

Connections

January 2023



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 27, Issue 1

Energy industry continues to evolve to serve members

When your cooperative was first organized in 1935, electricity was purchased from nearby power plants in the 1930s-1940s. In 1950 Federated had its own diesel power plant adjacent to the existing headquarters' site. In 1954 the cooperative received hydropower from the Missouri River. Then power shortages led to baseload power coal plants built in the 1970s. Load growth meant peaking plants were added in the 2000s. Federated even added its own "Welcome" wind turbine in 2008, as green energy took off. Now, we are seeing another major shift to even

more renewables. Along with being a hub for wind energy in southwestern Minnesota, comes the need for transmission lines to move that power to the customers.

Both Jackson and Martin counties have seen transmission lines added in the past decade to serve the wind turbines and it will continue. "The state of Minnesota with all three branches of government being the same party will likely push for even



This stretch of overhead line south of Lakefield (along County Road 12) will be changed to underground line in 2023 so a new transmission line can serve a wind farm development.

more renewables and carbon-free electricity this session," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "This is also occurring on the federal level with dollars dedicated for green energy, electricity infrastructure and electric vehicles."

The Three Waters Wind project is the next one on the horizon in Federated's service area in the Lakefield and Okabena area. "As the wind developer applies for permits with the state and county, Federated will relocate some

overhead single- and three-phase lines to underground to make way for new transmission lines' right-of-way," Reimer added. "The wind developer will compensate Federated for our efforts to relocate 15.5 miles of our lines. Co-op members will not have to foot the bill through their Federated rates."

Locally, this wind turbine and transmission line development creates construction jobs and restaurant/hotel spending to serve the construction workers. Factor in added tax revenue from the construction and wind production taxes, which minimizes the needed local landowner tax increases.

These projects are structured in such a way to have the least amount of impact on the land. The project managers are in constant contact with Federated, along with state and local officials, as they make their way through the permitting processes.

With the goal of a lower carbon footprint these projects will be more of the norm as the years progress. Your co-ops wants to keep you informed about the decisions that are made and bring these changes to light. ☺

At A Glance



Ring in New Year with a shiny new electric water heater

Procrastinate no more! Call Federated to schedule your new water heater installation. Replace your ancient water heater before it bursts or just conks out! The price is \$589, plus tax. Installation is included on these USA-made and insulated water heaters. ☺



Raise the IQ of your home's energy efficiency with these smart devices & appliances

All kinds of devices and appliances are getting smarter. You probably already know about TVs and thermostats (and, of course, phones). Now more devices with internet capabilities allow for easier and more automated control, like light bulbs, washers and dryers, refrigerators and security systems.

Smart home technologies use voice command or a cell phone app, your computer or tablet for remote control, giving you more freedom to customize parts of your home. Plus, you'll receive alerts and information about an action being finished (dishwasher cycle finished) or a potential issue.

Types of smart devices

- Smart speakers like the Amazon Echo and Google Home allow you to perform many tasks through voice command (check weather, turn on/off lights, etc...) and can connect to other smart home devices to give you additional control.

- Smart lighting comes in a few forms. Basic smart light bulbs, color-changing bulbs and smart light switches give you flexibility in your lighting options. Switches may require your electrician for installation. For added security many smart lights can be set up on a vacation mode to make it seem like someone's at home turning on the lights when you're out of town.

- Smart plugs connect to a traditional outlet to power a device. They then manage what's plugged in, set up a schedule or timer, or see how much energy is being used.

- Smart thermostats, like ones from Nest, Ecobee or your heating contractor, make it easier to adjust your home's temperature for different times of day or when coming home from work or vacation; snowbirds can monitor the indoor temp of the northern home too.

- Smart appliances, such as refrigerators, microwaves and ovens, often come with added functionality that allow for operation through an app or voice command.

- Smart security systems can be found with a variety of setups to meet your needs, allowing you to monitor and control your home's security from virtually anywhere using cameras and motion sensors. (See the ad on Page 7 for Heartland Security, a subsidiary or your electric co-op.)

Benefits from using smart devices

- Convenience and comfort are the primary advantage




See the light! Upgrade your home's energy IQ! Add smart lighting that you can turn on using your smart phone even if you are gone. Otherwise, invest in a smart security system from Heartland Security, for video monitoring on your smart phone, unlock doors, turn on/off lights and open/close garage door.

you'll gain with smart home technology. Gain a remote and sometimes hands-free way to control devices and customize a variety of actions, from scheduling to automating to occupancy sensing.

- Smart appliances offer accessibility, which is a big perk for an aging population. Having the ability to shut off lights or change the temperature via voice command can be especially helpful for those with mobility, dexterity, memory or vision issues. Some smart speakers also allow family members to check in and communicate with each other.

- Smart home technologies save energy thanks to their added control and automation. For example, avoid wasting electricity by setting up your thermostats and lights to operate only when you need them. Some thermostats even monitor the health of your heating and cooling system to alert you or your contractor before a system failure.

Visit your electric cooperative's website or call the office to request the rebate forms for Smart thermostats, Energy Star refrigerators, freezers and dehumidifiers. 

Smart refrigerator has window into efficiency

The LG InstaView Refrigerator is rated one of the best-value smart fridges available. Its modern exterior includes flat doors, discreet pocket handles and a seamless, edge-to-edge InstaView® glass panel. Just knock twice on the panel and it illuminates the interior to show you what is inside, rather than opening the door.

Other features include:

- Smooth Touch Ice Dispenser. Dual ice makers automatically create standard ice cubes, crushed ice and slow-melting round craft ice for entertaining. Gain easy access to ice when you need it without sacrificing valuable shelf space.


- Enjoy chilled filtered water with just a touch with a PrintProof™ finish that leaves no smudges behind.

- Capacity is 27.1 cubic feet. The refrigerator's freezer capacity is 9.6 cubic feet.

- Most LG refrigerators have a one-year warranty that covers labor and parts.



- Optional extended warranty exists.
- If you're someone who enjoys the latest technology and smart home devices, this refrigerator has a connected app that allows you to monitor and operate your fridge from anywhere. You can use the app to adjust the temperature controls, activate the odor filter and even make a batch of ice for your dinner party. The app can also alert you when the fridge door is left open. You can connect your WiFi-enabled LG refrigerator to smart home speakers too, so you can use voice commands for the fridge.

The LG InstaView suggested retail price lists around \$3,000. Be sure to take advantage of the cooperative's Energy Star rebate too. 

The LG InstaView refrigerator has a special window in the door to enable you to see inside without opening the refrigerator and wasting energy. Knock twice on the window, and the interior lights up to illuminate items.

Safety

Electric space heater safety tips

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather. Space heaters without adequate safety features can cause fire and electrical hazards when placed near combustibles or are improperly plugged into the outlet.

Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Keep these tips in mind.

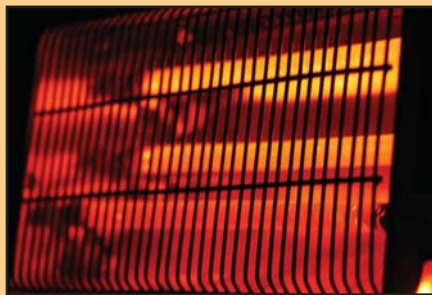
- Look for the label showing the space heater meets standards of a recognized testing laboratory.

- Before using any space heater, carefully read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels.

- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.

- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when leaving a room or going to sleep; don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.

- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook



food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.

- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.


- Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.

- Locate space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.

- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.

- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.

- Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use.

See Page 7 for the cost of running a space heater. 

— Information courtesy of esfi.org

Federated Focus

Two \$50 bill credit winners



Thanks go to all the Federated members who signed up for outage text notifications when their power goes out and is restored. The two names drawn for the \$50 bill credits were:

- Wayne Rasche, Heron Lake
- Darren Schwieger, Fairmont.

You can still sign up for outage text notifications. Go to Federated's home page and enroll your cell phone numbers on your electric accounts. You will need your account number from your electric bill.

Nondiscrimination notice



If you wish to file a Civil Rights complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, at any USDA office or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7742 or e-mail program.intake@usda.gov.

Operation Round Up deadline

The deadline for spring funding is February 10 for funds awarded in April. Find the application on Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop). Otherwise, call or e-mail the office to request funding for your organization, school and fire department. ☺



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Goodbye 2022! Broadband marks its first year at co-op

It's that time of year when we close out 2022 and get ready to begin 2023. Let's start with a year in review. As we began the year, our broadband business was one of the first things out of the gate. It was a giant leap forward to achieving our goal of closing the digital divide. Our service offerings grew into Martin County, with the construction of a wireless ring capable of serving 1,000 or more members. Our growth exceeded our expectations and we thank you for that. Our plans keep evolving. We are hoping to take full advantage of the billions of dollars being put into the economy with much of that for fiber-to-the-home grants. Our Ceylon project got started in mid-October; while Mother Nature shut us down just before Thanksgiving, we did install about half of the conduit and pedestals. This project will begin again in the spring of '23 with hopes of completion by the end of June. Once completed, the residents and businesses of Ceylon will have some of the highest internet speeds available in Martin County.

Line construction tackled major projects like new Manyaska substation

Our electric distribution system underwent more improvements through our most current work plan, which included several miles of overhead to underground conversions of older lines subject to weather extremes. Sherburn, due to the voltage of that system, underwent a conversion, along with the construction of a new substation (Manyaska sub); this gives the town and substation multiple sources of alternate backfeeds in times of emergency. We also concentrated on our substation system protection equipment. Voltage regulators, switches, circuit reclosures were systematically replaced. The supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system started a couple years ago continued getting us one step closer to being able to monitor substation loadings within our facility. This gives operations a heads up on how our systems are performing to manage issues before trouble occurs.

Radio control receivers changeouts move along with contractor

Our load management team moved things into high gear once we started getting a steady delivery of devices. They are literally visiting every site we have and replacing old devices with new technology that is more dependable. All of this helps us control our peak demands and helps us control costs. It also has the capability of helping the transmission grid during generation shortages with the hope of eliminating blackouts.

2023 Work Plan & Budget balances upgrades and fiscal responsibility

We are now in the 2023 budget and new work plan development and implementation mode. We will present a new six-year work plan to the Board at December's meeting. The budget will follow in January or as soon as 2022 is closed out. A six-year work plan isn't the norm; however, due to many factors we decided to take a slightly slower approach and space our expenses over a longer period. Our financial team has been working on a new long-range financial forecast that tells us what we should expect, as it relates to revenues and expenses. Power supply costs are the biggest driver making up about 80 cents of each dollar. The other 20 or so percent consists of things like labor, materials, fuel, operating costs, collections and customer service. The new financial model pays close attention to equity, several different operating ratios and is a living document, which can be updated with current inputs to give us the most accurate information possible. We're excited about this new tool. It will be a great benefit to planning both operationally and financially.

In closing, we do our best to keep you, as members, well informed about your cooperative; we are always looking for ways to improve. If there is something on your mind or if you have a suggestion for us, we're all ears. ☺

Remembering Mark Raboin, a former co-op journeyman lineman



Federated remembers Journeyman Lineman Mark Raboin, Jackson, who died December 11. He worked at Federated 32

years until 2006 when an electrical contact accident occurred.

“During Mark’s time at Federated, he was a pleasure to work with and be around,” stated Operations Manager George Madden. “He always was willing to help, offer advice or guidance to the young guys and lead by example. He was deeply missed at Federated when he retired, but it was always great to see him outside of work. When running into Mark on his way to or from hunting or one of his other hobbies, he was always eager to hear how things were going at Federated; he was genuinely happy when he would hear things were going well. Mark will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.” ☺

Service call changes

Federated wanted to inform members that the service calls for water heater and Dual Heat have changed, effective January 1, 2023.

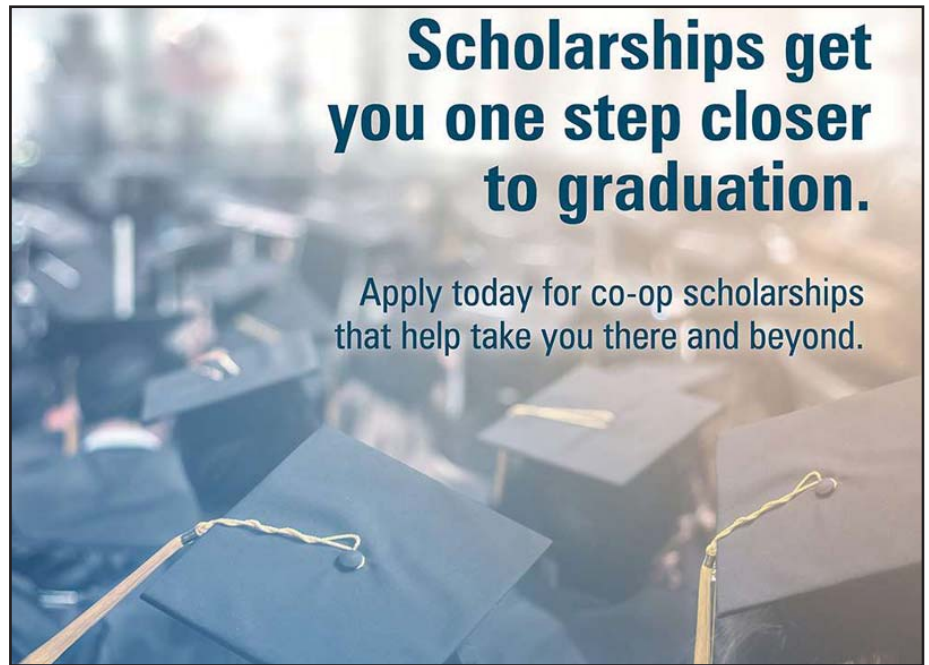
The water heater service call increased to \$185, due to increasing labor, parts’ prices and mileage. Parts are included in this pricing. After hours the water heater service call will be \$250 with parts included.

Members who need a Dual Heat service call for their electric heat system will be charged \$110, plus parts. After hours the price will be \$250, plus parts.

In addition, service calls for Exede/WildBlue satellite internet increased to \$125. Parts, if needed are extra. ☺



See U.S. history! High school students: enter Federated’s Youth Tour Contest. Complete the application and 300-word, energy-related essay. See details on Federated’s website or see the school counselor. Five finalists do 15 minute interviews March 20. First place is the D.C. trip June 13-18. Second place is \$150 and third place is \$100. The first 15 to apply receive \$20 Amazon gift cards. Encourage your child, relative or neighborhood teen to enter today! See monuments, museums and memorials! Make new friends too! It’s a trip of a lifetime! ☺



Federated will award two \$1,000 Basin scholarships to the sons/daughters of Federated members graduating from high school or have a year of higher education left. Apply by January 27. See Federated’s website or your school counselor for the application and details. Plus, the Operation Round Up scholarship applications will come as a February electric bill insert. Federated provides nine \$700 scholarships for sons/daughters of Federated members who are graduating high school seniors. ☺

Minnesota's goal: 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040; Electric co-ops want reliability & affordability priority too

This year's Minnesota legislative session will impact your future electricity.

With one party controlling the house, senate and governor's office carbon-free electricity is now on an even faster track.

In 2021 renewables generated 30 percent of Minnesota electricity (wind, solar, biomass and hydropower). The state lawmakers want 100 percent of Minnesota's electricity coming from carbon-free sources by 2040.

Presently, Xcel Energy and Minnesota Power already set 2050 as goals for carbon-free electricity.

"Electric cooperatives are not opposed to renewables, but are concerned that 100 percent clean energy will hurt cooperative members," stated Darrick Moe, Minnesota Rural Electric Association's president and CEO. "We would like to see all 'All Tech on Deck.' This means not simply focusing on wind, solar and batteries. Let's also include nuclear, large hydropower, carbon-capture/sequestration (putting carbon back into the ground) and hydrogen as clean energy resources."



Electric cooperatives do not need mandates that force non-profits to choose between compliance and serving our member-owners, Moe said. Set the goal and let each co-op find its way to getting there so we can balance reliability and affordability.

Presently, the transmission system is not built for local renewables. More transmission lines need to be built and that takes time and money. Supply chain and labor shortages are issues too.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which

oversees reliability nationally and in the Midwest, has warned of power generation shortfalls and the potential of rolling blackouts in the coming years.

Due to inflation, energy prices are already increasing for natural gas, electricity and the materials to build distribution and transmission lines.

In addition, the cost of the energy relative to income is 40 percent higher in rural Minnesota than the Twin Cities Metro area.

"Electric cooperatives want to be a part of the Minnesota policy direction," stated Brown County REA's CEO Mike Heidemann. "We will work with our legislators to voice these concerns and hope they will meet us halfway."

"It would be a terrible outcome if the Minnesota legislation passes without incorporating our advice," added Federated Rural Electric's General Manager Scott Reimer. "We hate to see Minnesota face rolling blackouts and sky-rocketing electric rates in the coming years. The utility industry would lose our credibility." ⁽¹⁾

Co-ops partner with Voices for Cooperative Power to speak up on legislative policies impacting rural energy consumers

Help us work to keep energy reliable and affordable in Minnesota

As a local energy cooperative, we work daily to provide reliable, affordable power to the communities and member-owners we serve.

Co-ops have a history of coming together to turn on the lights for rural energy consumers. Over the years co-ops adapted to continue providing reliable, affordable energy even though the industry changes at a rapid pace. However, this year, we need your help!

We are one of 50 Minnesota electric co-op's that serves rural energy consumers. Through our statewide organization, Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), and our national organization, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), we

are working to have a voice at the table for this upcoming legislative session and make our cooperative voices heard for Minnesota's energy policy.

Help us advocate for reliable, affordable energy for all of Minnesota's energy consumers; sign up for Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP), a network of electric cooperative member-owners who are working together to ensure the needs of rural America are reflected in state and national policy decisions.

You can learn more and sign up at <https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/minnesota>.

Through VCP, you will have access to resources designed to help you learn more about your local and national legislators and about issues impacting

rural energy cooperatives both in Minnesota and across the nation. VCP also provides the tools and information you need to communicate easily and effectively with our state legislators regarding Minnesota's energy policies and legislation.

Let's elevate our rural voices across the state to help keep electricity reliable and affordable for all. Thank you!

VCP is a free service for electric co-ops through NRECA. VCP exposes you to policy issues impacting energy co-ops. NRECA maintains the service and sets the national priorities.

Joining VCP is optional. You are not enrolled automatically, nor will you be required to contact your legislators by signing up. You can withdraw your registration at any time. ⁽²⁾

Pretty please! Share with me your yummy cheesecake recipes!

Cheesecake reigns! Share your cheesecake recipes, whether it's cupcake size, pie, dessert or the official cheesecake. Mail your favorite cheesecake recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by January 27. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Space heater economics 101



A space heater can add \$30-\$60 to your monthly electric bill. Running one for 12 hours a day at the average U.S. electric rate of 13.2 cents equals \$1.68 a day or \$47.52 for a month. Minimize their use for limited or temporary heating in a room. Turn off space heaters when leaving the room. 📧

German Apple Pancake

by Sue Pohlman, Lakefield

4 T. butter, melted & divided
 1 large green apple, peeled & thinly sliced
 4 T. sugar, divided
 3/4 tsp. cinnamon, divided
 3 eggs
 2/3 c. milk
 1/2 c. flour
 pinch of salt
 Melt butter. Brush 2 T. over the bottom 10" cast iron skillet. Add apple slices. Sprinkle 3 T. sugar and 1/2 tsp. cinnamon over apples. Cook over medium heat until apples are tender; stir occasionally (about six minutes).

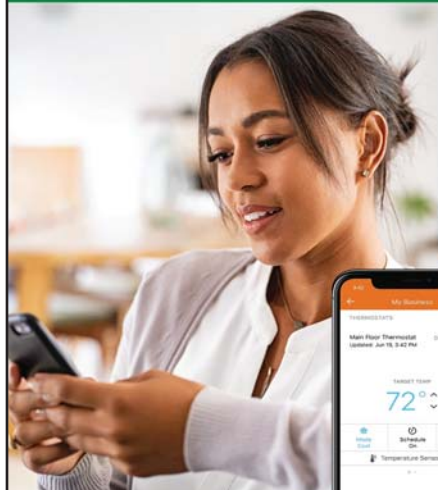
While apples are cooking, place eggs, milk, flour, 2 T. melted butter, 1 T. sugar, 1/4 tsp. cinnamon and salt into a blender for 20 seconds to combine. Pour batter over apples. Place skillet into pre-heated 450° oven and bake until puffed and brown (about 10-15 minutes). Remove from oven. Cut around edge with a knife and then invert onto serving plate. Sift powdered sugar on top and serve. 📧



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

Put the power in your hands.



CONTROL YOUR LIGHTS, LOCKS, GARAGE DOOR, AND MORE ALL FROM ONE APP.

As part of a monitored security system, interactive services let you remotely adjust and monitor your system from your phone. Watch live or recorded video, disarm your system, and more.



Security • Video • Medical Alerts
 888-264-6380 • heartlandss.com

Recipe revival! Share yours!

Help us out with recipes for the 2023 *Connections* newsletters! Submit recipes now for printing in the upcoming issues.



- January — cheesecake
- February — freezer meals
- March — raisins
- April — tortillas
- May — spinach
- June — ice cream
- July — hot dogs, brats & toppings

- August — carrots
- September — sauerkraut
- October — ham
- November — pecans
- December — oysters

Thanks for sharing. Use the e-mail or mailing address above. 📧



Phone a friend!

Refer a new customer & you receive free month of service when they sign up

Residential packages

- 6MB down/2MB up** \$50/month
 - Perfect speed for e-mails, surfing & Facebook
- 15MB down/2MB up** \$70/month
 - Upgrade to streaming TV & drop satellite TV
- 25MB down/3MB up** \$80/month
 - Works with larger households, downloads & gaming
- 40MB down/3MB up** \$90/month
 - Gamers, work from home and all of the above!

Basic installation fee \$150

We offer business packages & streaming TV too!



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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.

One year!

Highlights from first year as Federated Broadband

January marks the one-year anniversary of Federated Broadband. It's been an exciting year. Here are a few first year highlights.

- Doubled our coverage area by adding six towers in Martin County for a total of 23. Jackson County features 34 towers, along with 55 towers in adjacent counties.

- Increased internet subscribers by 13 percent — more growth than budgeted.

- Put the first fiber in the ground to serve Ceylon residents, thanks to that town's grant. Installs and home connections will resume when the ground thaws.

- Worked on fiber grant applications to serve Jackson and Martin Counties.

- Merged broadband billing with the electric accounts so customers receive one billing envelope. Call or e-mail us with your current phone number and e-mail in case we need to reach you.

Thanks for trusting Federated Broadband as your local, cooperatively-owned high-speed internet provider. Spread the word to your neighbors and you can get a referral credit when your name is mentioned. 