in the process of accepting bids and interviewing several qualified contractors working in our area on a regular basis. This change allows us to concentrate on more high voltage tasks for our linemen and we should see productivity increase exponentially.

Wholesale power refund returned to members on PCA in 2018

We recently received notice of refunds coming back to us from Basin Electric Cooperative and Great River Energy (GRE), two of our wholesale power suppliers. That \$800,000 refund will be returned to members via



Rural Electric

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

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

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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 — 764-3770

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.

the power cost adjustment or PCA on your electric bills in 2018 for legacy members. Several Basin and GRE power supply co-ops were subject to this refund and returned funds in a similar manner to their members. As a cooperative, we share this refund with you.

I wish you all a great month and until next time I challenge you to become more engaged in your cooperative by contacting me or our office with your questions and/or concerns. We want to exceed for you and with you so your input is vital. ☺

Wanted: Contractor for steel roof repair work on Jackson office. Call & ask for Gary or Scott 1-800-321-3520 or e-mail info@federatedrea.coop.

