

Connections

January 2021

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 25, Issue 1

Co-op rates remain below average

New Year's resolutions are great in theory, but putting them into practice is the hard part. Many people plan to make lifestyle choices, but they get distracted from carrying them out as the year goes along.

Each year your electric cooperative makes a resolution to provide you with reliable electric power for as low a price as possible. Fortunately, your electric co-op is good at keeping its resolutions!

Federated's average residential electric rate is 8.6 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for 2021. As you can see on the adjacent map, that is well under the Minnesota average electric rate for 2019 at 13 cents. In addition, the national average electric rate is 13.01 cents/kWh and your co-op is below that too.

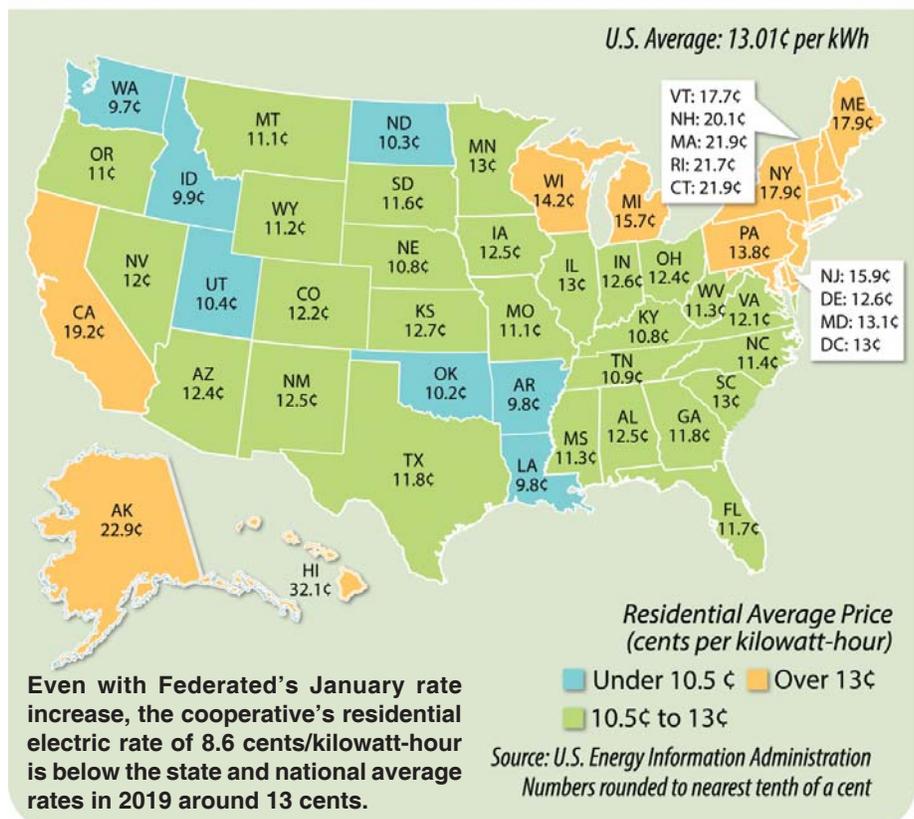
What makes it possible for your electric co-op to keep its resolutions?

First, your electric co-op is built on seven principles that always keep its goal in mind with everything it does: open and voluntary membership, democratic member control, members' economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training, and information, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community.

Next, your electric cooperative isn't run by a faceless corporation. Electric co-op employees and directors are your friends and neighbors. They have

Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2019 figures, in cents per kWh



a vested interest in your community and the service they provide. They know that providing power at a price that is as close to cost is good for everyone. Plus, directors are elected by you, the member-owners!

Since these principles are everyday practices, it makes it easy for your electric cooperative to keep its New Year's resolution year after year. Your electric cooperative is never distracted in its mission to serve.

At A Glance



Apply for the 3 \$1,000 Basin scholarships by January 29

Encourage your high school senior or college student with more than one year of college to apply for our Basin Scholarships. Three will be awarded this year as the pandemic cancelled Youth Tour. Find the application at www.federatedrea.coop or see your high school counselor. Must be son/daughter of a Federated member.



Save the princess...and energy!

If you are a gamer, you know that saving the princess was the goal of older video games. Now a new goal exists for gamers — saving energy!

Today's video game consoles have life-like graphics, voice control, gesture recognition and the ability to stream live Internet content. They also consume a surprising amount of electricity.

It is estimated that today's video game consoles can consume as much energy as all of the homes in the city of Houston or the equivalent of the electricity delivered by four power plants. With that much power in play, it is important to learn how to play as energy-efficiently as possible.

Power saving settings

The Xbox One comes set-up to listen for the "Xbox On" voice command to turn on and allow other devices to access it via the network. By configuring "Energy-saving" Power Mode, you can disable such features and drop the Xbox One's standby power use by 98 percent.

The PlayStation 4 (PS4) enters a low power "rest" mode after one hour of inactivity, which can be reduced to save even more.

Turn off the controllers

The PS4 includes a useful feature that allows the controllers to turn themselves off when not in use. You can choose to turn off your controllers automatically after 10, 30 or 60 minutes.

Xbox's Kinect accessory can use up to 14 watts when the game console is in use. If you don't use Kinect often, consider disconnecting it.

Keep up with updates

Video game system updates often



Take control of your video game playing. All of the video games in the country use as much energy as the city of Houston. Make sure to use your system as energy-efficiently as possible.

offer new features. For example, a system update allowed the PS4 to power down automatically and the USB ports to enter a lower power state once connected controllers are fully charged, dropping its power consumption by over 65 percent.

Don't let games come between you and your cable and streaming

For energy efficiency plug your cable TV cord into the first HDMI port on your TV and connect your Xbox to a secondary HDMI port. Plugging your cable TV cord into your Xbox requires the Xbox to consume power, even when you are not gaming.

Do you love binge-watching your favorite shows on Netflix? Try to avoid using your game console and use a digital media player (Roku, Apple TV, etc.) instead, which uses 15 times less energy. Better yet, you can watch Netflix most efficiently through a Smart TV, which does not require an extra streaming device.

If all gamers took these steps with the millions of PS4 and Xbox Ones out there, we would see a significant nationwide energy savings — over 800 million kWh every year. This prevents greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from over 120,000 vehicles.

TV time adds up too

If you are spending more time at home, you are also probably spending more time in front of the TV regardless, of whether you are a gamer or not. Any activity that increases screen time means increased energy use, making it important to choose an energy-efficient Energy Star model.

Energy Star TVs are, on average, 25 percent more energy efficient than conventional models, saving energy in all usage modes: sleep, idle and on. Energy Star models also offer the same features as their counterparts:

- High dynamic range (HDR) for
- **Continued on Page 6**

It's a snap to charge your phone — wirelessly — with the TapNCharge

Your phone battery is low. It's off to the power cord drawer. Once you find the appropriate cord, you have to untangle it from all of the other cords. Then you have to unknot it. Then you have to find the adaptor, plug it into the wall, plug in your phone and wait.

Imagine if your phone battery is low and you simply set it down on a shelf, desk or table while it charges on its own?

Thanks to wireless charging technology, this is possible! Simply set your device on the TapNCharge and it will charge without cords.

Using TapNCharge is simple. All you have to do is put your phone on the charging pad and that's it! If you wanted to use your phone or answer a call, all you'll need to do is pick it up. No unplugging and no hassle.

The TapNCharge works with most models, old and new, Android and Apple. The TapNCharge comes with its own adapter that allows you to transform old phones into wireless-charging phones.

While it's true that most cordless chargers are slow, that is not the case with this TapNCharge. You'll be amazed by how fast it can charge your phone.

The TapNCharge is sleek and thin so you can keep it in your handbag or even your pocket. Take it with you on trips for maximum comfort.



TapNCharge can be used right out of the box. All you have to do is plug it in and place your phone on it and it will charge. It also supports 1-centimeter charging distance, so you won't even need to take the phone case off.

Many wireless chargers are expensive, but the Tap N Charge is available for \$49.99. Visit tapncharge.io to order.

The TapNCharge makes it a snap to charge your phone. Simplify your life and remove going to the cord drawer whenever your phone is low. 📱

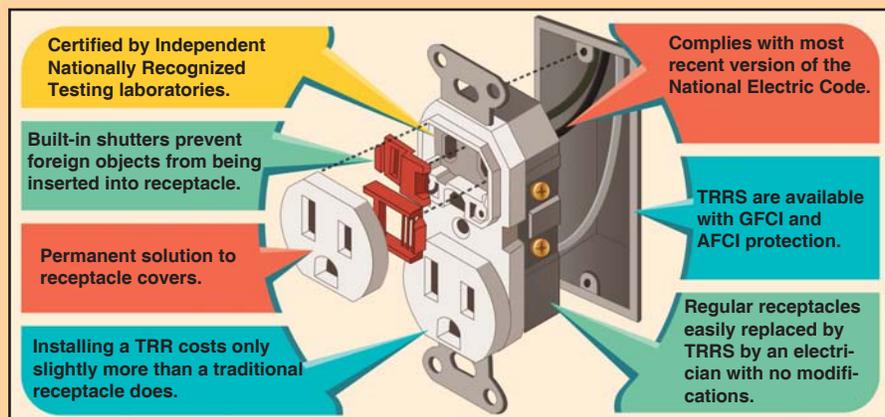
Safety

Tamper-resistant receptacles childproof outlets

If you have young children or grandkids, you may want to consider installing tamper-resistant receptacles (TRRs) as electric outlets.

TRRs feature built-in safety shutters that block foreign objects from being inserted into the receptacle. The shutters open only when a two-bladed or grounded plug is inserted into the outlet.

When you plug into a TRR for the first time, you may feel the internal shutter system engaging. If excessive force is needed to insert a plug into a TRR, there's a chance that the plug, not the receptacle, is damaged.



If a plug's blade is bent or splayed, straighten out the blades. This allows each prong to contact the shutters

simultaneously and engage them as designed. Cost: \$2-\$4. 📱
— Information courtesy of esfi.org

Federated Focus

Iowa complaint process posted

If you have a concern or complaint regarding Federated Rural Electric, it should be addressed to: Scott Reimer, general manager, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or call 507-847-3520.



If Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from: Utilities Board, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple St., Des Moines IA 50319-0069 or call 515-281-5979.

If your complaint is related to service, rather than rates, and Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Nondiscrimination notice posted

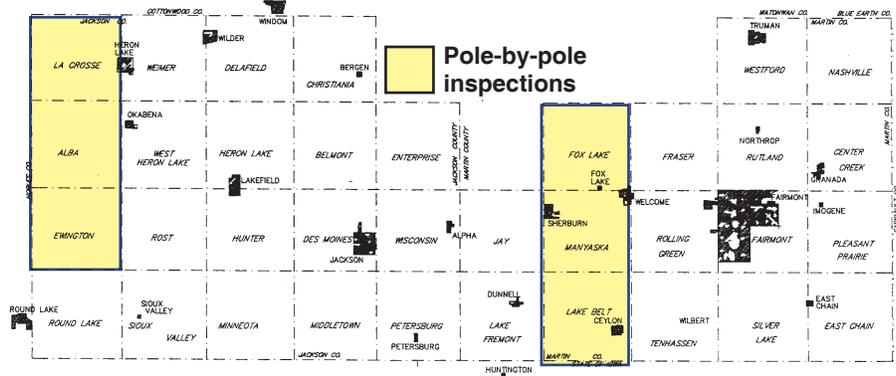


If you wish to file a Civil Rights complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, at any USDA office or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7742 or e-mail program.intake@usda.gov.

Operation Round Up deadline

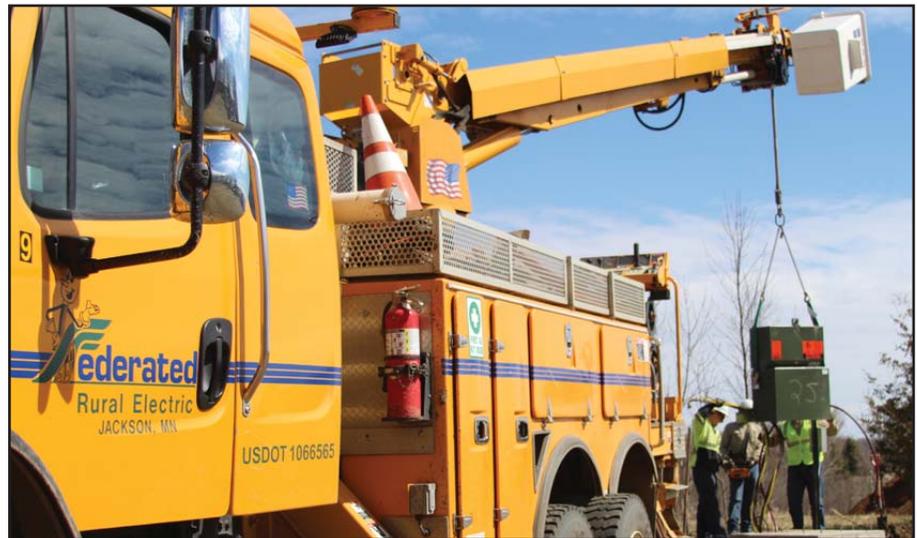
The next application deadline is February 12. See our website for the application.

Watch out for Federated trucks driving slowly



Line crews will drive all of the lines this winter looking for maintenance issues. They will also do pole-by-pole inspections in the yellow highlighted townships.

Plans for new hog barn, bins or home in 2021? Notify operations for new service



Have building plans for 2021? Keep Federated in the loop so we can build a new or larger electrical service. Call Federated and talk to George in Operations. Secure your place on the schedule so we can have materials ordered and on hand. Call 507-847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520 and press "4" for Operations.

Kyle Koerselman promoted January 1



Federated promoted Kyle Koerselman to Metering, Staking and Technical Services Foreman effective January 1.

"We are happy that Kyle's talents and tenacity will be put to good use in helping Federated bridge the technology gap," said Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "Kyle is good at problem solving and has a knack for knowing where to look for solutions. Electric operations hit the trifecta with Kyle for metering, staking and technology needs."

Koerselman started at Federated January 9, 2006 as an apprentice lineman at the Welcome warehouse. He became a journeyman lineman April 1, 2009. In 2017 he began working out of the Jackson warehouse. Congratulations Kyle!

10 Federated employees & directors recognized for 120 years of service



David A. Hansen
District 3 Director
& Board President
20 years



Steve Ruthenbeck
Communications/
Mapping Specialist
20 years



Dave Berlin
Master Electrician
15 years



David Meschke
District 5 Director
& Board Vice President
15 years



Angela Ziemer
Staff Accountant
15 years

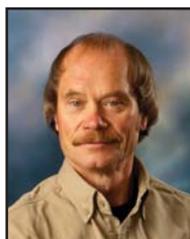


Darvin Voss
District 2 Director &
Board Secretary/Treasurer
10 years

While we could not gather for a recognition party in 2020 due to the pandemic, we still want to recognize these employees and directors for their dedicated, hard work.
Thank you for your 120 years of service to Federated members! 🎉



Janet Muller
Executive Secretary
10 years



Gary Armbrust
Warehouseman/Mechanic
5 years



Scott Reimer
General Manager
5 years



Julie Resch
Office Manager/CFO
5 years

Congratulations Casey Schoellerman, who is now journeyman lineman



Congratulations Casey Schoellerman on becoming a journeyman lineman, effective November 1, 2020. Schoellerman works out of Federated's Welcome warehouse.

Schoellerman started his lineman career after graduating from Mitchell Technical Institute.

He worked at Mid-Plains Power, Inc. in the Denison, Iowa, area, working on overhead construction for an electric cooperative.

Schoellerman also worked for Sioux Valley Energy in Brandon, South Dakota, as an 1,000-hour summer employee working on underground construction.

Most recently, he worked at Nobles Cooperative Electric in Slayton/Worthington for three years.

Finally, Schoellerman started at Federated October 14, 2019, where he completed the remaining year of the Merchant Job Training and Safety program.

This Merchant Journeyman program instructs utility personnel in the safety-related work practices and technical skills necessary to install, operate and maintain electric power distribution systems. The Merchant Journeyman program also meets the Federal and State Department of Labor requirements for apprentice training.

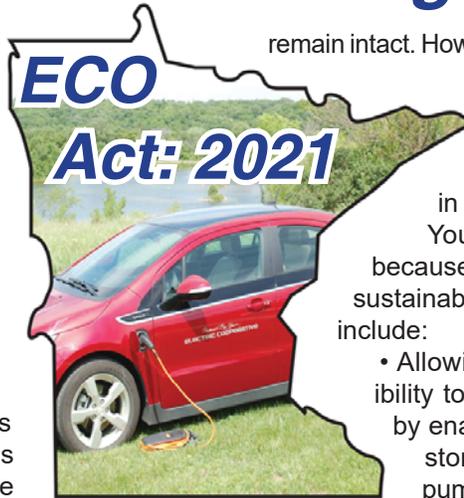
The certification program involves on-the-job training, along with testing in different areas, ranging from safety to meters, transformers, power lines and substations. Each year covers 1,875 hours of training and testing on each unit. 🎉

Energy matters are state legislative priority

In 2007 Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) was established, creating goals for all utilities — including electric cooperatives — to reduce their annual electricity sales by 1.5 percent and to spend at least 1.5 percent of revenues to achieve this goal. Your electric cooperative is proud that we've consistently met or exceeded these goals.

When CIP started, select energy-efficient purchases were incentivized, including Energy Star-rated appliances and LED lighting. Some of these items were just making their entry into the marketplace. It was a win-win to encourage co-op member-owners to use these new products. Thanks in part to CIP, we've reached a point of saturation with many of the energy-efficiency incentives introduced more than a decade ago. The electric power industry is the only segment of the economy that has exceeded its carbon reduction goals.

While CIP was beneficial, it has become outdated, lacks an emphasis on innovation and doesn't support many advancements that have positive environmental impacts. To modernize the program Minnesota's electric cooperatives, along with other industry partners, drafted the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act. This bill emphasizes total energy efficiency across many sectors — energy, transportation, agriculture and others — to encourage diverse improvements. Under the ECO Act, the goal to reduce electricity use by 1.5 percent annually will



remain intact. However, a portion of this may be achieved with efficient-electrification programs, such as incentivizing electric vehicles (EV). The 1.5 percent spending requirement would be eliminated unless the reduction in electricity use is not met.

Your electric cooperative supports this bill because we believe it provides more long-term, sustainable benefits for our members. The benefits include:

- Allowing your electric cooperative more flexibility to meet our annual energy-savings goals by enabling us to count EV incentives, electric storage water heaters and air source heat pumps toward part of the goal.
- Helping the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering a more resilient grid.
- Encouraging innovation by supporting continuously advancing technologies.
- Reducing consumers' total energy bills by eliminating the mandated 1.5 percent spending requirements, while providing better tools for reducing carbon.

We encourage our member-owners to join us in advocating for this legislative change by contacting your representatives. If you have questions, please contact your electric cooperative. We are happy to discuss more details of the ECO Act with you.

We need our member-consumers' help to pass the #ECOAct. The ECO Act will save you, your electric cooperative and all of our neighbors energy and money, plus cut through the unnecessary regulation. ⁽⁶⁾

Power up TVs & video games for energy savings

— Continued from Page 2

brighter highlights, a wider range of colors and better contrast levels.

- Internet connectivity, also referred to as "Smart TVs," for access to streaming video services like Netflix.

- Ultra-high definition (UHD) resolution means four times as many pixels as conventional high definition TVs.

In addition, Energy Star models have energy-efficient features.

- Automatic Brightness Control (ABC) saves energy and enhances the viewing experience. The ABC feature is a self-acting mechanism that controls the brightness of the TV relative to the brightness of the room.

- Local dimming saves energy and



Game on! Yes, you can save energy even with video games and the controllers!

gives deeper blacks. Local dimming turns off or dims sections of the backlighting for truer black levels.

- Many Energy Star TVs are now shipping with pre-set picture views such as "vivid," "sports" or "cinema." Look for the pre-set picture settings with the Energy Star label to ensure energy savings.

Video games and TV usage are perhaps at all time highs during this stay-at-home period. Following the right directions and buying the right models help keep energy usage in your home from being at an all-time high score, as well. ⁽⁶⁾

— Information from [Energystar.gov](https://energystar.gov)

Time for lots-n-lots of tator tots recipes; share your favorites!

Tator tots top off a cold winter's night meal. Do you use tator tots in egg bake, hot dish, dressed up as nachos or what other hot tator tot recipes? Send your tator tot recipes to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by January 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

Heartland Security covers it all!



From burglars, fire, floods and more, Heartland Security can protect your home or business with everything from alarms, to cameras, plus motion and water sensors. Call 1-888-264-6380 or visit www.heartlandss.com for more information. ☺

Rice Pudding

by Roxanne Zimanski, Courtland

Cook 1 c. white rice in 3 c. water; fluff with fork.

Cook the following in a heavy pan:

3 beaten egg yolks

¾ c. sugar

2 T. cornstarch

2 c. half and half

2 c. milk

Cook until thick, stirring all of the time until it coats a spoon; remove from heat and add 1 tsp. vanilla and pour over rice. Let cool and then refrigerate. At serving time I shake some sugar and cinnamon on top and warm in microwave. ☺

**Pick up the phone
before the shovel;
call before digging!**

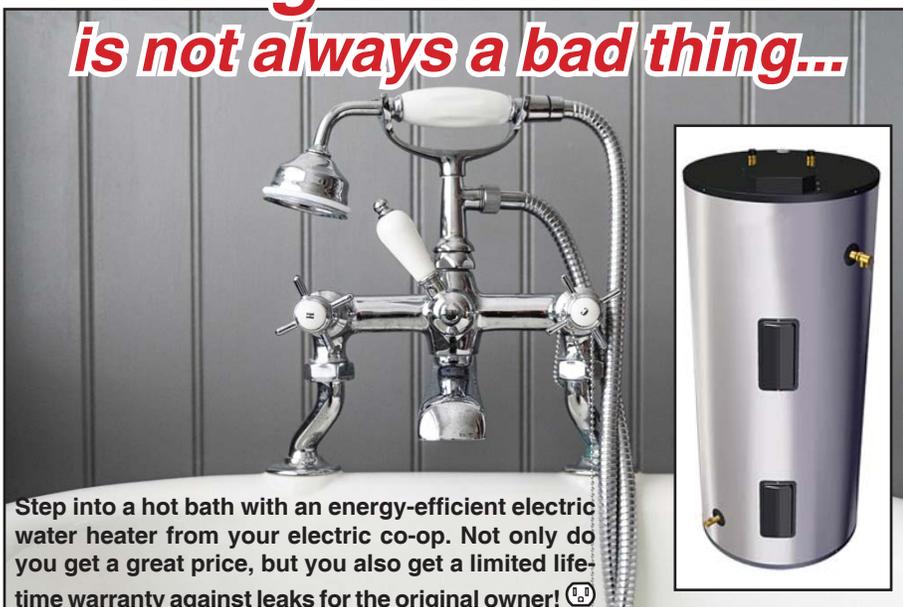
1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging

for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register at www.gopherstateonecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺

'Getting into hot water' is not always a bad thing...



Step into a hot bath with an energy-efficient electric water heater from your electric co-op. Not only do you get a great price, but you also get a limited lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner! ☺



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

We are committed to a co-op culture for all

Over the years, you may have heard me expound on why and how Federated is different — because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including Federated, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly.

Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA. Equal access for all!

When our electric co-op was founded, each member contributed an equal share in order to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families, family farms, businesses and industries within the communities we serve. Each member had an equal vote in co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. Federated was built by and belongs to the diverse communities and member-owners we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the co-op.

We encourage all members to vote in Federated's director elections every August. We invite all members to communicate with directors or here at our offices so that we may set co-op policies and priorities, such as high-speed fiber optic broadband, renewable energy (like our 2.1 megawatt wind turbine near Welcome) and electric vehicle programs.

We know members of our communities have different needs and perspectives; we welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the co-op. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our membership.

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our communities. Because we are your local electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our communities. In turn, we invest in our diverse membership base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.



Rural Electric

Official monthly newsletter published

77100 US Hwy 71, PO Box 69

Jackson, MN 56143-0069

E-mail: info@federatedrea.coop

Website: <http://www.federatedrea.coop>

Facebook.com/Federated

Phone: 847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520

Office hours: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Scott Reimer, General Manager

David A. Hansen, President — 847-3530

David Meschke, Vice President — 238-1122

Darvin Voss, Secretary/Treasurer — 662-6679

Bruce Brockmann — 399-3487

Glenn Dicks — 840-1075

Jon Saxen — 236-7027

Scott Thiesse — 399-6427

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.

While today's world is radically different than it was when Federated was founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you — the members we proudly serve — is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.

As we move into what we hope will be a fantastic 2021, we are anxious to roll out our new five-year work plan that is teeming with projects to help Federated, as well as our membership, thrive. We have put great emphasis on reliability and power quality; however, safety, affordability and member service are all at the top. Our work force is ready and willing at a moment's notice to respond to your needs — whatever that may be. Our Board of Directors is engaged and ready to listen to the membership whenever that time arises.

We want to wish you all the best in 2021! May you stay healthy and enjoy all that life has to offer. ☺



For the latest updates on Federated's programs, service & outages follow us on our Facebook page