

Connections

January 2018



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 22, Issue 1

How energy efficient are you?



1. I use high-efficiency LEDs in my home.



2. I turn off the lights when I leave a room.



3. I always unplug battery chargers when I am not using them.



4. I cover pots and pans for more efficient cooking.

You want to conserve energy and help the environment, but how do you know if you're doing the right things? Read these 12 questions. (Don't forget the four questions in the graphic above.) Answer true or false. Keep track of the total number of true answers and see how you score at the end.

5. I scrape my dishes before loading them into the dishwasher. No rinsing here!

6. I only run my dishwasher and clothes washer when I have a full load.

7. I wash clothes in cold water whenever possible.

8. Every year I have a qualified professional inspect my furnace and AC system.

9. I change my furnace filter regularly (according to manufacturer's guidelines).

10. I have a programmable thermostat and I program it to save energy.

11. I look for the Energy Star label when I buy new electronics and appliances.

12. I encourage friends and family to use less energy.

1-4 true answers:

Don't take this the wrong way, but you're a bit of an energy guzzler. Cut your losses by tackling the items on this list. Next, take the online energy audit at togetherwesave.com.

5-8 true answers:

Nice job! You're a power user, but there's still room for

improvement. Start by checking off the remaining items on the list. Next, take the online energy audit at togetherwesave.com.

9-12 true answers:

Congratulations! You're an energy star performer. Take it to the next level by requesting a *101 Energy Saving Tips* booklet from your co-op to increase your savings.

— Information courtesy of Questline

Line patrol begins



If you see an electric co-op line truck moving slowly down the road, be careful and give them space. Crews are beginning their annual line patrol. During line patrol, the linemen drive the system to inspect it for any present and future problems. They may also get out of their trucks and test poles for replacement.

Line trucks may also pull into your yard to inspect the service, meter and hardware to make sure it is all working right. Our linemen try to be as unobtrusive as possible during such visits. Thank you for your cooperation.

At A Glance



Changes to CBS channels on CTV; rescan or watch on WCCO 4.1

Channels 12.4 and 12.5 are no longer broadcast on CTV's towers due to failed negotiations for a tower lease agreement with KEYC. Viewers may pick up 12.1 and 12.2 directly from KEYC's VHF tower at Lewisville if their antenna has UHF and VHF capabilities. Do a rescan.



Count on 2018 energy-efficient resolutions



The New Year is a time for starting over. If you're looking for a change that can benefit your family, your community, the planet and your wallet, how about saving energy?

Just as we began 2018 with the 10... 9... 8... 7... countdown to the clock striking midnight, now you can count down how many of these energy-efficient resolutions you can accomplish this year.

10 — Switch things off when leaving your den!

Turn off lights when you're the last one to leave a room. Turn off the TV, game console or any other entertainment device when you're finished using it. The remote is never far away and hitting the power button is fast, free and easy.

9 — LED savings are fine!

Switch to energy-efficient, longer-lasting LED bulbs. Remember to recycle your CFL and fluorescent bulbs though.

8 — Make an inspection date!

Have your heating and cooling system inspected by a qualified professional.

7 — Clean filters help with the savings!

Change furnace filters regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions.

6 — Get your thermostat fixed!

Adjust the thermostat to save energy at night or when no one's at home. A programmable thermostat can do the job for you. You could also have a Wi-Fi thermostat installed. Then you'll be able to adjust the temperature of your home from your smartphone or tablet no matter where you are, including your couch. Check out the cooperative's qualifying smart Wi-Fi thermostat rebates too; call or visit the cooperative's website for details. If that still sounds like too much work, some smart models can program themselves based on your habits.

5 — Some electronics are always live!

Unplug battery chargers when they're not charging anything. Unplug any other "vampire" electronics you can think of, as well, that use power even when "off."

4 — Don't spend too much time under the shower!

Take shorter showers. If your water heater is getting old, contact your electric cooperative. We have great prices on energy-efficient electric water heaters, which feature insulation to prevent heat loss. Plus, the cooperative's water heaters come with a limited lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner!

3 — Leaks aren't free!

Fix water leaks at the faucet as quickly as possible. Drippy faucets are a drain on your wallet.

2 — Let fixtures do the job for you!

Install water-efficient showerheads and faucet aerators.

1 — Go with Energy Star when old appliances are done!

Purchase only Energy Star® certified high-efficiency appliances and devices. For example, Energy Star TVs use up to 30 percent less energy than standard sets. You can shop online and have it delivered and installed. That way, you won't have to lift a finger, other than to pick up the remote! If you buy an Energy Star refrigerator or freezer, fill out the cooperative's rebate form; you must have the old unit recycled to receive this credit.

Looking to save more? Contact your electric cooperative for the "101 Energy Saving Tips" booklet for even more ways to save. Your cooperative's energy expert is here to help. Ask away. If we don't know the answer, we will try and find out for you! 

— Information courtesy of Questline

Slow cooking is now on the go!

A lot of people love the convenience and ease of slow cookers when it comes to preparing meals. Some even bring slow cookers to family meals and picnics. Unfortunately, most are not designed for travel. They are tall and easily tip. Their covers don't latch. Now slow cookers are taking the next step and being made specifically for travel.

The Nomad Traveling Slow Cooler is based on a "picnic cooler-style" design. Its cool-touch housing and swing-up handle makes carrying easy and prevents tip-overs when traveling. The locking lid also seals tight for spill-proof transportation.

Make soups, stews, casseroles, chicken, roasts and more in this six-quart slow cooker. It is great for buffet-style foods, pulled pork, chicken wings, sloppy joes, hot beef and more. It tenderizes leaner cuts of meat and offers slow-cook settings for high, low and keep warm.

The hinged, removable cover has a large see-through glass window and features a detachable utensil holder with silicone cord that secures a utensil during transport and doubles as a spoon rest when serving. Removable nonstick cooking pot is fully immersible for easy cleaning. Built-in cord storage. A dry



The Nomad Traveling Slow Cooker is the slow cooker designed to take with you! Based on a picnic cooler design, this slow cooker is easy to carry and hard to spill. 

erase board on the front is handy for labeling what is inside the slow cooker.

The Nomad Traveling Slow Cooker is available on Amazon.com for approximately \$60. 

Safety

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe

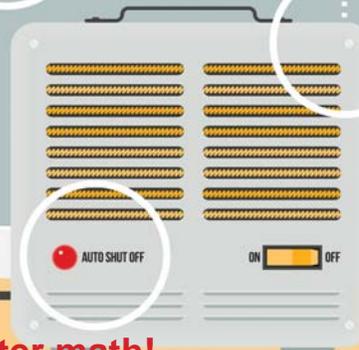
DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over or your forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



Ace space heater math!

Ace space heater math!

The typical space heater uses 1,500 watts of power. To figure out how much you'll spend using one 1,500-watt space heater over a period of time, use this formula:

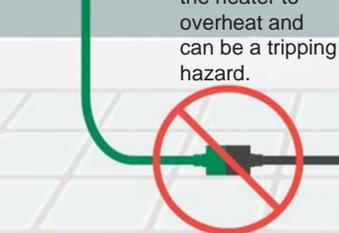
1. Multiply 1,500 watts by X hours of use = A.
2. Multiply A by your electricity rate per kilowatt-hour (kWh) = B.
3. Divide B by 1,000.

So if you use a 1,500-watt electric space heater for 10 hours a day at a 10-cent per kWh rate, the numbers look like this: $1,500 \times 10 = 15,000$. $15,000 \times .10 = 1,500$. $1,500/1,000 = \$1.50$ per day. 

DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat and can be a tripping hazard.



DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.

Federated Focus

2018: Plans for new home, shop, hog barn or grain dryer?



Have building plans? Keep Federated in the loop so we can provide a new or larger electrical service. Call Federated and

talk to Joe or George in operations. Get your project on our schedule so we can have materials on hand. **Basin \$1,000 scholarship due**



High school seniors and college students with a year of college left...apply for two \$1,000 Basin Scholarships by January 30. Applications are on Federated's website, at our office or from school counselors. Must be the son or daughter of a Federated member.

Iowa complaint process posted

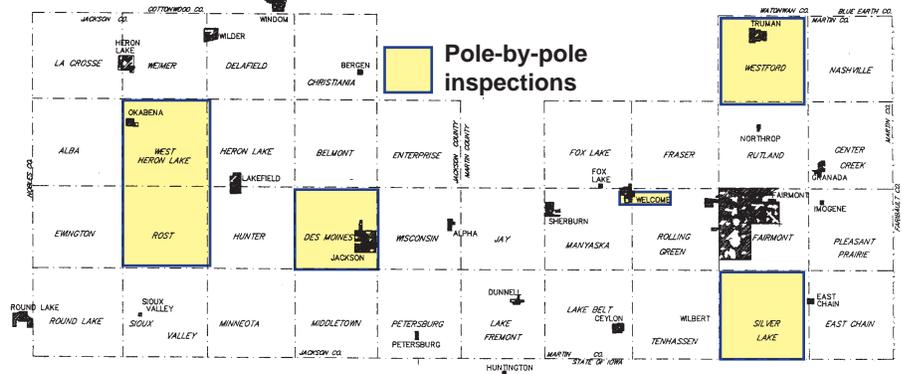


If you have a concern or complaint regarding Federated Rural Electric, it should be addressed to: Scott Reimer, general manager, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or call 507-847-3520.

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 too. ☎

Watch out for Federated trucks driving slowly



Line crews will drive all of the lines this winter looking for maintenance issues. They will also do pole-by-pole inspections in the yellow highlighted townships, including the town of Welcome. ☎

Co-op posts nondiscrimination notice



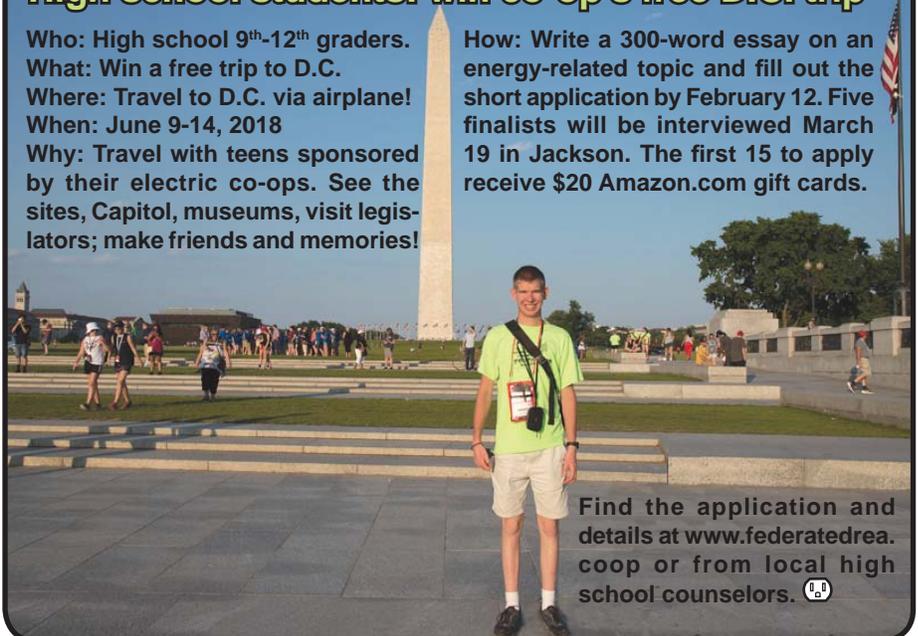
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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. ☎

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.



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

After drawing co-op's service maps 37 years Larry Burmeister maps out his retirement

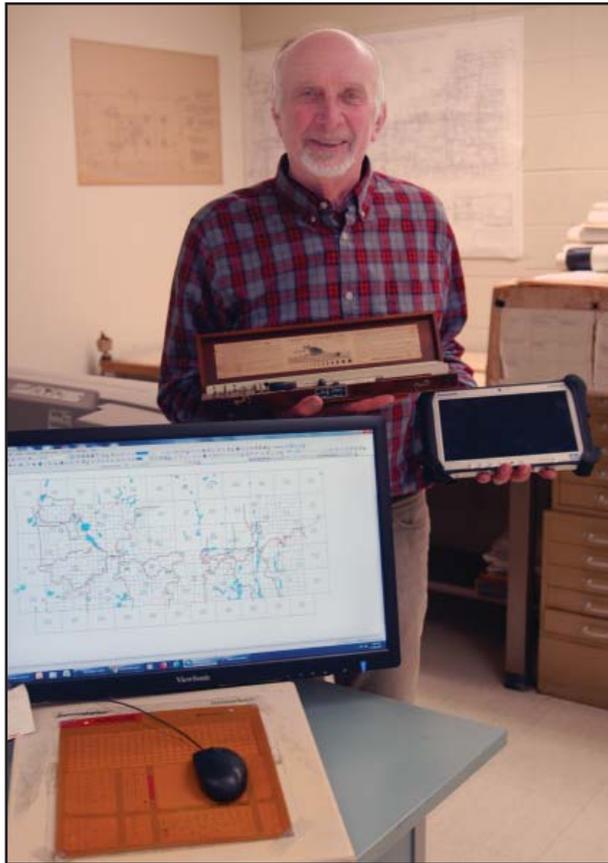
You could say that Larry Burmeister, Lakefield, knows every inch of Federated's system, along with neighboring electric cooperatives too. For the last 37 years he worked at Federated as the engineering aide.

Burmeister explained that he started with paper and pencil drawing Federated's maps from the meter dots to the power lines and substations; mapping also included ink and mylar, then AutoCad computer drawings and finally ESRI digital maps.

At one time this involved working for five electric cooperatives doing their map updates, drawing up work plan maps every four years and every 10 years drawing the long-range maps for line upgrades and construction. Besides Federated, he worked for Nobles Cooperative Electric, South Central Electric and Iowa Lakes starting in 1980. Brown County REA was added to the Engineering group in 1987. The Engineering group disbanded over the last decade.

Besides working on the maps, Burmeister worked with underground contractors hired by the co-ops. "First, I would stake all of the lines ahead of the contractor," Burmeister said. "I'd work with other utilities (phone, gas, fiber) to find out where their lines were located, along with the farmers on where their tile lines were. I'd make sure that the materials were all ready each day for the contractors and keep track of how much material and underground cable was used. During the summer I would start at 6:30 a.m. and go to 8 p.m. at night working beside the contractors, but I didn't mind the long hours."

During storm restoration he worked the maps too. "The worst storm was the Nobles ice storm in 1996," Burmeister



The tools of the trade have varied over 37 years for Larry Burmeister when making Federated's maps. He started using ink (right hand) and mylar (back left map), ESRI (front center) to create the color maps (back right). He also used the Tough Book in his left hand for staking.

stated. "The ice on the lines was as wide as the diameter of Coke cans. I worked at their Slayton office nearly two weeks taking calls on outages, drawing the outage locations on the map, where the crews were and then keeping track on the maps of when the lines were rebuilt. Nobles had 2,200 broken poles with some of it later replaced with 300 miles of underground cable. We had everyone on by Thanksgiving, but then the ice started falling off the lines and we had more outages."

Another memorable storm included the 2013 April ice storm. "I slept on the floor at Nobles for a week mapping the outage locations and also helped guide

Brown County crews working on Federated's lines," he said.

In addition, Burmeister was involved in the construction of five ethanol plants (Welcome, Fairmont, Heron Lake, Lake Crystal and Bingham Lake) and one soybean plant at Brewster. He worked with the contractors or co-op crews installing the underground cable. "That was the biggest challenge to the job," he commented. "We had daily meetings with the project manager, were working to beat the weather and working around the other contractors onsite."

Burmeister recalls using the infrared camera to look for hot spots in substations, transformers and cabinets, while testing unjacketed underground cable.

Before Federated, he went to the Jackson Vo-Tech for architectural drawing and worked for an Ellerbe Architects for three months drawing up plans for the Mayo Clinic expansion and outbuildings. Then the draft called and Burmeister worked for the Air Force four years in Washington, D.C and Germany. Afterwards, he

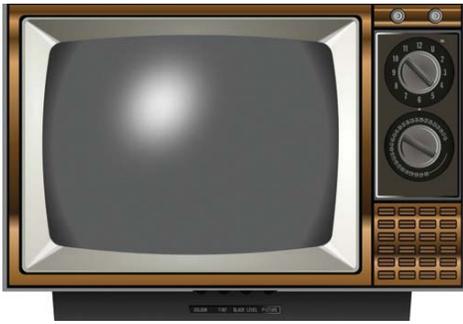
worked for Scheppmann Construction in Okabena as a draftsman. "My dad saw the ad in the paper that Federated needed a draftsman so I applied because this was a stable company that offered health insurance and retirement benefits," he added.

After nearly four decades Burmeister is looking forward to retirement. He plans to do some ice fishing up North with his brother, continue with his hobby of raising horses, baling hay in the summer and helping farmers too.

Burmeister will retire in January as the next generation of mapping arrives — global positioning system (GPS) maps.

Congratulations on a great career! 🎉

Is your TV past its prime time (energy wise)?



Americans love their TVs. More than 115 million U.S. households have at least one television set, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Many of these TVs, however, are not as energy efficient as they could be; the extra cost can make a regular appearance on your monthly energy bills.

The best solution is to upgrade to an Energy Star® certified TV, which averages 27 percent more energy efficient than a conventional model. You can find the Energy Star® label on every type of TV, from standard sets to large screen models with the latest features and internet connectivity.

In addition to being more energy efficient, today's TVs are flatter, lighter and brighter than older models, providing a better viewing experience. You can happily binge-watch your favorite shows without seeing your energy costs go up.

Looking to save even more? These cost-cutting tips can help:

- Consider seating recommendations before purchasing a large screen TV. A smaller screen (that uses less energy) may be fine for the size of your room.

- Increase your savings by purchasing Energy Star® rated electronics, as well, such as set-top boxes, soundbars and digital media players.

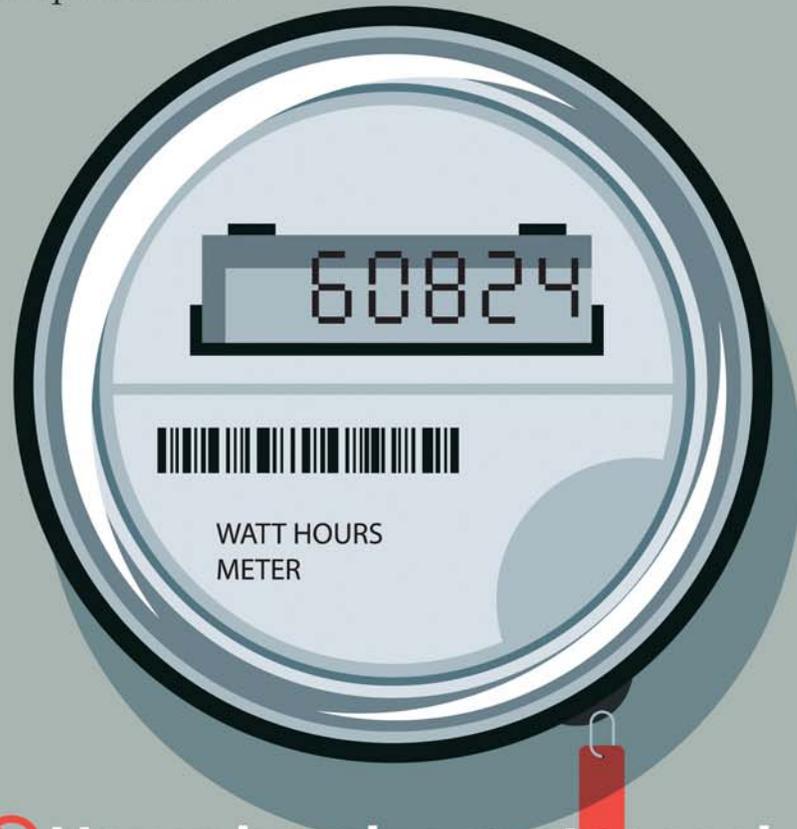
- Turn off your TV and other connected components when they're not in use. Plug your entire home entertainment center into an advanced power strip, which automatically shuts off power to idle equipment.

By upgrading to the latest high-efficiency products, you can enhance your viewing pleasure and enjoy lower energy bills. 

— Information courtesy of Questline

DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



-  **Never break a meter seal.**
-  **Never open a meter base.**
-  **Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.**

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.

You 'butter nut' forget to share your best butternut recipes!

Gardens yielded another good harvest, with lots of treats ready to be prepared into delicious meals. Butternut squash can be served a variety of ways: baked, glazed, mashed and more... Share your favorite butternut squash recipes and send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christofer@federatedrea.coop by January 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

Black Bean Brownies (gluten free) by Laurie Sherman, Truman

15 oz. can black beans, rinsed & drained ½ tsp. baking powder
 2 large eggs pinch of salt
 ¼ c. cocoa powder ¾ c. chocolate chips, divided
 2/3 c. honey 4 drops of peppermint essential oil (if desired)

Blend together until smooth everything except the chocolate chips; stir in ½ c. of the chocolate chips. Pour into 8x8" pan; top with the ¼ c. chocolate chips. Bake 350° for 30-35 minutes. Store in refrigerator. ☺

Pumpkin Nut Bars by Kay Sandersfeld, Fairmont

½ c. shortening ¼ tsp. ginger
 1 c. brown sugar ¼ tsp. nutmeg
 1 c. flour 2/3 c. pumpkin
 ½ tsp. soda 2 eggs
 ½ tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. vanilla 1/4 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. cinnamon 1/2 c. nuts

Combine all ingredients except nuts in a large mixing bowl. Beat two minutes with electric mixer at medium speed. Fold in nuts. Spread evenly in a 13x9x2" pan. Bake in a 350° oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Cool; spread with frosting.

Orange frosting:

Blend until smooth:

2 T. shortening
 1½ c. powdered sugar
 1 T. grated orange peel
 2 T. orange juice.
 Yields about 1 cup. ☺

Rice Pudding by Grace Gerken, Fairmont

Add 1/3 c. rice in 1 c. boiling water, ½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. butter. Steam 20-25 minutes. Scald 3 c. milk. Mix 2 rounded T. cornstarch, ½ c. sugar, pinch of salt. Separate 3 eggs. To the yolks add a little hot milk. Add to the dry ingredients. Add to hot milk. Stir and cook until thick. Add vanilla. Add rice to the custard mixture.

Meringue:

Beat 3 egg whites, 6 T. sugar and a dash of salt. Spread meringue on top and brown at 350° for 15 minutes. ☺

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**Pick up the phone
 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

Electricity comes from many sources

Federated members benefit greatly from a diverse power supply mix providing the most reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost, while maximizing "clean" renewable energy opportunities as they are made available.

Minnesota Statute 216B.1691 on Renewable Energy Objectives requires each utility to provide a percentage of approved renewable energy by:

- 2012: 12 percent
- 2016: 17 percent
- 2020: 20 percent
- 2025: 25 percent

Federated and its wholesale providers are well on our way to reaching and exceeding this standard as the bar raises. When you factor in that 11 percent of the energy we receive comes from the hydroelectric power plants along the Missouri River Basin from our hydroelectric power contract, we exceed today's standard and will continue to do so for many years.

Unfortunately, these hydro resources are not recognized by the state's plan, but do make a difference; look at the overall portfolio and the socioeconomic benefit derived from the zero carbon emission facilities lowering our carbon footprint.

Federated members also have the benefit of owning the 2.1 MW wind turbine just outside Welcome generating more than 7 million kilowatt-hours per year. That's enough to supply for about 585 homes using 12,000 kWhs per year with "clean" renewable energy.

The Federated Board of Directors is completely on board with the use of renewable energy in our power supply mix and recently approved such a resolution.

In addition to the clean energy initiatives, Federated participates in the Conservation Improvement Program that provides rebates to members for energy-efficient lighting, motors, appliances, heat pumps, along with custom rebates as needed.

Coal and natural gas continue to be a major source of our supply; as technology changes, so will the supply source. With wind and solar being an intermittent power supply and the battery storage technology a few years away, we need a diverse generation mix in order to accomplish everyone's energy needs. ☺



Scrub a dub dub! We'll provide the hot water for the tub, sink, showers & dishes...

\$539, plus tax; installation included. Buy your next electric water heater from Federated 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520



Rural Electric

Official monthly newsletter published

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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.

Jennifer Madden named customer service rep.



Federated promoted part-time employee Jennifer Madden to a full-time customer service representative effective November 20. Madden previously was a Federated summer intern in 2008 and then a part-time employee in 2009. She came back part-time in October 2015 and has worked here since then.

"I'm pleased that Jennifer Madden accepted a full-time customer service representative position with Federated," said Office Manager Julie Resch. "She's done an excellent job for us in her part-time role and we look forward to having her full-time. She will continue with many of the same duties at the front desk, but will also be cross-training to billing functions, assisting with phone calls, working with water heater and internet billings, plus importing the meter readings for the monthly bills."

Madden enjoys cooking and traveling in her free time and is married to Matt. ☺