

Connections

April 2025

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 29, Issue 4

Celebrating National Lineworker Appreciation Day April 14

Line crews are wired for 24/7 service

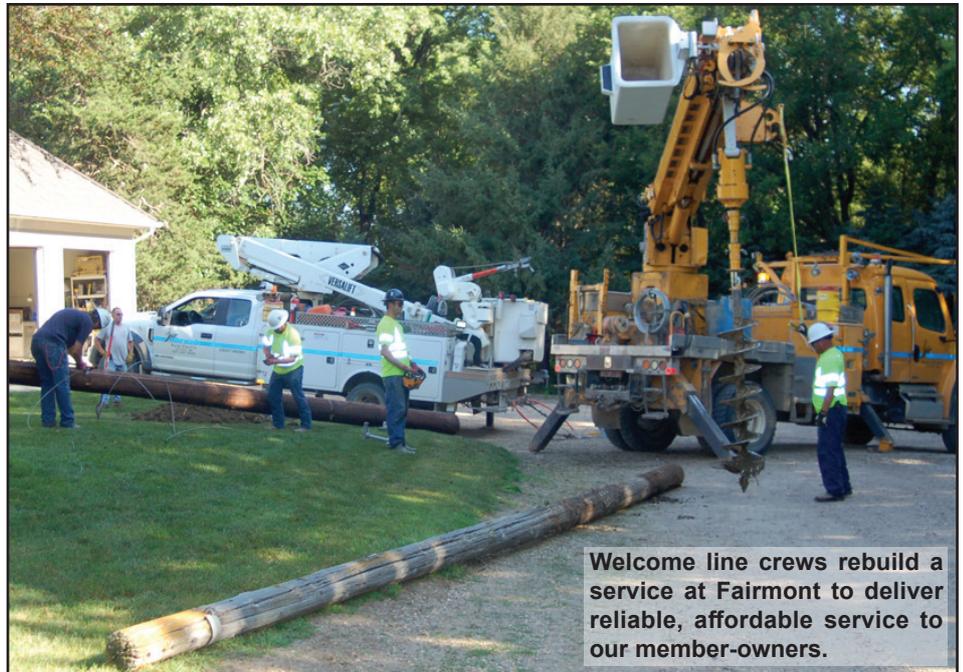
In the quiet hours before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day, often clad in flame-resistant clothing, safety glasses, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots.

They are the individuals who epitomize dedication to service in its purest form. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, this is an important moment to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical work. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and our communities connected.

Federated's line crews travel across our two-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local distribution system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible — a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, our co-op lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response



Welcome line crews rebuild a service at Fairmont to deliver reliable, affordable service to our member-owners.

restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it the most.

Federated's lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of their home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles. No one

embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable employees who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible — lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 

At A Glance



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Rate increase occurs April 1 & appears on May 5 electric bill

Increasing costs and decreasing sales contributed to the 2025 rate increase on April 1. Members will see it on the May 5 bill for the first time. The March 5 bills had an insert explaining it, along with the February *Connections* newsletter. Federated still ranks as one of the lowest cost providers for Minnesota co-ops. 



Ready to replace your central air? Go with a heat pump to boost home's energy efficiency

When is the best time to replace an old central air conditioner (AC)? This spring! For equipment older than 15 years waiting too long could mean the equipment breaks when you need it most. This leads to expensive emergency service calls and limited equipment replacement options. Take action this spring to avoid that stress, expense and lack of options. Before you replace your old central air, explore upgrading to a high-efficiency, cold-climate air source heat pump.

A heat pump is essentially an AC that can run two ways, providing heating and cooling. If you use propane to heat your home, heat pumps are a great investment. Replacing central air with a cold-climate heat pump saves you money on energy bills year-round, increases your comfort and is better for the environment.

Heat pumps slash energy bills

Cold-climate heat pumps are more energy efficient than standard central air. Beyond saving money in the summer, cold-climate heat pumps really show their value in the winter. A cold-climate heat pump can reduce your propane use up to 55 percent. This prevents expensive winter propane refills. It also creates the possibility to fill a tank once in the summer when prices are lower.

According to the Center for Energy and Environment's energy calculations, a cold-climate heat pump that provides heating down to -10°F achieves the maximum savings. The heating source switches from the heat pump to the propane furnace when the outside temperature dips below that switchover temperature.

With this setup and a standard electric rate, you can save up to 30 percent



Upgrade your old central air unit with a cold climate heat pump to maximize your home's heating and cooling energy efficiency. Check out the heat pump rebates on the cooperative's website too!

compared to a traditional propane furnace and standard AC system. Additional savings are possible with your co-op's Dual Fuel program. These programs are for members who have a heat pump with a furnace for backup heat. This allows members who use propane to maximize an investment in a cold-climate heat pump.

Can a single-stage or two-stage heat pump achieve these savings? In this situation, a variable capacity, cold-climate rated heat pump is needed for maximum efficiency and savings.

Search the cold-climate heat pump list to check whether a unit you have been quoted meets the qualifications. If it is listed, it qualifies. Ask the contractor to provide the unit's AHRI's number to make the search easier.

Your electric co-op offers generous air source heat pump rebates that may be stacked with seasonal manufacturer rebates offered in spring through early summer. These incentives bring the higher initial cost down and help ease the transition from a standard central air to a cold-climate heat pump. Over time, this higher upfront cost will be offset by lower annual energy bills.

Heat pumps offer better comfort

In addition to the financial benefits cold-climate heat pumps are quieter and keep living spaces more comfortable than standard ACs. This is due to their special variable capacity compressor.

Single-stage systems that are used in standard AC can only turn on and off. This can create a condition called short-cycling. An AC that is short-cycling will turn on and off frequently, which produces wider temperature variation and hampers dehumidification. Furnaces can also be subject to short cycling during mild temperatures.

Variable capacity compressor units can incrementally ramp up or down to consistently hold the temperature you set.

Not all heating is equal. Electric baseboards and space heaters are 100 percent, while LP furnaces may be 80 to 97 percent efficient, depending on its age. Modern, cold-climate heat pump's advanced technology can reach efficiencies of 200 to 350 percent to stretch your energy dollars.

Visit your electric co-op's website for heat pump rebate details or visit with your local heating/cooling contractor to step up your heating and cooling efficiency. ^(e)

— Courtesy of Center for Energy and Environment

Reimagine laundry with washer/dryer combo

Laundry now ventures into new territory with the GE Profile 4.8 cubic foot Carbon Graphite washer dryer combo.

You can place up to 10 pounds of laundry or a king size comforter into the unit. It will wash and dry in the same machine in two hours without having to move it to a separate dryer. Plus, this unit needs only a dedicated 120-volt outlet. No dryer exhaust vent is needed because it uses a ventless heat pump for drying that's 50 percent more efficient. Think of the tight spaces where laundry could now be done: garage, apartment, walk-in closet or move the laundry upstairs to eliminate the steps!

Check out these other clever features. The intelligent laundry detergent dispenser holds detergent and softener for up to 32 loads. Scan the barcode with the SmarthQ app and it uses the right amount of detergent. The app provides even more control at your fingertips: download specialty cycles, receive cycle status notices and initiate updates.

The pet hair removal mode uses filtered high-speed air before the wash cycle. It essentially vacuums and captures the pet hair in the two-stage filter before washing.

This Combo unit uses 65 percent less water and 50 percent less energy than other laundry systems. Find it at a local appliance store or national chain store for about the same price as a separate front load washer and dryer (\$2,200 on sale and white unit is cheaper). 



Imagine this washer and dryer combo unit in your walk-in closet. Never carry laundry up and down steps again!

Safety

See the sign? Move over to keep utility workers safe!

Your electric co-op line crews work on overhead and underground power lines, at electric substations and use heavy equipment. Electricity can be extremely dangerous and is one of the biggest hazards that our employees encounter. However, another big threat is traffic.

Oftentimes, utility employees must park alongside a road, turn on flashing lights and place traffic cones in the roadway as an indication to passing motorists that work is occurring. Doing this creates a work zone. It's important to move over when you see flashing lights to keep our co-op workers safe. Failing to do so endangers the lives of utility workers and other emergency responders.

Minnesota's Ted Foss Move Over Law states that when traveling on a road with two or more lanes, drivers must



Spring means construction season for our line crews. If you see the sign, move over a lane and slow down to keep our employees safe while they work.

over so that everyone goes home safely at the end of each day. 

move one full lane away from stopped emergency vehicles with their flashing lights activated. Most drivers are aware of this law, as it applies to police officers, firefighters and ambulances; in addition, it also applies to utility, maintenance and construction vehicles.

Working along the roadways can be dangerous. Moving over is the law. If it's not possible to move over one full lane, drivers are required to reduce their speed until their vehicle has completely passed the parked or stopped vehicle.

Your cooperative employees are working to ensure that our communities have reliable electric service. Please follow safe driving practices when you see them; move

Federated Focus

Lend a hand for GreenTouch day at Kilen Woods May 3



Rake, clean, pick up litter on trails, paint and more! All ages welcome at Kilen Woods State Park, Lakefield, May 3 from 9 a.m. to noon. RSVP to Federated by May 1 (info@federatedrea.coop or call 507-847-3520 or 800-321-3520, extension 2224) so we have plenty of hot dogs and chips for the noon lunch. Free entry occurs that day into the state park.

Still a few seats on Basin Tour

We still have a few open seats on the Basin Tour, plus we will start a waiting list. Call to sign up for the tour August 20-22. The cost is \$157 for a Federated member or \$314 for a Federated couple. Call Federated at 507-847-3520 or 800-321-3520, press extension 2224.

Grow farm's energy efficiency

Farmers: take note of Federated's energy-efficiency rebates to improve your operations. Visit our website for this form or call the office to request it. Rebates exist on the following improvements.

- Engine block heater timer \$5/ timer
- Hog farrowing heating mats: \$50/crate (existing) or \$30/create for new construction.
- Irrigation VFD \$10/horsepower
- Retrofit LED lighting varies
- Livestock water \$75
- Ventilation fan: \$15/exhaust fan, \$25/circulating fan and \$400 for high volume/low speed fan. (E)

Two \$1,000 Basin Scholarships awarded

Federated congratulates two students receiving the 18th annual \$1,000 Federated/Basin Scholarships.

Samantha Henning, Jackson, receives a \$1,000 Basin/Federated scholarship. She is a senior at Jackson County Central High School. She plans to attend South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota. She will major in precision agriculture and minor in soil health and agronomy. Henning is the daughter of Bradley and Ann.



Samantha Henning



Harriet Lohse

Harriet Lohse, Windom, receives the \$1,000 Federated/L&O/Basin Scholarship. Lohse is a senior at Windom Area High School; she will attend Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, to major in business marketing and possibly minor in theology, graphic design or psychology. Lohse is the daughter of Eric and Christina.

These scholarships come from two of Federated's power suppliers: Basin Electric Power Cooperative based in Bismarck, North Dakota; and L&O Power Cooperative in Rock Rapids, Iowa. The Basin scholarships are available to Federated members with 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. Federated received 16 applications. Each applicant completed a two-page application, wrote an essay, submitted grades, a reference checklist, work history and involvement. These scholarship applications were judged by retired education personnel: Jim Schneider, Okabena; and Sandy Larson, Fairmont. (E)

Lakefield student wins Youth Tour Contest

Federated salutes the winners in its 2025 Youth Tour Contest.

Winning the grand prize was Anna Hedstrom, Lakefield; she won Federated's free trip to Washington, D.C. June 16-21. Hedstrom is the daughter of Dale and Mary. She is a homeschooled sophomore. She will be among 1,500 teenagers from across the country participating in Youth Tour. She will tour the D.C. memorials and museums, witness Congress in session, visit with legislators and learn about electric cooperatives.



(Seated): Anna Hedstrom, Lakefield, won the Washington, D.C. trip. Timothy Foster, Winnebago, won second place. Annie Reylets, Fairmont, was third place. (Standing): Other finalists are: Evan Reylets, Fairmont; Hayden O'Connor, Sherburn; and Isaac Stone, Fairmont.

Second and third place awards of \$300 and \$200 were awarded to Timothy Foster, Winnebago; and Annie Reylets, Fairmont. Foster attends Martin Luther High School, as a junior. He is the son of Warren and Alynda. Sophomore Reylets is homeschooled in Fairmont. She is the daughter of Nathan and Kellie.

Each applicant completed an application and an essay on an energy-related topic. The six finalists were called back for personal interviews March 17.

The other three finalists receiving cash awards of \$100 and \$50 were Isaac Stone, Hayden O'Connor and Evan Reylets. Stone is a junior at Fairmont Area High School; he is the son of Steve and Christy from Fairmont. O'Connor is a junior at Martin County West High School; he is the son of Chris and Alice in Sherburn. Reylets is a homeschooled freshman from Fairmont; he is the son of Nathan and Kellie. (E)

The \$1,000,000 milestone!

Thanks Federated members for making Operation Round Up priceless

Holy cow and wow! Small change really adds up! Federated's Operation Round Up program surpasses the \$1 million milestone for funds returned to local organizations and as high school scholarships.

It started as 65 percent of Federated members having their electric bill rounded up to the nearest dollar amount in 1994. This "spare change," which amounts to an average of \$6 a year for each Federated member, has really made a difference in our local area. Now 75 percent of Federated members participate in Operation Round Up. Call or e-mail the co-op if you want to join.

The totals are impressive. 254 Federated high school seniors have received a total of \$147,600 in scholarships. The scholarships have grown from \$250 to \$700. Federated's unclaimed capital credits are also forwarded to the Operation Round Up program for these scholarships.

With the April distribution of \$19,939 in checks, \$1,003,521 has been returned to 1,279 applicants since 1994. In addition, Federated's wholesale power suppliers have also made donations to Operation Round Up over the years.

Applications fall into six categories:

- Community service (public safety, health care and enhancement of cultural environment);
- Community leadership programs;
- Education and youth projects (social problems and wellness/athletics);
- Environmental projects (recycling and environmental ag research);
- Emergency energy-assistance funds to organizations for distribution; and
- Disaster relief.

The Trust Board consists of seven Federated member-owners who meet twice a year to review the applications in the spring and fall. Nonprofit organizations submit applications, with the volunteer Trust Board making funding decisions based on available funds and Trust guidelines. The money collected does not go toward administrative costs or compensation.



Pictured are the very first recipients of Federated's Operation Round Up representing their local organizations. Recognize any of them? The first round of donations returned \$7,289 to 11 organizations in the spring of 1995. Plus, \$250 was awarded that spring to the nine high schools for scholarships in Federated's service area.



Federated's Operation Round Up program marks the \$1 million milestone with funds distributed in April. Pictured are the Trust Board directors celebrating this milestone at their March Trust Board meeting: Lea Heinrichs, Jackson; Dawn Skow, Alpha; Ruth Dicks, Lakefield; Stuart Smart, Welcome; and Rob Poush, Fairmont. Not pictured: Jessica Williams, Jackson; and Jessica Sauck, Truman; who participated via phone.

"Federated extends heartfelt thanks to its member-owners, employees, and previous trust board directors who laid the foundation for this remarkable program," stated Scott Reimer, Federated general manager. "This \$1 million milestone is a testament to the commitment to our local communities. The impact is just amazing! We look forward to helping our areas thrive, as we

continue with the next era of Operation Round Up."

The April recipients will be posted in next month's newsletter. The next application deadline is September 12. The application can be found on Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop under the "Community" tab). Otherwise, call or e-mail the office to request an application. ☎

Spring into fluorescent bulb recycling locally

State law requires the recycling of fluorescents and compact fluorescent bulbs due to the mercury. Check out these recycling options this spring. Put these dates on your calendar!



Jackson County

Residents of Jackson County can recycle their fluorescent bulbs at the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility in Lakefield (605 S Hwy 86), which will have scheduled drop-off dates from the months of June through October. A fee applies for bulb (75 cents each) and PCB Ballast recycling (\$5 each).

Other electronics are not accepted at the HHW. An E-Waste Collection for residents and businesses will be held September 12-13 at the Jackson County Fairgrounds. You can find more information about the HHW Facility and the E-Waste Collection advertised in the *Livewire*; on the Land Management website: www.co.jackson.mn.us/land; or call the Land Management Office at 507-662-6682, extension 4.

Martin County

Recycle fluorescent bulbs Thursday, May 1, at the Tractor Supply (1215 N State St., Fairmont) parking lot from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The other date is Thursday, October 2, from 9 a.m.

Brown County

The dates are set for May 7-8. A fee applies for recycling bulbs. Recycling occurs at:

- Springfield Market, 101 W. Central St., Springfield, May 7 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Brown County Fairgrounds in New Ulm, May 8 from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- River View Sanitation will sponsor an *Electronics & Appliance Recycling Day*, which will include fluorescent bulb recycling, May 21, from noon to 6 p.m. at the Sleepy Eye Hockey Arena parking lot. Fluorescent lamps 8' and under: \$1, ballast — PCB: \$7.50/lb. and PCB capacitors: \$7.50/lb. Most household appliances, including water heaters, refrigerators and freezers, computer CPUs, phones, keyboards, etc. and car batteries are free. Battery backups, printers, DVD/VCRs, copiers/scanners and stereos: \$10. Computer monitors and TVs: \$25. RV appliances: \$75. 

Use 'tree'mendous care near power lines

Spring mean landscaping and tree planting time. Before you plant that tree or shrub, keep some "powerful" safety tips in mind.

Don't dig up trouble

April is safe digging month. That means before doing your landscaping project, adding a deck, planting trees or tiling be sure to call Gopher State One Call. Call 811 or 1-800-252-1166. If you prefer to do the underground locate online, go to www.gopherstateonecall.org. Do this step at least 48 hours in advance (excluding weekends) so the utilities, like your electric cooperative, plus phone, fiber and gas lines, can be located by each utility. You may also need to have a licensed electrician locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. The extra time for safety can prevent a shocking experience.

Look up for powerlines too

Besides considering what's below, look up for powerlines too. Will that tree planted underneath powerlines in several years be growing up into the



overhead power lines? Then during a bad wind or ice storm those branches could touch the powerlines and blink the lights or even snap off to cause a power outage.

Your electric cooperative patrols its overhead lines each winter noting where tree limbs have grown into power lines for the co-op's contracted tree trimmer, Carr's Tree Service. This creates an

added expense to your cooperative that is passed along to you, our member-owners through our rates. By looking up and moving that tree further away from power lines before planting, you avoid the risk of outages in the future and save your electric cooperative and ultimately yourself money too.

Take a close look at the tree tag when shopping. It will state how tall and wide the tree typically grows. That will help you decide proper placement. Otherwise, google it. A good rule of thumb is to plant far enough away so that at least a 20-foot clearance remains after the tree has matured.

If your property has trees growing into powerlines, call or e-mail the cooperative and someone will come and evaluate the tree(s).

Carr's Tree Service, which is a subsidiary of several electric cooperatives, can also be hired for private tree trimming or removal. Call 1-888-470-3355 or go to their website at www.CarrsTreeService.com. 

Pucker up! Share some of your favorite lemon recipes with us!

“Squeeze” some lemony flavor into your next recipes! Share your favorite lemon recipes with us, whether it’s for lemon cookies, bars, pie or to sauce up pasta, fish and main courses. Send your favorite lemon 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! ☺

Rhubarb Meringue Dessert by Sandy Kalfs, Okabena

Crust: 2 c. flour 4 T. sugar 1 c. butter

Mix together 2 c. flour, 4 T. sugar and butter. Press in a 9x13" pan; bake 10 minutes at 350°.

Filling: 2 c. sugar ½ c. flour ¼ tsp. salt 6 egg yolks
1 c. cream or evaporated milk 7 c. rhubarb

Mix together 2 c. sugar, ½ c. flour and ¼ tsp. salt. In a different bowl beat the egg yolks and add cream. Stir in the dry ingredients. Add the rhubarb. Pour onto crust. Bake 50 minutes or more at 350°.

Meringue: 6 egg whites dash of salt ½ c. sugar 1 tsp. vanilla

Beat six egg whites until frothy. Add a dash of salt. Gradually add ½ c. sugar, beating until stiff. Fold in vanilla. Bake about 12 minutes at 350°. ☺

Lemon Pie Supreme

by Cheri Drever, Granada

Pie filling: 4 egg yolks

½ c. sugar

4 T. cornstarch

6 oz. can frozen lemonade concentrate

1 T. butter

1 c. boiling water

baked pie shell

Beat yolks, add sugar mixed with cornstarch. Add lemonade concentrate. Put boiling water and butter in a pan over low heat. Slowly add the egg yolk mixture stirring constantly until thick. Remove from heat.

Meringue: 4 egg whites

½ c. sugar

Beat egg whites until frothy; gradually add sugar and beat until stiff. Fold half of the meringue into filling. Pour into baked pie shell. Top with remainder of meringue and brown in 350° oven for 15 minutes. ☺



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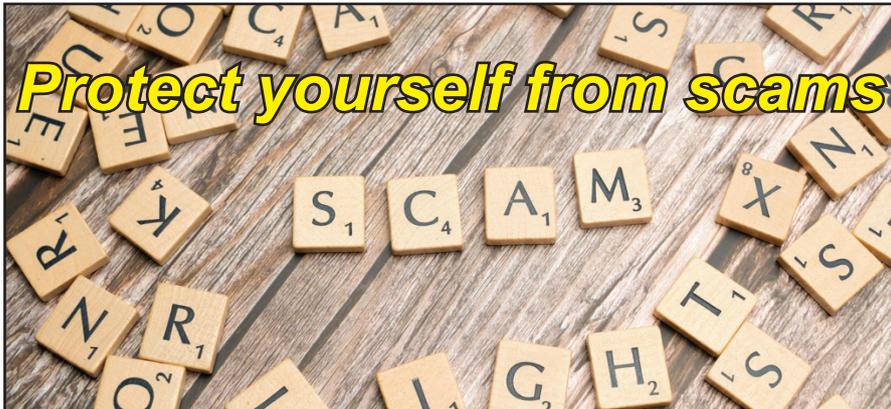
A subsidiary of your local electric co-op

**Always call first:
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.gopherstate-onecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺



Tax season is in full swing and it brings the task of filing returns, plus an increased risk of scams. Scammers use emails, text messages and phone calls to impersonate the IRS. They create a sense of urgency demanding immediate payment or personal information. They may claim you owe back taxes or made errors on your return. Scammers often ask for payment via unusual methods, such as wire transfer, prepaid debit cards or gift cards.

Know how to protect yourself:

- The IRS primarily communicates through official letters sent via U.S. mail. The IRS will not call demanding immediate payment or threaten to have you arrested. They will not require a specific payment method or ask for your credit or debit card information over the phone, nor will they contact you through social media.
- Be skeptical: don't click on a link or open attachments in suspicious or unexpected e-mails or text messages. Be wary of unsolicited phone calls or e-mails claiming to be from the IRS.
- Verify information: visit the official IRS website (irs.gov) to verify any information you receive and if you have any questions contact the IRS directly.
- Protect your personal information: never give out your social security number, bank account numbers or other sensitive information, unless you are sure you are dealing with a legitimate source. Monitor your credit reports and banking activity.
- Choose reputable tax preparers: if you use a tax preparer, make sure they are reputable and have a valid PTIN (Preparer Tax Identification Number). Be cautious of preparers who promise very large returns or offer to file your return for free and always fully read any documents before you sign them. (U)



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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.

Our fiber construction resumes with spring!

Our construction crews are back in the area! The boring crews are back to work on the mainline in the northern half of the Jackson Border-to-Border project; drop crews will be back in the area to continue their work in the next couple of weeks. We are still early in the season. We all know Mother Nature will likely give us another showing of winter before we are truly in the clear, but in the meantime the crews are at work!

We have over a third of the construction consent forms collected for the Martin County



project! Customers in this grant section will likely start seeing staking crews in the area and notice locating flags along the rights-of-way, as we prepare to begin

construction efforts later this spring.

We are still collecting construction consent forms for both Jackson and Martin County Border-to-Border grant areas. If you live within either grant boundary and are unsure if you have submitted a consent form or have questions regarding the construction process, please give our office a call 507-847-3520 and press option 7! (U)