

Connections

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 25, Issue 5

Outage management system interactive maps improve call response time & service for members

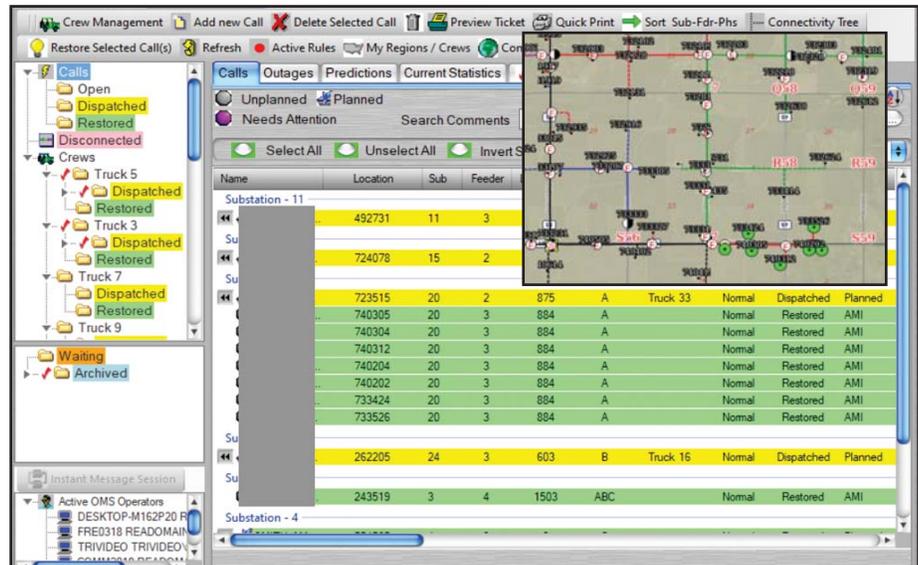
Every year your electric cooperative becomes more sophisticated. Your electric co-op has gone from digging poles by hand to line trucks with augers. Linemen have also gone from climbing poles with spikes and belt to hoisting themselves up to the wires in a bucket.

The way your electric co-op handles outages has changed as well. Member phone calls used to be the only way the co-op knew when the power was out. With the transition from mechanical meters to digital ones, which automatically send readings to the billing system, the cooperative has also gained the ability to deploy an outage management system.

The outage management system displays the electric co-op system on a computer screen in the form of a digital map. Outages appear on the map in near real time as the meters report outages to the system. Your electric co-op office and operations personnel can then dispatch crews to deal with the outage.

After hours, linemen can check the outage management system from their phones or tablets, and even get an overview of the situation on the same devices when out in the field. It has helped your electric co-op provide more reliable and affordable power.

Co-op personnel can click on an outage location to gain information



Your cooperative's outage response maps help the line crews respond to outages faster. These green dots represent meters on the co-op's system where meters were restored with power after an outage (inset). The yellow and green shows the meter listing of cleared and restored outages (main graphic).

about the service and member contact.

Safety has been improved as well. The location of each electric co-op truck is also displayed on the map, so help can be sent as quickly as possible if necessary.

If you have an outage, your electric co-op still wants you to call us, especially after normal business hours. Perhaps you see a branch in the line, heard the bang of a critter getting zapped or see a farm implement hit a pole. This information helps the cooperative respond appropriately

and bring the right materials in order to restore power as soon as possible.

In addition, a simplified version of the outage map now exists on your electric cooperative's website. Go check it out. During major storm outages, you can see the area affected. It doesn't show individual outage to provide member security, but posts how many outages in a township. Bookmark this page today for handy reference in the future.

Even with this technology in place, your cooperative asks that members still call and report an outage. ☎️

At A Glance



When shopping, go star gazing for Energy Star appliance rebates

Look to the stars for energy savings when buying a new refrigerator, freezer or dehumidifier. Federated will reward you with an Energy Star rebate of \$50 for an Energy Star fridge or freezer with recycling, while an Energy Star dehumidifier earns \$25. See our website or call to request the form. ☎️



LED shop lights—illuminating efficiency

If you are working in the shop underneath muddy lighting or buzzing fluorescent tubes, it's time to upgrade. Not only can you get better light quality, you can get lower energy bills.

LED is the best option for shop lights. LEDs are energy efficient and provide excellent light quality to enable you to work safely on your projects.

Energy savings

LED lights use 80 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and 10-50 percent less energy than fluorescents. What makes LEDs so efficient is that they convert electricity to light without turning electricity into heat. LEDs operate cool to the touch.

If you were previously using a 100-watt incandescent bulb, an LED light can offer the same amount of brightness using only 23-30 watts.

In addition, LED lights have a long life. They can last up to 50,000 hours. Depending on how long you keep your lights on each day, this can be up to 20 years. Fluorescent lights last for about 10,000 hours.

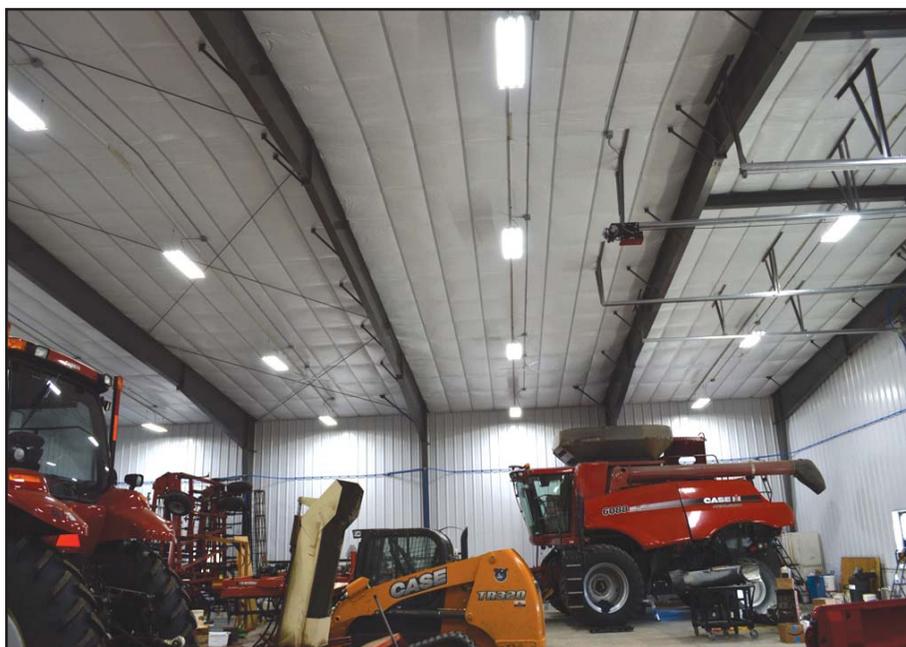
You can figure on this retrofit lasting decades. If you have to dispose of LED bulbs, they are mercury-free and do not require any special recycling.

Find the cooperative's retrofit lighting rebate form for LEDs on our website.

Light quality

LED brightness is measured in lumens. How many lumens do you need in a shop? A general rule of thumb is to use 130 to 150 lumens per square foot of work space.

The next thing to consider is color rendering index (CRI). CRI is the measurement of light in relation to how it affects the appearance of color. The CRI of LED bulbs is typically 80-90.



Harvest energy savings by upgrading your shop or hog barn lighting to LED lights. Top off the energy savings with a retrofit lighting rebate from your electric co-op too! This shop used LED highbay fixtures.

Shop lights should be in the 82+ range.

Color temperature refers to how blue or yellow a light's color. 2700K gives off a golden-white light. 3000K emits soft, warm white light. Color temperature between 3500K-4000K emits bright warm white. 5000K light is cool white. 5700K light appears to have a light blue glow. For shop lighting 5000K is generally recommended.

Installation tips

LED lights are available as integrated units and retrofits. With retrofits you add LED bulbs to existing incandescent or fluorescent light fixtures. Integrated LED lights come as complete bays.

Selecting between retrofit and integrated LED lights is a crucial decision. Integrated shop lights are suitable if you are looking for a permanent fixture.

Retrofits are best suited if you already have existing fixtures.

For the best results install fixtures directly above work areas. Some shop lights come equipped with a chain that allows you to hang them from the ceiling. Other shop lights mount directly to the ceiling.

The lights should be low enough to provide you with needed illumination, but high enough so that you don't bang into them.

Some LED fixtures can be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Others are hardwired. It is up to the shop owner on what they prefer.

Brighten up your shop today and save energy dollars. Look into LED lights as a way to upgrade your work space to the bright side. ☺

Portable cooling on wheels replaces window unit

If you have an older home without central air and individual rooms get hot during the summer, especially upstairs bedrooms, your main solution was wrestling a window air conditioner into the window in the spring and out of the window in the fall. Maybe you have similar issues with a college dorm room or a small shop on the farm. Now you have a new solution — a portable AC unit.

Black and Decker offers a 12,000 BTU floor-standing, portable AC unit that effectively cools rooms up to 150 square feet. It is ideal for dorms, apartments, cabins, campers, offices, bedrooms and living rooms.

Just wheel the AC unit into any room with a double-hung or sliding window. Attach the hose and window adapter, plug the AC unit in and cool the room. At the end of the season unhook and store. The unit includes a window kit, which consists of panels to fit horizontal or vertical window openings, exhaust hose and hose connectors.

The unit uses 1,150 watts. It costs about \$.12 an hour to run. Window ACs typically uses 1000 to 1,500 watts.



Portable AC units give you another option besides window AC units for upstairs bedrooms and more.

For comparison, they cost \$.11 to \$.16 to operate for one hour.

Other features of the portable AC unit include:

- Three adjustable fan speeds that cool the air to 65°F. The unit also features an auto-fan mode, which adjusts the fan speed to the best setting.
- Sleep mode makes the unit extra quiet.
- Remote control and LED display with 24-hour timer allow you to precisely control the air temperature.
- An easy-to-clean filter simply slides out; just pull it out twice a month and rinse under water.
- Compact size, carry handles and four wheels make it easy to move around the house.
- R410a refrigerant is safe for the environment.
- The portable AC dehumidifies while cooling. It keeps air both dry and cool, plus prevents growth of bacteria in hot and steamy conditions.

Self-evaporating operation means no buckets or drain pans.

- Compact (17.1" x 13.8") and lightweight (59.5 lbs).

The Black and Decker portable AC unit is available in stores and online for \$400. Other sizes available. 

Safety

Spot the overlooked electrical hazards

While you can see, smell or hear some electrical hazards, many others are harder to detect.

- Do not ignore odd electrical symptoms. If your lights flicker often, if your outlets are warm to the touch or discolored or if you smell odors like something is overheating, problems with your home's electrical system may exist. If you notice any of these symptoms or other unusual electrical oddities, such as frequent breaker trips or burned-out fuses, consult a qualified electrician.

- Cell phones make strange bedfellows. Do not sleep or lounge in bed with a cell phone or other device that is charging. This can cause burns to your skin or it can cause the soft bedding materials to ignite.

- Do not use cheap chargers. Instead, use the original charging



Electrical dangers are not always easy to spot. Be on the lookout for these potential issues.

components that came with your cell phone or other electronics. When it comes time to replace them, buy brand-specific chargers. Using cheaply made generic chargers can cause injury or even a fire.

- Do not use a plugged-in (charging) cell phone near water. Take a break from your phone while bathing, swimming or sitting in a hot tub. Deaths have occurred when a plugged-in cell phone has fallen into the water.

- Do not overload outlets or circuits.

While it can be tempting to plug several items in one outlet, drawing too much power can damage your electronics or your home's wiring. It could also cause a fire. If too much current is drawn, usually a circuit breaker will trip or fuses will blow, but this is never guaranteed.

- Include electrical sources when childproofing your home.

Toddlers could play with many electrical components that could be hazardous, such as dangling cords, accessible power strips or surge protectors. Get down on the floor and see what is at eye level or within reach. Tamper-resistant outlets became required by the NEC (National Electric Code) in 2008. Many homes built before then do not have them. 

— *Information courtesy of safeelectricity.org*

Federated Focus

Budget billing: 'averages' out electric bill payment amounts

Sign up for Federated's budget billing if you are under the residential rate class. Federated takes your 13-month billing history, divides by 12 and you have a nice even pay amount each month. Twice a year (in May and October), Federated reviews your budget amount to see if it needs to be increased, decreased or kept the same, based on your recent electricity use. You need a one-year billing history with Federated and sign up for Auto Pay. Members who become past due are removed from the program. Sign up for Budget Billing in May by calling Federated 847-3520 or 1-800-321-3520 or e-mailing billing@federatedrea.coop.

Annual Meeting voting!

Thanks to last year's bylaw amendments, members will be able to vote on the director and nominating committee candidates by mail. Watch for your ballots to arrive around July 1. Ballots must be returned by August 3. Federated will also have the drive-in Annual Meeting for in person voting August 4 at the Martin County Fairgrounds from 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Any member who votes will receive a \$10 bill credit whether by mail or at the drive-through event. The meeting will occur at 6:30 p.m.

Nominating Committee results

Candidates were announced.

District 5 Director:

- David Meschke, Welcome
- Stuart Smart, Welcome

District 6 Director:

- Bruce Brockmann, Ganada
- Nominating Committee At-Large
- Timothy Mailahn, Fairmont

Congratulations go to two directors earning national training certificates



Glenn Dicks, District 1



Bruce Brockmann, At-Large

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) recently awarded Bruce Brockmann, Granada; and Glenn Dicks, Lakefield; their Board Leadership Certificates (BLC).

"The ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model," stated Scott Reimer, Federated's general manager. "Our directors have a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen their knowledge for the benefit of Federated's member-owners."

They both completed the second level of director education program, the BLC. The courses focus in greater depth on specific industry and governance issues. These include issues such as risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology and policy development.

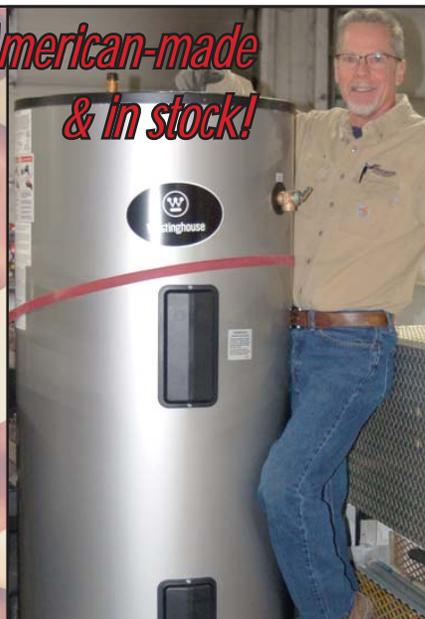
Prior to earning the BLC, directors must complete the first level of classes called the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate, consisting of five courses. All Federated directors have achieved the CCD level. These two directors join three other directors who have received this BLC certificate (David A. Hansen, Jackson; David Meschke, Welcome; and Darvin Voss, Lakefield).

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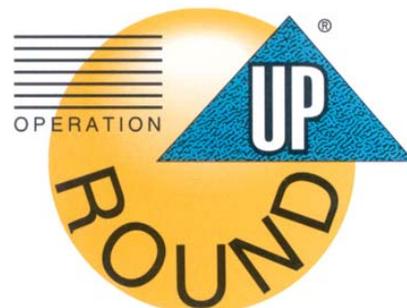
29 groups receive \$35,437 from Federated members through Operation Round Up program

Organization	Amount	Purpose
LaCrosse 4-H Club, Heron Lake	\$250	Matching funds for HL-O students' "Caring Connection Shop" for school supplies, personal items, food and gently-used clothes
Martin Co. Historical Society, Fairmont	\$400	Replace two mannequins to display historical clothing
JCC Middle School, Lakefield	\$400	Buy "Sit & Knit" supplies for 25 students in grades 4-8
Jackson County Central Post Prom	\$500	Hire Post Prom comedian to provide safe, fun prom
Jackson Boy Scout Pack 80	\$500	Assist scouts who can't afford to participate in Pine Wood Derby, Penguin day and new class B shirts
HL-O FFA, Okabena	\$520	Small animal vet scales, stethoscopes, horticulture hydroponic equipment, watering hose and wand
Heritage Acres, Fairmont	\$600	Hire blacksmith for August threshing and October harvest events
Jackson Volunteer Ambulance	\$600	Toward battery-powered stair chair to transport patients up/down steps to keep responders and patient safe
Okabena Fire Department	\$620	Two backpack pumps to fight grass fires and leak control kit for damaged farm fuel tanks
Minnesota West, Jackson	\$700	Scholarship for Jackson or Martin County lineman or electrician student
Martin County 4-H	\$800	Funds toward Adopt-A-Lamb program to increase participation for those who cannot afford it
Jackson County Fair	\$800	Buy paint and supplies for the inside of the 4-H/FFA building
Lakefield Ambulance Service	\$850	Buy 10 new oxygen tanks for the two ambulances
Jackson County Library	\$900	Hire Zooman for the summer-reading program in three towns
Northrop Volunteer Fire Dept.	\$1,000	Toward new firefighter boots for whole department, replacing old ones
SWWC Foundation for Innovation in Education, Marshall	\$1,000	Registration scholarships for needy students at events ranging from spelling bee, writing contests, knowledge bowl, etc...
Reinbows Inc., Windom	\$1,100	Three iPads and covers for kids to do virtual & in-person reading/math
Alpha Fire Department	\$1,200	Buy water softener to extend life of washer extractor and turnout gear
Prairie Ecology Bus, Lakefield	\$1,200	Toward free transportation scholarships for summer camps for children who could not otherwise afford attending
Warm Up Windom	\$1,250	Project where blankets were made & given to every student
Business Arts Recreation Ctr, Windom	\$1,500	Buy and install 2 new thermostats to improve energy-efficiency
MCW Community Education, Sherburn	\$1,552	Buy catcher/umpire gear, batting helmets w/face masks and bats
Jackson Co. Historical Society, Lakefield	\$1,745	Toward shelving in new storage area addition
Jackson Park Board	\$2,000	Timber interlocking borders for play structure containment area making Zimmerli Park ADA compliant
HL-O High School, Okabena	\$2,000	Toward a CNC wood router for industrial tech program
Trimont Fire Relief	\$2,500	Toward self-contained breathing apparatus and turnout gear
Fairmont Area High School Robotics	\$2,500	3D printer, laptop, 2 electric drills, plate shear and hand tools
Round Lake Fire Department	\$3,000	Buy new turnout gear replacing the 20-year old gear
JCC H.S. Media Center, Jackson	<u>\$3,450</u>	Buy 50 tablets and pens for teachers/paraprofessionals to assist students with virtual/hybrid/in-person learning
Total	\$35,437	

The next deadline is September 17 for Operation Round Up applications. Applications are found at www.federatedrea.coop; otherwise, call or e-mail the Federated office to request one.

Organizations eligible for funding include: for community service, community leadership programs, education and youth projects, environmental projects, emergency-energy assistance funds and disaster relief.

Federated members having their bills rounded up have assisted in these local contributions to organizations totaling \$810,000 since 1995. 



Electrical accident impacts a couple's lives

One day in May, Cody Edenburn had started his next-to-last day as assistant manager for an ag fertilizer company. He said they were shorthanded that day so it was all hands on deck. To get ahead of the sprayer he hopped in his truck.

"I had to take loads because we needed an extra truck to take fertilizer," Cody recalled. A sprayer had been broken down for 3½ hours, and when it finally showed up, he was ready.

What happened next

After the sprayer pulled in, Cody pulled up in his truck to unload fertilizer. "I hooked on like I normally would, and the sprayer was unfolding, which is pretty much standard procedure."

What transpired next changed everything. Those who were there think that when the operator unfolded the sprayer boom, he extended the sprayer tips at the same time, and one of them grazed the power line.

Cody said they believe the sprayer tip was electrified for only a moment, but that the stray electricity moved through the tip, boom, tractor and down to the ground where Cody was standing. When Cody touched the camlock, which connects the hoses together, 7,400 volts of electricity flowed through his body.

The force of the voltage threw him backwards and onto the ground. The person in the cab jumped out and started CPR (luckily the ground was no longer electrified) and called 9-1-1.

One journey. Two experiences.

As in any journey, two people experience it differently. Cody is matter of fact. He says he doesn't mind talking about it, but that Bailey, his wife, does.

He says he doesn't remember a lot about the accident, but he does have a few vivid memories that have to do with the stretcher — one was the sound of the collective click as it was being loaded into the ambulance. The other was him being rolled into the medevac.

"My first memory after that was probably a week and a half later," Cody said, adding that there were many conversations with Bailey to help him



Cody and Bailey Edenburn share their experiences to increase awareness about power line safety.

piece the details together, including the progression of his care. He said the medical staff made several attempts to save his hand, but the damage progressed too far. He also questioned why they had to take his leg.

"What we learned is that tissue is actively still dying over the course of two weeks, so it (the internal damage) just kept moving up (the affected limbs)," he said.

Bailey's recollections

When Bailey recalls what happened, her words come a bit faster than Cody's. "Emotionally, I've probably been more of a mess (than Cody). He struggled very early on with just the circumstances and just how badly hurt he was. But he's accepted the fact that this is his life now; he has to make this life as good as he can. I'm not quite there yet," she admitted.

As with most significant journeys in life, "there are days that are perfect, (when) the world is right." And there are the bad days, she added.

After watching Cody experience immense pain, lose two of his limbs,

undergo numerous surgeries and learn to walk again, "we knew life wasn't going to be the same," Bailey reflected. "We knew that the 'normal' before was not going to be the 'normal' after.

"In the beginning, it was just all about survival," Bailey recounted. Today, their lives include more grey areas.

"I don't know what the future holds," Bailey said. "There are some days when his leg just bothers him; he's not the type to want to sit still for anything. He's had to sit still and learn more patience in the last year than he has his entire life. And it (sitting still) just drives him bonkers."

The dangling carrot

Bailey recalls how at one of the initial meetings with the medical team, Cody mentioned September 7 of that same year — the day they were to be wed. "It was a giant dangling carrot, really," Bailey recalled. "I mean, he was bound and determined we were not going to put the wedding off."

They did get married, but on the Wednesday before the wedding, Bailey came home to a huge surprise. "I did chores and when I came back, he was walking around the house, without a cane. I bawled — absolutely bawled."

Bailey recalls that Cody had gotten his leg prosthetic 10 days before the wedding. "I didn't think he'd walk down the aisle. I'm not sure in that moment in time he thought he'd walk down the aisle."

But he did, and you can hear in Bailey's voice just how special their wedding day was. "It was just the most perfect of days," she said.

The journey continues

Cody and Bailey are still adapting to the twists and turns of their life together. Cody navigates the challenges he faces with a different dominant hand than before the accident. Some days he can't do everything he wants due to his pain. Bailey still struggles at times with what happened.

Lately, they have been busy planning for a baby and the next chapter. The journey continues.

Always be careful near electricity. ⚡

Share oodles of noodles recipes! 'Pasta' to us the very best ones

Noodle around and find us your best pasta recipes. Send us your favorite noodle recipes for salads, lasagna, hot dish, spaghetti, mac & cheese, alfredo and more! Mail to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by May 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Smothered Steak by Howard Blume, New Ulm

- 1½ lbs. chuck or round steak, cut into strips
- 1/3 c. flour
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1 lb. can tomatoes (I use a quart of home-canned stewed tomatoes)
- 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
- 2 T. molasses, optional
- 3 T. soy sauce
- 1-2 green peppers, sliced
- 10 oz. package frozen green beans, French-style, optional

Put steak strips, flour, salt and pepper in a crock-pot. Stir well to coat steak. Add all of the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on high one hour then turn to low for eight hours. Otherwise, keep on high for five hours. Serve over rice, potatoes or noodles. 📧

Butter Beef by Mary Dummer, Lafayette

- 3 lbs. beef stew meat
- ½ c. butter
- 1 oz. envelope dry onion soup mix

Place beef and butter in the slow cooker. Sprinkle onion soup mix over the beef. Cover and cook on low for eight hours or on high for four to five hours. Stir once or twice. 📧



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Scott Reimer

Manager's Message

Spring planting & construction is underway

Two times of the year exist for me that paint a pretty picture. The first snowfall of the year creates that clean-looking landscape. The other is right now when farmers are in the fields for planting. They look so clean exposing that beautiful soil. It's great to see progress!

Our construction season is upon us. We will be doing both overhead and underground work with contractors, substation upgrades and finishing up the Federal Emergency Management Agency

mitigation work. In a previous *Connections* it was laid out in greater detail.

Safety message goes hand-in-hand with spring planting season

I would be remiss if I didn't start with the safety message. Equipment is already in the fields. I know you are aware of the clearances at field approaches and also making turns with wider equipment. Remember that equipment widths can sometimes reach and clip poles as you're planting the end rows. Please be safe; if you see something, please say something. We want the opportunity to correct an issue before it becomes a problem. Please call our office anytime.

Broadband speaker to federal ears

I had the opportunity to be the lead broadband presenter at our National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association's legislative conference held virtually. We spoke to all of the Minnesota delegation (their staff and legislators). This has become quite the topic both on the state level, as well as federally. As I have mentioned, Federated wants all of our members to have access to the connection you require. In some cases that may be very minimal. However, the pandemic has exposed gaps in broadband, showing that many are underserved or even unserved. We are advocates of fiber to the home; we are working diligently to find a way to close the digital divide. Literally, every legislator we speak with understands what's needed and, of course, that boils down to funding and affordability for members. It's a work in progress and the message I am hearing is what's taking so long? Unfortunately, it's not a clear path free of impediments, but we are working on it.

Minnesota update on legislative topics of concern

The legislature and Governor Walz have four weeks to come to an agreement on a two-year state budget before adjournment May 17. If they do not come to an agreement, the Governor will need to call a special session, which seems to happen routinely every budget year. Committees in both the House and Senate finished hearing and passing omnibus budget bills. The Senate also began hearing omnibus bills on the Senate floor, including the higher education omnibus bill, the commerce and energy omnibus bill, plus the agriculture and broadband bill. The House will start hearing their omnibus bills on the floor next week. After bills pass the floors of each chamber, the next step will be to name conference committee



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77100 US Hwy 71, PO Box 69

Jackson, MN 56143-0069

E-mail: info@federatedrea.coop

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 — 847-3530

David Meschke, Vice President — 238-1122

Darvin Voss, Secretary/Treasurer — 662-6679

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.

members who will work to meld together their very different budget and policy positions into matching omnibus bills. As mentioned above, the Senate passed its agriculture and broadband omnibus bill (SF 958, Westrom) 48-18. Proposed funding is \$40 million for broadband. Up to \$80 million more could be spent if federal funding becomes available. The House's broadband proposal is \$30 million.

The ECO Act, which updates and expands the state's energy efficiency program, passed in both the House and Senate Energy Committees. ECO was up on the House floor and passed on a vote of 82-50. Opposition exists from the Minnesota Chamber and the propane industry; however, positive indications from several key legislators, including Majority Leader Gazelka, expect the bill will pass this year. ☺



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