

Connections

December 2024

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 28, Issue 12

Capitalize on Youth Tour experience to tour nation's Capitol and capital!



Washington, D.C. is calling! Answer the call to enter the 2025 Youth Tour Contest, sponsored by your electric cooperative.

Federated will send one local high school student to Washington, D.C. for FREE June 16-21, 2025. A high student (freshman through senior) completes a two-page application and writes a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic. Submit to Federated by February 3, 2025.

The top five finalists will come back for 15-minute interviews March 17 at 4 p.m. The interview, essay and application scores are added together to determine the trip winner. Federated awards these prizes:

- Second Place: First alternate and \$300
- Third Place: Second alternate and \$200
- Fourth Place: \$150
- Up to 10 other applicants receive \$50
- Travel with 40 Minnesota cooperative-sponsored teens via airplane to D.C. Tour the U.S. Capitol Building and meet your members of Congress.
- The monumental experience includes visits to Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, World War II Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, Air Force Memorial, U.S. Marines Corps War Memorial and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.
- Travel back in history with visits to the Smithsonian Museums, Holocaust Museum, National Cathedral, 9/11 Memorial, Old Town Alexandria, Georgetown, John F. Kennedy Center and Library of Congress.
- Travel via a boat ride on the Potomac River and on a Segway for a tour of the National Mall and monuments.

Encourage your local son, daughter, grandchild or family/friend's high school student to apply. Find the application on Federated website (federatedrea.coop) or pick up the application from your local school counselor. Last year only five students entered the contest so your odds of winning are good. 🏆

Federated's 2024 trip winner was Elsa Thompson, Elmore. This Granada Huntley East Chain High School senior called Youth Tour a great experience; she encourages other teens to enter the contest for meeting new people and seeing new places.

At A Glance



Santa shops at Federated for electric grills

Lighten Santa's sleigh and buy an electric grill for under the Christmas tree. The young adult or camper will like the portable Loc N Go grill for \$70, plus tax. The grandparents will like the pedestal grill for \$106, plus tax; just plug it in and there's no heavy tank to carry. Stop by Federated's office today! 🏆



Follow Energy Star to discover energy savings when purchasing appliances & electronics

Star of wonder, star of light, star of energy-savings bright! Look for Energy Star® products as you do your holiday shopping or start working on home energy efficiency for the new year. One of the best ways to make your home more energy efficient is by choosing products with the Energy Star label. Learn more about the Energy Star process.

How products earn the Energy Star label

Energy Star is a program by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help consumers identify energy-efficient products that save money and reduce environmental impact.

Products that earn the Energy Star label must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency, performance and cost effectiveness.

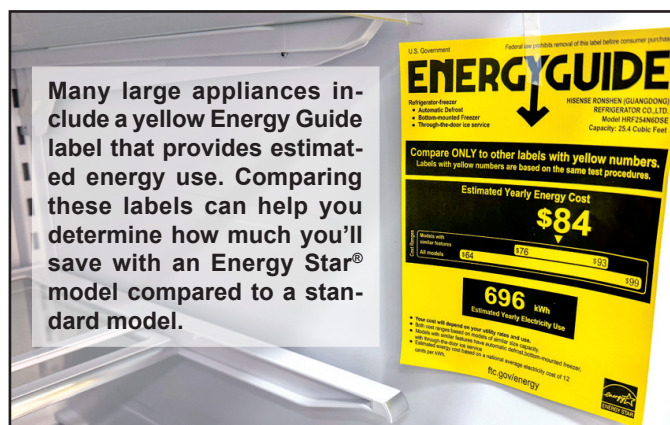
1. The product must be more energy efficient than typical models. This helps you save on energy bills by using less electricity, while still providing the same performance.
2. The product is tested in EPA-recognized labs, following standardized procedures. These tests ensure the product meets energy efficiency and performance requirements.
3. Then the product's test data is reviewed by a third-party certification body to verify it meets the standards. This ensures that the best products receive the Energy Star label.

Even after a product is certified, the EPA conducts "off-the-shelf" testing on random samples of Energy Star products to ensure they continue to meet the required standards. If a product fails to meet the performance requirements during verification testing, it can be disqualified from the Energy Star program. The EPA has clear procedures for handling such disqualifications to maintain the integrity of the label.

Speaking of labels

Whether upgrading your refrigerator, replacing light bulbs or purchasing new electronics, the blue Energy Star label ensures the product has passed all energy-efficiency tests. Find it on products ranging from small and major appliances to electronics.

Many large appliances, such as refrigerators, washing machines and clothes dryers, include a yellow Energy Guide label that provides estimated energy use. Compare these



labels to determine how much you'll save with an Energy Star model compared to a standard model.

While Energy Star products cost a little more upfront, their energy savings over time will often cover the difference. This reduces your household's energy consumption, which could translate to lower utility bills.

Why should I care?

As a member of an electric cooperative, choosing energy-efficient products benefits not only you, but also our entire co-op. When co-op members use less energy, it lowers overall electricity demand, helping to stabilize rates and reduce costs for everyone.

As you shop for appliances, electronics or other home equipment this holiday season, look for the Energy Star label. Whether it's a new washing machine or energy-efficient lighting options, these products are a simple and effective way to save money and lower energy use. Check the co-op's website to find the rebate forms for Energy Star products:

- Energy Star dehumidifier;
- Energy Star refrigerator or freezer with recycling of the old unit;
- Energy Star Smart thermostat; and
- If buying a new heating or cooling system, see the co-op's rebates for air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and ductless air source heat pumps as well.


To browse products that have earned the Energy Star label visit www.energystar.gov.

Easily wrap trees with stretch net holiday lights

Wrap up your outdoor holiday light tree displays with stretchnet pro wrap LED lights for faster installation and removal. Wintergreen Lighting allows tree decorating to surpass the winter wonderland wow factor.

Order the size for your trees or porch columns. The 50 light set is 20"x40" before stretching and the light cord stretches to 37"x45" max — perfect for medium width trees. A large light set starts at 30"x45" at rest, while a small light set measures 14"x31" at rest. Wrap it around the tree and it hooks to itself. Choose from different color lights: white, red, green, blue, two-color or multi-color. Choose from brown wire for trees or white for columns. Measure your tree or column's circumference before ordering these lights.

Like typical LED lighting, if one LED burns out, the rest stay lit. The bulbs are rated for up to 60,000 hours with shatter-proof acrylic bulbs; it comes with a one-year seasonal warranty. These are UL-listed for safety indoors and outdoors. Up to 45 of these light sets can be connected together.

The small and medium light set costs about \$30, while the large costs about \$35. Find it on Amazon or other holiday online websites. 



A "tree"mendous way to wrap up holiday decorating quickly features stretchable net tree wrap LED holiday lighting from Wintergreen. Choose from different colors.

Safety


Celebrate 12 days of Christmas with 12 safety tips

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me... (and it better not be a partridge in a pear tree!) Let's go with the 12 holiday safety tips so you can enjoy a safe season with your family!

1. Inspect all lights and extension cords for damage before decorating.
2. Never connect more than three strings of incandescent light strings.
3. Check your extension cords and holiday lights. Look for the tag that says it is safe for outdoor or indoor use.
4. Search for the safety stamp of approval — UL (underwriters Laboratory), ETL (Intertek) or CAS (Canadian Standards Association). These are nationally recognized testing labs.
5. Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations because they could overheat and cause a fire.
6. Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) outlets.

Look for the fine print! This tag shows the UL safety logo and indoor lighting rating.



7. Turn off all electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
 8. Better yet, install a timer with your holiday lights or a smart plug that connects with your Smart phone for easy on/off access.
 9. Keep all decorations three feet away from heating equipment, like space heaters or an open flame from a fireplace or candle.
 10. Use caution when decorating the house or trees outside. Stay 20 feet away from power lines with the ladder and decorating equipment.
 11. Water daily your Christmas tree.
 12. Keep the family pet safe by investing in a plastic sleeve for \$10-\$20 that slides over the electrical cords so Fido doesn't chew on these cords.
- Following these safety tips ensures you won't experience a crazy and unsafe "National Lampons Christmas Vacation" holiday. 

Federated Focus

Missing members! Help us!



Help us find these former Federated members. Their summer capital credits check came back as “address unknown.”

Review the listing of missing members on our website: <https://federatedrea.coop/capital-credits-unclaimed>. Encourage family members to contact us with their new address or if an estate whether to distribute to Operation Round Up or elsewhere.

E-mail Zierner@federatedrea.coop or call 507-849-7847 (direct dial) or 800-321-3520, extension 2233. Thanks for using Sherlock Holmes’ super-sleuthing skills!

Tax exempt electric heat?

Have a new electric heating system? Apply for the Minnesota heating exemption. Find the form on our website under billing; otherwise, call or e-mail billing@federatedrea.coop us to request it.

2025 construction plans?



Planning on building a new house, bins, hog barn or heated shop? Schedule your

project with Federated’s Operations Department to make sure we have the materials on hand for your job in 2025. Call the office and speak to George in Operations or e-mail info@federatedrea.coop.

Sign up Auto Pay — no delays!

Slower mail? Sign up for Auto Pay. Find the form on our website. Payment is automatic from your designated bank account or credit card on the 20th. ☺



Scott Reimer

Manager’s Message

Merry Christmas as Broadband wraps up 2024

It always amazes me how fast time flies. It seems like just yesterday that we had the groundbreaking event for our Jackson County Border-to-Border grant project and here we are already looking at contractors getting frozen out as we approach that time of year. A quick up date on that project; contractors have significantly completed the section south of Interstate 90 and are now moving north on the second part of the project. Some in the southern part of Jackson County will see fiber service hooked up yet this year and rolling into January to finish that up. We do have light on the fiber system and it’s moving along nicely.

We had press releases on the Martin County project, which is a Border-to-Border grant round 10. We are in the early stages of the project with environmental and archaeological reviews, as well as outlining staking maps and detailed planning have also begun. We do intend to start this project as early as possible in the spring.

We are making office improvement plans due to our growth

Since 2017 we worked with Olson Hobbie Architects, Mankato, on the Jackson facility. First we underwent a facility assessment, which outlined several issues that were becoming suspect and would need attention. Fast forward to early 2024, as we moved into a facilities remodel plan assessment. The structure itself is pretty good; however, once we identified all of the needs, it became apparent that one of two things were likely to happen — one was a new facility or a complete remodel. The remodel was chosen and after much consultation with employees and consultants, we took the plan to the Board of Directors and the plan was approved. We are currently in the next phase where we start designing and putting some details in order. We have quite a bit of square footage. However, we had enough wasted space that if we could make better use of it, we would make a positive impact on the operation. I will report more on this as we progress further along.

Four wholesale power suppliers increasing our electric rates

Rates are always a topic that is of interest to everyone. Our financial team, along with department managers, have been working hard to get the 2025 budget, as well as the long-range financial forecast, done. As we’ve reported before, 80 cents out of every dollar spent goes to power supply. Our country is in a cycle of building and by that, I mean generation and transmission infrastructure. Our society is moving toward more electrification and some of the common loads are electronics and electric vehicles (EV). You might say, well I don’t have an EV and I don’t have much for electronics, but the bulk of society is moving that direction; planners are taking notice. Our grid is being challenged at every level and while I’m not coining the phrase “trickle down,” that is what’s happening. All four of our power suppliers have announced rate increases to us and it’s a foregone conclusion that the Federated rates will be affected. With the forecast not yet complete, I hesitate to make a formal announcement until we run this through the Board of Directors, which should be at the December 30 meeting. Rates are affected by many things with power supply being number one. Stay tuned and we will announce this as soon as we can.

Have a great rest of your year and we will talk again very soon. ☺

Snowbirds’ do list:

1. Sign up for outage text notices with cell phone numbers.
2. Sign up for paperless bills or use online payment portal. Go to Federated’s website or call billing to get started.

Board President retires after 24 years! Thanks David Hansen for your service

Federated Board President David A. Hansen, Jackson, will tap the gavel one last time at the board meeting December 30. He is retiring as the co-op's District 3 director after 24 years of co-op service.

He followed in his father Art Hansen's footsteps who was a Federated director from 1969-1985. "I saw the friendships that my parents developed through the cooperative locally, plus on the state and national level," David stated. "I saw it as a way to get involved in the community. It was a privilege to serve."

David served, especially for the co-op's wholesale power suppliers. He served as a Great River Energy director four years and on their Transmission Committee six years. For the L&O Power Cooperative he served 15 years as a director; for Basin Electric Cooperative Hansen was on the Resolutions and Bylaws Committees. Hansen also served on the National Rural Electric Association's Resolutions and Research Committees. Dave



Federated tips its hard hat and thanks David A. Hansen, Jackson, for 24 years on the Board of Directors. He served 14 of those years as the Board president.

took director training and achieved Board Leadership Credentials too.

Hansen cited visiting with legislators on the state and national level as the most challenging, frustrating and rewarding. "We worked with them on electric industry policies that didn't always benefit our rural communities. We often were in the minority when it

came to policy strength so we had to be convincing and represent our members on issues to get considered on votes when they occurred. It's interesting to see how legislation operates on that level."

Hansen participated in an era of many changes at Federated, including:

- switching to two-way Sensus meters;
- building the Welcome wind turbine;
- addition of three ethanol plants and a soybean processing plant for large loads;
- adding 1,700 former Alliant customers from five towns in 2015; and
- the growth of Federated Broadband bringing fiber to rural customers.

"Dave's dedication to the members, concern for employees and board leadership are greatly appreciated," added Scott Reimer, Federated general manager. "He was always willing to represent Federated, whether at the fair auction, presenting economic development checks or scholarship awards. Thank you Dave!" 🙏

Apply for two Basin Scholarships — \$1,000 each!

This is the 18th year that Federated, will award two \$1,000 Basin and L&O scholarships to two local Federated members' sons or daughters.

"This scholarship comes from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, based in Bismarck, North Dakota, which became a wholesale power supplier for Federated in 2008 and L&O Power Cooperative in Rock Rapids, Iowa," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "Basin awards 150 of these scholarships to local electric cooperatives. Federated is excited to distribute the scholarship materials and select local students to receive the two \$1,000 scholarships."



The scholarships are available to high school seniors and college students who will be enrolled full-time in an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school working on an

undergraduate degree. Previous Federated-Basin scholarship winners are not eligible to apply again. Applicants must be 25 and under and a U.S. citizen.

Applicants must complete a two-page application, including a grades' transcript, ACT/SAT scores (optional), write an essay and have an outside appraisal (reference checklist). The one-page essay should address: How does the electricity provided by your

electric cooperative improve the quality of life in your community?

The deadline to apply for this scholarship is January 27, 2025. Applications are available from Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop), at Federated's office (507-847-3520 or info@federatedrea.coop) or from local high school counselors.

The scholarship must be used for college during Fall 2025. Checks will be made payable to the school as paid by Basin/L&O. Scholarships will be distributed in August.

Last year's Basin scholarship winners were Katie Hartke, Sherburn; and Elese Paplow, Lakefield; 11 students applied for the scholarship in 2024.

In addition, the Federated Operation Round Up scholarship applications will go out with the February electric bills; nine \$700 scholarships exist. 🙏

Electric space heater: know the cost impact on your monthly bill



Do you use electric resistance space heaters to heat a room or small section of your home?

If so, you may see an increase on your electric bill. For example, let's say you use a 1,500-watt electric space heater to warm your living room while you watch TV or read a book. Operating that space heater for two hours a day at the Minnesota average electricity rate of 13.5 cents per kilowatt-hour will cost you about \$12 a month. Operating that same space heater for 12 hours a day will

cost you about \$73 a month.

If you must use space heaters, operate them safely. Keep them three feet away from anything flammable; do not leave them unattended. Plus, plug the space heater directly into the outlet — not an extension cord or power strip. Ⓛ



WATER HEATER DEMAND RESPONSE

HOW IT WORKS...

1

Controllable, high-efficiency electric water heaters are installed in homes.

2

During times of high demand, co-op cuts power to water heaters.

3

When demand drops, water heaters are turned back on to run during the night and provide warm water for the next day.

BENEFITS:

- Co-ops avoid peak pricing.
- Members use power when it's cheaper.
- Helps avert need for new power plants.

FUN FACTS

Water-heater-control programs let co-ops take full advantage of wind generation, which is most active at night.



Call your local electric co-op for your next water heater with the member discounted price & lifetime warranty against leaks!

Spice up evening meal with salami recipes to cure winter blahs

Slice up a new super supper with salami! Share your favorite salami recipes with us, whether it's the family recipe, added to pasta, pizza, sandwiches or salads. Send your favorite salami recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by December 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Peanut Butter & Chocolate Crescents by Jeanne Schwieger, Fairmont

1 pkg. crescent rolls 8 T. peanut butter ¾ c. chocolate chips
Preheat oven to 375°. Open crescent rolls and layout out on a cookie sheet. Put 1 T. peanut butter on larger end. Top with 1 T. chocolate chips. Roll up crescents. Bake 10-12 minutes. Melt remainder of chocolate chips and drizzle over baked crescents. 📧

Veggie Pizza by Connie Urban, Fairmont

2 tubes crescent rolls ¼ tsp. galic salt
2 8 oz. pkgs. cream cheese 2 tsp. dill weed
¾ c. mayonnaise ½ tsp. onion powder
½ to 1 c. chopped veggies: carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, radishes or red pepper
Preheat oven to 375°. Stretch and spread out two tubes of the crescent rolls or dough sheets in a 11.5x17" ungreased baking sheet. Bake crust for 10 minutes and cool completely. Mix together softened cream cheese, mayonnaise and seasonings. Once the crust is cool, spread the cream cheese mixture over the crust. For ease of serving cut the veggie pizza into desired square sizes first and then top with finely chopped vegetables of choice; gently press veggies down into the cream cheese mixture to hold into place. Cover and chill overnight and keep refrigerated. 📧

2025 Connections recipes!



Dig out recipes for the upcoming year of *Connections*. Send them in now for use in the following months to the address listed above.

- February: biscuits
 - March: meat balls
 - April: chocolate or butterscotch chips
 - May: meringue
 - June: lemon
 - July: raspberry
 - August: cilantro
 - September: red or green peppers
 - October: sweet potatoes
 - November: cinnamon
 - December: Christmas cookies
- Thanks for sharing! 📧



Cook up simple savings! Use an air fryer if possible instead of your electric oven. Air fryers are about half the wattage of an electric oven, cook quickly and the smaller size means less space to heat up. Chew on that! 📧

Just make the 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 or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧

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Subsidiary of your local electric co-op





The Federated Broadband team would like to wish all of their customers a very happy holiday season!

As our team prepares to wrap up 2024, we wanted to take a moment to look back at all that was accomplished:

- Added two new faces to our team and we look forward to continuing to grow our team in the coming year.
- Connected over 260 new customers to fiber across Ceylon, Dunnell, Loon Lake area and Northrop.
- A total of 1,410 customers connected to fixed wireless services across our area.
- Contractor crews have installed over 125 miles of fiber for the Jackson County Border-to-Border project.
- Received a second Border-to Border grant from the State of Minnesota to bring fiber optic internet to portions of rural Martin County.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without you, our customers. Thank you for choosing your local internet service provider. We look forward to continuing to grow our fiber network and serving you in 2025. 🇺🇸



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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.

Martin County fiber grant enrollment starts

Fill out your Construction Consent form

Property owners are encouraged to submit Construction Consent forms for any building sites located with the grant area. This form is found on our website, federatedbroadband.coop; either submit it online or print it out and mail the form back to us. If you prefer to have a form mailed to you, please call our office and we would be happy to send one out. We do ask all forms be submitted with a map or sketch of buried underground utilities so we can begin planning fiber equipment locations on properties and avoid interfering with any other buried services.

Fiber adds resale value to property

Having the fiber brought up to the property is covered under this grant and adds to the site's resale value; the only cost to the customer is their monthly service charge when they are hooked up. We encourage everyone to submit a consent form even if you are unsure of taking service once available.

We anticipate our contractor crews will begin working on construction of the mainline in the Spring of 2025 and hope to begin connecting customers by the end of 2025.

For more information on this project and for a map of the grant area visit our website. 🇺🇸

Sign up for Broadband outage text notices. E-mail us (info@FederatedBroadband.coop) your cell phone number(s).



info@federatedbroadband.coop • www.federatedbroadband.coop

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

