

# Connections

August 2025

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 29, Issue 8

## Co-op's Youth Tour provides amazing first trip to Washington, D.C. for a Lakefield student

History came to life for Anna Hedstrom, Lakefield, as she represented Federated by winning the annual Youth Tour Contest. She wrote an energy-related essay, filled out a brief application and interviewed earlier this year. Hedstrom is a home-schooled junior and the daughter of Dale and Mary. She reported back on her June 16-22 trip.

### How was the Capitol visit?

The Capitol visit was really special. We toured the lower crypt first and then walked up the flight of stairs to the Rotunda. That first sight of the dome really takes your breath away. The paintings are also really amazing. Four of the paintings are about colonization and conquest; the other four are about governing, depicting several famous scenes, such as the presentation of the Declaration of Independence. I think my favorite part of that day was seeing the painting of George Washington giving up the papers that gave him command of the Army. The tour guide told us that this was the moment where he could have taken over the government by force and no one would have stopped him because he was so popular. Instead, he chose to give up his command and submit to the new government.

### How were the legislative visits?

We met Senators Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar at their offices. We had time to ask them our questions and hear



Anna Hedstrom, Lakefield, participated in the Youth Tour June 16-22.

their perspectives as senators. We also met some of their staffers. In particular, I remember meeting one of Senator Klobuchar's staffers who also worked for the Ag committee. He told us about his extensive work with Avian Influenza, as well as the work to implement wind and solar energy in rural Minnesota. I was excited to find out that he was from Heron Lake!

### Which museum visit stands out?

The People's House was a really fun museum. It's an interactive trip through the White House — without

ever entering the building! You look at the floor plans, walk through rooms and even take pictures in "the Oval Office". The museum ends with an elaborate exhibit where you take part in various historical cabinet meetings, such as the decision regarding Fort Sumter during the Civil War.


### What was the most emotional part?

Something I will definitely remember was the Holocaust Museum. I had previously seen the traveling Auschwitz exhibit, so I thought I was prepared. However, the actual museum was more powerful and dreadful than I thought. Although I left the museum feeling pretty shell-shocked, as did a lot of the other kids, I reminded myself that this is the point of the museum, so we don't let it happen again.

### Thoughts on Arlington Cemetery?


Arlington Cemetery is huge! It's mind blowing to think about how many people have given up their lives in service to this country. We saw John F. Kennedy's grave and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This really taught me a lot about the great history of our country's wars and the cost.

Hedstrom also enjoyed trading state pins with delegates, the Segway tour of the National Mall to see the monuments and the Marines' Sunset parade.


Watch for 2026 Youth Tour Contest details in the December *Connections*. 

### At A Glance



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

**Radio control upgrades continue in our service area**

Federated continues upgrading radio controls from Comverge and Scientific Atlanta models to Entek. The contractor is working in Nashville and Westford townships next. The townships left to be upgraded are Fairmont, Fraser, Manyaska, Rutland and Lake Belt in Martin County, plus Hunter, Weimer and Rost in Jackson County. 

## Energy Wise

# Cool savings! Enjoy just chilling with these fridges & freezers' efficiency tips

When exploring ways to be more efficient with refrigerators and freezers, we often find ourselves stuck between convenience and conserving energy. While you can upgrade to newer equipment, care and equipment habits can be just as important to saving energy.

Follow this guidance on equipment energy use, including tips to keep your current equipment running efficiently and ways to limit overuse of refrigeration in our homes.

The U.S. Department of Energy helps us understand what to look for in our existing equipment and new appliances. Generally, the larger the refrigerator, the more energy it uses. The most efficient models are typically 16 to 20 cubic feet. Models with the freezer on top tend to use less energy than bottom freezers or side-by-side units. A refrigerator 15 years or older uses about 35 percent more energy than an Energy Star-certified model.

Let's explore some tips to keep your refrigerator or freezer running at maximum efficiency.

### Keep it organized

One of the biggest issues with refrigerator energy use is opening the door or keeping it open. An organized fridge makes food items easier to find, minimizing open-door time and keeping cold air inside. Place items in the same spots so they are easier and faster to find. I tell my kids to take a quick look inside at the options and close the door while they are deciding what to eat.

### Keep it clean

Regularly cleaning the gasket — the flexible strip around the perimeter of the fridge door — ensures a tight seal



**Be sure to hunt down those dust bunnies! Clean the vent under your refrigerator to maximize air flow and efficiency. If your unit has coils at the back, remember to clean back there.**

between the door and the unit to keep cold air inside. If the gasket is not sealing tightly, it should be replaced. Removing and cleaning the vent at the bottom of the unit can help airflow. For the coils at the back use an extended cleaning brush instead of moving the fridge and risking injury.

Plus, keep food safety in mind. The Department of Energy recommends setting your refrigerator temperature between 35 and 38 degrees and freezer at 0 degrees.

### Think twice on second unit

If you have a second refrigerator or freezer, implement these tips that can help you save energy.

Do you need it plugged in year-round? Perhaps you can keep it empty and unplugged for part of the year. Maybe you only really need it during the holiday season. Unplugging it for the months you aren't using it, saves energy; yet,

you'll still have it as a backup when you need it.

If you are a hunter or buy meat in bulk, set a goal to empty out your freezer before you restock. This allows you to avoid food waste and unplug the extra appliance when it is not needed.

If possible, consider the location. Keeping the second fridge or freezer in a cool basement versus a hot garage requires less energy.

Implementing these simple cleaning and food storage habits are easy ways to be more efficient with your in-home refrigeration.

### Rebates add to your cool savings


Finally, keep in mind that your local electric cooperative offers rebates on Energy Star refrigerators and freezers. Sorry, dorm fridges are not eligible. Look for the rebate form on the co-op's website. Otherwise, contact the co-op if you need a hard copy mailed to you. ☺

# Convertible! Switch from fridge to freezer!

Is it a refrigerator or a freezer?

No, this appliance isn't having an identity crisis, but operates in either mode with the flip of a switch. In the summer use it as a refrigerator for your garden's bounty. After a good fall hunting season switch it to freezer mode to store the wild game.

Shop for the convertible chest freezer at your local appliance store or big chain store. Adjust the temperature to keep your foods at the right temperature. These convertible units come as small as chest-size freezers with 8 cubic feet for about \$300-\$400 or as larger 21 cubic feet upright freezers around \$1,000. The Midea convertible upright freezer (pictured on the right) features automatic defrost, while a Hubspace chest freezer features manual defrost. Some models link up as Smart Devices that can send alerts to your smart phone for a high temperature alarm. Some models even come as stainless steel finish, instead of white.

Look for the Energy Star label when appliance shopping. If so, this unit will qualify for a \$75 rebate from your local electric cooperative, as long as you have proof of recycling an old unit. Visit the co-op's website for the rebate form or call/e-mail to request a hard copy be mailed to your home. 

**Refrigerator or freezer? It's your choice with the flip of a switch! use it as either one, depending on your family's seasonal needs!**



## Safety

### *Avoid power lines when flying kites or drones*

With summer in full swing remember to use caution near electrical equipment as you explore the great outdoors. If you are flying a kite or a drone, always remember the importance of safety.

Look up! Flying kites or drones near power lines can be dangerous and could disrupt electrical service to fellow members and businesses.

If the wind pushes your kite near a power line or electrical facility, let go of it. Your safety is never worth chasing a kite into a dangerous environment. Keep your kite in an open area far away from electric equipment.

Never fly kites using wire, metallic thread or wire-reinforced string. Use paper, plastic or wood to build a kite; plus, only fly during dry weather. Children should always have adult supervision when flying kites.

Flying a drone near a power line may affect your drone's signal, causing it to fly into the line. Remember,




dark and windy conditions are bad for safe flight.

Check local laws before flying a drone near power lines, power plants, substations and other electrical equipment.

If you are operating a drone that

contacts and gets caught in a power line, call your local electric cooperative right way. Never try to remove it yourself.

Stay safe near electricity, whether on the ground or in the air! 



# Federated Focus

## 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting highlights

This edition went to print before the Annual Meeting occurred August 5. Watch for highlights in the September *Connections*.

## Fall Round Up deadline nears



The next Operation Round Up deadline is September 12. Find the application at

[www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop); otherwise, call the office to have it e-mailed or mailed to you. Encourage your fire department, ambulance squad, schools or local nonprofit groups to apply for funding. Eligibility is explained on the website or application letter.

## Continuity of electric service

Federated will endeavor to provide continuous service, but does not guarantee an uninterrupted or undisturbed supply of electric service. The Cooperative will not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from the interruption or disturbance of service for any cause other than gross negligence of the Cooperative. The Cooperative reserves the right without previously notifying the member to temporarily interrupt service for construction, inspection, repairs, emergency operations, shortages in power supply, safety and state or national emergencies. The Cooperative will not be liable in any event for any loss of profits or other consequential damages resulting from the use of service or any interruption or disturbance of service.

## Still time to grill — electrically!

Want to grill but hate messing with wood pellets, charcoal and lugging heavy LP tanks? Go with an electric grill from Federated. Two tabletop models exist for \$70 or \$106, plus tax. Stop by our office lobby.



Scott Reimer

A decade already of serving former Alliant towns

It's amazing that 10 years have already passed. In August 2015 we started serving the towns of Heron Lake, Okabena, Sherburn, Granada and Northrop with 1,700 customers, along with Heron Lake BioEnergy; they became new co-op member-owners having the right to vote in our Federated elections, receiving capital credits as your share of the profits and receiving high ranking, local customer service. These members will have received \$583,000 in capital credits retired directly from SMEC between 2018-July 2025. We invested and built in three emergency backfeeds to the Heron Lake and Okabena circuit from our Miloma and Wilder substations. Along with the new substation in Sherburn, we converted the primary voltage from 2,400 volts to 7,200 volts and added two backfeed circuits to our Welcome and Dunnell substations. The voltage conversion was necessary so that it would match the voltage on our legacy system in order to be able to back feed the town if needed. One major item after 10 years is that our wholesale power contract expired with Alliant Energy so this electricity will now be provided from L&O Power Cooperative/Basin Electric. As we move into the second decade of serving our new members, we would like to thank you for your patience as we grow together. Federated always endeavors to do the right thing as we continue to enhance our services to make your experience with us even better.

## Thank you Matt “George” Madden for 22 years of Federated service!



George Madden

We congratulate George Madden, our operations manager, for his dedicated service to Federated members these past 22 years. He recently accepted a new job and will still be affiliated with electric co-ops for RESCO covering the southern Minnesota electric cooperatives for their electrical parts and inventory. Perhaps you saw the operations manager job listing in the area papers with applications accepted until August 11.

George started as a lineman here in 2003. He was promoted to our meter technician in 2016, working with our Sensus two-way meters. He became the operations manager in 2020. George led Federated through the 2019 April ice storm restoration and the addition of 1,700 SMEC members in 2015. We appreciate your long hours during outages, the dedicated service to our co-op members and the cooperative spirit. We wish you all the best!

Meanwhile, Federated named Kyle Koreselman as the interim operations manager until the hiring process is completed. Kyle is Federated's line superintendent and has been with Federated for 19 years.



Kyle Koreselman

## Rate increase likely in 2026

As we work on our rate study, we are finding that due to rising power supply costs, a rate increase is required. The Board will receive the rate study and take action at the August meeting. We understand that rate increases are not fun. As we have mentioned, one of the ethanol plants closed its operations reducing sales, more power supply is required to cover large loads, mainly in North Dakota, plus major Midwest transmission line investments will impact rates. Other items include electric demand, which is measured in kW. We are seeing demand increasing in the summer causing an under collection, which results in loss of margins. We are looking at ways to mitigate this, but it boils down to conservation. This may result in a greater reliance on load management and adding members to the already successful program. The main sources of summer load control are electric water heaters and cooling. The latter has been identified as the culprit and may result in a marketing effort to encourage members to join load management. If we can't address the issue with load management, we will add a residential demand charge. Ⓢ

# Manager's Message

# Federated 'fires' up the donations totaling \$22,500 to assist 3 local fire departments


Federated recently presented a donation totaling \$7,500 to three local fire departments: Fairmont, Truman and Windom. Federated took advantage of matching funds from two organizations to triple the impact.

"Federated donated \$2,500, then secured matching funds from CoBank's Sharing Success Program and Basin Electric Cooperative," stated Federated's General Manager Scott Reimer. "Co-ops are concerned about their local communities; we saw this as a way to help each fire department with costly equipment. This is the fourth year of helping our local fire departments; we rotate this donation until we help all the fire departments in our service area."

CoBank provides Federated long-term financing for line construction projects, while Basin Electric is one of Federated's wholesale power providers.

The Fairmont Fire Department replaces two old mobile radios with these funds. "Our current radios we have are about 12 years old and are no longer supported for repair," stated Bryan Kastning, Fairmont's fire chief. "Motorola fire radios are expensive because they are built to withstand extreme conditions: heat, water, dust and smoke; they are safe so they won't ignite flammable gases or vapors."

The Windom Fire Department will buy turnout gear. "We had five new fire fighters join the department," stated Ben Derickson, Windom Fire Chief. "The turnout gear protects a firefighter from the heat and smoke with the coat and pants. Each set costs about \$3,500 so these donations will cover the costs for two of our new crew members."

The Truman Fire Department will also buy new bunker pants and jackets. "The National Fire Protection Association (NPFA) standards recommend that all structural turnout gear be retired not more than 10 years from the date of manufacture," stated Brandon Mosloski, Truman fire chief. "This donation helps offset the cost of four sets of turnout gear that will need to be retired." 



The Fairmont Fire Department will use their \$7,500 to replace two mobile radios. Federated General Manager Scott Reimer and Director Dave Meschke presented the checks to the department.



The Truman Fire Department received \$7,500 toward sets of replacement turnout gear that was beyond its life expectancy. Federated General Manager Scott Reimer (left) and Director Bruce Brockmann (right) presented the checks to the Truman Fire Chief Brandon Mosloski.



The Windom Fire Department accepts their \$7,500, which will go toward purchasing two sets of turnout gear for three new firefighters. Federated General Manager Scott Reimer and Director Glenn Dicks presented the donations.



# Minnesota legislative session revisited

The 2025 Minnesota legislative session officially wrapped up June 9, following a one-day special session to finalize the state budget. Throughout the session, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) worked on behalf of Minnesota's electric co-ops to advocate for policies that support reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for member-owners across the state.



**Jenny Glumack**  
Minnesota Rural  
Electric Association

Tragically, just days after legislators returned home, Minnesota was rocked by the horrific killings of Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, along with their beloved rescue-dog Gilbert. Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, were also injured at their home early on the morning of June 14. Speaker Emerita Hortman was a longtime leader at the Capitol who had worked closely with MREA over the years on major legislation. Senator Hoffman is a bipartisan leader and a valued friend of Minnesota's electric cooperatives. We mourn the loss of Speaker Hortman, pray for Senator Hoffman's recovery and extend our deepest sympathies to both families and all who were impacted.

As the state continues to process this tragedy, it's also important to reflect on the work that was accomplished during the 2025 legislative session — including key issues affecting your electric cooperative.

## **Support reliable, affordable energy**

While some of the most high-profile political debates made headlines this year, your electric cooperative was focused on protecting the interests of you, our co-op member-owners, at the Capitol. We advocated for fair, common-sense energy policy and helped defeat several costly new mandates.

One of our major priorities was reforming Minnesota's outdated net metering law, which currently requires cooperatives to pay above-market retail rates for excess electricity from rooftop solar systems. This policy results in increased energy costs for cooperatives,

which results in a cost shift, forcing disproportionately poorer co-op members without solar panels to subsidize those who can afford them. Legislation to modernize this policy came close to passing and gained strong momentum. Though it wasn't included in the final budget package, our coalition grew as policymakers understood the inequity of the current law;

we'll continue to work on this issue in the year ahead.

We also led efforts to lift Minnesota's moratorium on new nuclear energy. MREA helped form and lead the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance — a diverse coalition of nearly 40 stakeholders representing utilities, labor, business, agriculture and the environment — to push for access to next-generation nuclear power. These new technologies offer safe, carbon-free, around-the-clock power that could help meet Minnesota's carbon-free electricity goals. While the moratorium remains in place, support is growing rapidly across the state. We are hopeful our strong coalition will soon end Minnesota's outdated nuclear moratorium. It's time to allow Minnesotans to have this important conversation.

## **Other 2025 session highlights**

- **Tax fairness for co-ops:** After months of negotiations, we secured a major win in the final tax bill — the passage of MREA's property tax clarification bill. This common sense reform corrects how electric cooperative infrastructure is taxed and will save Minnesota's co-ops — and their member-owners — millions of dollars in the years ahead. The bill had broad bipartisan support and was ultimately prioritized by key legislative leaders in both chambers. This victory protects our ability to invest in rural infrastructure without unfair tax burdens.

- **No new mandates:** We successfully fought off multiple proposals that would impose new costly regulations on co-operatives. Thanks to strong advocacy from co-op members and leadership in


both parties, we preserved flexibility for our local, member-governed utilities.

- **Data centers:** Lawmakers debated how to handle the rapid growth of large data centers and their impact on the power grid. In the end a bipartisan deal was reached that included new energy-efficiency requirements, fees to support conservation programs and tax incentives tied to clean energy usage. We were especially proud to help stop a harmful provision that would have penalized cooperatives for data center-related growth — a move that would have disproportionately hurt rural communities.




## **Make your voice heard**

Want to stay informed and make a difference? Join Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) — a grassroots network of electric cooperative member-owners who care about affordable, reliable energy and protecting the cooperative way of life. It's a free, easy way to stay updated on key policy issues; when the time comes, VCP makes it simple to contact your lawmakers and make your voice count.

Visit [voicesforcooperativepower.com/register](https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/register) to sign up. 

— *Jenny Glumack, director of government affairs, Minnesota Rural Electric Association*



**Your co-op is closed for this holiday, September 1. Have fun and be safe!** 

## 'Bee' sure to share your sweetest honey recipes with all of us

We're all a buzz to see what honey recipes you have to share! Share your honey recipes with us, whether it's using honey in treats, snacks or main dishes, as honey butter or in sauces. Send your favorite honey recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by August 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

### Restaurant Style Salsa by Holly Benson, Granada

28 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained      1 tsp. salt  
 ½ red or white onion, roughly chopped      1 lime, juiced  
 1 handful cilantro leaves, roughly chopped      1 tsp. sugar\*  
 2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped  
 1 jalapeno, seeded & roughly chopped (leave in seeds for a spicier salsa)

Add ingredients (whole tomatoes through salt) to a food processor. Add the juice of half a lime, plus the sugar if your canned tomatoes do not contain sugar. If sugar is listed as an ingredient on your canned tomatoes, omit the sugar.

Pulse the ingredients until desired consistency is reached. Then taste and add more lime juice and/or salt, if necessary. Refrigerate overnight for the best results and then serve.

Scoop the salsa into a quart Mason jar or bowl with a tight fitting lid for 24 hours. This lets the flavors really meld before enjoying. The salsa will stay fresh in the refrigerator 1-2 weeks. (This salsa is mild as written with 1 seeded jalepeno.) ☺



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## Martin County Grant Groundbreaking

A groundbreaking ceremony occurred for the Martin County Border-to-Border Round 10 grant June 24. The event was attended by Federated staff, local and county officials, plus construction contractors.

Construction crews are waiting on the final approval of the archaeological studies that were completed throughout the grant area before they can begin plowing the main line. We are hopeful they may begin by the end of August. Crews will begin work in the northern portion of the grant area near Truman and then move onto the area south of Interstate 90. (C)

### Visit Broadband at Martin County Fair booth August 11-17

The Martin County Fair is right around the corner — August 11-17! Come visit with the Federated Broadband team at our booth in the Arena each day of the fair. This is a great opportunity to turn in your Construction Consent form or pick one up if you misplaced the one we mailed out. We will be hosting raffle drawings throughout the fair that current Federated Broadband customers earn an additional entry if you visit the booth. (C)

**Interested in after-hours text support?**

Text 'Start' to 1-833-956-1001 to be added to our Broadband system if you are not already!



info@federatedbroadband.coop • www.federatedbroadband.coop

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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.



Summer isn't over yet! Enjoy plenty of warm summer nights and beautiful days outside. Working from home, taking summer classes and family movie night all just became even better. Federated Broadband's outdoor Wi-Fi set-up keeps you connected and not tied to your home office.

Outdoor Wi-Fi changes the game by providing fast and stable internet to your outdoor spaces. It's built to withstand temperatures ranging from -22°F to 140°F and prevents dust and water penetration. It's perfect for outbuildings, barns, patios and more!

You can add outdoor Wi-Fi to your current fiber optic set-up for \$25/month and to fixed wireless services for \$35/month (price includes router rental). Call our office today to schedule your outdoor installation for \$75! (C)