

# Connections

September 2025

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 29, Issue 9

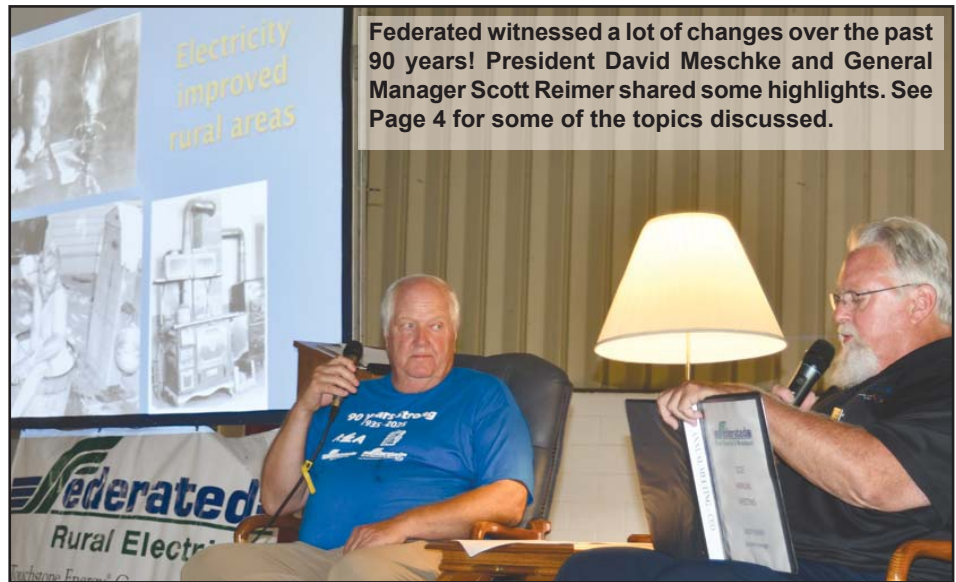
## Federated celebrates the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting with pancakes, prizes & pianos August 5

A sizeable crowd attended Federated Rural Electric's 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting August 5 in the Martin County Arena at the Fairmont fairgrounds.

"We had 1,047 members vote by mail and 30 members registered onsite to vote in person," said Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "We also served 307 members and their family a pancake and sausage supper. Dueling pianos by Rock It Man Entertainment, LLC elevated the celebration with musical entertainment. Members could also visit booths for kids, on Broadband, CTV, tree trimming and the new 765 KV transmission line.

Members elected director Troy Post, Brewster, for the one-year term remaining as the District 2 director due to a retirement. The other two director candidates were also running unopposed and were re-elected. David Meschke, Welcome, will serve another four-year term as the District 5 director, while Bruce Brockmann, Granada, will serve a four-year term for District 6. On the Nominating Committee Adam Weets, Alpha, was elected to a one-year term for District 3 due to a resignation. Ron Maurer, Windom, was elected for District At-Large for a four-year term. Both ran unopposed.

See Page 4 for the prize winners and highlights from the president's and general manager's remarks. 📄



Federated witnessed a lot of changes over the past 90 years! President David Meschke and General Manager Scott Reimer shared some highlights. See Page 4 for some of the topics discussed.



Congratulations to these seven \$90 bill credit winners. They caught the prize balls at the end of the Annual Meeting. The winners' names are listed on Page 4.

### 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 Weimer and Fraser next. The townships left to be upgraded are Manyaska and Lake Belt in Martin County, plus Hunter and Rost in Jackson County. 📄



## Energy Wise

# Some energy-efficiency tax credits expiring soon; act quickly to save more

Category	Description	Tax credit amount	Date of expiration
<b>Electric vehicle</b>	For the purchase of a new or used EV	Up to \$7,500 for new EV and up to \$4,000 for used.	September 30, 2025
<b>Energy-efficient home upgrades</b>	For the purchase and installation of energy-efficient appliances or building envelope components	Up to \$2,000 for heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, \$1,200 for insulation/air sealing and \$600 for windows. Doors: limited to \$250 per door, \$500 total. Windows and skylights: limited to \$600 total.	December 31, 2025
<b>Clean energy systems</b>	For investments in renewable energy for your home	Equals 30 percent of qualifying costs for rooftop solar, battery storage and geothermal heat pump installation.	December 31, 2025

Tick-tock! Time is running out on some energy-efficiency tax credits.

If you're a homeowner with plans to make any energy-efficiency upgrades, now is the time to see if those projects qualify you for a federal tax credit before they expire this year.

If you've been thinking about installing new windows, purchasing an electric vehicle or other home energy-efficiency improvements you could make, refer to the chart for the available tax credits and the date they expire.

If your air conditioner couldn't keep up with this summer's heat, act now to take advantage of these tax credits, instead of waiting until next summer. Visit your electric cooperative's website to also learn about the co-op's rebates for:

- air source heat pumps
- ductless air source heat pumps
- ground source heat pumps.

In addition, explore the incentives that are available for electric vehicles from your cooperative. Call before buying or visit the co-op's website. Make sure your electric service is large enough to handle a level two charger by visiting with your local electrician.

Work with a local qualified contractor for any of these

## Rebates & incentives

are available for air source heat pumps!

Take advantage of the federal tax incentives that expire this year and your electric co-op's heat pumps rebates to reduce your heating and cooling costs.



improvements, not a fly-by-night vendor trying to make a quick sale with these approaching deadlines. Following that, coordinate with your contractor for the installation or other work to be completed by the specific tax credit's deadline in order to meet the requirements. If you have questions about the tax credits, visit with your tax preparer. ☎



# Electric pressure canner boosts your safety

If a pressure canner boiling away on a stovetop scares you off, take a look at a digital pressure canner. Several models exist in various sizes.

The digital display guides a person through the different stages. Use it to process meats, poultry, fish, vegetables and other low acid foods. It doubles as a boiling water canner for jam, pickles and salsa too. Plus, you can use it to preheat jars.

A 12-quart Presto model costs around \$370, but can hold eight pints or 5 quarts for pressure canning. A 9.5 quart NESCO model runs about half the cost and holds four wide-mouth quarts. Besides pressure canning, the unit can be used for pressure cooking, steam cooking and slow cooking. Shop at Ace Hardware, Walmart or online.

A digital pressure canner features a built-in safety lock lid with an automatic float lid to identify the pressure, eliminating the guesswork. The unit typically features a removable, dishwasher-safe cooking chamber.

Balance food safety and your safety with this versatile, efficient electric appliance. (U)



You'll be a fan of this new way to can — introducing the electric pressure canner. Let the sensor monitor the process for the precise temperature and pressure for safe food processing.

## Safety

# Farmfest electric safety demonstrations inform

Crowds gathered around for the electric cooperatives safety demonstrations at Farmfest August 5-7.

Several electric cooperatives provided line crews. They demonstrated:

- using a grapefruit as a human heart and then contacting a power line. Cutting it in half shows the damage from an electrical contact, indicating damage from an internal electrical burn. (See bottom photo.)

- using a brat touching a power line to demonstrate how a human finger or limb is burned. (See top photo.)

- using their safety gear to show how line crews work safely around power lines and substations.

- allowing students to put on the boots, climbing gaffs and hooks to climb a few feet up a power pole.

- explaining what to do in a car or farm machinery contact accident; stay put and call for help; if it catches on fire, a person needs to hop away, but to not touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. If you must leave the vehicle or equipment, jump free and clear. As always, stay away from downed power lines at least 30 to 50 feet.

This safety demonstration was located across from the Touchstone Energy booth in the white tent. See prize winners on Page 7. (U)



Sparks and fire flew through the air as line crews demonstrated different electrical safety aspects at Farmfest.



# Federated Focus

## Annual Meeting prizes go to...

Three children won toys in the kids' drawing: Josiah Weets, Jackson; Susanna Oberbeck, Welcome; and Stella Hein, Welcome.

Seven \$90 electric bill credits were awarded to those who voted by August 1: Ed Bulfer, Fairmont; Verlin Goering, Jackson; Josh Leiding, Ceylon; Lowell Olson, Fairmont; Destiny Schley, Sherburn; Smith Farms, Jackson; and Mark Walter, Jackson.

Plus, seven more \$90 bill credits were awarded (Page 1 photo) at the conclusion of the meeting by tossing out balls into the crowd: Kevin Kristenson, Granada; John Garbers, Welcome; Gregory Post, Lakefield; Dennis Senne, Ceylon; Terry Prom, Alpha; Mike Handzus, Lakefield; and Thomas Cunningham, Round Lake.

Harry Knutson, Jackson, won the cooler donated by Heartland Security.

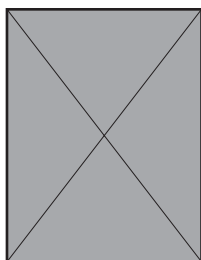
Plant prizes: Clayton Bart, Fairmont; and Josiah Weets, Jackson.

## Upgrade your old water heater



Before the snow flies, be sure to upgrade your prehistoric water heater lurking in the basement. Federated's electric water heater costs members \$589, plus tax. Installation is included in this

pricing. In return for this discounted pricing Federated installs a radio control that curtails heating during peak periods each month, which helps stabilize your electric rates, when electricity costs more. With the larger size water heater members are not inconvenienced during this control. Call Federated now! ☎



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## Highlights from 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting speech

President David Meschke and I conversed about how Federated was formed 90 years ago — the changes and growth. Electricity improved the quality of life in rural areas, moving away from kerosene lamps, wood-fired stoves, hand-washing laundry and adding refrigerators for the homes, plus added big farm improvements. Early challenges included shortages of materials during World War II, workers and power supply. Today's challenges include one ethanol plant closure, the need for building transmission lines to transport renewable energy and increased costs for materials after Covid.

Power supply has evolved. The first electricity to co-op members was provided by the local towns' power plants with Federated building its own power plant in 1950 and hydropower in 1954. Coal-fired electricity was added from Coal Creek in 1979. Now 75 percent of our energy comes from L&O/Basin Electric, with 10 percent from Great River Energy and 15 percent from the Missouri River hydropower.

The growth of fiber broadband is similar to the growth of rural electrification 90 years ago, bringing a desired service to the rural areas. Federated Broadband has fiber in the towns of Ceylon, Dunnell and Northrop. This year 480 rural residents will be served in Jackson County, while a Martin County fiber grant project is getting started to serve 457 homes. Plus, Cottonwood County is working with Federated Broadband to bring fiber to their residents, starting with Storden and a fiber ring around their county. Federated plans to bring fiber to 2,000 more and awaits results on another grant for 929 in Martin, Jackson and Cottonwood Counties. Delivering fiber to rural areas takes time and is challenging physically and financially.

Federated's CFO/Office Manager Julie Resch reported on Federated's financial condition. This summer Federated returned \$851,000 in capital credits to members as bill credits, along with \$100,000 as capital credits from two wholesale power suppliers. Plus, Federated last year had a residential electric rate of 11.59 cents a kilowatt-hour, which was lower than both the state and national averages (14.7 cents in Minnesota and 16 cents nationally for 2023). Federated expects Basin Electric Cooperative, Federated's major wholesale power supplier, to implement about a 6 percent rate increase January 1. Federated will keep members informed as it is finalized this fall. Federated itself is wrapping up a Cost-of-Service Study that analyzes our rate structure among our rate classes. We expect a rate change for January 1, after the directors review the results at its September board meeting.

## Board approves remodeling co-op's 1970 headquarters

Federated is also looking at a remodel of its office to accommodate more employees, enabling today's technology and replacing worn out plumbing and roofing in 2026. The remodel begins in the early spring. As we all know, time takes its toll on just about everything and our offices are no exception. Along with a reallocation of space for best use, we will do a 1,925 square-foot addition to the south end, which will be an employee lunch and break room, doubling as a larger meeting space. We will return to the flat roof, white to reflect heat and add insulation to make the building more efficient. It will essentially be a new facility when completed. The estimated cost is around \$5 million. The goal is to be back in before the winter of 2026.

## Federated working with Windomnet

One other item that I will point out is within our broadband division. We have been working with the city of Windom regarding Federated bringing Windomnet into the Federated family. As we have expanded, we realized that bringing assets together to form more of a regional provider approach makes the best and more efficient use of the fiber assets that are out there and in use. Talks are progressing and the word is out so we will spend time building a partnership with those affected, while enhancing the services we already have. ☎



# Federated coordinates food shelf donations totaling \$15,000 to help local residents in need

Federated facilitated donations to the four food shelves in Jackson and Martin County. These donations to all four total nearly \$15,000. The four food shelves are Heron Lake, Lakefield, Jackson and Heaven's Table in Fairmont/Sherburn.



(Left photo) Heaven's Food Shelf in Fairmont and Sherburn received \$7,500. Accepting the donation is Deb Adams, food shelf treasurer. Federated Director Jon Saxen (left) and General Manager Scott Reimer presented the checks.

(Above) The Lakefield Food Shelf's Connie Rossow (center) received \$2,500 in donations from Federated Director Troy Post (left) and General Manager Scott Reimer (right).

Federated coordinated a donation from its wholesale power suppliers: L&O Power Cooperative, Rock Rapids, Iowa; and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck, North Dakota. L&O took advantage of CoBank's Sharing Success program to triple the impact. Every four years Federated can direct L&O's donation to local entities. CoBank is one entity that provides Federated long-term financing for electric line construction projects and Broadband's fiber construction.

"Concern for community is one of the co-op principles," stated Federated's General Manager Scott Reimer. "This is a way to help our local food shelves and ultimately our co-op members. We are very thankful for these three donors and their critical impact. Since Heaven's Table serves all of Martin County, they received half of the donation or \$7,500. Then the three Jackson County food shelves in Heron Lake, Lakefield and Jackson split the other half, receiving \$2,500 each."

"As a member-owned electric cooperative, L and O Power Cooperative is committed to service beyond energy," said Troy Metzger L&O general manager. "Through our support of these charitable organizations via Federated, we uphold our co-op values and are thankful to assist these worthy organizations in their mission of supporting our neighbors."

Heaven's Food Shelf with locations in Fairmont and Sherburn serves Martin County. They will use their \$7,500 toward food. "We will use half the funds for the food shelf and the other funds will go toward the Backpack program providing snacks and meals for eligible school children during the school year," stated Deb Adams, treasurer. "We are grateful for this generous gift!"

"The Lakefield Food Shelf will use half of their donation toward food and the other half toward an air conditioner," stated Connie Rossow, coordinator. "Donations like this are always appreciated!"

"The Heron Lake/Okabena Community Cupboard Food Pantry will use their donation to buy food items through their partners at Second Harvest and to also buy personal hygiene items as well," stated Nikki Knobloch, food and nutrition manager at United Community Action Partnership. "Thank you for this donation. It is wonderful!"

"The Jackson Minnesota Food Shelf Inc. appreciates the money due to the rising cost of food," said Angela Schultze, coordinator. "We will buy foods, such as peanut butter, shelf stable foods and other items for infants. This is a huge help and we sure appreciate it." 🙏



The Heron Lake/Okabena Community Cupboard Food Pantry is represented by Nikki Knobloch, United Community Action Partnership. Federated Director Glenn Dicks presented the donations on behalf of Federated.



The Jackson Food Shelf's Director and Pastor John Schuetz accepted the donations from Federated General Manager Scott Reimer (left) and Director Troy Post (right) for \$2,500 total.

# Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not stop winter disconnects; know the process

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects.

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following apply:

1. Your household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by your electric cooperative or by the local energy-assistance provider.

2. You enter into and make reasonable timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

3. You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from your electric co-op.

## Winter disconnects may occur

Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between October 1 and April 30 your electric cooperative must provide:

1. A 30-day notice of disconnection;
2. A statement of members' rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy-assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
5. A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

## Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 50 percent of the state median income to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 30, 2026.

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department



Des Moines Valley Human Services (Jackson & Cottonwood).....	507-847-4000
Martin County Human Services.....	507-238-4757
MN Dept. of Commerce (Ask for fuel assistance) .....	1-800-657-3710
Minnesota Valley Action Council.....	1-800-767-7139
Blue Earth County .....	507-345-6822
Brown County .....	507-508-4041
Martin County.....	507-238-1663
Nicollet County.....	507-934-5224
Sibley County.....	507-237-2981
Watsonwan County .....	507-375-5748
Nobles County Community Services.....	888-807-8099
Renville County .....	320-523-1842
Salvation Army's Heat Share .....	1-800-842-7279
(Jackson, Martin & Brown Co.) .....	507-238-9797
Sibley County Human Services .....	507-237-4000
SW Health & Human Services (Redwood Co.) .....	1-888-234-1292
SW MN Opportunity Council, Inc. (Nobles Co.).....	507-376-4195
United Community Action Partnership (Jackson, Cottonwood & Redwood Counties) .....	1-800-992-1710

of Commerce Energy Assistance website: <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance> for more details. Online applications can be filled out online as of September 2, 2025.

- Contact your county's energy assistance provider for additional information and assistance.

Your electric cooperative exists because of you; we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact the cooperative to set up a payment plan. ☎

## 2025-2026 Minnesota income eligibility

Household size	1 month maximum guidelines
1 person	\$3,119
2 people	\$4,079
3 people	\$5,039
4 people	\$5,999

Households can apply online for energy assistance starting September 2 with the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Refer to their website and details are in the story.



## Spice up fall recipes with cinnamon; share your best recipes

Fall means cinnamon and spice time! Share your cinnamon recipes with us, whether it's apple pie/crisp recipes, pumpkin recipes or even cinnamon rolls and quick breads. Send your favorite cinnamon recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to [christoffer@federatedrea.coop](mailto:christoffer@federatedrea.coop) by September 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📞

## Minnesota's electric co-ops to honor local heroes; who will you nominate?

WHO IS YOUR  
LOCAL HERO?

Does someone in your community consistently go above and beyond to make a difference? Perhaps they've poured their time and energy into helping a local nonprofit thrive, assisted those in need or spearheaded a community project that has made life better for everyone. If someone comes to mind, recognize their remarkable service and help support their cause or organization.

Your electric cooperative is proud to partner with Minnesota's Touchstone Energy cooperatives in launching the Cooperative Heroes Award. Minnesota is served by 44 distribution cooperatives, covering 85 percent of Minnesota and reaching every county. This award provides an opportunity for anyone served by an electric cooperative to nominate an individual who has made meaningful, positive impact in their community.

The Cooperative Heroes Award celebrates Minnesota's cooperative values: integrity, innovation, reliability, accountability and commitment to community. Judges will carefully evaluate nominees for these qualities as they select three outstanding winners.

Each winner will receive funding to support a local nonprofit or cause of their choice: First place is \$1,000; second and third place wins \$500 each. Nominations are open from October 1 through November 15; a short application process is found at <https://www.mrea.org/programs/touchstone-energy>. Start thinking now about who you will nominate October 1! Together, let's shine a light on the community heroes whose dedication has touched lives and inspired change.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Group (MNTEG) is made up of co-ops in Minnesota who are part of the larger national Touchstone Energy brand consisting of 700 electric cooperatives in 46 states. Touchstone Energy cooperatives are committed to innovation, integrity, accountability and commitment to community. 📞



Minnesota law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and an annual notice to co-op members. Similar to the state's Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It's available for military personnel with active duty, deployed or a permanent duty station change.

Call or e-mail us for details about the active duty military payment options and a form to sign up. 📞



More than 500 electric cooperative members registered at the Farmfest booth. Congratulations to these winners on their Ego batter-powered tools:

- Chain Saw: Davis Schreier from Nobles Cooperative Electric
- String Trimmer: Bonita Tabbut from Kandiyohi Power Cooperative
- Blower: Roger Polkow from Redwood Electric Cooperative
- Ice Auger: Joe Koehl from Agralite Electric Cooperative
- Pole Saw: Randy Huhnerkoch from Redwood Electric Cooperative 📞

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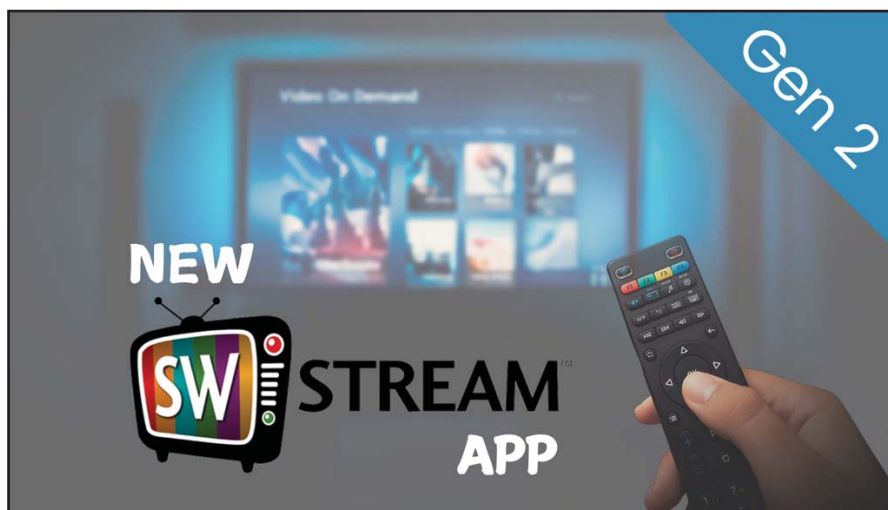
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Good through  
9/30/2025

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**SW Stream got an update! Gen2 app is available in the Roku Channel store and customers should make the switch before September 4, 2025**

Federated Broadband is pleased to announce enhancements to our SW Stream platform. The new app is designed to provide a faster, more seamless and more reliable streaming experience.

All current SW Stream customers should have received a packet in the mail regarding the change and information including login information and a step-by-step guide on making the transition. We strived to make this transition as easy as possible. If you did not receive information from us or would like assistance in making the switch to the new app, please contact our office. We are happy to help walk you through the process over the phone or find a time to have a technician come on site and assist you.

The new app keeps all the features you loved from the first gen app and includes some new ones including: What's On, Trending Programs, Last 10 Channels Tuned and more! 📺

**Interested in our 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

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



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Troy Post — 507-360-5537

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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.

**Thanks for stopping by our Martin County Fair booth!**



A great week was enjoyed at the Martin County Fair! Our team loved getting to meet and speak with many old, new, and incoming customers. We received lots of great questions asked about the Border-to-Border project and conversations about Federated's future buildout plans.

Congratulations to our fair booth raffle prize winners!

- Bluetooth speaker: Brileigh Frahm-Joel from Fairmont.

- Bluetooth earbuds: Etta Walden from Fairmont.

- Projector: Kendall Driscoll from Vernon Center. 📺