

# Connections

November 2022

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 26, Issue 11

## We deliver more than reliable electricity & broadband; Cyber planning protects your power & you too!

### Enable multi-factor authentication.



**Multi-factor authentication: a security measure that requires anyone logging into an account to navigate a two-step process to prove their identity.**

Just like we prepare for the worst from Mother Nature's storms, your electric cooperative has also prepared for the worst from cyber attacks as well.

"Rest assured, Federated has people and procedures in place to protect our electronic systems and important member data," stated Julie Resch, Federated Rural Electric's office manager. "We have a Data Security Plan that is reviewed and updated annually. We train our employees, update our computer systems, protect our member-owners' personal data and invest in physical and cyber security tools."

- Our billing software vendor and payment portal providers are audited annually for cyber security.
- Our wholesale power suppliers protect the reliable flow of power

### Use strong passwords and a password manager.



**Password manager: software created to manage all of your online credentials, like user names and passwords, plus stores safely in an encrypted database.**

with their information technology (IT) employees, training scenarios and multi-factor security access.

- Our office employees, when they worked from home during the pandemic, used VPN lines for extra security; plus, this year we added multifactor authentication, for a second layer of cyber safety confirming their identity and access, Resch commented.
- Federated's website is protected with top-of-the-line security service and vulnerability management solutions, guarding against malware, ransomware and other viruses. Touchstone Energy protects the website data and files in real-time and acts on any threats.
- Electric co-ops work together and with their wholesale power suppliers,

### Update software regularly.



**Software: a set of instructions, data or programs used to operate computers and execute specific tasks.**

statewide organization and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national association for electric co-ops. Together, cooperative utilities are leading efforts to establish relationships, provide tools, share resources and training to harden and improve the overall cyber landscape.

Yet, we need your help as member-owners. If you receive a phone call, e-mail or text about your account requiring immediate gift card payment, "click here" to prevent being disconnected in an hour or anything unusual, hang up or don't click on it. Call Federated back using our published phone numbers; don't let your guard down with spoofed local phone numbers. Share with us any unusual occurrences, as we will share and educate through Facebook.

### At A Glance



What a thrill to give as a gift an electric grill this Christmas!

Santa suggests giving an electric grill this holiday season! Help Grandpa's back so he doesn't have to lug heavy LP tanks or charcoal bags. Give Mom and Dad an electric grill so it's fast and easy when feeding little ones. View the models on our website or lobby with prices from \$70-\$171.



# Smart appliances for the smart chef

Whether you're a master chef or a culinary novice, smart appliances add convenience to any kitchen.

Smart appliances typically rely only on Wi-Fi (paired with a custom smartphone application), while others can work with common smart home systems like Google Home or Amazon Alexa. Smart home systems establish routines based on our activity, like when we return home from work. You can set smart devices to begin a programmed routine to turn on lights, adjust the thermostat and other tasks.

For smart kitchen appliances routines could include preheating an oven or turning on a coffee maker. Let's look at a few smart appliances for the home chef.

## Cooktops and ranges

Induction cooking works by delivering energy directly to cookware, using a magnetic field that warms the inside of cookware, specifically made for induction cooking. (Check your pans for compatibility by using a magnet.) Induction cooktops are 32 percent more energy efficient than gas cooktops and about 75 percent more efficient than electric cooktops.

Smart induction models recognize when a pan is placed on an element and automatically turn off when a pan is removed from the cooktop. Brands, like Samsung and Bosch, offer additional smart functions, including synchronization of the cooktop with a (brand-matched) smart ventilation hood. The smart hood activates as soon as cooking begins and adapts to cooking intensity on the fly. Smart ranges can also include this function and often feature a barcode scanning system that allows you to scan store-



**Induction cooktops, like the Samsung model shown here, transfer heat directly to the cookware, which is designed for induction cooking.** Photo credit: Samsung

bought foods, prompting the oven to start based on the instructions.

Smart ranges can be controlled remotely to preheat, change and monitor temperatures through the companion app or an integrated home system. A few brands offer a Wi-Fi connected cooking thermometer to allow remote monitoring, leaving the home chef free to do other things while an app keeps an eye on cooking progress.

## Countertop ovens

The June Oven includes an in-oven camera that allows progress to be tracked from its app. The app also provides progress monitoring with push notifications to your phone when cooking is complete.

Tovala also offers a smaller, countertop oven for ready-to-cook meals. These ovens use barcode scanning technology for both Tovala meals and those from the grocery store. The Tovala app uses push notifications to track progress.

Like Tovala, the Breville smart oven offers guided recipes and an app

that directs cooking temperature and function, such as air fry or bake, as the recipe advances. The Breville smart oven uses its on-board chip to monitor and stabilize temperature from all sides for more efficient cooking.

## Other gadgets

Microwaves from manufacturers, like LG, Whirlpool, GE, Sharp and Toshiba, include the barcode scanning function to allow product-specific cooking instructions to be sent to the appliance.

Smart kitchen scales, air fryers and pasta makers are also all available to connect to your phone for guided measuring and cooking.

If you're looking for a smart kitchen gadget that won't break the bank, try a smart meat thermometer. These handy little devices work with an app to specify optimal cook time and temperature; they notify the chef when the meat is ready.

As our appliances and kitchen gadgets become smarter, home chefs have more options for convenience and functionality. Bon appétit! 🍴

## Bear Electric Griddle offers ease and options

The Bear Electric Griddle is perfect for pancakes, quesadillas, burgers, eggs, pizza, crepes, seafood and more.

The Bear Electric Griddle grill works as a 180° foldable contact grill, electric grill, electric griddle, panini press, crepe maker and pizza maker. One can even use it to stir fry.

The upper and lower pans can be controlled independently. Switch to the mode you like, changing between an individual dining and a multi-person dining mode.


The cooking surface has honeycomb texture mesh and non-stick coating. It makes oil drops distribute evenly. It also allows you to control cooking oil more conveniently, so as to avoid greasy cooking. Excess oil flows naturally into the lower tray, which also makes your diet healthier.

The Bear Electric Griddle has a 1,500-watt embedded heating element, which generates heat in a surrounding way that heats up in mere minutes and provides an even cook for consistent results. You also don't have to worry about triggering the smoke alarm or make the whole house smell like a BBQ restaurant when cooking.



The Bear Electric Griddle opens up to enable you to use the top and bottom to cook larger meals. It is made to handle a variety of dishes.



The Bear Electric Griddle has a one-year warranty and costs approximately \$40. It is available online and in stores. 

### Safety

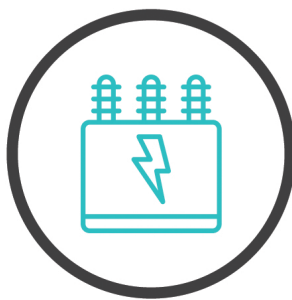
## The Steps to Restoring Power

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible - until everyone has power.



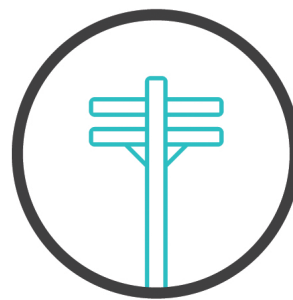
#### 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines

These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.



#### 2. Distribution Substations

Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



#### 3. Main Distribution Lines

Main lines serve essential facilities like hospitals and larger communities.



#### 4. Individual Homes and Businesses

After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.

# Federated Focus

## Santa says 'clean' up your act!

Santa is watching! Gift yourself a new water heater so you avoid a Christmas catastrophe with no hot water during the holidays. Have plenty of hot water for the cooking and cleaning that comes with the holidays! That 20 to 30-year-old water heater could become a gushing disaster. Replace the old water heater with an USA-made, energy-efficient, stainless steel tank. Federated's price includes the water heater and installation too for \$689, plus tax. Call Federated to schedule your installation 507-847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520.

## Federated's medical listing

Do you have a family member on the cooperative's lines who requires electricity as a lifeline for their medical equipment, such as oxygen, home dialysis, respirators or other life-saving equipment? Sign them up for the co-op's medical listing for planned outages. Complete the coupon by returning with your electric bill payment, dropping off or e-mailing (billing@federatedrea.coop). Plus, if you had a loved one who died or no longer uses the medical equipment on our listing, call or e-mail us to update it. Thanks! ☺

## 2022 Medical Listing Update

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Federated account # \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Type of life support/equipment:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does the equipment have battery backup? Yes or No

How long do the batteries last?  
\_\_\_\_\_ hours

Is there a generator for backup electricity? Yes or No



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## Ceylon fiber installed in the ground

It's been a busy and productive month for the project in Ceylon as about 5 miles of fiber has been brought into the community from the north. Last month I reported that Loosbrock would be our contractor. At the last minute we pivoted due to some timing issues and our contractor is now Oddson Underground Inc. Oddson is well known in the fiber business and will do a great job for us. The crews have entered the city limits and are working on the main line. Our site survey team of Federated Broadband employees is in town daily, meeting with customers and determining where the service will enter the home and making plans for the service install by Oddson Underground. To date we have 97 residents signed up for service and ultimately hope that all residents and eventually all businesses will take advantage of this opportunity. As our crews are out and about, please feel free to ask questions and discuss the benefits that fiber will bring to your community. Those of you that have signed up may have the opportunity to speak to a neighbor that is considering it, but not quite on board yet. We will make ourselves available to help answer any questions or concerns that come up; keep us in mind if you need anything. The build out will continue into fall and early winter to get as much of the underground work done. If all goes well, splicing and service hook ups could occur over the winter with work concluding by the summer of 2023.

## Electric and broadband margins

As we get closer to the end of the year, we pay close attention to our margins and how they will look by year end. Our accounting staff has been working very hard on a 10-year forecast for both electric and broadband using historical data with some expectations getting us through 2022. What we are seeing is that margins are lower than what we would like, which makes some assumptions in the forecast for future years. As expected, an increase will be needed. We have seen the materials' prices increase, along with the power supply increases coming from three of our four power suppliers. Fortunately, L&O – Basin, which provide about 70 percent of our energy and demand, announced a decrease for 2023. That will help us greatly. The electricity markets have settled a bit from earlier this year; however, natural gas prices remains up, which has a big impact on electricity pricing.

## ReConnect 4 and future broadband initiatives

The Federated Board has recently reaffirmed their support for the cooperative working to make available access to high-speed broadband, which continues to be a forefront issue nationally. This can come in a couple forms being fixed wireless or fiber to the home. We have both available today, but the fixed wireless is currently a line-of-site technology. Fiber to the home is something that is a more long-term solution and relies heavily on available grants to offset the high cost per site, reaching \$20,000 in some cases. As we design a rural build out, it needs to account for service to everyone that is eligible within the area. As we try to make this available to everyone, we note that the customers per mile are on the lower side, which may be as low as three customers per mile. However, not everyone will take the service making what we call a "take rate" something lower than 100 percent and 70 percent is typically used as a pro forma for budgeting. We are currently days away from submitting our application for 50 percent grant funding, which, if awarded, would bring fiber to the home of about 2,300 customers in Martin County. We are still checking our options for Jackson County, as fewer potential subscribers means higher costs.

In closing, our staff here has your best interests in mind with all we do. We do our best to keep the Board apprised of the operations. Please reach out to us any way needed and we commit to responding to you in a very timely fashion. ☺

# No need to be in the dark! Use these two outage tools: texting notification & public outage map

Knowledge is power! Federated offers two tools for you to stay informed regarding power outages.

Sign up for the new text notification system and follow the public outage map on Federated's website. These tools are in response to member feedback from surveys. We listened!

## Text notification of outages

Receive a text when the power goes off and another text when power is restored at your location. This is a great feature for snowbirds, members at work during the day or those who travel a lot! Texts will also be sent in advance for planned outages. Texts can only be sent to cell phone numbers so make sure you list up to four cell phone numbers on your Federated account. Follow the steps on the right.

Sign up by December 15, 2022 to be entered for \$50 bill credit drawing for two winners. Signing up helps the co-op during major outages and reduces the number of outage calls all at one time. During major outages, if the automatic metering system is overwhelmed, a slight chance exists you may not be notified.

## Public outage map

Ugh...the power went off! Is it a big outage or just my area? Now you can get the answer by looking at Federated's public outage map on our website: [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop). Click on the "Outage Map" button. It displays how many meters are off by township. A large number off may mean storm damage or a transmission line feeding the substation is off. A smaller number may mean a squirrel climbed the wrong pole, a driving accident occurred or something else.

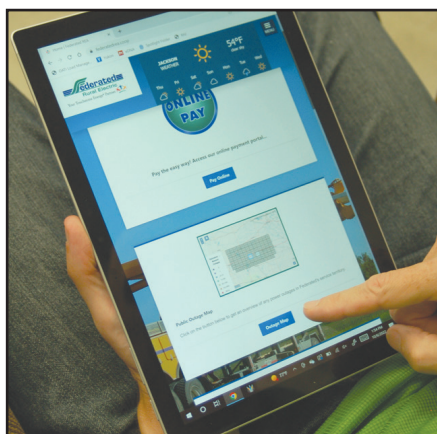
Bookmark this page on your cell phone, tablet or PC. Hit refresh periodically for updates. During a major power outage, follow Federated's Facebook

## Power Outage Notifications



## How to sign up for the outage text notifications

1. Go to [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop).
2. Click on the "Outage text notification" box and then the "Get started" button.
3. Enter your account number found on your electric bill; select whether it's a residential or business account. Then enter the last name on the residential account or business name. Click "Submit."
4. Confirm that this is the right address and account. Be sure to click on the "Opt in" button for each cell phone number.
- 5A. Click to select the phone numbers in our billing system you want to receive text notifications for outages and restoration. OR
- 5B. If your cell phone numbers are outdated or not listed, please click on "Update phone numbers" button. Enter your cell phone numbers and click the "Opt-in" box. A message will be sent to the billing department to add these phone numbers on your billing account. You will receive a confirmation text in a few business days when it is updated in the billing system.



In addition, check out Federated's public outage map. Visit the home page ([www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)). Click on the blue "Outage Map" button. It shows how many meters are out in each township. Bookmark it on your phone, tablet and computer so if an outage occurs, you have it at your finger tips for a quick update. Check back periodically to see the restoration progress.

page for restoration progress.

"During the business work day, employees monitor the outage map and



Enroll your account's cell phone number in the outage text notifications by December 15, 2022. You will be entered in a \$50 bill credit drawing for two winners. Signing up helps the co-op during major outages and reduces the number of outage calls all at one time. Sign up using the website link on our home page; you will need your account number from your electric bill(s).

dispatch the line crews for outages," stated Operations Manager George Madden. "During the evenings, holidays and weekends, we encourage members to still call us to report the outage. Know your address or location number (found on the bottom of the bill summary). If you can tell us the cause of the outage, that helps, as well. ☺"

**Federated rebates:** heat pumps, Energy Star refrigerator, freezer & dehumidifier. See website for forms or call.

# Keep food safe if the power goes out

Severe winds, lightning, ice storms, blizzards and even squirrels can temporarily cause the power to go out. Your local electric cooperative understands power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked with perishable foods.

Extended power outages are rare, but when they occur, it's important to understand food safety measures to avoid illness.

## Before an outage

A good rule of thumb is to keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items like bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal and protein bars in your emergency kit.

## During an outage

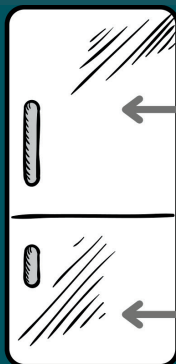
If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

## After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours,

## Keep food safe during & after power outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a longer power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



4

Refrigerated food lasts four hours or place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

24 OR 48

Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer lasts 48 hours.

### Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator & freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your fridge after four hours without power.

When in doubt, throw it out!



the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items. If any foods have an unusual color, odor or texture, they should be thrown away.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out after an extended outage, there are a few items that are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

- hard cheeses that are properly wrapped
- taco, barbecue and soy sauces

• butter or margarine that is properly wrapped

• jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish

The best way to avoid illness from spoiled food during or after an outage is to follow the four-hour rule of thumb. After an outage always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember — when in doubt, throw it out. To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit [www.ready.gov/food](http://www.ready.gov/food).

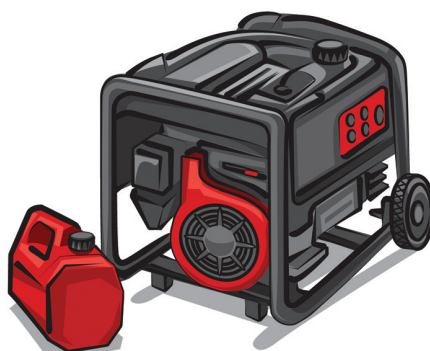
# Tune up time! Is your generator ready?

What will Mother Nature throw at us this winter? Is your generator ready?

Take the time to be prepared when it comes to your generator. A few minutes now will pay off when the weather is at its worst.

Check and see if your generator has adequate fuel. If it's a large unit, check the battery, oil and antifreeze. If it's a small portable unit, do you have the gas can full?

Remember to never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. Only two ways exist to safely connect a standby generator to your equipment.



With a stationary or portable generator use an approved generator transfer switch. This protects your home's circuits separate from the co-op's lines,

protecting the line crews. This should be installed by a professional.

If you do not have a transfer switch plug the appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. However, start the generator before connecting the appliances. Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect the electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

Run your portable generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Be sure it's out and away from the garage, doors, windows and vents. Remember, carbon monoxide is deadly.

## Cold weather cries out for nicely-priced rice recipes! Share yours!

For thrice the pleasure share your rice recipes for white, brown or wild rice meals or soups. Perhaps you are also a fan of rice pudding or rice made in hot dish, crock pot or Instapot. Mail your nice rice recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by November 28. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us!



**HAPPY Thanksgiving DAY**

**The co-op is closed for Thanksgiving November 24 & 25. Crews are on call in case of outages.**

### Traci's Chocolate Walnut Pie by Elizabeth Shimon, Granada


Beat 2 eggs until fluffy.  
 Add: ½ c. flour  
 ½ c. white sugar  
 ½ c. brown sugar  
 1 c. butter, melted & cooled  
 Mix well. Add: 1 c. chopped walnuts  
 1 c. mini chocolate chips  
 Pour into a 9" graham cracker crust.  
 Bake at 325° for 1 hour.

### Never Fail Peach Pie by Jeanne Schwieger, Fairmont

¾ c. sugar  
 ¼ tsp. cinnamon  
 dash of salt  
 5 c. sliced, fresh peaches  
 3 T. flour  
 2 T. soft butter  
 1 unbaked pie shell  
 Mix all ingredients together and put in a pie shell. Top with another pie crust or lattice crust. Bake at 400° for 40-45 minutes.

### Gluten Free Peanut Butter Pie by Rose Freking, Heron Lake

Mix ¼ c. peanut butter with 2/3 c. powdered sugar.  
 Spread mixture on a 8" gluten free pie crust (or a regular baked pie crust).  
 Mix: 4 T. corn starch  
 1/3 c. sugar  
 1/8 tsp. salt  
 2 c. milk (or Lactaid milk)  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 2 egg yolks.  
 Cook until thick.  
 Add 2 T. butter. Pour over prepared crust.  
 Refrigerate. Serve topped with Cool Whip.



**Call before digging: 1-800-252-1166**

Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees and tiling. You can also register at [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter.



**Secure Santa's secrets.**

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 888-264-6380 [heartlandss.com](http://heartlandss.com)

## Snuggle in for 'couch potato season' with our streaming TV options



### Residential internet package

15MB down/2MB up \$70/month

- Upgrade to streaming TV & drop satellite TV

**Basic installation fee \$150**

**TV packages through SW Stream with Roku, Fire TV Stick, smart phone or web browser**

**Basic TV package** 102 channels \$60/month

*Includes Twins Cities & South Dakota networks, Bally Sports North, Bally Sports North Plus, Big Ten Network, ESPN, ESPN2, History Channel, Discovery & more!*

**Starz Pack \$10 more. Showtime \$10 more.**



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### Rural Electric

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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.

## Tech time tip: Improve your cell phone reception with Wi-Fi calling

Dropping cell phone calls in your home is so frustrating. Plus, stepping outside for better reception in the winter is chilling!

Use your Federated Broadband internet service and Wi-Fi to improve your cell phone reception. Here's the Android cell steps:

1. Enable your cell phone to get onto your Federated Broadband router.

2. Open the "Phone" app on your cell phone.

3. Tap "Settings."

4. Tap "Calls."

5. Tap "Wi-Fi calling." If you don't see this option, it's because your cell phone carrier doesn't support this feature. You can use Wi-Fi calling without a service on some carriers. Repeat these steps for each phone in the household.

Here's the iPhone steps:

1. On your iPhone, go to Settings > Cellular.

2. If your iPhone has Dual SIM, choose a line (below SIMs).

3. Tap "Wi-Fi Calling," then turn on Wi-Fi calling on this iPhone.

4. Enter or confirm your address for emergency services. 