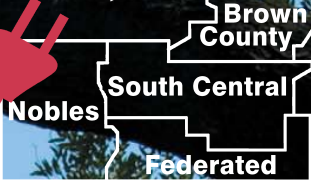




June 2008

Vol. 12, No. 6



Cooperative Alliance Partners

Connections

Connecting our co-ops & members to a progressive future




Tell 'em you're concerned about your future electric rates...Page 2



Congrats to our scholarship winners...Page 8

Help support our troops abroad...Page 9

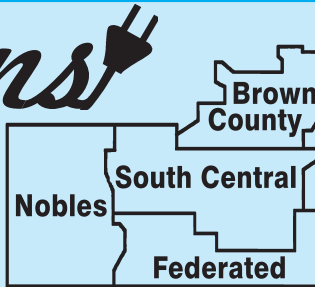
Manager's message ...Page 16

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Cooperative Alliance Partners *Connections*

This publication focuses on CAP's members, programs and events. As this is the official member publication, member's story ideas, letters-to-the-editor and comments are welcomed.

Andrea Christoffer, CCC, Editor
Printed by the Livewire Printing Co., Jackson



Connections (USPS 010-456) is published monthly by Federated Rural Electric, 77100 US Hwy 71, Jackson, MN 56143. Subscriptions: Members \$5 a year. Nonmembers \$10 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MN and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Connections*, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069.

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.
 "Owned by those it serves"

Our Energy, Our Future

Voice your concern with elected officials; send back the postcards

With increasing energy prices your electric co-op needs your help.

We need you to "speak up" with our politicians. It's as easy as 1-2-3. First, watch for the postcards that will come with your July electric bill. Secondly, fill out the postcards with your name and address. Third, return the postcards with your bill payment to the co-op.

Your electric cooperative will then box up the postcards to the appropriate legislators: Representative Walz, Senator Klobuchar and Senator Coleman. We will then deliver your postcards all at once for a larger impact. (One response from a constituent has the weight of 100 people who have not spoken up!)

The postcards point out that you are concerned about our nation's growing energy needs. It asks the legislators three questions about their plans for the nation to make sure we'll have the electricity needed, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (See questions 1-3.)

"Policy makers must be called upon to answer the tough questions," stated Glenn English, CEO from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "Consumers

1

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What are elected officials going to do to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

2

What are elected officials doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric power plants an affordable reality?

3

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will elected officials do to make it affordable?

The postcards ask our legislators to answer these three questions. Let them know you are concerned about your future electric rates and potential legislation.

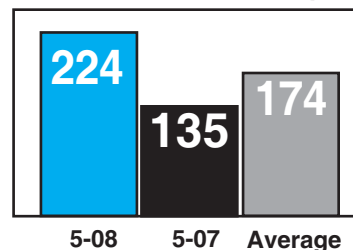
need straight answers about the current state of technology, capacity and cost. Co-op members recognize that balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult."

The Electric Power Research Institute estimates that global warming legislation could increase electric bills — **Continued on Page 10**

Cover Connections

Let your voice be heard on the issue of energy legislation. Electric co-op members have two easy ways to let Washington, D.C. know how you feel about energy legislation and its impact on electric rates. Send a postcard that will come with your July electric bill or visit www.ourenergy.coop.

Weather affects your electric bill



This chart compares the heating degree days for May '08, May '07 and the 63-year average for your monthly electric bill.

Brown County R&A member of the month

Cottage Clutter & Design — a cottage industry for ‘making your home a haven’

Starting a business is like making a candle. No matter what a person is making, the first thing they need is inspiration.

“I always dreamed about running my own business,” said Lisa Hoffmann, Sleepy Eye. “When I had my hours cut back at work last August, I decided to use it as an opportunity to make my dream come true.” A month later Hoffmann had Cottage Clutter & Design up and running. She operates a country craft store that offers a variety of items, including one of Hoffmann’s personal favorites — soy candles.

“I love the smell of candles and the way they make a house feel homey,” Hoffmann said. “A few years ago I started making soy candles. I chose soy over paraffin because it’s a natural substance that doesn’t put harmful chemicals in the air, plus it supports the farmers. The candles turned out so well that I started making them for others. For example, we had a benefit for a family member with cancer and I made 100 candles to raise money.”

One thing a person needs to make candles is a container. Likewise, a person needs a location to contain their business. “Cottage Clutter & Design is located in the country,” Hoffman said. “We’re on County Road 24, 10 miles east of Leavenworth or six miles southeast of Sleepy Eye. We’ve lived on the acreage for 19 years. My husband, Rick, wanted to live in the country so he could help his parents on their family farm, which is only a mile down the road. Plus, it’s a good place to raise kids. We have two children, Jesse and ShyAnn.”

Jesse also contributed to Cottage Clutter & Design’s location. “A few years ago my son cleaned out the granary and fixed it up so he could use it as a place to hang out with his friends,” Hoffmann said. “When I decided to start my craft shop, the granary was the natural choice for a building. At first Jesse didn’t mind, but once he saw us moving his TV out I think he reconsidered,” Hoffmann joked. Hoffmann’s family members helped her further remodel the granary. “We put in shelving, painted the floors and touched up the walls,” Hoffmann added. “In the future we hope to expand the building and add a porch.”

Once a person acquires a container, the next step in candle making is filling it with wax, a wick and fragrance.



Come and see what I have in store for you... Lisa Hoffmann, owner and operator of Cottage Clutter & Design, Sleepy Eye, stands among some of the products of her country craft store. Hoffmann provides customers with a selection of home decor, soy candles, gourmet foods and more.

Once Hoffmann acquired her location, she began filling it with the items that make a craft store.

“My goal is to carry a wide selection of unique items,” Hoffmann said. “Presently, Cottage Clutter & Design offers home décor, Amish baskets and rugs, handcrafted items, my homemade soy candles and more. I also carry a line of gourmet foods from Rabbit Creek. These include a variety of quick breads, beer bread, soups, dips, smoothies and hot chocolate mixes. My home décor line features pictures, lamps, shelves and cabinets. These come in several different styles, from rustic to contemporary to primitive. In addition, I sell a line of jewelry made by a local woman. My benches, cabinets, rugs and furniture also come from local vendors. I also do interior decorating and paint consulting for clients.”

Education and experience help Hoffmann create a successful craft store. “After high school I attended South Central Technical College, Mankato, and obtained a degree in sales marketing and management,” Hoffmann said. “I then worked for Advertising Unlimited and Randy’s Family Drug (both in Sleepy Eye), where I managed the store’s gift department. This required meeting sales reps and visiting markets for gift buying. One market I visit to find items for my store is in Minneapolis. I also use the Internet to seek out new and unique gifts that people might find interesting. That is one of the challenges of the job — maintaining an inventory that excites people. The other challenge is finding — *Continued on Page 10*

Price is right for CFL recycling at any Minnesota Menards — absolutely

FREE and CONVENIENT CFL recycling.

Coming in June to Minnesota's **MENARDS**[®]

Just bring your used CFLs to the Customer Service Counter.

Because of the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled. In Minnesota, it is illegal to place them directly in the garbage.

RE Brown County Rural Electrical Association 507-794-3331

Nobles Cooperative Electric 507-372-7331 or 836-6107

Federated Rural Electric 507-847-3520 or 728-8366

SCE South Central Electric Association 507-375-3164 or 628-5571

a brighter idea

While CFLs are starting to be available everywhere, recycling locations were harder to find...until now.

Great River Energy, your electric cooperative's wholesale power supplier, in partnership with 28 member cooperatives is excited to bring you free and convenient recycling at all Menards stores in Minnesota. Besides Menards, you can bring compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) to your local recycling center or your community's hazardous waste site. For more information on recycling options visit www.minnesota.earth911.org or www.pca.state.mn.us.

Recycle burned out or broken CFLs to prevent the release of mercury. Even though there is only a small amount of mercury in a CFL bulb (an amount equal to the tip of a ballpoint pen), they still require recycling. ⚡

Monthly ENERGY[®] wise tip

Replace your most used incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient models — Typically, the five most used fixtures in a home are in the kitchen, the living room/family room, floor lamps, dining room and outdoor porch or post lamps. Energy Star qualified lighting fixtures and replacement bulbs can be found at home improvement and hardware stores, lighting showrooms, other retail stores and from websites. The smallest things can add up to a real difference. Energy Star qualified lighting provides bright, warm light, but uses about 75 percent less electricity than standard lighting, produces 75 percent less waste heat and lasts up to 10 times longer. Save about \$30 or more in electricity costs over each bulb's lifetime. Change out the light fixtures or bulbs at home that you use the most with Energy Star qualified models. If every American home replaced their five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ones that have earned the Energy Star logo, we would save close to \$8 billion each year in energy costs. Together Americans would prevent the greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions from nearly 10 million cars. The energy used in the average home can be responsible for more than twice the greenhouse gas emissions of the average car. ⚡ — *Courtesy of www.energystar.gov*

Watts new

Put a new shine on grilling with a Dimplex stainless steel electric grill

The Dimplex PowerChef is a shining star among electric grills with its stainless steel finish and computerized controls. Grillers gain precise cooking control.

Program cooking

The PowerChef's cooking control panel provides a variety of options on a wide range of popular foods. The control panel prompts you through easy to follow steps in programming multiple food choices, cook settings and time adjustments. Once programmed, the PowerChef prompts you when it is time to start cooking, when it is time to turn your food over and when it is done. An electronic beep alerts you to each step.

Enjoy rotisserie operation

Reposition the EvenSear Cooking System into a vertical position and your PowerChef functions as a vertical rotisserie. This brings the high temperature cooking element into its optimum position for rotisserie cooking. Note: rotisserie device sold separately.

Remembers favorite cooking time

Following the directions in the manual, you can program one or more of your favorite cooking times into your PowerChef. Imagine your favorite food cooked to your own specifications every time, automatically. However, if the pre-programmed cooking options don't suit your taste, you can use the PowerChef Manual Mode.

EvenSear Cooking System

This dual layer grill system functions in two ways. The grill sears your food with direct contact. At the same time your food is cooked gently and evenly by additional heat radiating through the element. The EvenSear system ensures that all energy supplied to the grill is directly used to cook your food. Energy that would otherwise be wasted heating the cabinet or air surrounding the food is focused on cooking your food to perfection. The EvenSear Cooking System applies energy through both grill layers and flows evenly and consistently throughout the entire grill area, eliminating hot and cool spots. The 216 square-inch grill maintains a consistent even temperature, even in the corners.

No unwanted fumes, safe and fast

The PowerChef uses standard household electric current and provides a closely controlled source of heat to your food. No gas or other fuel fumes will leave behind unwanted tastes or odors to your food. The PowerChef is safe, with no open flame or combustion. It provides fast



The Dimplex PowerChef (above) and the Dimplex EBQ (inset) bring new features to the table for electric grills, including stainless steel grilling surfaces and computer controls.

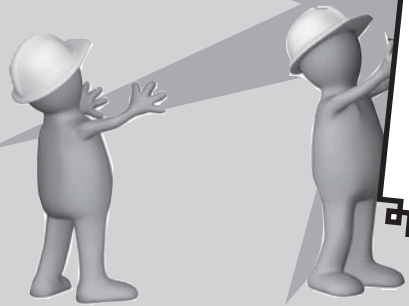
and efficient heat up and no refueling is ever necessary. Plus, its stainless steel upper grill, the EvenSear Cooking System is easy to keep clean.

The PowerChef costs approximately \$550. If you would like a stainless steel electric grill at a more economical price, the Dimplex EBQ might be for you. It has most of the features as the PowerChef, except for the computerized controls. It costs approximately \$400. For more information visit www.dimplex.com. (Dimplex also manufactures electric fireplaces and woodstoves.) If you would like to see this grill, stop by Federated Rural Electric in Jackson (1-800-321-3520) or Nobles Cooperative Electric in Worthington (1-800-776-0517). 🐾

Make your next cooling system a work of art...

Hook up with a Quality Installer!

The co-op's central air & air source heat pump rebates require use of a Quality Installation contractor. This means the contractor passed a certification exam, properly sizes the system & tests it for optimal performance. Talk to the co-op for details about the rebate amounts. Visit the co-op's website or call for an updated listing of Quality Installers.



Local Quality Installer List

- Adrian Plumbing & Heating, Windom; 831-3934
- Ahrens Heating, New Ulm: 354-217
- Al's Plumbing & Heating, Wilmont: 926-5901
- A-OK Service, Fairmont: 238-2468
- Boeckman Plumbing & Heating, Elmore: 943-3749
- B&R Plumbing & Heating, Winthrop: 647-5362
- Bruce's Plumbing & Heating, St. James: 375-4520
- BTU, Inc., Worthington: 376-6966
- C&S Heating & Air Conditioning, Hanska: 794-4328
- Cress Refrigeration, Fairmont: 236-2284
- Countryside Plumbing & Heating, Jackson: 847-4288
- Comfort Heating & Air Conditioning, New Ulm: 354-2165
- Day Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, Fairmont: 235-9009
- Electric Service Company, Blue Earth: 526-2255
- Feder Mechanical, Madelia: 642-3522
- Fischer Heating & Sheet Metal, Sleepy Eye: 794-7625
- Fodness Heating & Cooling, New Ulm: 354-3947
- Gag Sheet Metal Inc., New Ulm: 354-3813
- Gibson Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, Estherville: 712-362-7408
- Isakson Plumbing & Heating, Gibbon: 834-6413
- Jenniges Plumbing & Heating, Redwood Falls: 637-5483
- Kaduce Plumbing & Heating, Winnebago: 893-4456
- Kerkoff Plumbing & Heating, Morgan: 249-3138
- Lakeside Plumbing & Heating, Gibbon: 834-6206
- Lowes Sheetmetal Inc., Worthington: 376-5927
- Mike's Plumbing & Heating, Slayton: 836-6158
- Mosley Inc., Lakefield: 662-6227
- Nilson Heating & A/C, New Ulm: 354-5500
- Parker Plumbing & Heating, Slayton: 836-6560
- Royer's Inc., Winnebago: 893-4612
- Schwalbach's Plumbing & Heating, at Ace Hardware stores in Jackson, Windom & Worthington: 372-2792
- St. James Heating & Air, St. James: 375-8700
- Total Comfort, Fairmont: 235-5278
- Vee Plumbing and Heating, Madelia: 642-8700



Brown County Rural Electrical Association
507-794-3331



Nobles Cooperative Electric
507-372-7331 or 836-6107



Federated Rural Electric
507-847-3520 or 728-8366



South Central Electric Association
507-375-3164 or 628-5571

Share 'life-saving' lessons

Children laugh as they run through a sprinkler or splash in a pool; hear the hum of a boat on a lake with waves slapping against the shore while fishing — the sounds of summer. Don't let a safety hazard alter your summer fun. Teach your children about electrical safety, Learn what you need to, and Care enough to share it with those you love — TLC.

Safe Electricity's "TLC — Teach Learn Care" campaign reminds everyone that water and electricity are a dangerous combination. The family of Caitlyn MacKenzie, a 12-year old Edwardsville, Illinois girl who tragically lost her life in an electrical accident, wants everyone to become educated about electrical safety.

Caitlyn's mother Teresa Orasco said, "Educate your children, your grandchildren, nieces, nephews — anyone you can. It's important; you don't realize how important until tragedy strikes."

Assessing electrical hazards near water is a wise investment of your time. Contact between water and electricity can be serious or even deadly. "Caitlyn's accident occurred while she was damp from swimming and reached for an ungrounded outdoor lamp and received a heart-stopping electrical shock," said Molly Hall, from Safe Electricity. "Electrical equipment around swimming pools can pose a very real hazard." Consider the following:

- Do not put any electrical appliances within five feet of a swimming pool.
- Electrical outlets within 20 feet of a pool should have a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Never swim during a thunderstorm.



Keep me safe near water this summer! Educate children about electrical safety hazards whether swimming, boating or fishing.

- Pools and decks should be built at least five feet away from all underground electrical lines and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.

- Use battery-operated appliances, rather than electrical, near pools.

- If a swimmer is electrocuted or shocked, don't dive in or you could be electrocuted as well. Turn off the power; use a fiberglass shepherd's hook to pull the victim out of the water.

When you leave the pool, don't change the radio station or touch any electrical appliances until you are dry. Never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water. If children play with sprinklers or hoses, set it up well away from any electrical outlets or appli-

ances. Be proactive with potential safety hazards to avoid accidents and deaths.

Electricity and water are dangerous around larger bodies of water as well. If you go boating or fishing, be aware of your surroundings and potential electrical hazards.

- Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines to be safe.

- If your boat comes in contact with a power line, never jump out of the boat into the water — the water could be energized. Instead, stay in the boat and avoid touching anything metal until help arrives or until your boat is no longer in contact with the line.

- Be sure dockside outlets have GFCI protection; check cords that are plugged into them to make sure there is no broken casing or exposed wires.

- Check for the location of power lines before fishing. Cast the line away from power lines to avoid contact. ➡

Don't dig up trouble! Contact GSOC first this summer!



1-800-252-1166
www.gopherstateonecall.org

Contact Gopher State One Call (GSOC) before doing any digging more than 12-inches deep. Make this call 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register on the website at www.gopherstateonecall.org. This gives utilities time to mark their underground lines up to your meter so you are safe! Then contact a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ➡

Federated focus: Federated focus: Even Pay bills adjusted

If you participate in the Even Pay program (so you pay the same amount monthly on your electric bill), your June 1st bill most likely changed. The Billing Department reviews twice a year (May and October) all Even Pay accounts to see if the averaged amount was meeting the actual use. Check for your new amount on the June 1st bill. The new amount is based on your actual kilowatt-hours used for the past year. If you want to join Even Pay, call us at 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520 or use billing@federatedrea.coop.

Nominating Committee meets

Federated's Nominating Committee will select director and nominating committee candidates. The first meeting is August 4. The membership will vote on these candidates at the Annual Meeting November 22, which will be at the Jackson County Central High School, Jackson.

The director positions slated for election involve Districts 3 and 4, while the Nominating Committee is for Districts 1 and 2. Both positions are four-year terms.

If you would like to nominate a member for a position, call Federated at 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520. Otherwise, e-mail info@federatedrea.coop.

The nominations will be posted at Federated 30 days before the Annual Meeting. Nominations can also be made by petition at least 20 days prior to the meeting or from the floor during the meeting.

CFLs for sale!

Buy your CFLs at reduced rates. Federated has a variety of CFL bulbs on sale at our office. ➡

Congratulations Federated scholarship recipients!



District 1
Michelle Olsem,
Dundee.
Daughter of George & Carla



District 2
Sarah Buresch,
Lakefield.
Daughter of Mike & Sue



District 3
Hanna Fransen
Jackson.
Daughter of Craig & Kathleen



District 4
Rebekah Anderson,
Dunnell.
Daughter of John & Paula



District 5
Bryce Padgett,
Fairmont.
Son of Doug & Pat



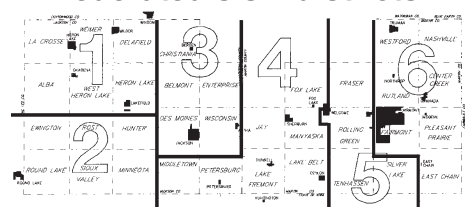
District 6
Bridget Tonne,
Granada.
Daughter of Mike & Becky

Six high school seniors have more to celebrate than graduation. Each one received a \$600 Federated Operation Round Up Scholarship.

57 students completed Federated's scholarship application. This is the sixth year students applied for it. Previously, nine smaller scholarships were awarded to each high school, but that excluded the home-schooled and students in neighboring schools. A scholarship was awarded to each co-op district; these are the same districts used for director elections.

This is the 18th consecutive year Federated dedicated funds to high school scholarships and the 13th year that the scholarships are from Operation Round Up. This totals \$53,800 in Federated Round Up scholarships. ➡

Federated's six districts



Show the troops some Minnesota Nice!

As Memorial Day has passed and the 4th of July approaches, remember the troops who protect our freedom and preserve our independence.

As a community service project, Federated employees are launching a drive for our troops overseas. Members are asked to drop off items that could make life a little more like home for troops serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

Federated is partnering with Operation Minnesota Nice (www.operationminnesotanice.com). Visit their website for a complete list of items to donate. Federated's goal is to collect 5,000 items, representing one item for each Federated meter.

These items can be dropped off at Federated's Jackson Office (77100 US HWY 71, Jackson) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or at the Welcome State Bank (111 Guide St. N., Welcome, MN) during business hours. Otherwise, make a cash donation (customers can simply put

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

Some items include beef jerky, hard candy (please do not give chocolate; it melts), gum, granola bars, cookies, nuts, pop tarts, Spam, sardines, breakfast bars, new socks, shoe insole cushions, Chapstick, sunscreen, instant coffee, Gatorade, tea bags or mixes, sweetened powdered drink mixes, baby wipes, Q-tips, eye drops, floss, lotion, soap, deodorant, shampoo, tissues, toilet paper, tooth brushes, toothpaste, books, crossword puzzle books, CDs, DVDs, disposable cameras, cards, flashlights, pens and paper.

an additional check in with their electric bill and make the check payable to Federated REA; list "troops" on the memo line). Otherwise, mail the check to Federated Rural Electric,

ATTN: Troops, PO Box 69, Jackson, MN 56143. Federated employees will purchase the needed items. Items will then be delivered to Minnesota Nice and sent to troops overseas. Federated will collect items and cash donations until Labor Day, September 1, 2008.

Operation Minnesota Nice has been in service since 2004. They currently have 1,100 volunteers matched to as many soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait and have sent over 200,000 pounds worth of care packages.

One U.S. soldier in Iraq had this to say about Operation Minnesota Nice: "I am so appreciative of your gratitude. People underestimate the way voicing their feelings and opinions could affect our morale. But when I see support from people like you it means the world to me and the soldiers that I know and work with."

Contact Federated at 847-3520, 728-8366, 1-800-321-3520 or troops@federatedrea.coop with any questions. 🐾

Thanks GreenTouch volunteers!



Holding banner: Blanch Hanson, Curt Baumgard, Victor and Gerry Pohlman and Jessica Christoffer. Back: Kerry Ella, Joe Sherack, David A. Hansen, Darnell Christians, LeRoy Berkness and Wayne Barlow.

Volunteers added their GreenTouch to Kilen Woods State Park May 3. 11 volunteers consisting of co-op members, employees and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' members helped spruce up Kilen Woods.

"Our energetic volunteers sure made a difference," stated Andrea Christoffer, Federated's marketing and communications manager. "We scraped, painted and fixed picnic tables and signs. The park's entrance gate, recycling bins and some amphitheater seats were painted. We cleaned the shower stalls and bathrooms, straightened posts, cleaned out the fire rings and picked up branches." 🐾

Employees, directors 'Walk the Line'



Walk the Line t-shirts are modeled by this group of wellness walkers who took great strides to better health and fitness.

Federated employees, directors and spouses "Walked the Line." In this wellness program participants wore pedometers to keep track of their miles walked and were grouped into teams for the competition.

"The goal was to walk 2,170 miles over six weeks, representing FREA's miles of line," stated Sherry Swanson, office manager. "Instead, it was changed to each group walking that far as they racked up the miles!" This program helps qualify Federated for health insurance discounts.

Spouse Wayne Walter walked 637 miles, receiving a \$45 Scheel's card. Lineman Brandon Clarke walked 571 miles. The winning team received \$5 Subway gift certificates. All participants received t-shirts. 🐾

A few minutes can make a big difference on the energy policies' legislative issues

— Continued from Page 1


from 50 to 300 percent. This month the America's Climate Security Act (S.2191 or Lieberman-Warner bill) will be introduced into the Senate debating a global warming cap and trade system.


Taking just a few minutes with these postcards will influence your future electric rates. Your contact information


We Have an Energy Challenge.

I want to start a conversation with you about how we meet our nation's growing energy needs. The federal government has asked the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to monitor our nation's electric system. NERC CEO Rick Sergel declared in January, "We're very close to the edge. We operate under tight conditions more often than ever. We need action in the next year or two to start on the path to having enough electricity 10 years from now." What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need over the next 10 years while we reduce greenhouse gas emissions? I look forward to your answer and will share it with my friends and neighbors. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to my question.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 E-mail: _____
 Phone: _____




Our Energy, Our Future
 A Dialogue With America

 America's Electric Cooperatives


will also be entered into a database in case we need you to act again on issues affecting your electric rates in the near future. If you prefer to send an e-mail to your legislators go to www.ourenergy.coop.

Thanks for speaking up! Since you are a member-owner of this electric co-op! You can help control your future electric rates! 🗳️

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide: What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?


REPRESENTATIVE TIMOTHY J WALZ
 1529 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BLDG
 WASHINGTON DC 20515-0001

Postage Required. Post Office will not deliver without proper postage.

Hoffmann enjoys meeting visitors in her craft store

— Continued from Page 3

the time to get everything done between family activities and other responsibilities (Hoffmann also serves as the Housing Manager at Lake Villa Maria Senior Housing, Sleepy Eye)."

Cottage Clutter & Design is usually open one weekend each month, May through December (Friday and Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday noon-5 p.m.). The weekends are as follows: June 20-22, August 22-24, September 26-28, October 10-12, November 7-9 and 14-16 and December 5-7. Appointments can also be made for weekday and group visits. Call Hoffmann at 507-794-3524 or e-mail cottageclutter@hotmail.com.

"I love meeting new people who stop by, helping them with decorating tips and learning where they are from," Hoffmann said. "My customers come from all over the area, including South Dakota. They are of all ages and mostly female, but some husbands come out shopping for their wives. I also serve cookies, juice and sometimes samples of the gourmet food line to visitors. Interacting with them is one of the best parts of the job."

The last step in candle making is lighting the candle. The last step in creating a business is making it a bright spot for people to visit. 🗳️

Good for you. Good for us.
 Good for the environment.



Cycled Air helps your electric co-op avoid buying costly power on the open market during times of peak use. People who join the Cycled Air Program allow the co-op to cycle their central air or heat pump's compressor on for 15 minutes and off for 15 minutes during peaks. In return, receive cooling credits on your electric bill. That's good for you, good for us and good for the environment. Sign up today!

Get the lowdown on energy-efficiency low-income funds

Low-income families may be eligible for financial assistance to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

According to the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC), an electric utility must spend at least 0.1 percent of its gross operating revenue on low-income programs. This money is distributed to area Community Action Program (CAP) Agencies, who then distribute the funds to low-income families.

Low-income is defined as 50 percent or below the state median income. For example, a family of four qualifies if they had an income on the most recent federal tax form of \$38,697 or less or \$9,674 over the last three months. A single person's income would be \$20,122 for taxes or \$5,030 for the last three months.

Previously, CAP agencies often used utilities' Conservation Improvement Program funds for weatherization improvements to low-income families. While this helped the households, it did little to reduce their electric bills. Thus, a more comprehensive approach to improve electrical efficiency was developed.

While making weatherization service visits to low-income households, CAP Agency representatives will look for potential installation of five electric energy-efficient measures. The following guidelines prioritize the products to be replaced within a home when there is potential for more than one energy-efficient measure.

Order of priority for installation

1. CFL light bulbs (23-watt or greater) — Replace a minimum of four CFLs in high traffic areas (where lights are on at least four hours per day). Fund limits include a maximum of \$7 per CFL, not to exceed purchase price, up to a maximum of \$35 per household. Families must also be educated on the proper disposal.

2. High-efficient, controlled water heater — The old electric water heater must be at least 10 years old and in working condition. Fund limits include a maximum of \$700 for a



Low-income electric co-op members may qualify for free CFLs, water heater, refrigerator, microwave, room air conditioner or clothes washer. Inquire with your local CAP agency (as listed in this story).

105-gallon water heater. Its energy factor must be .90 or higher, which is what your local cooperative sells.

3. Energy Star refrigerators — Fund limits include \$700 maximum for an Energy Star refrigerator of equal or lesser size with proof of recycling the old refrigerator. The old refrigerator must also be at least 10 years old and in working condition.

4. Microwave ovens — Fund limits include \$150

maximum for a microwave oven. The household must also have an existing electric cooking stove and no microwave oven.

5. Room air conditioners — fund limits include a \$500 maximum for an Energy Star room air conditioner with proof of proper disposal for the old air conditioner. The old air conditioner must also be at least 10 years old and in working condition.

6. Clothes washer — first, the old clothes washer must be at least 10 years old and in working condition. Second, fund limits include an \$850 maximum for an Energy Star clothes washer with proof of proper disposal for the old clothes washer.

Your electric cooperative has a limited amount of funds dedicated for low-income projects each year. Contact your local CAP agency, as listed below, to inquire about these energy-efficiency programs.

Minnesota Valley Action Council	1-800-767-7139
Brown County	359-6500
Martin County	238-1663
Nicollet County	934-5224
Sibley County	237-2981
Watonwan County	375-5748

Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.	
Nobles County	376-4195
Murray County	1-800-658-2444

Western Community Action Program	
Jackson and Cottonwood County	1-800-658-2448
Redwood County	1-800-658-2480

Connections casts an award-winning shadow under the Spotlight of Excellence

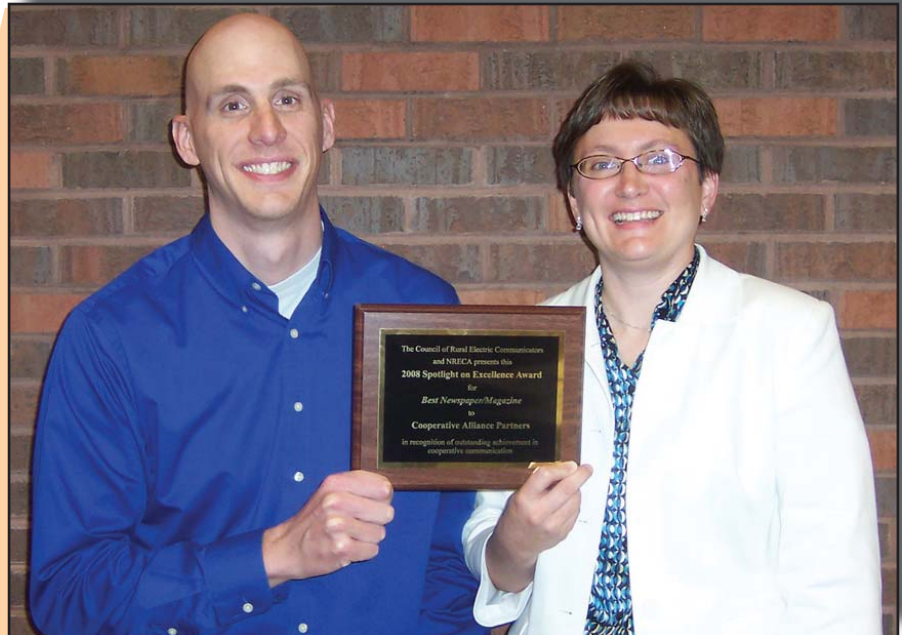
The Council of Rural Electric Communicators announced that *Connections*, won an award in the 2008 “Spotlight on Excellence.”

The cooperative received an Award of Excellence in the Best Newspaper/Magazine Category for the *Connections* magazine. Andrea Christoffer, marketing & communications manager, is the editor of the award-winning member magazine. Steve Ruthenbeck, communications assistant, also works on this publication.

“One judge summed it up by describing the overall quality of entries as simply outstanding,” said Maggie Tilley, administrator of Spotlight on Excellence. “In quality of writing, clarity of presentation and level of creativity these professionals are excelling at serving the people with whom they are communicating.”

Rural electric communicators submitted more than 910 entries consisting of last year’s communications projects in this 20th annual awards program.

The Council of Rural Electric Communicators presented the awards at Connect 2008 Conference held in Portland, Oregon, May 13-16. Faculty members from the prestigious University of Missouri, Columbia; and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and University of Southern Mississippi judged the entries. All



Connections won first place (and award number eight) in the national Spotlight on Excellence competition. Editor Andrea Christoffer and Communications Specialist Steve Ruthenbeck work on the electric cooperative publication.

winning entries were displayed at the conference.

Connections is the member magazine that serves four neighboring electric co-ops and their 15,000 members: Brown County Rural Electrical Assn., Sleepy Eye; Federated Rural Electric, Jackson; Nobles Cooperative Electric, Worthington; and South Central Electric Assn., St. James.

“This is the eighth year that *Connections* has won an award,” Christoffer stated. “Besides this year’s award, *Connections* won an Award of Excellence, which is equivalent to first place in its category, in 2000 and 2001. In 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006 *Connections* won an Award of Merit or second place. We strive to provide good communication with our customers. This award again demonstrates the content and quality of our communication. It is recognized among the best throughout the nation for content and design.”

Connections was created in 1997 to provide timely information in an attractive manner, while splitting the production costs among the four co-ops to make it more affordable. *Connections* was modeled after Federated’s previous newsletter *Federated Focus*, which won similar awards in the Best Newsletter category four different years.

The Council developed the Awards Program as an annual event to showcase top-rated performance by electric cooperatives and related organizations. The cooperatives entering the contest are classified by size so they compete with similar-sized co-ops.

The Council, organized in 1982, seeks to advance the recognition, education and professionalism of electric cooperatives’ communicators and their affiliated organizations. It is a volunteer association working on behalf of 3,100 rural electric communicators across the United States. 🖱



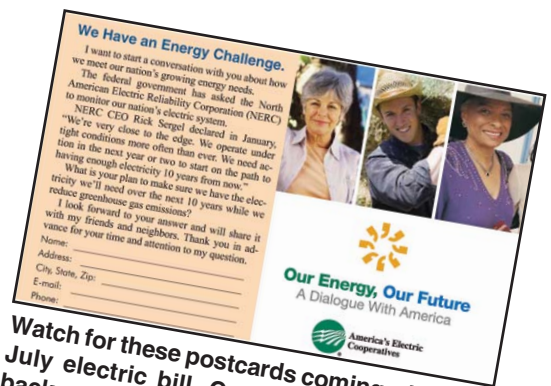
IT'S TIME TO COME TOGETHER AND CHANGE OUR FUTURE.

We have an energy challenge, America.

When it comes to finding solutions, we must meet climate change goals while keeping costs down and electricity available. America needs a plan. Immediately. Because we all know that our energy needs keep on growing—every day.

Now is the time to have a candid conversation with your elected officials. Together, we can find answers and take action.

Start the conversation today at www.ourenergy.coop.



Watch for these postcards coming with your July electric bill. Complete it and send it back with your electric bill so we can begin a dialogue with our legislators.



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

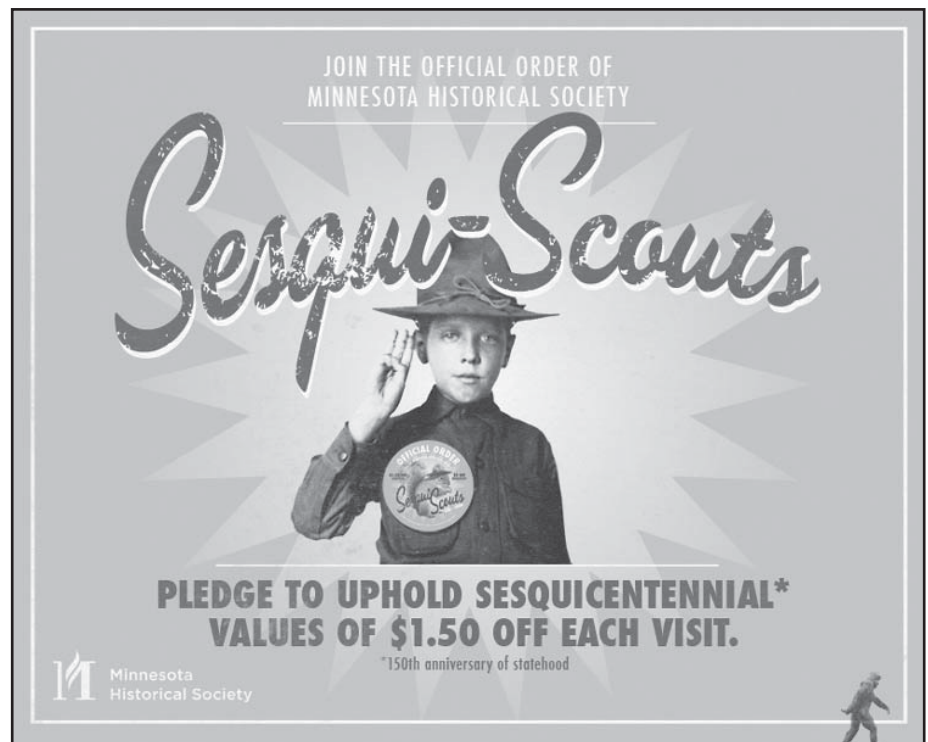
For an easy way to start a dialogue with your elected officials on energy legislation, visit www.ourenergy.coop. Click on "contact your elected official and begin the dialogue now." You will then fill out some basic information, including your name and address, which is attached to a form letter on energy issues. The letter urges legislators to be responsible in their decisions to meet our nation's growing energy needs. After filling out the necessary information, simply click "send message." The letter will then be e-mailed to your state senator and representative. Otherwise, return the postcards.

Save on sesqui-sensational summer celebrations at historic state sites

Become an official Minnesota Historical Society “Sesqui-Scout.” Visit one of 26 historic sites and museums and earn a “Sesqui-Scout” badge. Use the badge to receive discounts on future visits to all sites, all summer long. The summer-long promotion also includes special events, prizes and online games.

The Sesqui-Scout promotion is available in the free 2008 Minnesota Historical Society Travel Guide (available from your local electric cooperative). The summer-long program runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. For more information visit www.mnhs.org/sesqui.

The 2008 Travel Guide is the best resource for a Sesqui-sensational



Two-for-One Admission

with this coupon

This coupon good for one free admission with one paid admission to any of our 26 historic sites and museums. Not valid for group tours or special paid programs.



Touchstone Energy®
The power of human connections

VALID THROUGH 2008
www.mnhs.org

Clip and save. This coupon gives you two-for-one admission to historic state sites this summer. Sites include Fort Ridgley, the Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site, Mille Lacs Indian Museum, Split Rock Lighthouse, Folsom House, the W.W. Mayo House and more.

summer! Navigate the Society’s network of 26 museums and historic sites, plus explore how to make personal connections with history. The guide is divided into four regional sections to help visitors plan daytrips, weekend getaways or extended vacations; it can also be ordered by calling 1-800-657-3773.

The guide offers detailed glimpses into what many of Minnesota’s historic sites have to offer to visitors and history buffs. 26 sites and museums are featured in the guide. Information such as ticket costs and hours are also provided in the guide. In addition, websites are listed.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives (including your local co-op) and the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission are proud to partner on the 2008 Travel Guide. Additional media support is provided by the Star Tribune.

Older than the state itself, the Min-

nesota Historical Society is a non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1849 to preserve and share Minnesota history. The Society tells the story of Minnesota’s past through museum exhibits, extensive libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs and book publishing. During 2008, the Society is commemorating Minnesota’s 150th anniversary of statehood with Sesquicentennial events and programs including “MN150,” the new exhibit featuring 150 people, places, and things that have shaped our state, on display at the Minnesota History Center.

If you wish to become a member of the Minnesota Historical Society, an application is provided in the 2008 Travel Guide. Being a member grants free admission to all historic sites. Members also receive a magazine and other benefits. ✎

Readers' recipes

Tickle your taste buds with pickles!

Your family will be tickled to try out some new pickle recipes. Enjoy!

Add some spice to supper with salsa



Add some spice to your next supper with salsa. Share with us your recipes using salsa, whether it's mild, hot or even red-hot jalapeno salsa! Sandwiches, hot dishes, chips, steak and more like being spiced up with salsa!

Mail these salsa recipes by June 24 to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop. Otherwise, drop it off at your local electric co-op. Add your name and phone number. ➡

Erna's Cucumbers by Donna Brown, Sherburn

7 c. cucumbers, peeled & sliced

- 1 c. chopped onions
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 1 c. vinegar
- 1 T. salt
- 1 tsp. celery seed

Mix together and put in the refrigerator. It keeps forever! I fill an ice cream bucket and use these pickles for salads, with meals and sandwiches. ➡

Easy Beet Pickles by Lola Schultze

After finishing a jar of sweet pickles, do not pour out the juice. Drain a can of sliced beets and put them in the juice. Refrigerate and let stand a few days. ➡

Cheese Ball by Brenda Pomerence, Okabena

- ½ lb. Velveeta cheese, cubed
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ lb. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 T. sweet pickle relish
- ½ c. mayonnaise
- 1 T. onion, finely chopped

Let the cheese sit for several hours in a covered dish to soften. Beat with a mixer to mix well. Beat mayonnaise into cheese until fluffy. Beat the rest of the ingredients into the cheese mixture. Refrigerate for six or more hours. Roll into a ball and roll in chopped pecans or walnuts. Makes one large (4") or two small ones. Wrap in Saran Wrap. Freezes well. ➡

Sweet Pickles From Dill Pickles by Lola Schultze, Ceylon

(A good way to use up some surplus or old home-canned dill pickles)

- 1 quart of dill pickles
- pimento
- 2 c. sugar
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 c. vinegar

Slice the pickles lengthwise. Put in a container and cover with onion and a little pimento. Boil the vinegar and sugar. Pour over the sliced dill pickles. Let stand a few days before using. Refrigerate. Very crisp and good. ➡

Sun Dill Pickles by Angie Ziemer, Ceylon

Wash cucumbers and pack tightly in jars. Add to each jar:

- 1/8 tsp. minced garlic or one clove of fresh garlic
- ¼ tsp. alum
- 2-3 sprigs fresh dill

Mix until dissolved:

- 6½ c. water
- ¾ c. white vinegar
- 2/3 c. pickling salt

Pour the water-vinegar mixture into cucumber packed jars. Set the jars in the sun for three days. Refrigerate. ➡

12 Hour Refrigerator Pickles by Andrea Christoffer, Round Lake

- In the one gallon jar put:
- 1 onion, sliced or coarsely chopped
- 2 c. white vinegar
- ½ c. sugar
- ¼ c. pickling salt
- several sprigs of dill or 1 T. dill seed

Slice the cucumbers lengthwise and put into a gallon jar (or ice cream pail) with the above ingredients. Fill the jar with cold water to the top. Shake to dissolve the sugar and salt. You can eat in 12 hours. Store pickles in the refrigerator. ➡

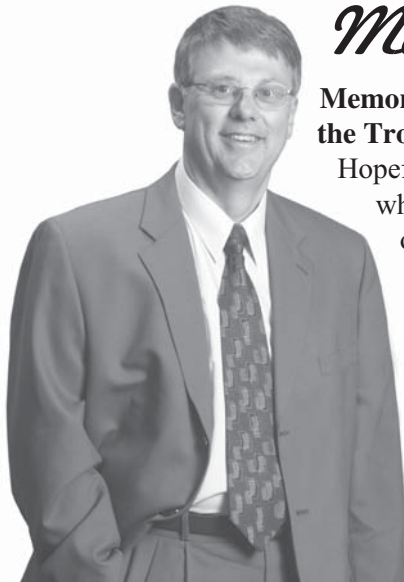
Whatta water heater!

Marathon water heater features:



- **High efficiency** — 2½" foam insulation keeps the heat in
- **Durable** — No rust tank & no anode rods needed
- **Enduring** — Marathon water heaters have a limited lifetime warranty on the tank against leakage
- **Just right sizes** — 50, 85 & 105 gallon sizes

Call your electric co-op for your next water heater



Richard 'Rick' Burud

Manager's message

Memorial Day leads into co-op's 'We support the Troops' campaign

Hopefully many of us took time out to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to keep us and our nation free over Memorial Day Weekend.

Federated employees have embarked on a program called "Operation Minnesota Nice." Please join us in making our armed services personnel feel special. See Page 9 for a story on how you can help.

Wind turbine testing continues

If you live in the Welcome area, you've observed our wind turbine being on and off. Most of the bugs are out of the unit now and it'll be producing electricity shortly.

Summer construction season arrives

Our crews are busy upgrading and replacing lines, along with constructing new services for our members. Yes, we again have a busy summer schedule. If your plans include a service addition or upgrade, be sure to contact Joe or Jerry at 1-800-321-3520. We can meet your needs. With material price escalations and shortages, planning is essential for each construction job.

Digital TV stations available!

If you have a digital TV, press your "scan" button on your remote control. As you'll then see, we are broadcasting channels 5, 9 and 11 with a companion channel from all three CTV towers (Jackson, Frost and Godahl). If you have an analog TV, you'll need a converter box and you can request a government coupon valued at \$40 from www.dtv2009.org or call 1-888-DTV-2009. This website also lists all qualifying converter boxes. ➤



Rural Electric

Official monthly newsletter published by
Federated Rural Electric
77100 US Hwy 71, PO Box 69
Jackson, MN 56143-0069
E-mail: info@federatedrea.coop
Website: <http://www.federatedrea.coop>

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

Richard Burud, General Manager

David Post, President — 853-4518
David A. Hansen, V. President — 847-3530
Jim Oltman, Sec./Treasurer — 464-3479
Glenn Dicks — 662-5321
Lyle Fisher — 847-4757
David Meschke — 238-1122
Jon Saxen — 764-3771

The Board of Directors meets the last business day of the month at 9 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.

Board meeting highlights

Federated Rural Electric's Board of Directors met for their monthly meeting May 30. All directors were present. They acted on these issues:

- Approved a budget increase to buy a new lineman's truck.
- Approved participating in the Our Energy, Our Future postcards campaign. See story on Page 2.
- Updated on the co-op's wind turbine commissioning, which is still in progress.
- Learned that the Rural Utilities Service approved Federated's FFB loan for line construction projects and ERC loan for members installing heat pumps or other energy conservation.
- Updated on Great River Energy's All Requirement's rate proposal.
- Updated on changes coming to the Engineering Department, which serves five electric co-ops, due to a retirement and two electric cooperatives making changes. ➤

\$199 for WildBlue
Sign up by June 23, 2008 for this price — lowest in 2 years!

One Hot Deal

High-speed Internet you can afford!

WILDBLUE
High-speed Internet. Out of the blue.™

Call 847-3520,
728-8366 or
1-800-321-3520

Requires a clear view of the southern sky. Not available in all areas. Usage subject to WildBlue's Fair Access Policy. Speeds not guaranteed. Considerably speed comparison between Pro Plan and 4Mbps dial-up. Value Plan is up to 50% faster than dial-up. Equipment, monthly service fees, installation charges, taxes and minimum term commitments also apply. ©2008 WildBlue Communications, Inc.