

# Connections

December 2022



For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric

Volume 26, Issue 12

## Students: see D.C. for free! Enter Youth Tour Contest Top 10 reasons to apply

Washington, D.C. is the place to be! High school students entering Federated's 2023 Youth Tour Contest can win the free trip June 13-18.

Let's count the top 10 reasons why your high school student should enter.

1. Visit the national monuments for Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln.
2. Make friends with the other 40 Minnesota delegates and meet 1,000 students from across the nation sent by their local electric cooperative.
3. Meet your Minnesota representative and senators at the Capitol.
4. See history come to life with visits to Mount Vernon, Arlington Cemetery and Holocaust Museum.
5. Experience how freedom isn't free with visits to the Vietnam, Korean and World War II monuments.
6. Explore the Smithsonian Museum complex — the largest in the world.
7. Expand your cultural experiences with a theater show, riverboat ride, Youth Tour dance and trade state pins.
8. Looks great on your resume for scholarships!
9. Apply to be the Minnesota delegate on the Youth Leadership Council for additional travel to D.C. and San Antonio, Texas.
10. After attending, apply for the national \$10,000 and four \$1,000



**"Capitolize" on your summer vacation by earning a free trip to Washington, D.C. as Federated's Youth Tour delegate, just like Eli Hedstrom, Lakefield, did in 2022.**

Glenn English Scholarships.

These priceless memories are easily achievable. The contest is open to high school students in Jackson and Martin County. Write a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic; fill out the two-page application by February 3.

Five finalists will be called back for 15-minute interviews March 20. Grand prize is the free trip to D.C. Second place earns \$150, while third place receives \$100. The first 15 to apply also receive a \$20 Amazon gift card. Find the application and details at

[www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop) or visit your school counselor for the application.

Last year's winner, Eli Hedstrom, Lakefield, said this about the trip: "I am so grateful that I could go to our nation's capital and learn about our republic. It was amazing to see our Declaration of Independence and Constitution at the National Archives. I think it is important for everyone to understand what a great country we live in — the need to protect our freedom, be involved in politics and learn about our country."

### At A Glance



The stockings were hung by the chimney with care...

"Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. When what to my wondering eyes should appear? A water heater leaking and that's my worst fear, oh dear! Don't let your holidays be ruined; schedule your install with Federated.



# Plugging new ways to save energy!

Let's try a new "outlet" as a way to save energy that's worth plugging!

Connect your electric items to smart devices that can operate what is plugged into them according to a set schedule or temperature. Then you don't forget to turn things on and off. Check out these two options.

## Prime Outdoor Timer

If you have outdoor Christmas lights, they probably run all night. Maybe you would like to turn them off after midnight and save some energy, but who wants to get out of bed and go unplug them outside when it's below zero. Maybe you have other devices outside in the winter that are running; it is a hassle to go out in the cold and turn them on and off. Now you can do it remotely.

The Prime Outdoor Timer gives you the ability to remotely turn on and off devices that are plugged into it. It has seven modes: two hour, four hour, six hour, eight hour, repeat dusk to dawn or on/off override. The timer is photocell activated and resets only after the programming cycle has completed interruption. You can plug up to two devices into the remote timer.

The Prime Outdoor Timer is available from places like Ace Hardware and online for approximately \$25.

## Thermo Cube

The Thermo Cube plugs into electrical outlets and turns power on automatically according to ambient air temperature. Therefore, you save money by using power only when temperatures require heating or cooling.

Five models of Thermo Cube are available with different temperature ranges to choose from. Each unit has two receptacles for use with more than one electrical device.

The cold weather model turns on around 0°F, and turns off as temperature rises above 10°F. It is ideal for automotive applications, including engine and battery heaters.

Another model turns on as the temperature falls to approximately 35°F, off as temperature rises above 45°F. It is ideal for home and farm applications, such as pond de-icers, unheated rooms, pump houses, greenhouses, boats and RVs. The Thermo Cube is available online and in stores; it costs approximately \$16.

Check out these two devices if you are interested in giving yourself more options to save money remotely with your out-of-easy reach electrical devices. (L)



The Prime Outdoor Timer allows you to remotely turn on or off the outdoor holiday lights without venturing outside!



The Thermo Cube help homeowners save money by automatically turning off out-of-reach electric devices, according to the surrounding air temperature.



## Hang a meteor shower in your backyard


New varieties of LED Christmas lights continue to show up in stores to make the holidays more festive than ever. Now “meteor shower” lights are available. They hang vertically, and the light “drips” down the length of a series of tubes.

Meteor lights are available in stores and online from a variety of manufacturers. Generally, they are built to be waterproof for indoor and outdoor use. Since they are LED lights, they are energy-efficient and long lasting.

Typically, each string has eight tubes containing 24 LED lights. The wire between each tube is about 16 inches, meaning the length of the string is about 10 feet. More than one string can be connected together. It is recommended to connect (at most) four strings to ensure all the lights work well and achieve the best brightness.

The LED lights will not overheat so there is little danger of fire. Just plug them in to turn them on and unplug to turn them off (or check out the remote switch on Page 2).

Meteor lights make a great addition to enhance your outdoor scenery and provide a beautiful, dazzling display at night. Use them for Halloween, Christmas, New Year, weddings, parties and more. Choose from blue or white.

Meteor lights typically cost about \$15 for a 10-foot string. 



LED meteor lights can bring an otherworldly sparkle to your holidays!


## Safety

### Tis the season to celebrate safely

To make sure your holidays don't go from merry to scary, remember these holiday safety tips.

- Keep decorations at least three feet away from heat sources — especially those with an open flame, like fireplaces and candles. Remember to blow out your candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Do not run cords under rugs or furniture, out of windows or across walkways and sidewalks.
- If you have a natural Christmas tree, water it to keep it fresh and safe. Real trees can dry up and turn into kindling in no time at all. Get rid of the tree after Christmas. Dried-out trees are a fire hazard and should not be left in the home or garage.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave your home and when you're sleeping.
- If you're using extension cords or adapters that add receptacles, hire a qualified electrician to add more outlets to your home. Extension cords are common causes of home fires.



- Only use electronics in dry areas. As tempting as it is, don't decorate your aquarium with icicle lights.
  - Phones and tablets should stay on your nightstand. We all love falling asleep to the muffled crooning of Bing Crosby, but overheated electronics under blankets are dangerous.
  - Every home needs a working smoke alarm in each bedroom, outside sleeping areas and on every level, including the basement. Plus, test your own smoke detectors to make sure they're working. Think about giving them as gifts.
  - The best gift for your family is to upgrade to Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter breakers or outlets (AFCIs). It is estimated that half of the electrical fires that occur every year could be prevented by AFCIs.
  - If you're using a space heater, switch it off before leaving the room. It only takes seconds for a fire to start if a space heater tips over or comes in contact with something combustible, like a blanket or curtains.
  - Discard damaged or worn-out decorations. 
- Information courtesy of [esfi.org](http://esfi.org)

# Federated Focus

## Operation Round Up deadline

The fall recipients of Operation Round Up funding are listed on Page 5. The spring funding deadline is February 10 with recipients announced in April. Find the application at federatedrea.coop, call or e-mail info@federatedrea.coop to request it. The eligibility guidelines are posted on the website.



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## Water heater credit transition

Federated's Board of Directors approved moving away from monthly water heater credits on electric bills for the storage water heaters of \$1.50, \$4 or \$5.50 monthly, effective this heating season. Instead, the Dual Heat and water heater credits of \$4 and \$5.50 will be moved into the Dual Fuel discount rate, which moved from a 1.4 cent discount to 2.2 cent discount. The \$1.50 credit will instead go toward discounting the price of new water heater purchases. This change improves paperwork processing and maintains the larger incentive to those using their Dual Heat systems.

## Closed for the holidays



Federated will be closed December 26 and January 2, which are both the recognized legal

holidays. Crews are on call in case of outages. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Bright idea for last minute gift!

What do you get for someone who has it all? A gift certificate or advance payment on a Federated member's electricity or broadband bill! Call billing today! ☎



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## Manyaska substation nears completion

Winter is upon us, which means an end to most outside construction projects. One of the large projects we took on this year was the construction of the new "Manyaska" substation in Sherburn. The project has been in the planning and construction phase for roughly two years and is now nearing completion. The new substation was energized November 14, 2022; however, no members have been switched over just yet as we are still in the testing phase and awaiting the delivery of the last of three voltage regulators, which should be in shortly. Once all the testing is done and things are configured properly, we will start the conversion process. If all goes well that could begin sometime the week of December 5.

This will be the first new substation built in more than 30 years on the Federated system (other than what was built for special loads, such as the ethanol plants). The new sub will provide additional growth capacity, as well as allow backfeeds from two other substations for redundancy. In fact, when the conversion process begins, we will use the Welcome and Dunnell substations to give us operational flexibility to mitigate any outage times. The price tag was \$1.3 million and it is a 50-plus-year asset so it's a good long-term investment. Once done it will eliminate the voltage miss match left from the 2015 Alliant acquisition. The existing substation that is in the middle of town will be torn down and returning that site to a more usable state. Substations, as well as much of the infrastructure, has a useful life and we need to stay on top of orderly improvements. Other substations are on the list for replacement in our long-range work plan. Below are some photos of the new substation.

Thank you and please feel free to reach out to us any way needed and we commit to responding to you in a very timely fashion. ☎



The \$1.3 million Manyaska substation south of Interstate 90 will be energized in early December. Substation testing started in November. This substation allows back-feeding from the co-op's Welcome and Dunnell substations so outages do not last as long. Sherburn members will experience a blink when the substation switch occurs from old to new.





# Federated members fund \$32,000 this autumn through Operation Round Up

Organization	Amount	Purpose
HL-O Elementary Phy. Ed. classes	\$200	Toward roller skate rental costs in PE classes
HL-O Elementary Occupational Therapy	\$238	Buy crash pad & body stretching bag for motor skills control
JCC Agriculture Department	\$382	Ceramic knife sets and oven mitts/pot holders in foods' kitchens
City of Jackson Park Board	\$400	Replace two older, worn out dog waste receptacles on trails
Fairmont Girls Basketball Assn.	\$500	Toward six basketballs for 4 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> grader teams
HL-O H.S. Agriculture Department	\$500	For two activity tables in classroom for hands-on activities
JCC Riverside Elem. Special Education	\$500	Four sets of books for special education students
Family Services Network, Jackson	\$500	Buy snowpants for area youth
Reinbows, Inc, Windom	\$500	Buy three drills, chargers & cases to teach carpentry skills
JCC's Lakefield tennis courts	\$554	Replaced two old nets for PE classes & community use
Jackson County Sheriff Office	\$579	Buy CPR mannequins, jail AED defibrillator & replaceable pads
Jackson County Sheriff Office	\$550	Buy body opponent bag for defensive tactics training for jailers
Lakefield Fire Rescue	\$600	Toward grain bin rescue auger
Dunnell Lake Fremont Fire Department	\$600	Toward grain bin rescue auger & battery-powered drill
JCC First Grade	\$605	Set of decodable text books to become better readers
GHEC Elementary	\$683	Mindful moment classroom supplies & materials for anxiety relief
JCC Riverside Elementary	\$700	Sensory room supplies to help cope with emotions & behaviors
BIO Girls, Jackson-Lakefield	\$888	Four scholarships for mentoring program, guides & supplies
Caregiver Response Effort & Service Team	\$900	Handbooks for volunteer training, regional training & brochures
JCC Agriculture Department	\$1,000	Three battery operated jib saws, drill bits, safety glasses & ear plugs
East Chain Activity Center	\$1,000	Upgrade to LED bulbs in the big gym
HL-O School pool	\$1,000	Toward log roller for fun in the pool & replace pool stairs
HL-O Robotics Teams	\$1,000	Toward robotic parts, batteries and motors for two teams
Alpha Fire Department	\$1,000	Toward cordless headset for pump operator to radio traffic at fire
Lakefield Ambulance Service	\$1,250	Buy three new pagers (two for new members; replace one old one)
HL-O High School Industrial Tech	\$1,500	Toward a new band saw
Sherburn Fire Department	\$1,500	Buy two hand-held thermal imaging cameras to find fire victims
Jackson Ambulance Service	\$1,500	Toward new hand-held radio replacing broken one
Round Lake Fire Department	\$1,500	Two wetsuits for ice water rescue & inflatable flotation device
Business, Arts & Recreation Ctr, Windom	\$1,500	Toward keyless entry-door lock system for safety & security
Jackson County Library system	\$1,799	Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for Lakefield Library
9 \$700 scholarships	\$6,300	For Federated members with graduating high school senior
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$32,228</b>	

## Apply for 2 \$1,000 Federated-Basin scholarships

Federated will award two \$1,000 Basin/L&O scholarships to two local Federated members' sons or daughters.

"This scholarship comes from Basin Electric Power Cooperative based in Bismarck, North Dakota, which became a wholesale power supplier for Federated in 2008 and L&O Power Cooperative in Rock Rapids, Iowa," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager.

The scholarships are available to



high school seniors and college students who will be enrolled full-time in an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school working on an undergraduate or master's degree. Previous Federated-Basin scholarship winners are not eligible to apply again. Applicants must be 25 and under and a U.S. citizen.

Complete a two-page application, including a grades' transcript, ACT/SAT

scores (optional), write an essay and have an outside appraisal (reference checklist). The one-page essay should address: *What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years and how do you think challenges should be addressed?*

Apply by January 27, 2023. Applications are available from [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop), call the office or [info@federatedrea.coop](mailto:info@federatedrea.coop) or from local high school counselors.

Scholarships apply to Fall 2023 tuition and are paid in August.

# Frosty the Snowman melts with co-op's energy-efficiency tools

If you are a frozen “Frosty the Snowman” in your own home (as you try to reduce your heating costs), turn to your electric cooperative.

Warm up with these ways to save energy. First, how old and how inefficient is your ancient heating system? If it's beyond 15-20 years, pull the trigger to invest in a 300-400 percent energy efficient heat pump. No ductwork? Go with a ductless air source heat pump. Tired of the high fossil fuel heating costs? Add an air source heat pump for year-round energy-efficient heating and cooling. Talk to the co-op's energy expert. Tell us the type of fossil fuel furnace and the age. We can tell you what the heat pump heating costs would be equivalent with your fossil fuel system. Frosty, of course, prefers the cold-climate heat pumps's higher efficiencies that work as the temperatures drop outside. Plus, hot cash heat pump rebates from your co-op will warm your wallet and



**Go from a frosty snowman to thawed and a happy one with your cooperative's money saving programs.**


heart too. The thumpity thump thump, thumpity thump thump from your old heating system can then go over the hills of snow to retirement.

Is a heat pump on your New Year's resolution do list? You'll begin to dance

around as details on incentives are finalized on the federal legislation passed this year. Pair the new heat pump with a Smart Thermostat with WI-FI connection and cash in on the co-op's rebate!

Plus, Frosty likes to go star gazing. Check out the Energy Star rebates for refrigerators, freezers and dehumidifiers from your electric cooperative's website.

If you have to hurry on your way, as your old water heater waved and said goodbye as it konks out, the co-op replies, “Don't you cry!” We have energy-efficient water heaters so you can enjoy hot water again right away. Thumpity thump thump, thumpity thump thump, look at the old rusty water heater go up the basement steps and over the hills of snow too.

You too can be a jolly, happy soul again after implementing these money-saving measures. Just look at Frosty go over the hills of snow! 

## Enjoy affordable holiday cheer with LEDs & inflatable decor

Do not fear! Holiday cheer is affordable with LEDs and inflatables in your holiday gear.

Switch to LEDs for all your holiday lighting. LED holiday lights consume 70 percent less energy than conventional incandescent light strands. For example, it costs 27 cents to light a 6-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days with LEDs compared to \$10 for incandescent lights.

Pick up a few light timers so you don't have to remember to unplug your lights every evening. (See related story on Page 2). Upgrade to smart holiday lights that offer a wide range of app-controlled options, including time, colors, music and modes.

According to [www.yardinflatablelife.com](http://www.yardinflatablelife.com), electricity costs vary based on the inflatable's size. These estimates are based on the manufacturer claims.




**Ho, Ho, Ho! Holiday lights are more affordable than you think when using LEDs and inflatable displays.**

• 4-foot Inflatable – 52 watts per hour x 12 hours = .624 kilowatt-hour (kWh) per day. If used 31 days in December for 12 hours a day, this inflatable would add \$2.32 to your electric bill.

• 6-foot Inflatable – 60 watts per hour x 12 hours = .72 kWh per day. If used all 31 days of December for 12 hours a day, this inflatable would cost an additional \$2.68 on your electric bill.

• 8-foot Inflatable – 76 watts per hour x 12 hours = .91 kWh per day. If used all 31 days of December for 12 hours a day, this inflatable would add \$3.39 to your electric bill.

• 12-foot Inflatable – 85 watts per hour x 12 hours = 1.02 kWh per day. If used all 31 days of December for 12 hours a day, this inflatable would add \$3.80 to your electric bill.

An animated inflatable likely uses two to three times the electricity. 

## Patty cake, patty cake, make me some pancakes as fast as you can

Flip over some new pancake recipes! Do you add fruit or potatoes to your pancakes? Have a homemade syrup recipe worth sharing? Have an oven pancake recipe that you bake? Share your pancake recipes and mail to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by December 28. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧



*All I want for Christmas is...  
reliable hot water each and  
every day!*

- Made in the USA
- Lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner
- Insulated for efficiency
- In stock & ready for you now!

*Just call your electric cooperative  
without delay!*

### Chicken on Sunday by Cindy Koep, Lakefield

1 c. Minute Rice  
1 can mushroom soup  
1 can celery soup  
1 c. milk  
1 whole fresh or thawed chicken, cut up into pieces  
½ pkg. Lipton onion soup mix  
Butter 9x13" pan and spread rice on the bottom. Heat soups and milk; pour over the rice. Place uncooked chicken over the top of soups and rice. Sprinkle the half package of the dry onion soup mix over the top of the chicken. Cover with aluminium foil; bake at 325° for 2.5 hours.

You may substitute one can of the canned soup with a can of water, if desired. 📧

### Rice Pudding by Cheri Drever, Granada

1 c. water – bring to a boil and add 1/3 c. rice (not instant)  
Add: ½ tsp. butter  
½ tsp. salt  
Reduce heat and simmer about 20 minutes until the water is absorbed and rice is tender.

Scald 3 c. of milk  
Mix: 2 rounded T. cornstarch  
½ c. sugar  
1/8 tsp. of salt  
Separate 3 eggs  
Beat yolks and add about 1/3 c. of the hot milk to them. Using a fork, add to cornstarch mixture. Slowly add this to the hot milk; stir and cook until thickened.

Add: 1 tsp. vanilla  
Mix with steamed rice. Cool and refrigerate.

I triple this recipe when the family comes home, using a 9x13" pan. 📧



### 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. 📧



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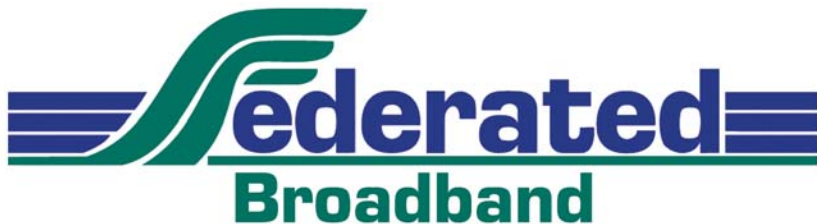
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The Board of Directors generally meets the last business day of the month at 8 a.m. at the Jackson office. Regular board meetings are open to the membership. Members interested in discussing business items should contact the general manager or president three days before the meeting.

**New bill look!  
Broadband bill mailed with  
co-op electric account bill**

Your Federated Broadband bill will have a different look December 5.

For billing efficiency, labor savings and member convenience Federated merged the billing system for Federated Broadband. The cooperative will use the same software for electric accounts for Broadband billing too.

Federated Broadband subscribers were mailed letters about this change in October. The due date will be the same as the electric accounts — the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**New bill format benefits:**

- Broadband subscribers will no longer pay extra for a mailed paper bill or credit card fee.
- Broadband members can pay their bill using the online pay portal on the electric or broadband websites. Set up billing reminders and notices that the payment was received.
- Sign up for Auto Pay where payment is automatically done on the due date from your checking or savings bank account.
- Make one payment for the electric and broadband bills!
- Receive statements monthly for easy access to receipts. ☺