

# Connections

May 2025

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 29, Issue 5

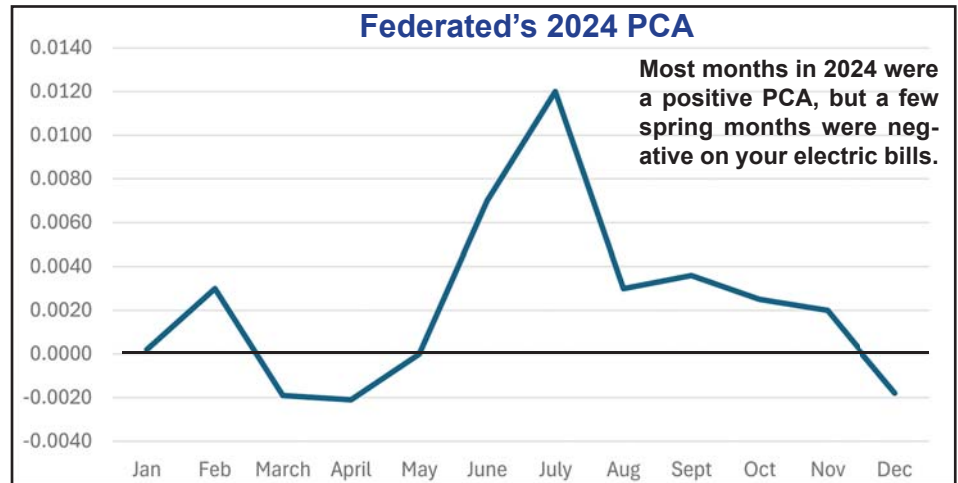
## Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) on your electric bill varies monthly due to the wholesale power suppliers' expenses

Just like a roller coaster, your electric bill goes up and down. While your kilowatt-hours (kWhs) used makes up a major portion of the monthly changes, another contributor is the power cost adjustment (PCA).

The PCA allows Federated to pass along to you, the members, fluctuating wholesale power costs on your bill. Federated presently has four wholesale power suppliers so this helps reduce the impact from any one supplier.

The PCA is measured in mills (tenth of a cent) and can increase or decrease your electric bill. The PCA increases due to a cold snap, high usage from corn drying or a summer heat wave when members use greater amounts of electricity and power costs more on the open market. The PCA may increase if our power suppliers experience higher prices on the wholesale market due to limited natural gas or spikes in natural gas pricing, a power plant goes down or other factors. The PCA passes along higher costs of wholesale power purchased on the open market. It may go negative during the spring when sales are less or in the fall if corn drying isn't needed.

As wholesale power costs make up about 80 percent of your electric bill, the PCA causes monthly fluctuations based on your kWhs used from the PCA base. This base rate includes the wholesale power generation and the transmission



line costs to Federated's substations. It's a way to pass along the true cost of your power.

The best way to help stabilize the variances on your electric bill is to use your electricity wisely. Upgrade your heating/cooling system to a cold climate air source heat pump or ground source heat pump. Unplug an old energy guzzler refrigerator or freezer in the garage. Use LED light bulbs. Make sure your home or business is well insulated. Take advantage of the co-op's water heater program too, which pushes the heating of the water to off-peak hours. Energy conservation stretches your energy dollar.

Residential rate class members can also sign up for Federated's Budget Billing service during the month of

May. The last 13 months of electricity use are averaged out so you have the same monthly payment each month. Federated does a recalculation twice a year in May and October to see if your average is keeping up with your actual electric use. If you wish to sign up for Budget Billing, you must have a current bill payment history with no disconnect notices in the past year. Call Federated during business hours to sign up or e-mail us ([billing@federatedrea.coop](mailto:billing@federatedrea.coop)) and include your account number. When the recalculation occurs, Federated mails letters to members with major adjustments.

By keeping you informed about your electric bill and the PCA, it makes the rollercoaster ride a bit easier when paying your electric bills. ☺

### At A Glance



**Beat summer's heat with a new heat pump and co-op's rebates**

Retire your old dinosaur of a central air conditioner! Go with a unit that's more efficient and uses less electricity for savings on your electric bill. A heat pump can also reduce your heating costs too. Explore our air source, ground source and ductless air source heat pump rebates, as listed on our website, or call us on it. ☺



## Energy Wise

# Spring into action now for the lower summer electric bills with these several easy actions

Spring is in the air. Before you know it, summer will be here. Jump start summer savings with these tips to prevent higher summertime electric bills and prevent energy waste.

Add your cooling equipment to the spring-cleaning checklist. An annual tune-up by a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional should include refrigerant charge, airflow adjustment, plus condenser and evaporator fan coil cleaning. This helps maximize your system's efficiency and the lifespan of your equipment, reducing wasted energy and costs.

Some HVAC companies offer discounts for cleaning equipment during the months when they are less busy. Once high temperatures hit, they are more likely to be swamped with calls to repair or replace broken equipment. Signing up for an annual maintenance plan, may provide additional savings.

A dirty furnace filter wastes energy by causing your system to work harder. Make sure you have a stack of replacement filters ready to go so you are more likely to replace them as needed. Filters tend to be less expensive if you buy them in bulk. The per-filter price was about half as much for a 12-pack, as it was for a two-pack.

Ductless heat pumps, also known as mini-splits, have a filter in the indoor unit or head, which should be cleaned. If you clean the indoor filter yourself, turn the unit off before removing the filter and let it dry completely before putting it back.

If you need to replace your old central air unit, explore the co-op's website for heat pump rebates. Upgrade to the highest efficiency unit now for lower



**Beat the dog days of summer! Using a fan can make a warmer room more comfortable without adjusting the thermostat. Remember, fans cool people (and pets) — not rooms. Turn fans off in unoccupied rooms.**

monthly operating costs each summer. Take advantage of the co-op's Smart Thermostat \$25 rebate too.

As we transition from cool to warm weather, keep an eye on your thermostat settings. The Department of Energy recommends setting cooling temperatures to 78 degrees when you are home and higher when you are away. Save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day.

One way to feel cooler is using fans in the occupied room(s) during the day or when you're sleeping. Using a fan can make a warm room feel cooler without having to adjust the thermostat. Remember: fans cool people, not rooms. Turn fans off in unoccupied rooms.

If your ceiling fan has a reverse function, flip the switch so it blows air down into the living space. The reverse function is great at circulating warm air in the winter. Plus, save more with a fan by switching the flow of air seasonally.

Another consideration before summer hits is your home's impact on peak load — when demand for electricity is highest. This typically occurs in the morning when people are getting ready for work and school, plus in the evening when they return home. Your electric cooperative must manage the energy use of all its consumers, which can be a challenge. Consider starting the dishwasher before you go to sleep or starting a load of laundry outside of your utility's peak times.

If you have a photovoltaic solar system, run your dishwasher or do laundry when your system produces the most electricity, which is typically during the sunny mid-day.

Cooking outdoors in summer is a great way to save energy. Using the stove or oven heats your kitchen, which requires more energy for cooling. Clean the grill now so that you are ready to enjoy outdoor cooking.

Follow these tips to save energy and lower your bills. (6)


# New spin on light bulb/fan keeps you cool

Adding a fan's cooling breeze is now as simple as screwing in a light bulb to an existing light fixture.

Besides the LED light with a variety of LED colors from white to a yellow tint, enjoy the small fan in many possible locations. Add it to your garage, laundry room, bathroom, pantry, bedroom, walk-in closet or above the kitchen sink! Add the cool flexibility needed in an apartment. No tools, wiring or electrician are needed!

Some fans feature the blades inside a protective cover and other styles do not. Choose the cover style if you have kids or pets. Choose from white or black styles. Some brands even have a remote control to turn the fan on, select from three fan speeds and adjust the lighting color and brightness.

Keep your cool with the affordable pricing. Find it at your local Ace Hardware store, lumberyard or Amazon. Depending on the features, prices range from \$25-\$50 as several models and manufacturers exist.

Some fan lights are as small as 10 inches wide, while others are up to 18 inches in diameter. Some models feature extended sockets so it works with recessed light sockets. 

Installing a small ceiling fan is as simple as screwing in a LED light bulb with a built-in fan!



## Safety

### Observe May Electrical Safety Month every month!

Every May, Electrical Safety Month serves as a reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.

Your electric cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May, but year-round.

Reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected with five home safety tips.



**1. Be vigilant.** Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for signs of damage or outdated components; replace frayed electrical wires or cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate


from extension cords every year from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're using extension cords as permanent power, call an electrician to install more outlets.

**2. Use surge protectors.** Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances with surge protectors. These devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not

all power strips include surge protection; read the product's label. Plus, surge protectors can lose effectiveness over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated as it has a 5 to 10-year lifespan.

**3. Practice safe power strip use.** Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers, should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with an "overburdened" power strip may lead to overheating and create a fire hazard; check the power strip's wattage before using it.

**4. Water and electricity don't mix.** Accidents involving water contact with electrical items still occur. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances — never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Install Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) where water and electricity are typically close, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.

**5. Educate family members.** Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances; ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions during emergencies. 



# Federated Focus

## The fall Operation Round Up deadline set for September 12



These spring Operation Round Up recipients shown on Page 5 helped

us top the \$1 million milestone. Thank you Federated members.

The next deadline is September 12 for applications. Find the form on our website ([www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)) or call the office to request a hard copy (507-847-2320 or 800-321-3520; press extension 2224).

### Boost farm/business efficiency


Looking to upgrade your business or farm's efficiency this year? Explore the Federated rebates on our website ([www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)):

- Retrofit lighting upgrades
- Retrofit NEMA premium efficiency electric motors
- Variable speed drives
- Ag ventilation
- Hog farrowing mats
- Livestock waterers
- Commercial heat pumps, rooftop air conditioning, chillers, air handlers and cooling towers
- Electric forklift
- Restaurant/convenience stores food equipment
- Custom rebates for unique projects are possible too!

Visit with energy expert Jon Beckman on your potential project; call 507-847-3520 or 800-321-3520; press extension 2226.

### Home appliance rebates too!

- \$25 for Energy Star dehumidifier
- \$25 for Smart Thermostat
- \$75 for Energy Star refrigerator or freezer with proof of recycling the old unit

These rebate forms are on our website. Home rebates are added as credits to your electric bill. 



Scott Reimer

## Manager's Message

### After 55 years, co-op headquarters slated for remodeling

Federated's headquarters will undergo a major remodel starting in 2025 and concluding in 2026. For some time now we have been working with our directors, architects, contractors and employees to produce a best case workable solution for our operations, which considers current and future growth, workflow, efficiency, infrastructure and overall cost. The bones of our structure are good; however, underutilized space exists that we need, so a redesign took shape. Several renditions were tossed around before we settled on a final one. We need to make the best use of space to accommodate growth. The decision to remodel vs. new construction was fairly easy for your Board of Directors and staff to make. We are currently planning to commence interior demolition in August of this year, leading to construction over the winter, which will include a new roof structure, plumbing, mechanical, data, communications and electrical. One addition to the south side of the building needs to be done before freeze up so the structure can be weather tight. This is all based on current timelines, which can change.

To get the most out of the process and allow contractors the best access to the affected areas without interruption, we decided to relocate our office and administration temporarily to a new location. We have a couple of locations in mind; we should make that decision in early May. Starting in mid-July, if all goes as planned, our location at 77100 North Highway 71 in Jackson will be closed for construction with office operations to resume at the temporary site. The payment drop box will be relocated to the temporary site for your convenience. As details are known, we will report back to you. Line crews will still use the Jackson warehouse.

### Fiber construction is already underway this spring


As you've likely noticed, summer construction operations are underway in both counties for electric and broadband. In Jackson County our broadband contractor began and already has more than 20 miles of fiber in the ground. Drop crews will be mobilizing soon and it looks like by mid-June, we should be ready to light up fiber services and get you connected. The official deadline for the Jackson County project is December 31, 2025. In Martin County the project design is nearly complete and staking will begin soon. Once permitting and environmental reviews, including any archaeological mitigation, are done, fiber will go into the ground. Materials are reserved and contractors are ready. This project has a deadline of December 31, 2026. Members are encouraged to stay in touch with our broadband department to keep track of when fiber will be coming to your home or business.

### Line maintenance/upgrades are progressing with the early spring too


On the electric side crews are doing service rebuilds in both counties. Plowing in underground cable has been underway for a couple of weeks already. Overhead-to-underground conversions make our system more resilient or hardened and less susceptible to storms. Crews are replacing existing underground cables that have been subject to failure or have reached an expected useful life, done as a preventative measure for reliability. We still have a good share of our system overhead, which needs maintenance too, so poles are being replaced as needed throughout the service area. The winter line patrol identifies items that need to be repaired. Early spring and summer are a great time to address those tasks. Work plan projects should start in a few weeks, which entail much larger undertakings typically outside of our scope, so contractors are brought in for those. (See Page 5.)

### We are watching Minnesota energy legislation closely

Here's some legislative priorities that cooperatives are watching:

- HF 2002/SF 350 would repeal the nuclear moratorium in Minnesota.
- SF 1142/HF 845 reforms the current net-metering legislation.
- SF 132 is a property tax clarification bill relating to appurtenances on co-op poles
- No mandates from the state, which impede efficient operation of our businesses. 

# Co-op members fund \$19,939 thru Operation Round Up

Organization	Amount	Purpose
Heritage Acres, Fairmont	\$300	Toward blacksmith for the October fall festival
MCW Early Childhood screening	\$320	Training staff for hearing/vision screening of students
JCC Chemistry class	\$400	Buy four electronic scales for chemistry lab stations
Cardinal Power Fastpitch	\$450	Buy balls and rebounder machine for fielding experience
Huskies Baseball 10U	\$500	Toward bats, balls & youth catcher's gear/bag
Red Rock Center for the Arts, Fairmont	\$500	Toward Memorial Day celebration lunch, music & kid activities
Fairmont Area Human Rights Organization	\$500	Toward Disability Awareness Day expenses at Martin County Fair
MCW School District	\$500	Buy fruits & vegetables for "Try Fun Day" for K-6th grade students
Rhythm of the River, Jackson	\$500	Create 100 kids' bags with crafts & musical instruments
Truman Public Schools Community Ed	\$600	Toward pickleball nets, balls & paddles, plus roller-skating equip.
JCC Post Prom	\$600	Toward Fun Jumps Entertainment
Youth First/Fairmont Post Prom	\$600	Toward event food and prizes
Kinship of Martin County	\$829	New laptop for the organization
Lakefield Fire & Rescue	\$900	Buy new nozzles used for fighting wildland grass fires
HLO Elementary School Library	\$900	36 new books for beginning readers with three reading levels
Jackson County Library System	\$1,000	For Zoo Man summer reading at three county libraries
Bergen Ball Park	\$1,000	Toward playground equipment at the ballfield
MCW Community Ed & Recreation	\$1,000	Scholarships for eligible students to participate in community ed
MCW Early Childhood Family Ed	\$1,040	40 kits for stuffed animal creation for birth to four-year-olds
SWWC Foundation for Innovation in Education, Marshall	\$1,000	Registration fees for students in knowledge bowl & spelling bee
Jackson Co. Conservation League	\$1,000	Help stock panfish in select Jackson County lakes
Rebuilding Together Minnesota	\$1,000	Safety improvements for Jackson County low-income homes
JCC Health Office	\$1,500	Replace old expired automatic external defibrillators w/new units
Fairmont Opera House	\$1,500	Toward participants' scholarships for summer youth performance
Sheldon Johnson Outreach Center	<u>\$1,500</u>	TV, mounting bracket & TV console for Jackson community room 
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,939</b>	

## Nominating Committee announces candidates for 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Federated's Nominating Committee announces the slate of candidates for members to cast their ballots in July.

Candidates usually serve a four-year term, but two candidates are filling out one year left on a term due to resignations. Candidates are running unopposed.

### District Two Director Candidate (one year)

- Troy Post, Brewster

### District Five Director Candidate (four years)

- David Meschke, Welcome

### District Six Director Candidate (four years)

- Bruce Brockmann, Granada

### District Three Nominating Committee (one year)


- Adam Weets, Jackson

### District At-Large Nominating Committee (four years)

- Ron Maurer, Windom

In addition, two trust board directors were nominated for a four-year term:

- John Borchardt, Welcome, for District Five
- Jessica Sauck, Truman, for District Six

The Nominating Committee recommended increasing the per diem by \$15/month for the electric Board of Directors and officers by \$20-\$25. This will be a vote at the Annual Meeting. The last increase was in 2021. 

## About \$2.1 million slated for line construction & other upgrades


Construction season has arrived for Federated line crews and contractors. The Construction Work Plan has \$2.1 million of line construction projects and upgrades.

Loosebrock Construction will do three projects this summer:

1. From the East Chain substation west 3.5 miles and then north one mile the old three-phase-overhead lines will be replaced with three-phase underground cable.
2. At Enterprise substation south two miles old three-phase underground to be replaced with new three-phase underground.
3. Two miles of three-phase overhead east of Dunnell, along County Road 8 between 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue, will be replaced with three-phase underground.

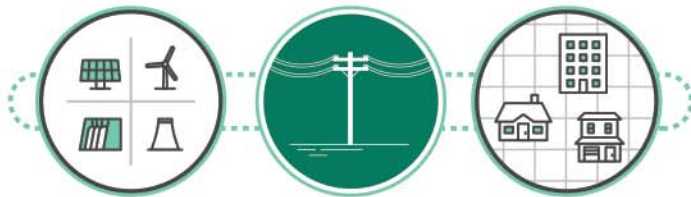
Federated line crews will also replace old oil circuit reclosers (OCRs) with electronic ones at the West Lakefield substation. These devices try to restore power three times automatically before it causes an outage.

Line crews will also install substation control and data acquisition equipment in the Rolling Green substation. This equipment allows Federated and our transmission provider to see the load levels at the substation.

Line crews will also be busy with new services and service upgrades. Talk to George in Operations to schedule your 2025 projects for bin upgrades, hog barns and new houses/shops. 

# A Balancing Act: ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

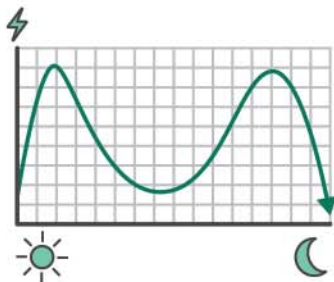
Behind the scenes, a network of people and facilities work together to ensure you have electricity when you flip the switch.



Electricity is generated at a power plant, then sent across the grid to homes, schools and businesses.

The *amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to where it's needed* are typically coordinated and monitored by regional grid operators that essentially act as energy traffic managers.

## Regional Grid Operators



As electricity demand varies throughout the day, grid operators, power plant operators and electric utilities work to forecast, plan and purchase enough electricity for everyone.

Ensuring communities have the exact amount of electricity they need is a challenging task, but behind the scenes, a network of industry experts make it happen every day.



## Factors that Impact Electricity Supply and Demand



- Demand Surges
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal and State Regulations



# Become berry merry sharing raspberry recipes with all of us

Raspberries are scrumptuous summer treats! Share your favorite raspberry recipes with us, whether it's for jam, lemonade, cheesecake, bars or as a special sauce. Send your favorite raspberry 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 May 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

## Rhubarb Cream Delight by Barbara Sellner, Sleepy Eye

**Crust:** 1½ c. flour 3 T. sugar ¾ c. butter

Combine crust ingredients. Press into a 9x13" pan. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes.

While it is baking, make the filling.

**Cream filling:** 2 c. sugar 4 egg yolks, beaten 2/3 c. cream  
3 T. flour 4 c. rhubarb, chopped

Combine in a sauce pan and cook until thick. Pour on the crust. Top with the meringue.

**Meringue:** 4 egg whites ¼ c. sugar

Beat egg white with the sugar until thick and satiny. Bake at 325° for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. Refrigerate any leftovers. Serves 10 to 12. ☺

## Rhubarb Pie, by Barbara Sellner, Sleepy Eye

3. rhubarb 1 T. butter 1 c. sugar

Cook together on high until rhubarb becomes tender.

¼ c. cream 2 egg yolks (save the egg whites) 2 T. cornstarch ½ c. sugar

Mix together and then add to the rhubarb; boil on low until thick.

Pour the filling into a baked pie shell. Cover with the meringue:

2 reserved egg whites from pie ¼ c. sugar

Beat egg whites until stiff; add sugar slowly. Beat until glossy. Put on top of the pie. Bake at 400° for three to five minutes until golden brown. ☺

## Closed Memorial Day, May 26



Co-op crews will be on call in case of outages



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Contact Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees and tiling.

Register at [www.gopherstate-onecall.org](http://www.gopherstate-onecall.org) or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺



Federated Broadband is excited to announce the launch of its new website. The new site boasts a refreshed look and feel that more closely aligns with the cooperative style and theme.

While our new website may look a little different, our customers can expect the same comprehensive service and information they have come to rely on, as well as some exciting new additions. The new website will continue to provide easy access to details about Federated Broadband service offerings, contact information, support resources and updates on exciting projects, like the ongoing fiber-optic buildouts.

Customers and members can continue to use the same website link you are used to — [federatedbroadband.coop](http://federatedbroadband.coop); although it may look different, you will still find the same service information, support and more! Check back frequently as we continue adding to the website.

Federated Broadband is committed to connecting our rural communities with reliable and affordable internet. Federated Broadband strives to enhance the quality of life and economic opportunities for its customers and all Federated members. ☺

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

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



[info@federatedbroadband.coop](mailto:info@federatedbroadband.coop) • [www.federatedbroadband.coop](http://www.federatedbroadband.coop)

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



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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.

**Sign up for Broadband's phone service today!**



Say goodbye to dropped calls and hello to crystal-clear voice quality with Federated Broadband's VoIP Services! Our phone service is a perfect fit for businesses looking to upgrade their phone systems or for a home phone connection.

Residential phone services start at \$25/month and business services start at \$30/month. You can even keep your current phone number (when porting is available) or start fresh with a new number.

Upgrade to smarter calling with Federated Broadband's VoIP services. Enjoy better quality, more features and often lower costs compared to your traditional landline. Make the switch today! Contact our office now to learn more about how Federated Broadband can be your one stop shop for internet, TV and phone! ☺