

# Connections

June 2026

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric & Broadband



Volume 30, Issue 6

## Congrats grads! Nine students awarded \$700 Operation Round Up scholarships!



**District 1:**  
**Paige Ysker**  
Lakefield  
daughter of  
Devon & Tami



**District 2:**  
**Jacob Cihak**  
Lakefield  
son of  
John & Jill



**District 3:**  
**Zadie-Anne Johnson**  
Windom  
daughter of  
Paul & Rae



**District 4:**  
**Riley Ebeling**  
Dunnell  
son of  
Jeremy & Laura



**District 5:**  
**Kellen Fritz**  
Fairmont  
son of  
Daniel & Sheri



**District 6:**  
**Keira Benck**  
Granada  
daughter of  
Aaron & Katie



**At-Large District:**  
**Coyer Robinson**  
Round Lake  
son of  
Neil & Anna



**At-Large District:**  
**Jackson Veenker**  
Windom  
son of  
John & Staci



**At-Large District:**  
**Rylee Benda**  
Jackson  
daughter of  
Chad & Amanda

Nine high school seniors received a \$700 Federated Operation Round Up Scholarship. 31 students completed the Federated scholarship application.

This is the 36<sup>th</sup> year of Federated scholarships. A scholarship was awarded to each co-op district, plus three more where remaining applicants had a second chance of winning. These are the same districts used for director elections. Unclaimed capital credits and Operation Round Up fund these scholarships. This is the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Federated Operation Round Up high school scholarships. This totals \$167,500 in Federated scholarships.

Congratulations to these and all high school graduates this spring! 🎓

## Jamie Edlin earns Basin scholarship for the cooperative employees' group



Congratulations Jamie Edlin, Jackson, for earning a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric Cooperative, Federated's main wholesale power supplier. Basin awards 170 scholarships to cooperative employees' dependents. Edlin submitted an essay, grades and activities. She is the daughter of Carl and Julie, who is a Federated customer service representative. Jamie attends Lakes Area Technical College in Watertown, South Dakota, for building trades. 🎓

### At A Glance



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Take advantage of the co-op's one-stop shop for a new water heater priced at \$750, plus tax

Make one call 507-847-3520! Federated does it all this summer for upgrading your water heater. Our employee is licensed for plumbing and electrical installation. Plus, Marathon water heaters feature insulation and lifetime warranty on leaks for the original residential owner. 🎓



**Energy Wise**

# What does the old central air cost on your electric bill? Heat pumps more efficient

Federated introduced a residential demand rate this year to better reflect how electricity prices vary during peak times. Let's look at how this demand rate will impact your summer cooling costs and ultimately your electric bill.

One of the biggest drivers of those summer peak periods involves your home's cooling system. If your central air conditioner is 15 to 20 years old, it may be costing you more than you think, including the kilowatt-hours (kWh), plus now the demand measured in kilowatt-hours (kW). (See chart.)

In addition, your furnace fan or air handler is part of the cooling system. Most 20-plus-year-old furnaces have alternating current (AC) blower motors. New units have direct current (DC), which are up to 70 percent more efficient than AC blower motors. The older furnace fans are either on or off and run at full power, while the new fans are multi-stage running on low or higher speeds.

### Why older systems cost more

Older systems tend to:

- Work harder during hot days
- Turn on at full power, creating sudden spikes in electricity demand
- Use more total energy to keep your home cool

These short bursts of high demand can increase your bill under a demand-based rate, even if your overall usage doesn't seem unusually high.

### How ASHPs compare

Today's high-efficiency air-source heat pumps are designed to:

- Run more steadily, avoiding large demand spikes

Type of unit (3 ton unit)	Typical monthly demand (kW) \$4	Typical monthly energy use (kWh) w/ rate of \$.07243	Federated bill residential rate (cooling only)
<b>15-year-old central air (8-10 SEER)</b>	3-4 kW \$4 x 4kW=\$16/ month	24-32 kWh/day 32kWh x 30 days x\$.07243 = \$69.53	\$85.53
<b>20-year-old central air (8-10 SEER)</b>	3-6 kW \$4 x 6kW=\$24/ month	24 to 36/kWh/day 45 to 60 kWh extreme heat, humidity 60 kWh x 30 days x\$.07243 = \$130.38	\$102.22 \$154.37
<b>2026 air source heat pump (Energy Star model)</b>	1.5-2.5/kW cooling mode \$4 x 2.5kW=\$10/ month	10-20 kWh/day cooling, but more in heating season 20 kWh x 30 days x \$.07243 = \$43.46	\$53.46

**These are averages. Of course, the unit's operating cost depends on how well a home is insulated and whether the temperature is set at 68 or 78 degrees on the thermostat. Ask your HVAC contractor for a calculation on your existing central air, as compared to an Energy Star heat pump and cold-climate heat pump. The cold climate air source heat pump is 200 to 300 percent efficient and can help cut your heating costs too.**

- Up to 40 percent more efficient, versus a 15 to 20-year-old central air
- Provides both cooling in the summer and heating in cooler months

That means heat pumps can help manage both the heating and cooling parts of your electric bill more efficiently:

- Lower peak demand (kW)
- Lower total energy use (kWh)

### Is it time to consider an upgrade?

If your cooling system is more than 15 years old, it may be worth exploring replacement options, especially before the hottest days of summer arrive.


Upgrading to a newer system can improve comfort during extreme temperatures, reduce unexpected energy use spikes and provide more

consistent, reliable performance all year long.

Take the next step If you're interested in learning whether a high-efficiency system is right for your home; reach out to a qualified heating/cooling contractor.

Keep in mind Federated's heat pump rebates:

- \$600 ductless air source heat pump
- \$500/ton for ground source heat pump
- \$1,000 or \$1,500 for an air source heat pump, depending on the efficiency ratings. See our website for details.
- \$25 Smart Thermostat rebate

Planning ahead now can help you stay comfortable and avoid surprises as the summer temperatures rise. 

## See the light with easy install, rechargeable sconces


Believe it or not, adding a light fixture doesn't necessarily mean hiring an electrician. These rechargeable battery wall sconces mean no drilling holes or fishing wire to a hard-to-reach area.

Perhaps you have a dim hallway, living room or bedroom. Maybe it's a rental without light fixtures. This nearly 12-inch wall sconce uses heavy duty double-sided tape and no wiring is needed. The LED "bulb" is removed about once a week for four hours of recharging using the the USB cord. The light lasts about 26 hours at the brightest setting or about 60 hours on the lowest setting. No bulb screwing is required as it's a magnet that sits on the sconce base for easy removal to recharge.

The handy feature is the remote control. Select the color of lighting desired from



warm to cool white, plus seven colors to match the holiday spirit (green, blue, cyan, purple, red, orange and yellow). Choose from steady light to flashing, along with the brightness level desired. The automatic timer turns off after one, three or five hours.

Find rechargeable wall sconces on Amazon for 60-\$70. Choose from gold, nickel or black sconces in this design; it comes as a pair of sconces. If your decor is more of a modern, sleek design, those types of sconces are available too. Similar battery powered sconces can be ordered from Target, Walmart and other online vendors. 

**Brighten up a bedroom, fireplace or artwork with these rechargeable, battery-powered indoor wall sconces — no wiring required.**

## Safety

### Tamper resistant receptacles: your 'outlet' to keep kids safe

Each year, approximately seven children a day suffer severe shock and burns when they stick items into the slots of electrical receptacles. It is estimated that six to 12 fatalities occur a year. Nearly one-third of these injuries are the result of small children placing ordinary household objects, such as keys, pins or paperclips into the outlets with disastrous consequences.

Located in practically every room in every house throughout the United States, electrical outlets and receptacles represent a constant and real danger wherever young children are found.


Tamper resistant receptacles (TRRs) provide a simple, affordable, reliable and permanent solution to help prevent these kinds of injuries.

While TRRs look just like ordinary outlets, they are designed with spring-loaded receptacle cover plates that close off the receptacle openings or slots.

When equal pressure is simultaneously applied to both sides, the receptacle cover plates open to allow the standard plug to make contact



with the receptacle contact points. Without this simultaneous pressure the cover plates remain closed, preventing insertion of foreign objects and protecting your children or grandchildren from painful, traumatic electrical injuries.

Although not widely used in homes until recently, TRRs have been required in hospital pediatric care facilities since the early 1980s. In fact, TRRs have proven to be so effective that the National Electrical Code (NEC) now requires them to be installed in all new home construction. Existing homes can be easily retrofitted with TRRs using the same installation guidelines that apply to standard receptacles. TRRs should only be installed by a licensed electrician. TRRs are the only device tested by UL and other nationally recognized testing laboratory (NRTL) to meet the requirement set by the National Electrical Code; plastic outlet covers are not tested by NRTLs for tamper resistance. 

— Courtesy of the Electrical Safety

Foundation International

# Federated Focus

## Cycled Air credit changes to \$5

# \$5


The 2026 rate adjustment also included a change to the monthly Cycled Air credit for the June, July and August electric bills. It was changed to \$5/month due to a wholesale power provider change.

Cycled Air is a program where members enroll their central air or heat pump to cycle 15 minutes on and then 15 minutes off during the hottest summer peaks, typically from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. This load management program helps Federated and our members use energy wisely when it costs the most on the market to stabilize electric rates.

## Co-op posts interconnection process for wind & solar



In compliance with Federated's adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Federated is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Federated is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Federated Board.

Interested members should contact Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069, e-mail [info@federatedrea.coop](mailto:info@federatedrea.coop) or call 507-847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520; ask for Jon Beckman. The application process is outlined at [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop). 



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## Major efforts underway on multiple projects

Federated continues to work on major initiatives to position your co-op for long-term success. Let me highlight the projects.

### Update on headquarters renovation progress

One of the most visible projects underway is the remodel and expansion of Federated's headquarters facility in Jackson (See photo below). This investment is focused on improving operational efficiency, enhancing employee collaboration, modernizing member service areas and ensuring our facilities continue to support the growing needs of the co-op in the future. Construction activity moves forward steadily. We appreciate the patience and understanding of our members during this process. We are excited about the long-term benefits this project for both our employees and the membership we serve. If all stays on course, we are looking at a mid-November completion.

### Project underway to add backup generators at substations for reliability

On the power supply side important developments continue with Diamond Leaf Generation. This project represents a key opportunity to strengthen long-term financial viability, while contributing to reliability (resource adequacy) for our region. As electric demand growth accelerates across the Midwest, securing dependable dispatchable generation remains increasingly important. Federated is working collaboratively with project partners and stakeholders. The current plan would install about 50 megawatts of generation across several of our substation locations.


### WindomNet acquisition awaits the city's decision

We continue advancing the acquisition process involving WindomNet. This opportunity aligns strategically with Federated's commitment to supporting rural broadband access and strengthening communications infrastructure throughout southern Minnesota and the three-county area that we are serving. While several key steps remain, progress continues, as the city works through the selection process of naming a successor internet service provider. Federated is competing with MIDCO and Southwest Broadband; the city will make a selection soon.

### Upgrading our financial and billing software underway

Internally, Federated is making substantial progress on the conversion to the new National Information Solutions Cooperative software. This will modernize many of the co-op's core operational systems, including billing, accounting, service management and member information systems. Large-scale software conversions require extensive planning, training, testing and coordination across departments; our employees have dedicated significant effort to ensure a successful transition. While much work still remains, we are making strong progress toward implementation.

### Retiring at year-end, but Board is planning for the leadership transition

In closing, I want to share that I will retire as Federated's fourth CEO-general manager at the end of 2026. Serving Federated and its members for the past decade has been one of the greatest honors of my professional career. I am appreciative of the support, trust and relationships. Federated's Board of Directors began the succession planning process; they are working with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association on a comprehensive national search for the co-op's next CEO-General Manager. The Board is committed to a smooth transition and identifying strong leadership that advance Federated's mission and strategic goals. 



# Federated triples co-op's donation with matching funds distributing \$30,000 to assist four local food shelves

Federated presented donations to the four main food shelves in Jackson and Martin Counties. These donations to all four total \$30,000. The four food shelves are located at Heron Lake, Lakefield, Jackson and Heaven's Table in Fairmont/Sherburn.

Federated took advantage of matching funds from two organizations to triple the impact. "Federated donated \$5,000 per county and then secured matching funds from CoBank's Sharing Success Program and Basin Electric Cooperative," stated Federated's General Manager Scott Reimer. "Co-ops are concerned about their local communities; we saw this as a way to help the food shelves assist those local residents who need help the most — providing food on the table."

CoBank provides Federated long-term financing for line construction and fiber projects, while Basin Electric is a wholesale power provider for Federated.

Federated's tripled donation was split among Jackson and Martin Counties. Since Heaven's Table serves all of Martin County, they received half of the donation or \$15,000. Then the three Jackson County food shelves in Heron Lake, Lakefield and Jackson divided the other half, receiving \$5,000 each."

Heaven's Table Food Shelf serves Martin County. They will use their \$15,000 for two food programs. "We will use half the funds for our public schools' Backpack program, providing snacks and meals for 400 eligible school children during the Fall of 2026 school year," stated Greta Lintelman, Heaven's Table Board Chairperson.



The Lakefield Food Shelf's Connie Rossow received donations from Federated Director "Red" Ayers (left) and Glenn Dicks. Funds will buy some equipment, but mostly food and hygiene products.



Heaven's Table Food Shelf, Fairmont/Sherburn, will buy food for the Community Box and the Backpack programs. Pictured is Greta Lintelman food shelf chairperson with Federated Directors Jon Saxen, David Meschke and Scott Thiesse.



The Jackson Food Shelf's Director/Pastor John Schuetz and Treasurer Angela Schultze accepted checks from Federated Directors Glenn Dicks and "Red" Ayers. Funds will go toward food, hygiene items and baby supplies.



The Heron Lake/Okabena Community Cupboard Food Pantry is represented by Nikki Knobloch. Federated Directors Troy Post and Glenn Dicks presented the \$5,000. The food shelf will buy food and personal hygiene items.

"The other half will go toward the Community Box program where eligible residents from Martin County towns can order an 16-18-pound box of food monthly from their local city with the food delivered to each city for the pickup. This box of food typically serves three people. We are grateful for this generous gift!"

"The Lakefield Food Shelf will use some of their \$5,000 toward a new computer and food shelf software, along with a truck dolly to move the food," stated Connie Rossow, coordinator. "However, most of the donations will go toward food and hygiene products like diapers, toilet paper and laundry soap. Donations like this are always appreciated!"

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

"The Jackson Minnesota Food Shelf Inc. appreciates the money due to the rising cost of food," said Angela Schultze, coordinator. "We will buy food, personal hygiene items and baby supplies too. This is a huge

# Working to keep your electricity affordable & reliable thru the 2026 legislative session

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session wrapped up at the Capitol. Discover how the session affected the energy that powers your home, farm or business.

It was a session shaped by divided government. With a tied House, a one-seat Senate majority and an election looming in November, every bill needed bipartisan agreement to move. Much of the Legislature's attention went to a supplemental budget, funding for Hennepin County Medical Center, tax conformity and a capital investment package, leaving less room for major policy changes elsewhere.

Even so, Minnesota's electric cooperatives made important progress on the issues that matter most to member-owners. The session delivered a meaningful step forward on nuclear energy and stopped several costly proposals before they could become law.

## A step forward on nuclear energy

After three decades of standing still Minnesota took its first real step forward on nuclear energy. Lawmakers approved a state nuclear energy study, the most significant movement on the issue since Minnesota's nuclear moratorium was put in place in 1994. The moratorium itself remains on the books, but the study reflects a growing recognition at the Capitol that nuclear power deserves a serious look as the state works toward its carbon-free electricity goals.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives, working through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), helped lead this effort as a founding member of the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance. The Alliance brings together more than 60 organizations spanning utilities, labor, agriculture, business and environmental groups; its broad reach helped move nuclear into the mainstream of Minnesota's energy conversation.

The study itself will examine the costs, benefits and tradeoffs of nuclear energy in Minnesota, including its potential role



in supporting affordability, reliability and emissions reductions. The findings will give lawmakers a stronger foundation for deciding whether to lift the moratorium next year.

## Holding the line on costly new mandates

Just as important as what passed is what didn't. Several proposals introduced this session would have added new costs, new mandates or new layers of regulation onto Minnesota's electric cooperatives. None of them became law and that outcome wasn't an accident.


Throughout the session, Minnesota's electric cooperatives, through MREA and the advocacy of member-owners across the state, worked to educate legislators about how mandates from St. Paul affect locally governed, not-for-profit cooperatives differently than they do large investor-owned utilities. Bills touching on solar policy, affordability mandates and utility operations all stalled before reaching the finish line. Cooperative priorities like net metering reform also saw little movement, leaving important work for future sessions.

That distinction matters because cooperatives are governed by the members they serve. Decisions about your electricity are made by neighbors

you can talk to, not regulators in St. Paul. One-size-fits-all mandates often raise costs, undermine that local democracy and add bureaucracy without delivering real benefits to member-owners. Stopping bad policy rarely makes headlines, but it remains one of the most valuable services MREA provides to cooperatives and the families and businesses we serve.

## Looking ahead to 2027

The November election will reshape the makeup of the Legislature; the political landscape next session could look very different. What won't change is the focus of Minnesota's electric cooperatives: advocating for affordable, reliable electricity and protecting the local, democratic governance that makes cooperatives unique.


Nuclear energy will likely return as a central conversation in 2027, alongside continued debate over mandates, affordability and the pace of Minnesota's energy transition. Net metering reform will also remain near the top of the co-op agenda. Modernizing Minnesota's net metering rules is essential to ensuring all member-owners pay their fair share for the electric grid. Member-owners who want to lend their voice can sign up for legislative alerts at <https://voicesforcooperativepower.com>. 

## The co-op difference: see your share in the margins!



Take a look at your June electric bill. You will see your share of the allocations for 2025 "profits" — \$2,157,048.63 from your co-op and two wholesale power suppliers.

Federated	\$725,092.03
Great River Energy	\$845,542.41
L&O Power Co-op	<u>\$586,413.98</u>
Total	\$2,157,048.42

The Board of Directors decides when these will be payable in the future based on financials. 

## Power up with protein balls, shakes & other protein recipes

Power up with protein-snack recipes, whether it involves protein balls, protein shakes or other snacks. Please send us protein-packed recipes that your family enjoys. Send to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by June 22. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

### Slow Cooker Chicken Pot Pie by Carolyn Hansen, Lakefield

Cook four boneless/skinless chicken breasts on low heat in a fry pan and then cut up. Whisk together 1 c. chicken broth, 2 cans cream of chicken soup, 1 c. milk, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Slice up two carrots; add to the sauce in a crockpot. Stir in chicken, 1/3 c. diced celery and 1/3 c. diced onion. Cook on low for 4½ hours. Stir in one-third a bag of frozen peas. Cut up one can of biscuit dough in quarters and place on top of the chicken mixture. Cook on high for one additional hour. 📧

### Lemon Salad by Beth Prust, Northrop

- |                                        |                              |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 c. boiling water                     | 1 can lemon pie filling      |
| 1 large pkg. lemon Jello               | 8 oz. container of Cool Whip |
| 1 large can crushed pineapple, drained |                              |

Dissolve Jello in the boiling water. Chill until it's just beginning to set. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Refrigerate until set. Serves 12-15 people. 📧

### Halloweenies by Jean Beckendorf, Welcome

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6 med. potatoes          | 8 slices American cheese         |
| 12 oz. pkg. frankfurters | 10½ oz. can cream of celery soup |

Peel and slice the potatoes. Place of them in the bottom of a 2½-quart casserole dish. Arrange four slices of cheese on top. Then slice in halves the weenies. Next, slice the rest of the potatoes on top of that. Again cover with cheese. Add a final layer of sliced weenies. Pour the celery soup over everything. Cover and bake at 375° for 45 minutes or longer. Makes eight hearty servings. 📧



**Federated is  
closed July 3 for  
the Independence  
Day holiday**

*Crews will be on call  
in case of outages*

Home security  
to help protect  
what matters



Most break-ins start at the door. Heartland Security door sensors detect entry instantly. Connect them with fire, water, and life-safety protection in one system.



Contact us to help secure your home.

888.264.6380  
heartlandss.com

— A Federated 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.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. 📧

## Smart tech tips for students home for summer



School is out! Many households suddenly have more devices online and more daily usage — laptops, tablets, gaming systems and streaming — all happening at once. The extra load can slow things down if your home network isn't ready. A few simple steps can help keep everyone connected without frustration.

### Give your Wi-Fi a quick tune-up

Take a few minutes to compare where your router is located in your home to where most devices are. A router tucked in a corner, inside a cabinet, near kitchen appliances or behind a TV can struggle to reach bedrooms and basements. Place a router in a central, open location to boost coverage to all areas of your home. If your router is older, five or more years, consider upgrading to a newer model or try out Federated's managed home Wi-Fi. If you have a larger home, consider a Wi-Fi mesh system so you can place multiple smaller routers throughout your home and create consistent coverage even in the far corners.

### Check your speed needs

With kids home throughout the day your household may need more bandwidth than during the school year. Video calls, online classes and gaming all have different bandwidth requirements. Consider bumping up to the next speed package for a few months to keep everyone's device running smoothly.

### Set healthy device habits

Summer is a great time to reset tech routines. Encourage students to download large files during off-peak times, take breaks from screens and use parental controls if younger kids are online more often and need help establishing healthy boundaries. Plus, step away from the screens and get outside as a family; those are the memories they will tell their grandkids about some day.

### Keep devices updated

Laptops and tablets that sit idle during the school year often need software updates. Run the updates to improve performance and secure your network.

### Troubleshooting tips for slow speeds

If devices seem slow, try these quick fixes first: check for firmware/software updates, fully power down and let the device rest for a few minutes; see how many other devices are running on your network and if any can be turned off (remember sleep/idle mode and powered down are not the same thing). See where the device is in relation to your router; see if you can move it closer. 📶



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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.

## Introducing new Broadband technician — Mike Simon



Federated Broadband is very excited to welcome a new addition to our team! Mike Simon started on April 27 as a broadband technician/installer. Simon is originally from Ipswich, South Dakota, and has lived in Windom for the past 12 years. He graduated from Mitchell Tech for Powerline Construction and Maintenance in 2012. Simon started working for FEM Electric Association, in Ipswich, South Dakota, out of high school as shop help and worked multiple 1,000-hour jobs before attending line school. "I am excited to be working for Federated Broadband," Simon said.

Simon jumped right into field training on his first day and quickly became a great addition to the Broadband team. Welcome Mike! 📶