

# Connections

May 2023



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 27, Issue 5

## Two local electric cooperatives are now charging ahead with first electric pickup added to its fleet

Your electric cooperative has energized its fleet of vehicles, adding its first electric pickup.

Brown County REA (BCREA) added a Ford Lightning pickup in January, while Federated Rural Electric received its Rivian pickup in November.

“Since we are a rural agricultural area, we wanted to have first-hand experience using an electric pickup,” stated Jon Beckman, Federated’s marketing specialist. “This pickup is used mainly by the Marketing and Communications Department for events, meeting with members at their homes and businesses, plus for EV education. The pickup bed works great for hauling coolers, displays and equipment. Employees from other departments are also driving the Rivian for meetings or work errands too.”

BCREA purchased an F-150 Lightning pickup with the extended battery to use daily as a line crew pickup. It was purchased to help the cooperative gain knowledge on day-to-day use of an electric vehicle and information is being gathered to share with members.

“The line crew uses this pickup during the line patrol in the winter and for pulling a 3,500-pound trailer in the summer,” explained Brandon Havemeier, BCREA operations and engineering manager. “It is a smooth, quiet ride.”



Federated Rural Electric, Jackson, “plugs” new electric technology, which includes its first electric pickup for the cooperative. The Rivian R1T was ordered in 2021 and arrived in November 2022.

### Rivian pickup specs

Federated’s Rivian pickup is an all electric vehicle that can be charged up to 328 miles for a road trip. In addition, Rivian offers another extended range pickup with a range of 400 miles. Rivian recommends charging the batteries up to 85 percent in the winter, while charging up to 70 percent in the summer to maintain battery life, just like a cell phone battery.

“We bought the Rivian level two charger (220 power) for \$855,” Beckman added. “It adds 25 miles an hour and we recharge it in the evenings. With a standard 110-outlet it recharges the batteries, adding five miles an hour, so that’s why we needed a level-two charger. We wanted an

EV that would make it up to the Twin Cities for meetings without having to stop for charging.”

The Rivian comes with a five-year or 60,000-mile warranty. The battery pack and drive train feature an eight-year warranty or 175,000 miles. Federated ordered this vehicle in 2021 when the price was \$71,500 for the base model. With winter driving owners can expect the driving range to decline 20 to 30 percent based on the outdoor temperature, wind, road conditions and heating the cab.

What’s unique about the Rivian is that the pickup was delivered to Federated’s office. While a Rivian dealer exists in Twin Cities, if repairs — *Continued on Page 2*

### At A Glance



Electric service needs to be added or even upgraded?

This year do you have plans for a new hog barn, upgraded grain dryer system or a new house? Your electric service may need to be upgraded as well. Call Federated so your project is on the crews’ 2023 construction list. Speak to George in Operations at 847-3520 or 800-321-3520. ☎

This publication focuses on cooperative savings, programs and events. As this is the official member publication, member's story ideas, letters-to-the-editor and comments are welcomed.  
 Andrea Christoffer, CCC, Editor  
 "Owned by those it serves"

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**Energy Wise**

# Electric pickups 'pick up' work function & potential for increasing co-op sales

— Continued from Page 1

are needed, the service vehicle comes to the owner's location.

### Lightning pickup specs

The Ford Lightning pickup has an extended range of 320 miles. "Crews plug in the pickup at the end of the work day," Havemeier stated. "We have it set for off-peak charging, starting at 11 p.m., and then it is fully charged when the crews come to work at 7 a.m. We expect to see a range of 2.3 miles/kilowatt-hour (kWh) in the summer and 1.5 miles per kwh in the winter."

BCREA purchased the pickup for \$90,000 from Chuck Spaeth Ford, Sleepy Eye. The 19.2 kW Charge Station Pro Level 2 vehicle charger came free with the purchase of the extended-battery model pickup. The Charge Pro is the bi-directional model that can provide backup power to your home during outages. It costs around \$1,300 if purchased separately.

The Ford Lightning features a five-year or 60,000-mile warranty. The battery components come with an eight-year or 100,000-mile warranty. BCREA ordered the pickup in 2021 and received it in 2023.

### Fuel cost comparison

Now let's compare the fueling costs and keep in mind that the average American drives 29.2 miles per day. An electric pickup charged up for 320 miles would take about \$8.84 for kWh for a full charge. Demand may apply, depending on your electric rate class with the co-op; demand could be an additional \$20.34. Talk to the



**Brown County REA, Sleepy Eye, added its first electric vehicle — the Ford Lightning pickup this winter. Linemen Zach Gulden, driver, and Tyler Jensen get ready to take it out on their work day.**

**Ford F-150 Lightning extended range fast facts:**  
 Horsepower: 580  
 Torque: 775 lb-ft  
 Towing capacity: 10,000 lbs  
 Payload: 2,000 lbs  
 Bed length: 5.5 feet

**Rivian R1-T fast facts:**  
 Horsepower: 600  
 Torque: 908 lb-ft  
 Towing capacity: 11,000 lbs  
 Payload: 1,760 lbs  
 Bed length: 5.5 feet

**In other pickup news a GMC Hummer EV edition is now available. Coming soon are pickups for Chevrolet Silverado EV and GMC Sierra EV Denali in 2024. The Dodge RAM 1500 is estimated for 2024 with an unknown year for the Tesla Cybertruck.**

cooperative's energy expert about the co-op's EV level two charger rebate and EV program; otherwise, visit your cooperative's website.

Meanwhile, filling a gas tank for 320 miles would be \$59.80 with gasoline at \$3.50 per gallon. Now with diesel fuel filling for 320 miles would be \$87.33,

when buying diesel at \$4.10 a gallon.

Explore the tax credits available for new and used electric vehicles. Visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). You'll need to check with the EV dealer to determine the country where the batteries' minerals were mined and where the vehicle was built for tax-credit eligibility. (E)




# EGO electric mower cuts it up!

The EGO Power+ 42-inch Z6 Zero Turn Riding Mower holds four 56-volt lithium batteries — the same battery technology powering all EGO products. This makes it the world's first platform compatible rider. Delivering 22 horsepower and reaching a top speed of 8 miles an hour, the Z6 covers up to two acres on a single charge. It takes about two hours to charge.

Customize the ride with an LCD interface featuring three driving modes (control, standard and sport) that can be accessed with the touch of a button. LED lights, USB charging port and Bluetooth come standard to make the experience even more user-friendly.

The Z6 has a floating deck, which can be adjusted for cutting height. The Z6 also has a towing capacity of 250 pounds, so it can help with light yard work.

The Z6 is available from places like Ace Hardware online. It retails for approximately \$5,000. 



EGO electric riding lawnmowers come in two sizes. One holds four batteries (above). A larger model uses six batteries, a 52" deck and covers six acres. The amount of batteries does not increase power. It simply increases runtime.

## Safety

# Stay clear of storm-downed power lines

Your electric co-op wants to remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and that we are prepared to keep the power flowing to homes, farms and businesses.

"Though most consumer-members experience very little time without electricity, we do see an increase in disruption of electric service during severe weather," said Mark Peterson, system operations manager for Great River Energy.

During severe weather, such as tornadoes, high winds and hail, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and stay away from downed powerlines. No way exists to tell if a power line is energized just by looking at it. Always assume it can carry currents strong enough to kill.

If you see a downed or sagging power line, follow these tips:

- Stay away from downed lines; call your local electric co-op or 911 to report it immediately.
- Never drive over a downed power


**Downed power lines are always dangerous. Stay away! Call your local electric cooperative or 911!**



line if it is blocking your driveway or road. Call 911 and find another route.

- Never touch anything that is also touching a power line, including trees with limbs caught in a power line.
- If a power line falls on your car or otherwise contacts your vehicle, stay in your vehicle. Use your cell phone to call 911 and wait for help to arrive.
- If you must exit your vehicle (due to fire), jump clear of the vehicle without touching it. Land with your feet together

and shuffle away.

When severe weather causes widespread damage, sometimes outages can last a lot longer. GRE and your electric cooperative work hard to restore your power quickly and safely. The first focus is on removing any threats to public safety, then following established priorities for making repairs that will restore power to the most members first. 

# Federated Focus

## Nominating Committee results

A slate of candidates was created by the Nominating Committee. As a member-owner, you can vote on who represents you. Vote on the ballots that will be mailed to you in early July or in-person at the Annual Meeting August 3 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be at the Martin County West High School gym in Sherburn.

### Director At-Large candidates:

- Douglas Landsteiner, Fairmont
- Jon Saxen, Sherburn
- Gordon Toupal, Fairmont

### Nominator candidates

#### District Five

- John T. Garbers, Welcome

#### District Six

- Ron Fowler, Truman

The two trust board candidates were approved by the electric Board of Directors April 28.

### Trust Board Directors

#### District Two (to fill vacancy)

- Jessica Williams, Jackson

#### District At-Large

- Robert Poush, Fairmont

## Budget billing: 'averages' out electric bill payment amounts

Sign up for Federated's budget billing if under the residential rate class. Federated takes your 13-month billing history, divides by 12 and you have a nice even pay amount each month. Twice a year (in May and October), Federated reviews your budget amount to see if it needs to be increased, decreased or kept the same, based on your recent electricity use. You need a one-year billing history with Federated and must sign up for Auto Pay. Members who become past due are removed from the program. Sign up for budget billing in May. ☎



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## We're keeping an eye on state & federal legislation

As we get closer to legislative sessions in both Minnesota and Washington, D.C. coming to an end, we reflect on what a roller coaster ride it was and still is. Well over 6,000 bills were introduced in Minnesota, covering the gamut from climate change to abortion and everything in between. As cooperatives, we tend to focus on issues that affect our operations and our

members. We have a very good staff at the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in D.C. At both levels co-ops are active throughout the year advocating for issues of mutual concern.

## We are monitoring the federal Farm Bill and broadband funding

We just returned from Washington, D.C. where we met with most of the federal delegation on the Farm Bill; it includes key priorities of affordability and reliability of electricity, broadband funding, economic development tools, along with the electric loan program. The other major concern was permit reform. This has evolved over the past four decades, resulting in significant delays and added costs for co-ops, as well as other industries, increasing the difficulty of completing projects. Reliability challenges of electrification and disorderly retirements of baseload generation were discussed; a common-sense approach needs to be taken to avoid or at least reduce the threat of rolling blackouts due to diminishing dispatchable resources. Supply-chain concerns left over from the pandemic have been the cause of anxiety industry-wide. Some of the bigger ticket items, such as transformers and broadband electronics, have doubled in price, along with shipping times being more than a year. As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Grid Deployment Office is administering a \$10.5 billion Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program to enhance grid flexibility and improve the resilience of the power system against growing threats of extreme weather and climate change. These programs will accelerate the deployment of projects that ensure the reliability of the power sector's infrastructure, so all American communities have access to affordable, reliable, clean electricity — anytime, anywhere. Federated has applications in for two separate funds totaling just under \$8 million dollars.

## We are keeping our eyes on state legislative bills too

At the state level we are watching the Ag/Broadband bill, which would authorize \$448.4 million in agricultural spending, including \$163.2 million in General Fund spending for the Department of Agriculture and \$125.7 million for the Office of Broadband in the next biennium. \$48 million exists in new money for farmers and an additional \$100 million to expand broadband with a carve-out for very low-population density areas.

The Paid Family Leave Bill would create a state-administered paid leave insurance program. Financed through a new .7 percent payroll tax on employers, the program funds partial wage replacement benefits for a total of 20 weeks. It is projected that the state would add more than 400 state employees to implement it.

Regarding the Property Tax on co-op distribution infrastructure, the Department of Revenue was excluding co-op-owned rural meters, streetlights and load control receivers under a rural electrification property tax exemption since 1939. We are working on an agreement to maintain that status, which is being challenged. Thousands of bills are being contemplated; many of them will pass and the DFL goal is to be done well ahead of the session ending.

## Rate increase appears on the May electric bills

In closing, members will see the rate increase that went into effect April 1 on the bills that arrive in May. This helps us cover the increasing materials costs.

Make it a safe spring planting season! Plus, slow down as you approach our crews during this busy line construction season. ☎

# Federated invests \$2.8 million in planned line construction, maintenance & substations in 2023

With spring's arrival a big construction year awaits — \$2.8 million worth — will be invested in Federated's system for reliable electricity.

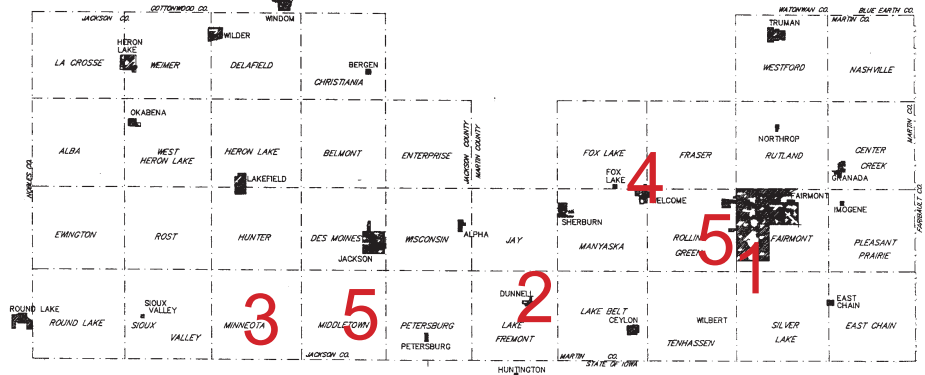
**1** 3.5 miles of three-phase overhead line will be switched to new three-phase underground along Lake Aires Road south of Fairmont. This work will be done by contractor Loosbrock Construction.

**2** One mile of three-phase underground cable will be replaced with new three-phase underground that serves as the main feeder into the town of Dunnell. This work will also be done by Loosbrock.

**3** Three miles of old single-phase underground will be replaced with single-phase underground by Federated crews east of Loon Lake.

**4** Federated's Welcome wind turbine is slated for a \$100,000 repowering where the pitch system is upgraded for efficiency and added power generation.

**5** In the Middletown and Wilbert substations old mechanical reclosers will be replaced with electronic ones. The reclosers are trying to see if the tree branch or critter is no longer in contact with the line. It automatically



The numbers indicate the work that will be done in this area under the 2023 construction work plan to provide reliable electricity to members.

tries three times before staying off until a lineman comes to inspect and make repairs.

Electronic reclosers require less scheduled maintenance. Previously, every three years the hydraulic ones were taken out of service (removed from the line by linemen) and replaced with a freshly maintained OCR. Then the OCR had to be tested, the oil changed and replaced any parts that were worn or broken. The only maintenance required on electronic reclosers is to replace a battery every 10 years, which can be done with the recloser still in service. Plus, many of Federated's hydraulic reclosers are 70-years old

or more and need to be replaced. The electronic reclosers operate faster on a fault and coordinate with each other better, keeping the outage as small of a section as possible. This is the fourth year of installing these electronic reclosers. In addition, 46 electronic reclosers will be replaced on Federated's power lines too.

**6** In addition, Federated has budgeted \$166,000 for pole replacements, \$63,000 for new services and \$500,000 for radio control upgrades that communicates with members' water heaters, gensets, Dual Heat and Cycled Air during peak times to cycle off. (E)



**Federated is closed**  
**May 29**  
*Crews are on call in case of outages*

## Reap savings with Federated rebates

- Keep Federated's rebates in mind with your purchases this year.
- \$50 rebate for Energy Star refrigerator or freezer with proof of recycling the old energy-guzzler
- \$25 Energy Star dehumidifier or Smart Thermostat rebate
- \$500 instant rebate on electric vehicle chargers. (Buy through Federated's website). Must enroll in the residential Time-of-Use electric rate.
- Air source heat pump \$1,000 for 14-16 SEER and \$1,500 for 17+SEER
- Ductless air source heat pumps \$300
- Ground source heat pump \$350/ton
- Commercial lighting retrofit rebates for farms and businesses
- Commercial cooling rebates
- Hog farrowing mat rebates
- New or retrofit fractional horsepower motors (not rewind or repaired)
- VSD or VFD drive \$30/horsepower

Find these and other rebate program forms at [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop) or call the office to request one; ask for Jon 847-3520 or 800-321-3520. (E)



# Workplace Safety: Avoid Common Electrical Hazards

Contact with or exposure to electricity is one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities. Follow these tips to avoid electrical injuries.

## Overhead Power Line Contact

**46%** of all electrical fatalities are caused by contact with overhead power lines

**57%** of overhead power line fatalities were in non-electrical occupations

 Always assume all lines are **live and dangerous**

 Always look up; **be aware** of overhead power lines

 Keep yourself and equipment at least **10 feet away** from overhead power lines

 Do not touch anything that is in contact with overhead power lines

 Carry equipment, including ladders, **horizontally** to avoid contact with power lines

 Stay at least **35 feet** away from downed power lines

## Electrical Safety in the Workplace

 GFCI protection should be installed where **electricity and water** may come in contact  
— From ESFI.org

**5** sources accounted for **92% of all electrical fatalities**

Overhead power lines 

Unexpected contact with electricity 

Working on energized parts 

Ground fault 

Damaged wiring 

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## Get your greens! Share spinach recipes to be strong to the finish

Spring greens will be growing soon. How do you eat your spinach? Do you eat it steamed, in salads, sandwiches or dips? Share your spinach recipes with us. Mail your favorite spinach recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by May 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧



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### Creamed Ooodles

by Barbara Sellner, Sleepy Eye

- 7 oz. jar marshmallow cream
- ½ c. honey                      1½ c. raisins
- 2 c. shredded coconut
- 1 c. peanut butter
- 1 c. mini chocolate chips
- 1 c. walnuts (or any kind of nut)

Combine marshmallow cream, peanut butter and honey. Mix until well blended. Add chocolate chips, raisins and nuts. Make into 1" balls. Roll in coconut, Rice Krispies or graham cracker crumbs. Chill and keep in the refrigerator. Makes six dozen. 📧

### Raisin Cream Waffles

by Gloria Marten, Welcome

- 1 c. raisins
- 3 eggs, separated              1 c. cream
- 1 c. milk                              ½ c. sugar
- 2½ c. flour
- 5 tsp. baking powder      1 tsp. salt
- 5 T. butter, melted

Boil raisins five minutes in water to cover. Drain and cool. Beat egg yolks; combine with cream, milk and sugar. Sift dry ingredients. Add to yolk mixture. Stir in butter and raisins. Beat egg whites until stiff; fold into batter. Bake in a hot waffle iron. Yields six waffles. 📧



Win \$500 electricity bill credit

### Take a short heat pump quiz for chance to win \$500 electric bill credit

Go to our website's home page or visit <https://www.energywisemn.com/heating-and-cooling>. Scroll to bottom and click on the quiz.

Contest ends June 30.

Contest is sponsored by Great River Energy, a wholesale power supplier to your electric co-op and 26 other co-ops.

### 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 and tiling. Register at [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧



# Flowers fade!

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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.

## We're LOCAL just like you!



*Our team of Internet employees are based here in southern Minnesota. We believe that customer service takes on a whole new meaning when you live and work with the people you serve! You do have options for Internet! Make it local with Federated Broadband!*