

Connections

April 2026

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric & Broadband



Volume 30, Issue 4

Federated visits legislators educating on energy issues that impact co-op's member-owners

Electric cooperatives visited with their state legislators March 16-17 about energy issues that could impact members' electric bills for reliability and affordability.

Electric cooperatives are working on meeting the 2040 Minnesota carbon-free electricity mandate. Co-ops visited about three main energy issues pertaining to energy policy.

1. Lift nuclear moratorium

Minnesota's electricity reliability requires an "all tech on deck" strategy. Meeting the state's carbon reduction goals requires more than wind, solar and battery storage, as these resources cannot consistently deliver electricity under all conditions. This requires all technology options, including advanced nuclear power. However, Minnesota has a nuclear moratorium that could impact Minnesota's long-term energy needs.

2. Update net metering law

Minnesota's net metering law is outdated, expensive and inequitable. Enacted in the 1980s when solar was a new industry, it now needs updates due to Minnesota's carbon-free 2040 mandate. Net metering currently allows



(Above): Electric cooperative leaders recently visited with our local legislators on Minnesota Energy Policy. Pictured are Federated Directors Troy Post and Scott Thiesse with Senator Bill Weber, along with Directors Bruce Brockmann and David Meschke, plus General Manager Scott Reimer. Below are the same Federated leaders who also visited with Representative Bjorn Olson.



some customers to use the grid without fully contributing to its upkeep, placing the burden on those without wind or solar. Electric co-ops support self generation, but rooftop solar is twice as expensive to build as utility scale

solar. Plus, Minnesota is the only state in the nation that mandates cooperative utilities pay retail rate for energy generated beyond a member's own needs. Existing wind and solar projects would be grandfathered in.

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At A Glance



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Few seats still available on the Basin Tour August 5-7. Just call Federated to sign up!

We have a few seats on the waiting list still available in case the Iowa co-ops don't fill their spots. Tour the lignite mine and the power plant. The cost is \$138/Federated member or \$237/Federated couple. Call 507-847-3520, press extension 2224, to sign up with Andrea.



Thinking about replacing your central air? Go with cold climate heat pump to cut propane costs

When is the best time to replace your central air conditioner? For equipment older than 15 years waiting too long could mean the equipment breaks when you need it the most. This leads to expensive emergency service calls and limited equipment replacement options. Avoid that stress, expense and lack of options; make a replacement plan now. Before installing another central air unit, consider the benefits of upgrading to a high-efficiency, cold-climate air source heat pump.

A heat pump is essentially an AC that provides heating and cooling. If you use propane to heat your home, heat pumps are a great investment. Replacing an AC with a cold-climate heat pump saves you money on energy bills year-round and increases your comfort.

Heat pumps slash energy bills

Cold-climate heat pumps are more energy efficient than standard ACs. Beyond saving money in the summer, cold-climate heat pumps show their value in the winter. A cold-climate heat pump can reduce your propane use by up to 55 percent to prevent expensive propane refills during the winter. Imagine filling an LP tank only in the summer when prices are lower.

According to the Center for Energy and Environment's energy calculations, a cold-climate heat pump that provides heating down to -10°F will achieve the maximum savings. The heating source switches from the heat pump to the propane furnace when the outside temperature dips below that point (called the "switchover temperature").

With this setup and a standard electric rate, you can save up to 30 percent compared to a traditional propane



Rusted and busted? Replace your old cooling unit with a cold climate heat pump and reduce heating and cooling costs! Check out co-op's rebates too!

furnace and standard AC system. Additional savings are possible by signing up for Federated's "Dual Fuel" program if you have a furnace and a backup fossil fuel furnace for winter load control.

A variable capacity, cold-climate rated heat pump is also called a variable-speed heat pump. These modern, high-efficiency heat pumps are specially designed to deliver heat in cold temperatures.

When requesting quotes from a contractor, make sure to specifically ask to see options that have cold-climate certification. To check whether a unit you have been quoted meets the qualifications, search the cold-climate heat pump list. If the equipment is listed, it is qualified. Ask the contractor for the unit's AHRI's number.

Cold-climate heat pumps carry a higher price tag compared to standard

central air. Over time, this higher upfront cost will be offset by lower annual energy bills. In addition, Federated offers rebates of \$1,000 or \$1,500, depending on the unit's efficiency. Manufacturers often offer rebates in the spring through early summer. These incentives bring the initial cost down.


Heat pumps offer better comfort

Cold-climate heat pumps are quieter and keep living spaces more comfortable than standard ACs. This is due to their special variable capacity compressor.

Single-stage systems that are used in standard AC can only turn on and off. This can create a condition called short-cycling. An AC that is short-cycling will turn on and off frequently, which produces wider temperature variation and hampers dehumidification. Furnaces can also be subject to short cycling during mild temperatures.

Variable capacity compressor units can incrementally ramp up or down their operation to consistently hold the temperature you set.

A variable capacity unit can operate at low power for long periods of time. This mode does a better job at holding a consistent temperature, has improved dehumidification and is highly energy efficient. Variable capacity heat pumps can also ramp up operation when extra power is needed, allowing them to operate in much colder temperatures than standard heat pump systems.


Nationwide, 40 percent of a home's energy use is attributed to heating. In Minnesota that percentage can be as high as 80 percent due to our colder winters. 

— *Courtesy of Air Source Heat Pump Collaborative*

Rechargeable flashlight on stand goes everywhere

Rechargeable flashlights are handy, but add one that comes with its own stand — that takes work and play to a new level!

This rechargeable camping light with stand comes in a carrying bag, like a camp chair. Charge it overnight using its USB A or C cord. It provides about five hours on high brightness and 11 hours on the low LED light setting; choose from the three light settings or even a strobe light setting in case of a car emergency on the side of the road. The detachable metal stand adjusts from 34" to 67". Plus, remove the light from the stand and use the hook to hang it from a tree branch or tent. If you are working on broken down farm equipment or vehicle at night, attach the magnetic bottom to put the light right where you need it. Finally, the four panels of LED lights flip up and around for desired positioning. Yes, it can serve as a power bank to recharge a cell phone.

Several versions exist from different website, such as Walmart or Amazon for \$60 up to \$150. 

See the light, whether you're at work or play. This rechargeable flashlight comes with its own stand, hook and magnetic base to shine the light when and where needed.



Safety

Storm strikes! Power lines down! Lines energized?

Mother Nature can whip up a powerful storm, as spring and summer storm season is just around the corner.

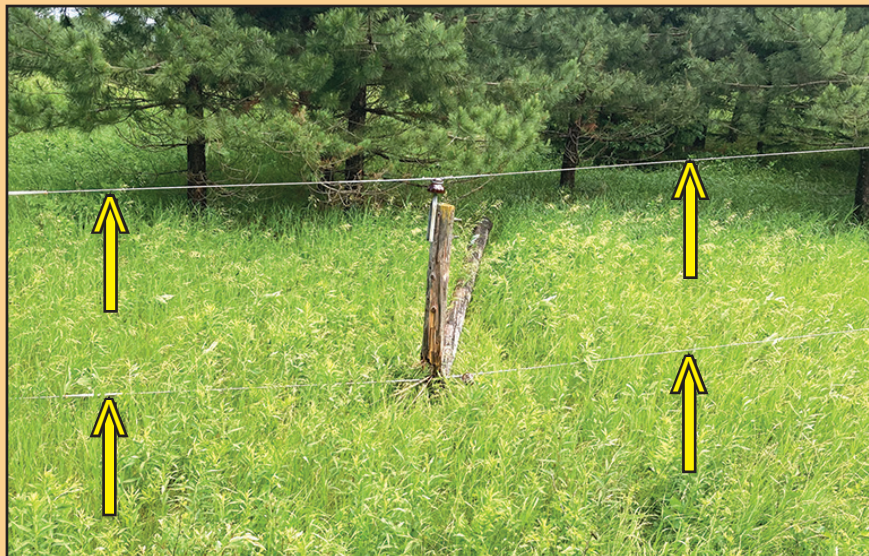
Be ready! While having a secure shelter from tornado is talked about every year, do you know what to look for outside? The first tendency is to go outside and inspect the storm damage.

Wait! Think about it a minute or more! The storm could have knocked down power lines. Just because a power line is down, doesn't mean the power is off. Sometimes, the lines remain energized when a tree branch falls on it or the pole is snapped and broken. Don't risk an electrical contact accident as you walk around to inspect the damage on your farm yard or back yard.

1. Never walk outside after a storm unless you have a spotlight and can see where you are going. Downed lines could still be energized and you may step on it or run into a low-hanging line.


2. Never ever touch a line on the ground. Turn around. Yes, it can still be energized. Stay far away and call your electric cooperative.

3. Don't ever touch anything in contact with a power line,



What's lurking in the grass or trees after a storm? Downed powerlines could still be energized (see arrows above)! Imagine how hard this would be to see in the dark too! Be safe and avoid risk of an electrical shock.

even if it is to remove a downed tree limb. The limb can be energized too. Leave this for your electric cooperative's trained line crews.

4. Never drive over a downed powerline on the ground or under a dangling one. Turn around; call the co-op. 

Federated Focus

Federated remembers former Board President David Post

Former director David Post, Worthington, passed away March 8, 2026. Federated offers its condolences to the family.



Post served as a Federated director from 1990 to 2010, as the District Two director for southwestern Jackson County. Ten of those years he served as the co-op's Board president. His son Troy Post now serves as the District Two director.

"When I was first elected to the Federated Board, Dave Post served as president," said David Meschke, current Board president. "He was always supportive and helpful to me filling this role. He led Federated with integrity and was always honest and fair in his dealings. Dave was highly respected in the rural electric family."

Powering your April showers!



March into hot April showers, thanks to a Marathon water heater

sold and installed by your electric cooperative. Enjoy the limited lifetime warranty for the original owner against leaks and the insulated tank so your hard-working energy dollars are efficient too. Call Federated today for your next water heater that costs \$750, plus tax. Installation is included in this price. Schedule your new electric water heater installation today before your dilapidated water heater dies. Call Jon at Federated at 507-847-3520, extension 2226. (L)



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Proud to serve you the cooperative way

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire staff here at Federated Rural Electric Association, we thank you for your patronage, support and most of all trust in us. We continue the great cooperative commitment of bringing you the four most important pillars of our operations:

1. Safe electric and broadband services
2. Reliable electric and broadband services
3. Affordable electric and broadband services and
4. Great member services.

These are core to our operation, along with the seven cooperative principles. It's what we think of when we get up in the morning and when we go to bed at night. We are here for you!

Wishing you a safe spring planting season — watch out for our poles

As we ring in the spring season, several things start to occur. Farming will get underway very soon so please be aware of machinery traveling our roads. Each year we have instances of equipment contact with poles and wires. In some cases it goes unnoticed, but in others it causes outages and damage to machinery.

I'm the last one that should be telling you to calculate the width of your planters and other farm equipment to make sure that you maintain a safe distance away from poles and wires — both horizontally and vertically, but I will anyway. Primarily, I want you to go home to your families after the day is finished. We wish you all the best as you head into the field and please be safe. If you see something that could cause a safety problem, please contact our operations department so we can check it out.

Spring construction season starts for electric & broadband

This time of year also brings the start of our construction season. Both our electric and broadband crews, including contractors, will have extremely full plates this season. They will be all over the counties doing both overhead and underground construction and maintenance. Please slow down and watch out for them as you travel.

Demolition starts inside office headquarters

Our contractor Knutson Construction, Mankato, mobilized March 30, and started on our building renovation project. The first stage will be demolition and abatement on the inside. The addition on the south end starts as soon as the ground completely thaws for footing work.

The schedule is still calling for a November 2026 completion; if everything cooperates, including the weather, we should be moved back in before the really cold weather arrives. It's getting real and everyone is excited and grateful for the project coming to fruition. Our temporary location is working out very well; everyone is settled in and doing a great job serving you, our members-owners.

2026 Annual Meeting format changes; add September 10 to your calendar

The Annual Meeting is our opportunity for face-to-face conversations and celebrating another successful year. We have experienced declining Annual Meeting attendance so we are changing formats hoping to lure you, more of our member-owners, to attend. Please add Thursday, September 10, to your calendar and save the date. The meeting will be back in Jackson at the National Guard Armory. We will bring back the Bingo during registration. We are going to try something new for food — using food trucks. We will still continue to mail out the ballots so you can vote on who you want to represent you on the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee. (See Page 6 for the nominations.) We are still working out many of the 91st Annual Meeting details, but we value the time spent answering questions and working with you. (L)

Two linemen bring experience to Federated



Welcome to the Federated family! Sam Ebert, a Gaylord native, started March 3 as an apprentice lineman.

Just as spring construction season ramps up, Federated hired two linemen to fill vacancies due to promotions. Federated welcomes Sam Ebert and Colin Vercruysse to the Jackson line crew. Both received their powerline technician training at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Jackson.

Sam Ebert works at an electric co-op, like his mom

Sam Ebert started March 3 as an apprentice lineman. This Gaylord native worked 17 months as a tree trimmer in the Gaylord area before being hired as a 1,000 hour employee at Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC), Jordan. At MVEC he worked as a groundsman assisting the journeyman crews, when working on overhead, underground lines or doing maintenance. After that he worked for Synergy Powerline Construction, based out of Sauk Centre, building new transmission lines in Montana and North Dakota.

"I like working with the Federated crews and the cooperative," Ebert stated. "My mom actually works for the electric cooperative, McLeod Cooperative Power Association at Glencoe. It has always been in the back of my head to work at an electric cooperative."

In his free time Ebert enjoys fishing, hunting and playing baseball.



Colin Vercruysse joined the cooperative March 9 as a journeyman lineman. Both will work on the Jackson line crews.

Colin Vercruysse enjoys a variety of tasks at the co-op

Colin Vercruysse started March 9 as a journeyman, coming from Worthington Public Utilities, where he worked nine years. "Worthington is 100 percent underground lines," explained Vercruysse. "I've always wanted to work for an electric cooperative and live in a smaller community. At Federated I'm looking forward to a variety of work from overhead, to underground and maintenance, plus the challenges that come with it."

Previously, Vercruysse worked as a wind tower technician maintaining 100 wind turbines in the Tyler area for more than two years. In addition, he worked for Karian Peterson Powerline Contracting, building new overhead and underground distribution lines, plus transmission lines in Minnesota, Iowa and South Dakota; he also worked storm restoration. Vercruysse worked 1,000 hours for the Brookings, South Dakota, municipal utility after Minnesota West graduation.

This Russell native moved his family to Jackson; his family consists of wife, Anna, their four-year-old son Colson, two-year old daughter Layla and a baby on the way at the end of April.

Welcome Sam and Colin to the Federated cooperative family. 📸

Reliable, affordable electricity priority of state legislative visits

— Continued from Page 1

3. Third-party aggregation regulation

Electric cooperatives believe that third-party aggregators operating in Minnesota must comply with appropriate energy regulations, ensuring they do not operate in cooperative territory without authority to do so. Without these precautions these entities would undermine Minnesota's regulatory compact by inserting unregulated vendors into the relationship between consumers and their local utility. A recent Minnesota Court of Appeals ruling exposed a dangerous gap in oversight, opening the door to potential reliability risks, higher costs and consumer confusion. Electric cooperatives support the Public Utilities Commission's clear oversight of third-party aggregators to preserve reliability and protect consumers.

"Federated values our local representatives and senators, as many of our co-op member-owners are also their constituents,"



The Federated delegation also met with Representative Marj Fogelman.

stated Federated General Manager Scott Reimer. "As we work to provide reliable and affordable electricity, they can help ensure that no new mandates are added and that we work together for responsible energy policy." 📸

25 years! Share your GreenTouch to help spruce up the Kilen Woods State Park Saturday, May 2

For 25 years Federated employees, members and general public have spruced up Kilen Woods State Park, Lakefield, under the GreenTouch program.

The 2026 spring clean-up day is set for Saturday, May 2, for volunteers at a state park. Locally, Federated invites volunteers to Kilen Woods State Park, northeast of Lakefield from 9 a.m. to noon. All ages are welcome. Volunteers will enjoy hot dogs, chips and cookies for lunch.

Volunteer tasks may include:

- Paint amphitheater seats
- Pick up litter on hiking trails and trim branches
- Clean picnic shelter, bathroom & office building
- Scoop out campfire pits
- Pick up fallen branches
- Rake tent sites and campground
- Replace picnic tabletops
- Replace a vault toilet roof

“Kilen Woods staff always looks forward to GreenTouch day,” stated Jason Honkomp, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. “We appreciate the many volunteers that help get the park spruced up for the summer camping and hiking season.”

You do not need to be a Federated member to volunteer. Volunteers need to RSVP by noon April 30 so enough



“Leaf” it to us! We have plenty of tasks for GreenTouch volunteers to do Saturday May 2 from 9 a.m. to noon. Rake, paint, pick up litter on hiking trails, plus enjoy a beautiful spring day. RSVP if you can attend so we have plenty of hot dogs and fixings for the free noon lunch.

hot dogs are purchased. Call or e-mail Federated at 507-847-3520, 1-800-321-3520 (press extension 2224 for Andrea) or info@federatedrea.coop. GreenTouch volunteers receive free access to the park on this day. In case of rainy/snowy weather listen to KKOJ 1190 or check Federated’s Facebook page.

“GreenTouch is one way Touchstone

Energy Cooperatives demonstrate their commitment to the community,” stated Scott Reimer, Federated’s general manager. “We’re proud of the way our volunteers show their cooperative spirit, but we’re not surprised by their generosity. It comes naturally.”

The more the merrier...we hope to see you there! 🇺🇸

Nominating Committee develops slate of candidates so members can cast their ballots before the Annual Meeting September 10

Federated’s Nominating Committee announced the slate of candidates for members to cast their ballots mailed in August for the Annual Meeting September 10.

Candidates serve a four-year term. The Nominating Committee met March 26 and approved this slate of candidates.

District One Director Candidate

- Glenn Dicks, Lakefield

District Two Director Candidate

- Troy Post, Brewster

District Three Nominating Committee

- Adam Weets, Jackson



District Four Nominating Committee

- James Amundson, Jackson

Operation Round Up Trust Board Directors

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

- Ruth Dicks, Lakefield, for District One
- Jessica Williams, Jackson, for District Two.

Detailed candidate biographies will be mailed with the ballots and published in the *Connections* Annual Report this summer. 🇺🇸

Let's get fruity! Share with us your favorite fruit salad recipes

Spring means it's time for lighter, fruity fun foods! Send us your family favorite fruit salads recipes, using fresh fruit, fruit cocktail, or fruit salads using pudding or Jell-O; send to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by April 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us!

Spring cleaning means fluorescent bulb recycling too! Add dates to your calendar



Minnesota state law requires the recycling of fluorescent bulbs to keep mercury out of our environment. Take note of these 2026 fluorescent bulb recycling dates.

Martin County residents

Residents may recycle Thursday, May 7, or Thursday, October 1, at the Tractor Supply parking lot, 1215 North State Street, Fairmont. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring fluorescent bulbs and ballasts for recycling. Prices are as follow:

- Straight fluorescent lamps 4-foot or less cost 75 cents each
- Fluorescent lamps over four-feet cost \$1 each
- High intensity discharge lamps (HID) cost \$5 each.

For more specific pricing call Retrofit Recycling at 800-274-1309.

Jackson County residents

Residents of Jackson County can recycle their fluorescent bulbs at the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility in Lakefield (605 S Hwy 86), which will features scheduled drop-off dates from the months of June through October. A fee applies for bulb recycling (75 cents each) and PCB Ballast recycling (\$5 each).

Other electronics are not accepted at the HHW. An E-Waste Collection for residents and businesses will be held September 11-12 at the Jackson County Fairgrounds. You can find more information about the HHW Facility and the E-Waste Collection advertised in the Livewire, on the Land Management website (www.co.jackson.mn.us/land) or you may call the Land Management Office at 507-662-6682, extension 4.

Next Operation Round Up deadline:

September 18, 2026

Find the application at:
www.federatedrea.coop



Russell Ranch Casserole by Sandy Kalfs, Okabena

- 4 medium potatoes, sliced
- 1 onion, sliced & broken into rings
- 1 lb. hamburger, cooked & crumbled
- 28 oz. can Bush baked beans
- 10¾ oz. can tomato soup
- 6 slices bacon, fried crisp
- ½ c. shredded cheese

Slice potatoes into 2-quart casserole. Put onion rings on top. Cover with hamburger, followed by beans. Cover with tomato soup. Bake 1½ hours at 350°. Put crumbled bacon on top, plus cheese. Bake 10 more minutes.

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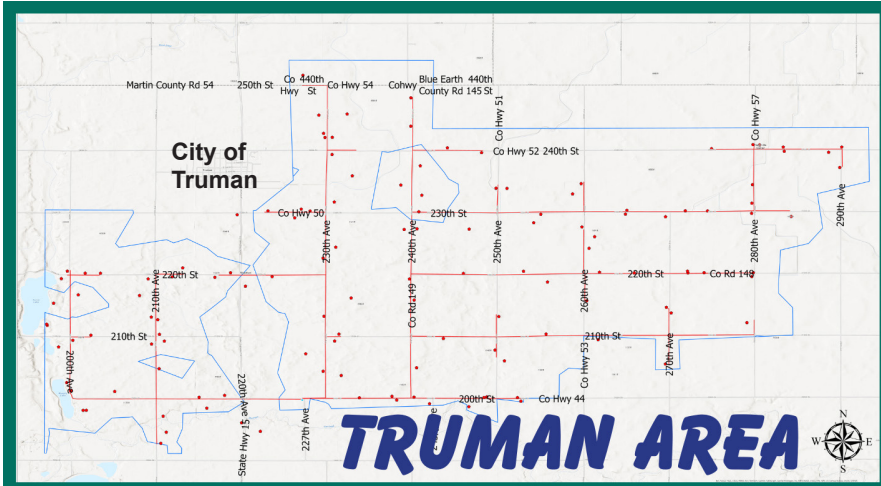
— A Federated REA subsidiary

Call before digging:

1-800-252-1166

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.gopherstateonecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter.

Truman area Border-to-Border fiber installs to the home begin this month



The red dots indicate sites eligible for fiber installations this spring (east and south of Truman). Property owners were sent an email to call the office and schedule their home installs.

Border-to-Border Round 10 Update: Truman area is ready for home installs!

We are very excited to announce that our construction crews have handed off the first portion of our Border-to-Border project in Martin County. Addresses in the Truman area that received a drop are ready for home installation so residences can begin using the fiber optic network with Federated Broadband.

Federated Broadband offers three speed packages for fiber optic services:

- 100MB download / 100MB upload for \$70 per month
- 250MB download / 250MB upload for \$85 per month
- 1 Gig download / 1 Gig upload for \$100 per month

Whole Home Manage Wi-Fi is included with all fiber connections. This means that we bring all the equipment needed to run the service, including the Wi-Fi router. We keep everything up to date for you and are able to help troubleshoot remotely, if you should ever need assistance.

Interested in combining your internet, TV and home phone all onto one bill? Let Federated be your one stop shop by switching to our SW Stream television service and VoIP phone service. See the pricing on our website. ☎



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Bruce Brockmann — 507-399-3487

Troy Post — 507-360-5537

Scott Thiesse — 507-399-6427

The Board of Directors generally meets the first Thursday of the month virtually at 8 a.m. 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.

Nicki Miller joins Broadband team



Federated is happy to announce the addition of a new Broadband customer service representative, effective March 23. She will be in the office answering customers'

phone calls, scheduling installation/service call appointments, helping with billing, attending community events and so much more!

Miller is a native of Jackson, graduating from Jackson County Central High School in 2002. She attended college in Marshall for education. She returned to Jackson 15 years ago. Miller worked at Bob's Fleet Supply for nine years and was the manager at Anytime Fitness in Jackson for the last five years.

She enjoys being outside in nice weather, walking, biking and spending time with her family and playing with her orange cat Willie.

Welcome Nicki to the Federated family; she is already making a great impact! ☎