

Connections

August 2023

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 27, Issue 8

Teens transformed by Youth Tour & historical Washington D.C., courtesy of electric co-op

History came to life for two local teens after winning the co-op's Youth Tour Contest. They traveled with 34 Minnesota Youth to our nation's capital June 13-18. Grace Mages, Sleepy Eye, represented Brown County REA, while Katie Hartke, Sheburn, was sponsored by Federated Rural Electric.

Grace Mages' favorite sites

"My favorite memorial was the Lincoln Memorial," stated Mages. "There was a lot of symbolism and it showcased consequential speeches, like the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural Address. I also enjoyed the Washington Monument; it is an important symbol of respect and gratitude for President Washington and everything he did for our country. Plus, I really enjoyed the Museum of Natural History with the 'Eternal Life in Ancient Egypt' section. I learned how every experience, failure or success, got us to where we are today."

The Youth Tour students also expanded their cultural horizons, Mages added. "The performance of 'The Enigmatist' at The Kennedy Center was amazing! There were so many different 'tricks' performed and puzzles for the audience too! An unexpected, but greatly appreciated surprise, was watching the Navy Band practice for their concert later that evening. We got to talk to some of the band members afterwards too!"

Of course a D.C. trip involves a visit to the Capitol and with



Teen travelers! Katie Hartke, Sherburn, and Grace Mages, Sleepy Eye, experienced all Washington, D.C. had to offer. The teens were sponsored by their electric co-op for Youth Tour June 13-18.

legislators. "Even though there was some construction at the Capitol, it was beautiful inside and out," she said. "My favorite part was the mural in the rotunda — beautiful and very symbolic. Visiting with our legislators was my favorite part of the trip! I enjoyed hearing what our Representatives and Senators each do for me and my community. They talked to us about different topics regarding renewable energy sources and their local effects, cooperatives and other local issues."

Mount Vernon was another beautiful stop for Mages. "I enjoyed the gardens, greenhouse and the chance to view the Washington family grave."

"I would highly recommend Youth Tour to anyone who has the chance! It is an amazing trip with amazing people. You will learn so many things about our country and also about yourself! I learned that

everyone plays a part in society no matter how big or small and that putting myself out into the world helps me make a difference. In addition, anytime we would see groups from other states they would always ask us to say something so they could hear our Minnesota accents!

"It was really easy to make friends on the trip because no one really knew each other," Mages said. "I keep in contact with most of the close friends I made on Youth Tour! I would like to thank Brown County REA and all of the chaperones

— Continued on Page 6

At A Glance



Beat by the heat?
Check out our cool
heat pump rebates

If your old central air is on its last legs, switch to an energy-efficient heat pump. Air source heat pumps have \$1,000 to \$1,500 rebates. Ductless air source heat pumps feature \$300 rebates, while ground source heat pumps are \$350/ton. See our website or call us with questions. ☎

Run the numbers on heat pumps

Heat pumps offer energy-savings and money-saving benefits for homeowners. If you need a new heating/cooling system, consider the numerous pros of going with a heat pump.

- Heat pumps are highly energy efficient, especially when compared to traditional heating and cooling systems, like furnaces or air conditioners. They work by transferring heat from one location to another, instead of generating heat directly, resulting in significant energy savings. Heat pumps can provide up to four times more energy than they consume, making them an environmentally-friendly option.

- One major advantage of heat pumps is their ability to heat and cool. By reversing the refrigeration cycle heat pumps can extract heat from the outside air (even in colder temperatures) and transfer it indoors during winter for heating. During the summer, they can extract heat from inside and expel it outside, providing cooling.

- Due to their energy efficiency, heat pumps can significantly reduce energy bills compared to conventional heating and cooling systems. While the upfront cost of installing a heat pump may be higher, the long-term savings in energy costs offsets this initial investment.

- Heat pumps have a lower carbon footprint compared to fossil fuel-based heating systems.

- Heat pumps are known for their durability and lifespan. With proper maintenance and regular servicing a well-installed heat pump can last for 15 to 20 years or longer.

Heat pumps come in various types and sizes, offering flexibility for



SAVINGS CALCULATOR

SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN SAVE WITH ENERGY STAR

The average household spends more than \$2,200 a year on energy bills, with nearly half going to heating and cooling. HVAC equipment that earns the ENERGY STAR label is independently certified to save energy, save money and help protect the climate.

What type of heating and/or cooling system do you have in your home?

- ☒ Central cooling and/or heating delivered through duct work and air vents (i.e. forced air)

What type of heating and/or cooling system do you have in your home?

- ☐ Central air conditioning only
☒ Central air conditioning and heating delivered through duct work and air vents (i.e. forced air) using a heat pump

Split system or single package?

- ☐ Split System
☒ Single Package

Enter your zip code?


56161

To get a better idea how much you can save with a new heat pump, visit the Energy Star website. They have a savings calculator at https://www.energystar.gov/products/heating_cooling/guide/savings-calculator.

different applications. They can be used in residential homes, commercial buildings and even industrial settings.

The amount of electricity and money saved by heat pumps will vary based on several factors, including the size of the home, heat pump rating (SEER), and the homeowner's energy patterns. To estimate cost savings you need to compare the operating costs of a heat

pump to the alternative heating system you would be using. (See the image above.) The Energy Star website offers a savings-calculator to give potential heat pump buyers an idea of savings.

Additionally, your electric co-op offers rebates on heat pumps. Contact your co-op's energy expert or visit your electric cooperative's website to learn more. 

EGO fan brings portable power to cooling

The EGO Power+ Fan is a revolutionary portable fan that takes outdoor comfort to a whole new level. Equipped with a high-efficiency brushless motor, this fan operates using EGO's industry-leading 56-volt lithium-ion battery system. This ensures long-lasting performance without the hassle of cords, allowing you to enjoy the cool breeze wherever you go. The battery, which is compatible with other EGO tools, provides a significant runtime, enabling extended periods of use before recharging is necessary.

One feature of the EGO Power+ Fan is its portable design. With its lightweight construction and ergonomic handle, it's easy to carry and maneuver the fan to your desired location. The adjustable tilting head allows you to direct airflow precisely where you need it, ensuring maximum comfort on hot summer days. The fan's compact size makes it ideal for various settings, whether you're camping, tailgating, simply relaxing in your backyard or working in the shop.

The EGO Power+ Fan offers three settings to customize the airflow according to your preferences. Whether you need a gentle breeze or a powerful gust, this fan delivers. The variable speed controls allowing you to adjust the settings effortlessly to adapt to changing conditions. The EGO Power+ Fan also offers a misting function.


In addition to its powerful airflow capabilities, the EGO Power+ Fan operates with minimal noise. The advanced engineering of the brushless motor ensures quiet opera-



The EGO fan uses the same rechargeable batteries as other EGO products, offering long life and quick recharging.

tion, allowing you to enjoy the cool breeze without any disturbances. This makes the fan perfect for use in quiet environments, such as during an evening on the patio or while working on a project that requires concentration.

Run time per charge varies. The fan will run two hours on turbo, four hours on high and up to 60 hours on low.

Embrace the freedom of a cordless fan. The EGO Power+ Fan costs about \$280 and is available at hardware stores and online. Charger (\$99-\$399) and battery (\$179-\$500) sold separately. The EGO battery/charger works with other EGO devices/tools so you may not need it to buy if you already have for their other tools. 

Safety

Make yard work safe work around electricity

Summer is the season for yard work. Be aware of electrical safety when maintaining your landscaping.

- Before starting any yard work task, inspect your electrical tools. Check for frayed cords, damaged plugs or any signs of wear and tear. It is crucial to repair or replace faulty equipment immediately to avoid potential accidents.

- When working outdoors, use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs monitor the flow of electricity and can quickly shut off the power if they detect a fault.

- Avoid running electrical cords across walkways or under carpets; never nail or staple them to walls or fences, as this can lead to insulation damage and expose live wires.

- Before using ladders or long tools, always check for overhead power lines.


- After completing your yard work, store your electrical



tools and equipment in a dry, protected area. Exposure to the elements leads to corrosion and increase the risk of electric shock during future use.

- Using electrical tools during wet weather is extremely hazardous. Water is an excellent conductor of electricity and can create life-threatening situations. Wait until the weather clears up before yard work occurs. Wet grass can also conduct electricity. Ensure the grass is dry before using any electric tools.

- Use only outdoor-rated extension cords. These cords are designed to withstand exposure to the elements and reduce electrical hazards.

- If digging more than 18 inches deep, be sure to call Gopher State One Call 48 hours in advance (1-800-252-1166 or 811). Locators mark any underground utilities in the area. 

Federated Focus

Annual Meeting recap coming

The highlights of the Annual Meeting August 3 will be featured in the September *Connections*. This edition went to the printers before the meeting.

September 22 deadline nears



Apply for Operation Round Up funds by September 22.

The application can be found on our website (www.federatedrea.coop) or call/e-mail the office to request a hard copy. Nonprofit organizations, schools, fire departments and environmental groups can apply. Recipients will be announced in November.

Got a water heater geyser?

While you are on vacation you want to see Old Faithful in person and not find it spurting water from your prehistoric water heater. Call Federated to replace your water heater with one possessing a lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner. Price \$589, plus, tax; installation included. Schedule your install now to prevent the geyser nightmare from happening in your basement.

Bountiful garden yields?



Does your bountiful garden have your old freezer or refrigerator bursting at the seams? Upgrade your unit now before hunting season occurs with

an Energy Star refrigerator or freezer. Receive a \$50 rebate from Federated with proof of recycling the old one. Find the rebate form on our website or call us to request it. ☎



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Federated awarded \$7 million grant for Jackson County

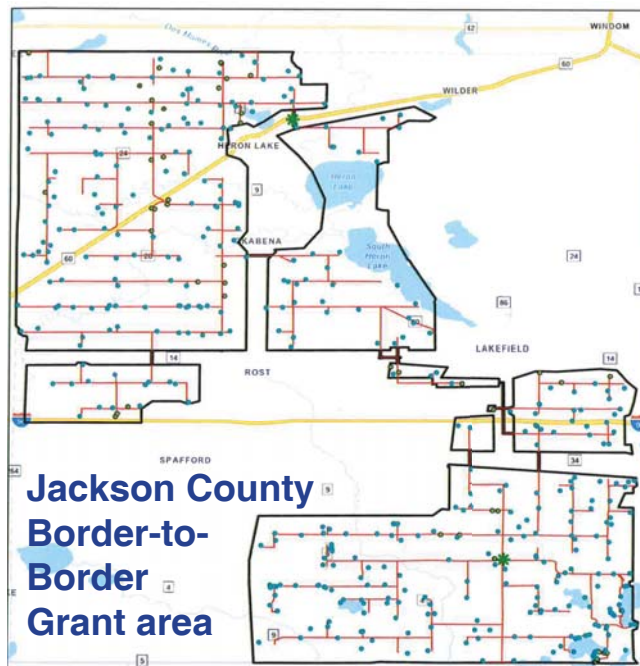
The Minnesota Department Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Office of Broadband Development notified Federated Rural Electric/Broadband of a \$7 million grant to serve rural Jackson County in late June. We're ecstatic about the opportunity to serve rural Jackson County with fiber to the premises, delivering 1 gig symmetrical service to our members. This grant features a two-year time frame so construction could begin yet this year or in the spring of 2024. With the grant application much has been done so essentially it's a shovel-ready project; ironing out the details remains. Once we have the contract, the Board will officially sign and return to DEED to make it official. Once we have a signed contract, we will be able to begin the environmental work, start procuring materials and look for a contractor.

The area covered by the grant is northwestern Jackson County, covering the rural areas of Heron Lake and Okabena. In addition, areas south, east and southwest of Lakefield are underserved or unserved as well. The project involves 480 households, businesses and farms, installing 251 miles of fiber. The townships covered are: LaCrosse, Wiemer, Western Heron Lake, Alba, Rost, Hunter, Sioux Valley, Minneota and Ewington. (See the map below.)

The project's total cost is estimated at just over \$10 million with Jackson County partnering and providing a \$500,000 match. Federated will secure long-term loans for the balance, similar to what it does for financing its electric distribution work plan projects.

Only 61.98 percent of Jackson County residents have access to 100/200 Mbps speeds, which ranks 55th out of 87 Minnesota Counties. The quality of life will be much improved allowing telecommuting, telehealth, distance learning, plus help farmers and rural businesses be competitive. In addition, rural members will have improved entertainment opportunities, better access to financial management and social media. This is a great economic development tool for our area!

The State of Minnesota announced June 28 grants totaling \$66,869,009 to 30 projects in the eighth round of the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant program and the pilot round of the Low-Density Broadband Grant program. Federated was funded under the low-density program due to its rural nature.



Federated will continue its quest to provide high-speed internet access to our service area and other areas deemed feasible by our Board. Federated remains committed to our membership for the long haul for electric, broadband and other essential services that fit into our scope of operations. ☎

Red lines show the proposed fiber route in the area covered under this Minnesota grant. The green dots are the possible sites that will be served.

Board authorizes \$1 million in capital credits; find credits on electric bills received in August

Cash back is coming your way! Federated members will see capital credits refunds on the August 4 electric bills.

This year the Board of Directors is retiring and returning nearly \$1 million in capital credits from three different sources:

1. \$95,815 from 2020 Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative patronage (wholesale power supplier capital credits).

2. Great River Energy returned \$477,184 in capital credits to Federated for 1993-1994 patronage, along with margins from 2006-2012 for the ethanol plant adjacent to the Coal Creek power plant; this also represents wholesale power supplier capital credits.

3. Finally, Federated is returning capital credits from 2003 and 2022 totaling \$425,649.

- Retires 61 percent from 2003: \$255,395
- Retires nearly 31 percent from 2022: \$170,254

Federated returns a portion of last year's margins so newer cooperative members see the benefits of capital credits. When Federated's Board of Directors approved the rate consolidation of Federated's legacy and former Alliant electric rates in 2021, the wholesale power supplier capital credits are now allocated among all electric members. In the last decade Federated has returned over \$8.2 million to its member-owners.

Current members will receive a bill credit on their August bills listed as "Capital Credits Retired." Checks will be mailed in late July if the amount was more than \$500. Checks will also be mailed to former members if the amount is larger



Federated directors celebrate the cooperative difference by returning nearly one million to Federated members as capital credits; look for your credits on the August 4 electric bill. Directors from left to right: Jon Saxen, Glenn Dicks, David Meschke, Bruce Brockmann, Darvin Voss, Scott Thiesse and David A. Hansen.

than \$20. Capital credits are returned as a bill credit, which saves labor, postage and printing costs for the membership.

"During these inflationary times, capital credits being returned to you, our member-owners, helps out a lot," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "This is the cooperative difference of local ownership!"

Unlike many corporations, Federated is a not-for-profit organization. We reinvest our profits back into the cooperative. Plus, we allocate the value of those profits (based on electricity purchased during the year) to a capital credits account maintained for each member. Federated holds these margins over time to finance part of line construction and maintenance. Using our margins this way means Federated does not have to borrow as much money, saving members interest charges that would otherwise be reflected in higher electric rates. (1)

Pink wave of 4-H T-shirts hits fairgrounds, courtesy of co-op



Federated distributed more than 500 T-shirts to Jackson and Martin County 4-H members and screened adult leaders during the county fairs.

From monuments to museums Youth Tour makes memories for local teens

— Continued from Page 1
on the trip for everything. I had an amazing time!”

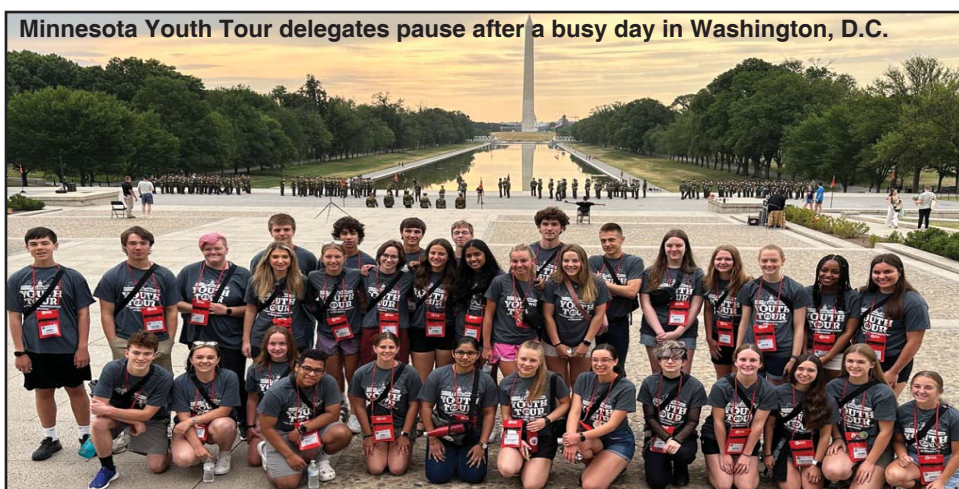
Katie Hartke’s D.C. highlights

“I loved the Jefferson Memorial because I admired how parts of the Declaration of Independence were on the walls surrounding his statue,” she said. “I was reminded of the values and rights that we, as Americans, should all cherish and appreciate. As stated in the Declaration of Independence, some of the most important rights are: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As Americans, we need to respect, value and cherish life.”

Hartke explained her favorite D.C. site-seeing stops. “My favorite monument was Arlington Cemetery. It is amazing how so many soldiers dedicated their lives to fight for freedom in America. Specifically, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was striking because I was amazed by the selfless dedication of the military guards. I appreciate how the Tomb is guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is such a neat symbol of humble service and sacrifice.

“I enjoyed learning more about specific facts and details within the Holocaust Museum,” she added. “I thought it was interesting and scary how certain themes of the Holocaust are present in the world today. I was reminded how it’s important to be thankful for the gifts and opportunities we have. We also went to the Smithsonian. I saw the museums of American History, Air and Space, and Natural History. The National Cathedral was another cool site we saw. I loved the American details and designs involved in the architecture and layout.”

Hartke appreciated Capitol Hill. “I thought the Capitol was huge. I liked how our tour guide talked about the Nation’s motto of ‘Out of many, we are One’. I think it’s important to understand how we are all Americans, even



though we have different beliefs and backgrounds. I also enjoyed getting to see the House and Senate Chambers, as well as how the members of Congress communicate and vote.


“It was a great experience getting to talk with the Minnesota legislators,” Hartke stated. “I really appreciated how all of the legislators valued respect and the importance of working together, especially as Democrats and Republicans. In addition, the legislators were all excited to see us and thanked us for coming because they want the next generation to get involved and understand politics. Thank you Representatives Brad Finstad, Dean Phillips, Pete Stauber and Senator Amy Klobuchar for meeting with us.”

Hartke’s national pride grew due to the trip too. “If I had to pick one thing to be my favorite, I would say being able to see and feel the Nation’s pride and honor. The media does not always talk about positive things, so it was gratifying for me to see the symbolism of sacrifice and freedom within the memorials, and the honor and respect that we should have for our country. I was inspired to be more thankful and to uphold the freedoms and opportunities given to me in America.

“This trip helped me to be more responsible and forced me to interact with others in different ways. I am a

little more shy and introverted, so I had to make more of an effort to make friends, as well as voice my opinions. I refined my communication skills to grow in compassion and understanding. This trip also helped me become more grateful for all the freedoms and opportunities we have in America. Electricity, protection, shoes, food and clean water are all things that we take for granted in America. I was reminded of how to be thankful and how the simplest things can bring you joy.

“I met many new friends and my roommate was originally from Ukraine,” Hartke commented. “I became closest with my roommate and enjoyed getting to hear her story and experiences. It was such a cool experience to meet lots of different people for the first time and become friends with them by the end of the trip. I plan to keep in contact with my roommate, as well as other friends I met.”

Hartke encourages other high schoolers to enter the cooperative’s Youth Tour Contest. “The process of applying and interviewing was a great experience and practice; the opportunity for a free trip to D.C. is so humbling and rewarding. A huge thank you to Federated for the opportunity. It was very humbling and inspiring. I am forever grateful to all who granted me this experience.” 

Let's ham it up! Share your favorite ham recipes for your family

Alakazam! Make some ham recipes appear out of thin air! Share your favorite ham recipe, whether it's for sandwiches, egg bake, ham balls, hot dishes and appetizers. Share your ham recipes with us. Mail your favorite recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by August 28. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Buster Bar Dessert by Bonnie Seidl, Sleepy Eye

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 small package of Oreos | ½ small jar of caramel topping/sauce |
| ¼ c. melted butter | 10 oz. can of salted peanuts |
| ½ gallon softened vanilla ice cream | 8 oz. Cool Whip |
| 1 small jar of fudge topping | |

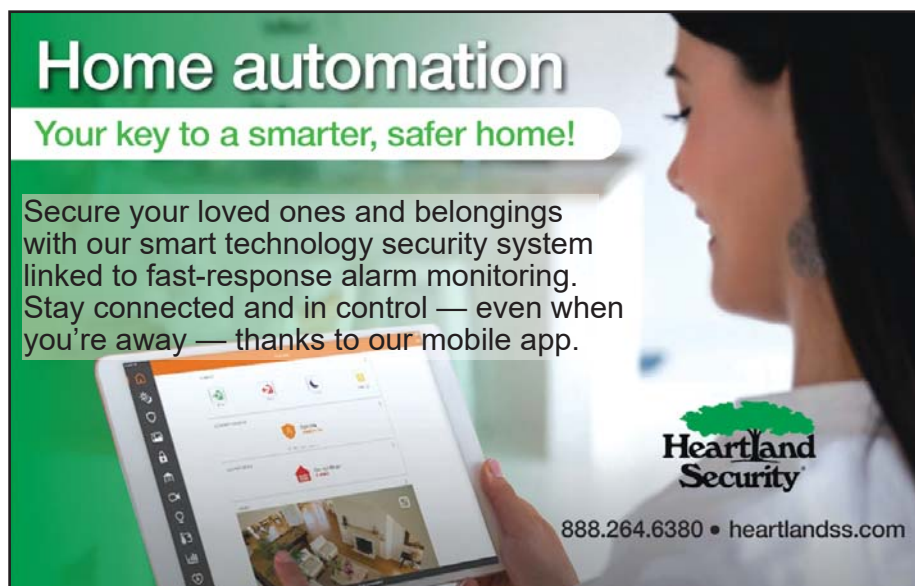
Crush the package of Oreos, but set aside 1 cup. Mix the balance with melted butter then put in a 9x13" cake pan.

Soften the ice cream and spread on crumbs. Then pour fudge topping and caramel topping on ice cream. Sprinkle peanuts on top followed by Cool Whip. Sprinkle reserved Oreo crumbs on top. Freeze. 📧

Grandma Edna's Ice Cream by Lynda Weilage, Sleepy Eye

Dissolve 2 T. of cornstarch in ½ c. whole milk. Beat in 6 egg yolks, 2 c. sugar and 1½ c. whole milk. Cook custard over low to medium heat, stirring constantly. When mixture simmers and thickens, remove from heat and set aside, lightly covered.

When the custard is cool, put 1 quart real cream (whipping) in freezer canister and then add the cooked custard. Whip the 6 egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold the egg whites into the custard mixture and 2 T. of the best vanilla available. Lastly, fill the ice cream can three-fourths full with the whole milk. Freeze according to machine's directions. 📧



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The cooperative will be closed for Labor Day September 4

Crews will be on call in case of outages

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Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees and tiling.

Register at www.gopherstateonecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧

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Broadband
customer &
Federated director**



"I work from home and need to access the internet on a daily basis," stated Scott Thiesse, Welcome. "Since I started receiving internet service from Federated, I can now concentrate on work and not when and where I need to go for internet service. Federated Broadband has increased my production tremendously. With my old provider I often had to attend meetings with audio only because the video would lock up. I have not had that problem with Federated Broadband. It's fast and dependable. After being connected to Federated's wireless broadband I haven't given it a thought because it is always there."



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507-847-1001 or 1-833-847-8001



Businesses: ask about our larger data plans



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The Board of Directors generally meets the last business day of the month at 8 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.

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