

# Connections

June 2025

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 29, Issue 6

## Critter control! Co-op tries to prevent birds & animals from causing dreaded power outages

Squirrels, raccoons, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and outages. Last year animals caused 15 percent of Federated's power outages. According to Cooperative.com, studies show that animals cause between 7 and 20 percent of all U.S. power outages annually and are likely the second-most-common cause of interruptions after the weather.

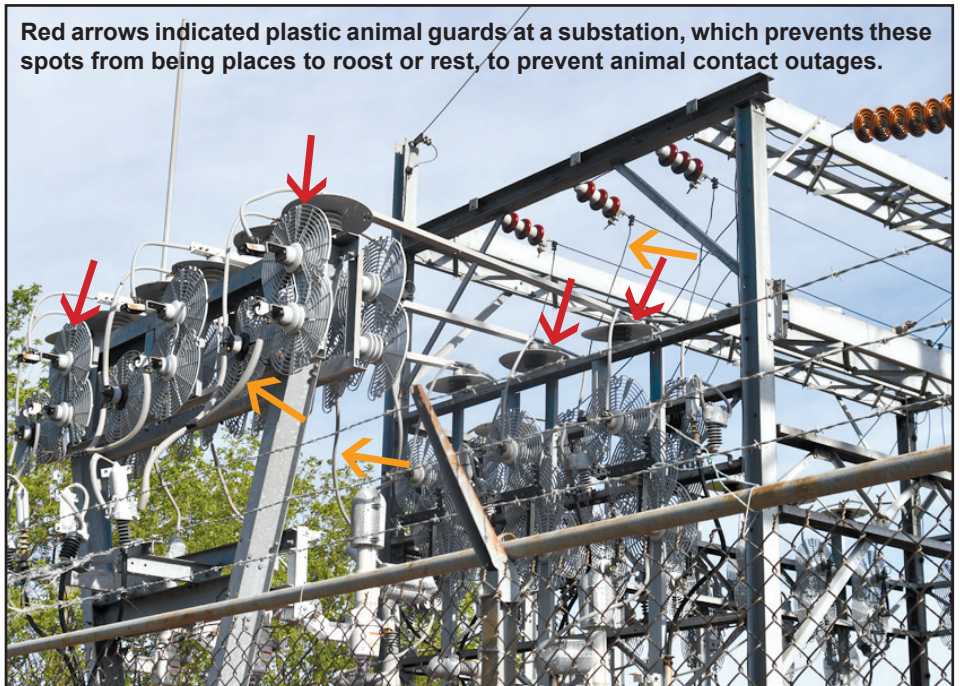
Federated has 1,517 miles of overhead lines and 23 substations. Even the 947 miles of underground cable can be susceptible to digging/gnawing critters. Your co-op installs safeguards to keep critters out of harm's way that cause the occasional outage.

- **Pole guards** — This pole wrap is installed on poles that have fuses, transformers or equipment that animals may touch. The slippery guard doesn't allow the squirrel, cat or raccoon to climb above the wrap.

- **Animal guards** — These plastic covers are designed to prevent animals or birds from coming in contact with energized parts of the equipment.

- **Cover up** — Rubber cover up slides onto wires within a few feet of anywhere an animal or bird may be able to touch, while standing on a grounded piece of equipment.

- **Fencing** — Fences keep humans and critters out of substations and safe.



Red arrows indicated plastic animal guards at a substation, which prevents these spots from being places to roost or rest, to prevent animal contact outages.

The orange arrows indicate gray tubing that covers up energized wires.

However, since critters cannot read our fencing caution signs, they sometimes dig under the fencing looking for good place to play. 🐾



Substation fencing also tries to prevent the animal outages.



The red arrow indicates pole wrap. This slippery cover doesn't allow squirrels, cats or raccoons to climb above the wrapped area to prevent outages and avoid contacting energized equipment.

### At A Glance



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Radio control upgrades continue in our service area

Federated continues upgrading radio controls from Comverge and Scientific Atlanta models to Entek. The contractor will work in Sioux Valley and Rolling Green townships next. Our electrician upgrades radio controls during service calls/installs or as time permits, in Fox Lake Township. See related story on Page 2. 📺



## Energy Wise

# Beyond the weather forecast, key factors help determine, is today a load control day?

Members enrolled in one of your electric cooperative's load management programs know that when extremely hot temperatures are in the forecast, it's likely that your water heater or cooling system may be controlled. In the winter your Dual Heat system may see control under extreme cold. A small group of members enroll their business/farm generators or irrigation in the interruptible rate class too.

Temperature is the primary factor for load control dispatch, as extreme weather events will drive energy demand due to heating or cooling needs.

Your electric cooperative and its wholesale power providers use load management as a strategy to reduce demand for electricity during high demand periods. These programs encourage members to invest in a larger water heater that stores less expensive off-peak energy or heating/cooling equipment that can be temporarily controlled to reduce energy consumption during times when electricity costs more than usual.

However, some days control occurs when factors beyond temperature come into play determining when to initiate a load control.

• **Market position:** Wholesale power suppliers forecast the demand needs of its member-owner cooperatives on a daily basis and make purchases from the regional energy market to serve them. Similarly, generation is bid into the market daily, including wind energy. When high demand is expected, load management programs can reduce the cooperative's overall market exposure.

• **High prices:** These can be driven



The gray radio control on the side of your house "talks" to your water heater, cooling system or electric heat, if enrolled in one of the co-op's money-saving programs. A green light means it has power. A red light means control is occurring.

by natural gas prices, which are often price setters in the energy market.

• **Localized outages:** Either generation or transmission outages can affect pricing.

• **Reliability concerns:** While not a frequent driver, instances occur where load control helps mitigate reliability concerns. During these events, load is reduced so that transmission congestion is brought below a system operating limit.

• **Monthly events:** Your co-op's power supplier(s) often initiate a load control event one time per month for

contractual reasons; this ensures that member-owners receive the value from load management over the billing peak (i.e., the highest demand that is experienced on the system each month).

Using load management as a strategy saves members money by helping electric cooperatives mitigate high-cost market purchases that would otherwise need to be paid by its member-owners, which are passed along using the power cost adjustment (PCA) on your electric bill. Additionally, capacity benefits accrue, allowing the cooperative to better position its resources and reduce costs needed to acquire or build more generation.

Great River Energy (GRE), which includes co-ops statewide, manages more than 300,000 devices — from water heaters to air conditioners to irrigation and space heating systems; radio controls operate different load management programs that can be dispatched when needed by system operators. Members who participate in these programs receive a reduced electric rate, credit or discounted new water heater purchase price.

Contact your electric cooperative for more information on load management programs and how you can enroll. Visit the co-op's website and click on the home page button to see if GRE is calling for load control. In addition, look for lights on your gray radio control box. A green light means the radio control has power and is working. A red light means control is occurring. Thank you co-op member-owners for doing your part to help the co-op keep your electric rates affordable.



# Portable air conditioner chills small space

Look beyond a typical window air conditioner (AC) to help you chill out this summer! Go with a portable air conditioner for that bedroom, apartment or garage without any ductwork.

Determine the size of the room you want to cool. Portable AC units are listed by square footage or British Thermal Units (BTU) for how much heat can be removed from a room.

Look for cool features:

- Besides adjusting the temperatures settings from on and off, look for multi-speed fan settings with some models providing a remote control, a timer or Wi-Fi connections. Does it offer the modes of cool, fan and dehumidification?


- Quiet mode run with less noise for better sleep.

- Rather than lifting a heavy window AC unit and trying to install it in a window,

it's much easier to install the flexible tube with the sealing kit; the hot air is exhausted through the tubing. Before buying, make sure the expanding hose will reach to your window.

- Washable filters save money.

Look for these portable AC units from your local hardware store, home improvement store or online. Prices range from \$250-\$600, depending on the size and features.

A more permanent option for a larger area home with no duct work would be a ductless air source heat pump providing heating and cooling. Take advantage of the co-op's ductless air source heat pump rebate; find the form on our website. 

**Keep your chill factor going with a portable air conditioning unit with expandable tubing and window sealing kit.**



## Safety

# Be weather aware and storm prepared!

Are you ready for the severe summer storms?

### Be prepared

- Create an emergency kit with power outage essentials: batteries, power banks, flashlights, non-perishable foods, water, medical supplies and prescriptions.

- Develop an emergency family plan with meeting points, communications methods and evacuation routes. Share your plan with all family members.

- Monitor the weather for important updates that could impact your emergency plan.

- Download a weather notification app on your Smart Phone to receive weather updates. No smart phone? Buy a NOAA weather radio.

### Stay safe


- Ensure a safe shelter. Stay away from the windows and doors. With tornadoes move to a basement or



interior room without windows. Talk with your children. Do they know where to go as well?

- Use portable generators safely. Operate outdoors in well-ventilated areas. Place on a flat dry surface. Do not overload it and always read the operating manual before use.

- Severe storms can bring down tree limbs and power lines. If you encounter a downed line, stay back at least 20 feet. Always assume a downed line is live and dangerous. Call your electric cooperative to let us know if tree branches downed the line, the pole snapped or what you see from a safe distance. Downed tree branches can hide downed lines; just stay inside versus going outside to see the damage.

- See downed wires on the road? Do not drive over them. Stay away and let the cooperative know so repairs may occur quickly. 



# Federated Focus

## Central air died? Upgrade to a heat pump; save with a rebate



Central air units work only in the summer. Upgrade to a heat pump that works year round to provide efficient cooling and help cut your heating costs too. Check out Federated's rebates on our

website or call and visit with our energy expert.

- \$1,000 to \$1,500 for air source heat pump, based on SEER2 rating
- \$500/ton ground source heat pump rebate
- \$600 for ductless air source heat pump (if you don't have ductwork)
- \$25 Smart thermostat rebate

## Turn to Federated & Marathon water heater for the long haul



Is it time to upgrade your water heater? Is it more than 20 years old? Tank has a slight drip that could turn into a gusher? Schedule your water heater installation with Federated so it's convenient and not a disaster. The 105-gallon insulated

tank has a lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner. Plus, it's made in the USA! It is 30.5" wide and 70.75" tall. The cost is \$589, plus tax, with installation included. This pricing requires installation of a free radio control so the unit is off during peak energy times, which stabilizes your electric rates. Call Federated to schedule at 507-847-3520 or 800-321-3520; press extension 2226. (U)



Scott Reimer

# Manager's Message

## Pausing for Memorial Day moments...

As we closed out May, we gathered for Memorial Day, a day to honor and remember the men and women who died, while serving in the U.S. military. Americans reflect on the sacrifices and acknowledge the debt of gratitude owed to those who gave their lives in defense of our nation and freedom. We honor the fallen, a day dedicated to those who died in service. We reflect

on the sacrifices made while encouraging a pause for reflection on the costs of freedom and the values that sustain the nation. Many people visit cemeteries and participate in ceremonies and parades. Memorial Day is not a holiday to celebrate, but rather a day of remembrance and mourning. All of us here at Federated want to express our sincere gratitude for the ultimate sacrifice they made to protect our way of life. Approximately 1,195,569 American military personnel have died in wars and conflicts since 1775, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## Minnesota Legislature requires special session

As most of you have heard, the Minnesota State Legislature did not complete their work by the May 19 deadline so a special session will take place. Here's a more detailed breakdown of the unfinished business. The special session will address the remaining budget bills that were not passed during the regular session. Key areas like K-12 education, health and human services, and transportation will likely be addressed. Legislators are expected to work in committees to finalize these budget bills before the special session begins. The Governor can call a special session when necessary, usually to address unfinished business. There is a deadline for this as well. The legislature must complete the budget by July 1 to avoid a partial government shutdown. Needless to say, the priorities that cooperatives had are among those to be worked on.

## Martin County Border-to-Border's fiber groundbreaking slated for June 24

Federated will be breaking ground on our Martin County Border-to-Border grant project June 24, serving nearly 500 locations with our high-speed fiber to the home or business internet. Our marketing team has been busy contacting and encouraging those within the funded service area to complete the needed information for service installation to your site. We are working with the Martin County Broadband Advisory Committee to keep everyone informed and most importantly, we identify the un-served and under-served locations. Martin County has a very aggressive plan and wants fiber to every service location of at least 100/20. The minimum fiber offering is 100/100 symmetrical. We are grateful for their support, as we continue our buildouts keeping these goals in mind. We have the same goals in mind for our entire service area, which now spans three counties.

## Cost of Service top of mind for you, our member-owners

We mentioned that we are constantly working on our cost of service. Today's electric member/user has different needs in mind and are ever changing. We must be cognizant of those needs and build accordingly for the future. Our inside and outside staff are paying close attention to providing great member service, reliability, resiliency, affordability and of course, safety, as we consider that paramount. What I am leading up to is that there is a cost associated with providing the level of service you expect and we want to provide. I can't blame this on the recent tariff situation; however, it will have an effect. The cost of providing service really goes back to the COVID-era, which wasn't that long ago. This event changed many things for the worst and some haven't reverted back to normal. We unfortunately accepted this new normal. It all boils down to keeping your cooperative in a healthy financial state. We have the tools to evaluate, forecast, perform proformas all with the ultimate goal of rate stabilization. At this year's 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting celebration we will give you a complete financial and operational state of the cooperative so you can feel good about what you have. (U)



# Congrats grads! Nine students awarded \$700 Operation Round Up scholarships



**District 1:**  
**Lilly Bass**  
Heron Lake  
daughter of Eric



**District 2:**  
**McKade Tewes**  
Jackson  
son of Jeff & Jen



**District 3:**  
**Rachel Mohr**  
Jackson  
daughter of  
Mark & Carrie



**District 4:**  
**Ava Thate**  
Dunnell  
daughter of Jacob  
& Rhonda



**District 5:**  
**Tyler Kurt**  
Fairmont  
son of Jeff  
& Ann



**District 6:**  
**Madisen Lewis**  
Granada  
daughter of Blake  
& Niki



**At-Large District:**  
**Lucas Larson**  
Sherburn  
son of Robb &  
Jamie



**At-Large District:**  
**Zachary Kirchner**  
Dundee  
son of Jacob &  
Monica



**At-Large District:**  
**Erin Doyscher**  
Round Lake  
daughter of  
Patrick & Charon

Nine high school seniors received a \$700 Federated Operation Round Up Scholarship. 37 students completed the Federated scholarship application.

This is the 35<sup>th</sup> year of Federated scholarships. A scholarship was awarded to each co-op district, plus three more where remaining applicants had a second chance of winning. These are the same districts used for director elections. Unclaimed capital credits and Operation Round Up funds these scholarships. This is the 30<sup>th</sup> year of Federated Operation Round Up high school scholarships. This totals \$161,200 in Federated scholarships.

Congratulations to these and all high school graduates! 🎓

## 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting • Tuesday, August 5

Martin County Fairgrounds in the Arena, Fairmont, MN



### Vote to enter drawing for \$90 bill credits

- Your mailed ballots arrive around July 1 and must be received back by August 1 at 4:30 p.m. in Federated's office OR register to vote in person August 5 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.
- Pancakes & sausages served from 4:30 p.m.- 6:15 p.m.
- Dueling pianos perform from 4:45-6:15 p.m.
- Annual Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m.
- Visit booths for Federated, Broadband, CTV, Carr's Tree Service, Heartland Security & Great River Energy on 765 kV transmission line.



# Many ways to pay...enroll today!

Let me count the ways to pay!

Co-op members have more ways to pay their electric bill. Take advantage of these technologies to avoid paying for the increasing cost of stamps and save time as post office changes mean slower delivery.

## **Automatic payments from your checking or savings account**

Sign up once and have your electric bill paid automatically on the due date (20<sup>th</sup> of each month or the next business day). You decide whether you want it paid from your checking or savings account. Find the enrollment form on the co-op's website under billing.

## **Online pay**

If you prefer to manually make the monthly payment, use the online pay app. Federated members: download the Federated Rural Electric app. Brown County REA members: download the Brown County REA app. Otherwise, you can pay through the co-op's website too.

This app requires you to set up your account so you will need to have your electric bill in front of you. Once you do so, paying the monthly bill is simple using this app.

The Online Pay app has many other great features at your fingertips:

1. Account summary
2. Statement history
3. Usage history
4. Payment history
5. My accounts
6. Change your password



**Sign up for a “greener” way to pay your electric bill, from your bank account or online. For the ultimate level of efficiency sign up for paperless bills; it's like saving a tree!**

7. Messages — Sign up for reminders to pay and confirmation e-mails that it was paid.

8. Sign up for paperless bills. Your bill amount is emailed to you; you log in to see the full bill. This saves your cooperative printing and postage, which

helps us keep our electric rates to you as low as possible.

## **Paper check payment**

Many co-op members still pay by mailing a check, but members are seeing slower mail delivery times.

## **Drop box**

If you're coming to town, drive by and use the drop box in front of our office.

## **Front counter payment**

If you prefer to pay in person during business hours, you can pay with cash, check or credit card.

## **Automatic payment with credit card**

Residential accounts can enroll their credit card (VISA, Mastercard or Discover) for payment on the due date. Again, find the form on the co-op's website under billing. Your co-op encourages you to use your bank account method if possible, as the co-op pays processing fees with credit card payments.

## **Telephone payment**

Members use this option to avoid late fees or disconnection. Call the co-op during business hours. Be careful with this option and use only the co-op's published landline listed on your electric bill and not some scam phone number on a fake website.

If you have any questions about any of these payment options, reach out to the co-op's billing department during business hours. ☎

## **No e-mail on your account? It's hard to stay in the know**



E-mail your electric co-operative your e-mail address. We need a current e-mail address for you with these billing options mentioned above. Plus, we sometimes use it for communications when members do not answer their phones or check voice mail. Thanks for helping us serve you, our member-owners, better! ☎



## ***This summer it's time to upgrade your dehumidifier***

Save energy on your electric bill each month with an Energy Star model. Plus, save with the co-op's \$25 Energy Star rebate. Find the form on the cooperative's website.

A dehumidifier can add \$14 to \$40 to your electric bill each month, depending on it's size, efficiency and moisture level. A new Energy Star model will use about 13 percent less electricity. ☎



## Share cilantro recipes to spice up your summer gatherings!

Summery cilantro recipes summon you! Share your favorite cilantro recipes with us, whether it's for salsa, salads, marinades, chicken or pesto. Send your favorite cilantro recipes to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to [christoffer@federatedrea.coop](mailto:christoffer@federatedrea.coop) by June 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

### Raspberry Pretzel Dessert by Holly Benson, Granada

**Crust:** 2 c. pretzels crushed (about 8 oz.)     $\frac{3}{4}$  c. butter, melted    3 T. sugar  
Preheat the oven to 350°. In a medium bowl add the crushed pretzels, butter and sugar. Toss well to combine. Press into an ungreased 9x13" pan. Bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.

**Filling:** 8 oz. cream cheese, softened    2 c. boiling water  
1 c. powdered sugar    32 oz. frozen raspberries  
8 oz. Cool Whip, thawed    whipped topping for garnish  
2 3 oz. pkgs. raspberry gelatin    uncrushed pretzels for garnish  
In a medium bowl beat the cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth. Stir in the whipped topping until combined. Spread over pretzel crust and refrigerate until chilled at least 30 minutes. In a large bowl dissolve the gelatin in boiling water. Stir in frozen raspberries and chill until partially set about 15 to 20 minutes. Carefully pour or spoon over cream cheese filling. Chill until firm about four to six hours. Garnish with additional whipped topping and pretzels, if desired. ☺



### Look for Energy Star to save on fridges & freezers

When buying your kitchen's next refrigerator or home's freezer, look for the Energy Star logo. It indicates energy efficiency and your electric co-op offers rebates. Find the form on our website. ☺



The co-op is  
closed July 4<sup>th</sup> —  
celebrate safely!

Crews will be on  
call in case of  
outages.



**JUNE SPECIAL!**  
**Buy one glass break or motion sensor,  
get one FREE!**  
with purchase of a new system and three-year monitoring agreement

**Heartland Security** A subsidiary of your local electric co-op

888.264.6380 [heartlandss.com](http://heartlandss.com)

**Always call first:**  
**1-800-252-1166**



Contact Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees and tiling.

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. ☺





Effective July 1, 2025 SW Stream monthly rate will increase by \$15 for Basic and Expanded channel packages, and a \$5 increase to Showtime and Starz movie channel packs.

At Federated Broadband we are committed to delivering the programming you depend on. The cost to carry many of these channels continues to rise, especially due to increases from broadcasters. While we have worked hard to absorb these costs for as long as possible, a rate adjustment is now necessary. This change will help ensure we can continue offering the wide range of channels and high-quality service our customers expect and deserve.

This rate change will appear on July 2025 statements. We understand that rate changes are never ideal; we sincerely appreciate your understanding. Our commitment to our customers remains the same — to deliver the best entertainment and connectivity options with exceptional value.

If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact our office Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. ☎

**Interested in after-hours text support?**

Text 'Start' to 1-833-956-1001 to be added to our Broadband system if you are not already!



info@federatedbroadband.coop • www.federatedbroadband.coop

**507-847-1001 or 1-833-847-8001**



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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.

## Follow the fiber as progress occurs!

Construction season is well under way for us here at Federated Broadband.

Jackson County Border-to-Border area residents: if you have not yet submitted a construction consent form and would like to have fiber optic brought up to your home or building, we need to receive your form as soon as possible. If you are unsure if you have submitted one, please call or email our office; we would be happy to check the status of your property. If your drop has been completed and you are ready to make the switch, call our office to schedule your installation time. All construction under this grant must be completed by year end.

Martin County Border-to-Border area residents: please continue to submit construction consent forms. We anticipate mainline construction within the grant area will begin this month. We hope to begin home installs within the grant area this fall. All construction under this grant must be completed by June 2027.

As a reminder, fiber optic installation is a four-step process: mainline construction, drop placement, splicing and then finally home installation. ☎