

Connections

October 2022

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 26, Issue 10

October is Cooperative Month! We are celebrating you — our member-owners

October is an eventful month with school, community and sports in full swing. It's also when all cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When Federated Rural Electric celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our member-owners.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our area a better place. "Concern for community" is one of seven guiding principles that all co-ops share.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions; being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

Federated helps our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board, comprised of neighbors who live right here in our community. Because we're local, we understand our communities' unique needs and strive to help meet them.

We're proud to support local youth through our Youth Tour and scholarship programs. With your help we offer Operation Round Up program to provide assistance to our community's worthy local organizations, schools and fire departments. We support

Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

area food shelves, 4-H programs and our economic development programs. Our actions expanded into other needed services like CTV, Heartland Security and most recently Federated Broadband.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together toward a common goal, mutually benefitting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community where they live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. That's why we have numerous

programs, including rebates ranging from retrofit lighting upgrades, heat pumps and Energy Star appliances (dehumidifiers, refrigerators and freezers.)

We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven't already, download our app (Federated Rural Electric) through the app store. Conveniently monitor and manage your energy use, pay your bills and set up reminders too. Of course, we're here to help, so give us a call if you have questions about your energy bills or e-mail us (billing@federatedrea.coop).

Federated continuously examines ways to operate more efficiently, while providing the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect. We were built by the members we serve.

At A Glance



Check our online outage map to see extent of an outage

If your power goes out, call Federated to report it. Can't get through? It may be a larger outage. Pull up the home page of our website (www.federatedrea.coop) to look at our public outage map. It shows how many outages by each township. Bookmark this page on your phone.



Energy Wise

Every homeowner has a 'stake' in stopping the hidden costs of the energy vampires

Some people think vampires only come out on Halloween, but chances are you have vampires in your home every day of the year. The scary part is...they cost you money!

"Vampire" electronics are devices that continue to use energy, even when they are "off." Even when they just sit there, they add dollars and cents to your energy bill.

According to the CNET website, the average home sees about 10 percent of its total energy use go to energy vampires. That can cost \$250 a year. CNET also lists the most common types of energy vampires in the average home and their hidden costs.

Computers costs add up

According to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Standby Project, operated by the Department of Energy, a desktop computer can cost more than \$23 per year in stand-by mode. The monitor costs \$1.53 per year on average. Modems or routers contribute about another \$7 per year. That means a computer system can siphon \$30 a year in energy even when not in use. If you have more than one computer, the cost increases.

Televisions show more money

LED TVs are more energy-efficient than older models, but they still use up to \$20 per year in energy when switched off.

Cable boxes cost more yet. They use nearly \$50 in energy per year if you keep them plugged in at all times.

Sound systems hear jingling coins

With TVs come stereos and sound systems to make the home-theater experience complete. Audio systems



Energy vampires are electronics or appliances that use energy even when off. Common energy vampires include stereos, TVs and more. Learn how to defeat them to save on your electric bill.

can cost nearly \$10 per year when they stay plugged into the outlet. CD players or record players can add another \$5. Subwoofers and audio receivers also use energy when off so consider unplugging them when not in use.

Identify and defeat energy vampires

CNET reports that any device with an external power supply is likely using energy even when off. Likewise, devices with a remote control are often energy vampires because they are waiting for input. Appliances with continuous displays: clocks on microwaves or screensavers on computers always use energy too.

The simplest way to slay energy vampires is by unplugging devices that are not in use. However, this can be so annoying and such a hassle. Make it so much simpler by just grouping energy vampires together and plugging

them into one power strip that can turn off multiple devices all at once. For example, a single power strip could cover your TV, cable box and audio system.

Advanced power strips are also available for purchase that prevent electronics from drawing power when they're turned off or not in use.



If you'd like to learn more about energy-saving tips, just request the "101 Easy Ways to Save Energy and Money" booklet. Stop by the cooperative's office to pick

yours up.

Multi-colored smart floodlight available

The AuroraLux Smart Floodlight from Novostella is different from other smart flood lights. Besides providing regular white floodlight, it can present multiple colors simultaneously.

With the AuroraLux you can control not only one LED floodlight from your phone, but also multiple floodlights at the same time. This allows for a variety of applications for landscaping, home security and more.

The AuroraLux works with Amazon Alexa (Echo/Dot/Tap) and Google Assistant. Its app is compatible with Android & iOS. Once installed, you can control lights with a simple tap or a voice command.

Set schedules to automatically turn on and off the floodlight as routines




The AuroraLux Smart Floodlight gives you a rainbow of colors to control from your Smartphone.

dictate. A memory function is also available. The last settings are saved for quick access to make daily use more convenient.

Finally, the AuroraLux has a music mode that syncs the floodlights to your favorite music. This makes it a great decoration for the upcoming holidays, local festivals and family parties — both indoors and out.


The AuroraLux features a waterproof rating and superior heat diffusion to ensure stable performance under most weather conditions.

The AuroraLux comes in a variety of wattages, depending on your choice of brightness (20-100). The cost ranges from \$60-\$100. 

Safety

Be safe around electricity at harvest

Watch out for electric poles during this fall harvest and when working the ground. Poles are no match for today's powerful farm machinery.

- Use a spotter and don't rush.
- Look out for guy wires and green padmount transformers too.
- Stay inside the cab and call your electric cooperative if you break one.
- If you break it, you will buy it, which costs about \$2,000 on your farm insurance. It's even more costly after normal business hours due to overtime.
- If you burn ditches, protect the poles and never leave a fire unattended. A burned pole is weaker during a major storm. 

Federated Focus

Upgrade to LED shop bulb




Now that darkness arrives so much earlier, extend your work with an LED light bulb in the garage, machine shed or shop area. These LED bulbs sold at Federated already have the rebate built into the pricing. The 22-watt LED replaces a 150-watt incandescent, 40-watt compact fluorescent or 100 watt-HID bulb. Price: \$39.50, plus tax. Stop by our lobby to buy one or several, while the supply lasts at this pricing!

Water heater haunting you?



Spooked by how old your water heater has become? Upgrade to an energy-efficient, USA-made, lifetime-warranty against leaks for the original owner! Avoid the October tricks of a leaky water heater that becomes a gushing geyser! Treat yourself to a worry-free hot shower by calling Federated today to schedule your water heater with free installation for \$589, plus tax.

Even Pay amounts adjusted

Federated members on the Even Pay program will see adjustments to their Even Pay amounts. Every six months Federated reviews the average payment to make sure it is keeping up with the actual usage. If there's a credit, the amount is adjusted down; if there's a deficit, the average amount is increased. Members can expect an increase in their Even Pay amount due to a hotter summer than last year, plus higher power cost adjustment (PCA) costs. 



Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Harvest and fall arrived! Look up for power lines!

We would be remiss if we didn't provide a caution reminder when it comes to farm equipment and power lines. They don't mix well. As you enter the fields, please look around as our lines may have changed. Our crews were busy this summer with line projects; what was there last fall, may not be there now or it moved due to reconstruction. Those underground lines eliminate the poles for you, but the pedestals and padmount transformers exist. Both are green and occupy the same right of way, but are shorter and harder to see. We put identification markers on them, but if the sun hits you just right, it could be just glare. Look around for changes. Poles are still prevalent so the same caution applies and with larger equipment depth perception out the side can be an issue. If you do make contact, please call us right away and our crews will respond. Remember to use 911 in emergencies and 811 if you're planning excavation that may hit buried lines causing damage.

Broadband project starts in Ceylon & grant applications continue

We just received our approval on the environmental review of the Ceylon project and work is now underway. Our contractors, Loosbrock Digging Service and Foxtail Utilities, a fiber-splicing contractor, will handle the installations. Our broadband team will meet onsite with homeowners to establish routes and entry points into the home for the service. Once completed, residents of Ceylon will have access to gigabit speed fiber to the home for both download and upload.

Federated remains steadfast in our goal to bring the same fast internet to the rural homes and businesses of Jackson and Martin Counties. We continue to seek grants for our projects. The ReConnect 4 grant is open now; we will apply for all areas open in both counties. That application closes November 2.

Electric rates increasing due to rising natural gas prices & inflation


Electric rates nationwide are on the uptick, primarily due to natural gas prices remaining high, along with the materials needed in some cases doubling in price with extremely long lead times. Inflation hit our industry equally hard; yet, we adjust to it while keeping a close eye on reliability and the safety of our services. The national residential average is around the 14 cent per kilowatt-hour (kWh) range and some areas of the country could see increases of 7-10 percent. Our average in residential rate has risen to 10.8 cents per kWh, which includes the current power cost adjustment (PCA) charge. Going forward, we see the need for an increase to maintain the operations and an early prediction looks to be about 4 percent. All rate classes would see a proportionate share of the increase and we will be publishing details soon.

Get out and vote in the November elections!

One of the great things about our country is our right to vote. It's likely the most underutilized form of freedom of speech, but the easiest to accomplish. Vote in person or by mail. It's our way of giving direction to our elected leaders.

October is Cooperative Month! We salute you, our member-owners!

I'd like to end with the annual tradition of October being Cooperative Month. Celebrated by cooperatives nationwide, this is an opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, inclusive communities.

Federated thanks all of our member-owners for their patronage throughout the past year. Our 87-year history has been filled with great stories of how the cooperative business model has been a model of success for our communities. We take great pride in the CTV, Heartland Security, electric and broadband services we provide. Our goal is always to exceed your expectations, providing safe, reliable, affordable services with great member service. 

Federated coordinates \$30,000 worth of donations to four local fire departments

Federated Rural Electric recently presented a donation totaling \$7,500 each to four fire departments — Heron Lake, Jackson, Welcome and Granada.

Federated took advantage of matching funds from two organizations to triple the impact. “Federated donated \$2,500, then secured matching funds from CoBank’s Sharing Success Program and Basin Electric Cooperative,” stated Federated’s General Manager Scott Reimer. “Cooperatives are concerned about their local communities; we saw this as a way to help each fire department with costly equipment needs. We started with the two towns where we have buildings and will rotate this donation the following years until we’ve helped each fire department in our service area.”

CoBank provides Federated long-term financing for line construction projects, while Basin Electric is one of Federated’s wholesale power providers.

The Jackson Fire Department ordered the 100-foot aerial ladder fire truck this year for \$1.3 million dollars. “With larger grain elevators, grain bins and metal machine sheds we need to be able to reach those fires,” stated Kirk Dunlavey, fire department training officer. “This will be our first ladder truck and it can be shared through mutual aid with neighboring departments. Due to supply chain issues, we probably won’t have it until 2023. However, we are doing major fundraising so this donation is greatly appreciated.”

The Welcome Fire Department Relief Association will purchase an extrication tool. “This donation helps not only Welcome and the surrounding areas, but also helps travelers going down Interstate 90 as well,” stated Chris Borchardt, Welcome fire chief. “Our department is furnishing a new rescue truck. This donation will buy a Genesis battery-operated push/pull ram; it can be used to extricate people in auto accidents by moving the whole dash off their lap or move a piece of



The Heron Lake Fire Department received \$7,500 from Federated that will buy four sets of bunker gear.



The Granada Fire Department accepts their \$7,500 and will buy four new two-way radios. Federated’s General Manager Scott Reimer (holding envelope) presents the three checks.



The Welcome Fire Department buys an extrication tool with their \$7,500 donation. Federated Director Scott Thiesse (left) gives the check to Fire Chief Chris Borchardt.

farm equipment during an entanglement. Without donations from local companies our rural fire departments cannot survive.”

Meanwhile, the Heron Lake Fire Department will order four sets of bunker gear. “We will buy four sets of turnout gear, which includes pants/bibs, coats and suspenders,” explained Chad Diemer, who is the Heron Lake Fire Department chief. “This donation will cover two of these sets. This equipment needs to be replaced every 10 years



The Jackson Fire Department will use their \$7,500 on their first aerial ladder truck. Kirk Dunlavey and Dave Bond accept it from Federated’s Board President David A. Hansen (center).

so we really appreciate this donation.”

Finally, the Granada Fire Department will buy four two-way radios. Granada Fire Chief J.D. Gorackowski explains, “Firefighters wear these radios as they walk into a fire so they can communicate with each other. These new radios are spendy at \$1,600 each and help outfit more of our department, plus they also tie into the county’s system to communicate with others during mutual aid.” (5)

Dual Fuel members: fill up LP tanks so ready for increased load control events

Attention all Dual Fuel members with a second meter!

Inflationary pressures and supply constraints throughout the energy industry continue to drive unusually high prices in the electricity and natural gas markets. Forward curves indicate the current pricing environment will continue into the 2022-23 winter season. Additional pricing pressures exist in the wholesale power markets during the heating season due to natural gas supply competition with domestic heating. Great River Energy, our wholesale power provider, will manage costs by using our Dual Fuel program members to reduce load during peak pricing hours, which may include both morning and evening peak load periods.

As a reminder, the primary electric heating system can be controlled up to 12 hours per day and up to 400 hours a heating season. Control occurs for high electrical demand, high wholesale energy prices or system emergencies.

Because GRE anticipates increased control hours, your electric cooperative highly encourages Dual Fuel program participants to ensure you have adequate supplies of your secondary fuel source. Replenishing storage tanks now, typically leads to cost savings versus filling up during peak winter heating months.

In addition to purchasing in the early fall, you can also save money if you:

1. Buy a bigger tank, which allows you to stock up when prices are low.
2. Shop around and then lock in low rates. The propane market is competitive, so research rates and consider additional perks such as free service calls, maintenance, buy backs and bonuses. If rates are low, as they usually are in October, ask if the company will lock in the low rate for a period of time.
3. Ask about discounts from your LP provider. Sometimes these are made available for veterans, seniors,



employees of the state or major corporations, memberships in travel clubs or holder of credit cards. You never know where a discount may exist, so inquire.

4. Schedule deliveries carefully. Avoid holiday, weekend and other peak delivery times that may incur a fee.

5. Conserve propane by using less. Install a smart thermostat, keep appliances clean and well-serviced and choose energy-efficient models.

6. Upgrade your electric heat to a more efficient heat pump system that's

200 to 400 percent efficient. Take advantage of our heat pump rebates too. As a comparison, air source heat pumps are 200-300 percent efficient, while ground source heat pumps are 400 percent efficient. Furnaces are 60 to 90 percent efficient, depending on the age and fuel source.

Call and visit with the co-op's energy expert about Dual Fuel or heat pump questions. If you no longer have a functioning backup fossil fuel heating system, call us so we remove you from the Dual Fuel program. ☎

Co-op's \$25 Smart thermostat rebate warms up your wallet!

Be "smart" about your energy use! Install an Energy Star Smart thermostat (Wi-Fi-connected) to receive a \$25 rebate from your electric cooperative. Find the form on our website or call us.

Why pie? Why not pie? Share your favorite pie recipes with us!

My, oh my...I'm not gonna lie...I sure love pie! Share with us your favorite pie recipes, whether it's for meringue, pudding, fruit, cheesecake or even pecan pie. Mail your pie recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by October 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us!

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Turn to the co-op for your next water heater

Lake Winnibigoshish Wild Rice & Walleye by Linda Kilmer, New Ulm

- 2 lbs. walleye fillets
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 3 slices bacon, diced
- 1 c. fresh mushrooms
- ¼ c. onions, diced
- ¼ c. celery, diced
- 2 c. cooked wild rice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 T. melted butter

Season fillets. In skillet cook bacon until lightly browned. Add mushrooms, onions and celery, until opaque. Stir in wild rice and salt. Place fillets in well greased baking dish. Top with wild rice mixture and salt. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Cover with mushroom walnut sauce before serving.

Mushroom and Walnut Sauce

- 2 T. butter
- 1 T. minced onion
- 1 c. sliced mushrooms
- 3 T. flour
- ½ tsp. dried mustard
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. thyme
- 2 c. Half & Half
- ¼ c. walnuts, toasted

Melt butter in double boiler. Add minced onion and mushrooms, stir in flour, mustard, salt and thyme. Gradually stir in half and half. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in nuts.

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.

Monitored smoke detectors make a difference.

WHEN FIRE OR SMOKE HAPPENS, OUR RESPONSE CENTER IS NOTIFIED AND CONTACTS YOU OR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT RIGHT AWAY.

You can't hear a smoke alarm go off if you're not home. As part of a monitored security system, smoke detectors alert you before it's too late.

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Website: http://www.federatedrea.coop
Facebook.com/Federated
Phone: 847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520
Office hours: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Scott Reimer, General Manager

David A. Hansen, President — 841-1176
David Meschke, Vice President — 238-1122
Darvin Voss, Secretary/Treasurer — 370-3201
Bruce Brockmann — 399-3487
Glenn Dicks — 840-1075
Jon Saxen — 236-7027
Scott Thiesse — 399-6427

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.

New technician/installer joins Federated Broadband



Braden Schuett will help with tower maintenance and do installs for members signing up for Federated Broadband's tower internet service. He's holding a tower radio antenna.

Federated hired Braden Schuett, Lakefield, as its new IT technician/installer for the Broadband department. He started at Federated September 6.

Schuett is a graduate of Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Jackson with a powerline diploma and Jackson County Central High School. His hobbies include hunting, fishing and watching the Vikings.

"I've enjoyed meeting the fun and friendly staff members," Schuett said. "I'm looking forward to working inside and outside with members." ☺

No tricks, just treats from Federated Broadband!

If your internet only tricks you with marginal service or poor customer service, switch to us for a local, reliable treat every day!

Residential packages

- | | |
|--|------------|
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| • Perfect speed for e-mails, surfing & Facebook | |
| 15MB down/2MB up | \$70/month |
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| 25MB down/3MB up | \$80/month |
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