

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



December 2011

Connections



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**Youth
Tour
2012**

*Win a free
trip to D.C.!*

Attention: high school students!

Visit the Washington, D.C. memorials and other famous monuments. Tour the nation's Capitol. Visit with Minnesota legislators about the nation's issues and make new friends from around the country. You can do all of these things in the 2012 Youth Tour!

Thanks to your electric cooperative, teens may win a free trip to Washington, D.C. this summer. Just enter our Youth Tour Contest. Co-ops from each state send teens to Washington, D.C. for Youth Tour. The first year of the tour involved approximately 400 young people from 12 states. Word-of-mouth spread and today more than 1,500 young people and their chaperones participate in Youth Tour each year. If you are a high school student, you may be eligible for the Youth Tour tradition by winning the all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 16-21.

See Page 4 for details on how to enter the contest. ⚡



Teens: if you ever wanted to see Mount Vernon, now is your chance! The winner of Youth Tour will see many historic sites in Washington, D.C. Apply today!



Connecting our co-ops & members to a progressive future



Inside this issue:

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Give the gift that keeps on saving!



This holiday shopping season, consider gift options that give more! Energy Star gift-giving ideas help friends and family give back to the environment — all while saving money!

The typical household spends more than \$2,200 a year on energy bills; with Energy Star products you can save more than 30 percent or about \$700. A few Energy Star gift options and ideas include:

Home electronics

If a television, DVD player, stereo or cordless phone is on your list, looking for the Energy Star is "on the money," since Energy Star points you to the most energy-efficient models. Today's Energy Star TVs meet new, stricter requirements and offer up to 30 percent energy-savings over standard models. An Energy Star TV uses less energy when it is on and in standby mode. Plus, look for the Energy Star on the products that incorporate battery chargers for more energy-saving gifts!

Office products

This holiday help someone get their home office up and running with Energy Star office products. The Energy Star label is on a number of office products from computers and monitors, to fax machines, printers, and copiers — everything you need to make your home office work energy efficiently for you. A home office that has replaced all of its equipment with Energy Star products and has enabled power management features on the



Energy Star PC and LCD monitor will save a consumer more than \$160 over the lifetime of the products. Make sure you remind your gift recipient to keep the power-management features enabled on their new computer or monitor. Power management places computers and monitors into a low-power "sleep mode" when not in use and allows them to awaken within seconds, saving more than \$25 per year. Save even more by plugging your electronics into a power strip and turning the strip off when not in use.

Power tools and appliances

For that handyman or handywoman on your list consider power tools with Energy Star battery chargers; this means that they are the most efficient available. EPA now qualifies products

with popular brands such as Black & Decker, Makita, Bosch and others. Choose from a number of other Energy Star gifts such as appliances — clothes washers, dishwashers, refrigerators — and decorative lighting, such as ceiling and wall fixtures, table lamps and more.

Fun holiday ideas

Decorate your home or tree with more style and less energy with Energy Star decorative light strings. Featuring LED technology, qualified light strings use 75 percent less electricity than conventional incandescent light strings. LED strings are available in a variety of colors, shapes, and lengths; these are more durable and shock-resistant than other light strings and emit less heat.

Smaller, less expensive gifts can make surprising stocking stuffers! An Energy Star compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb is a unique gift if you want to get someone started on energy savings. You'd also never expect to think about caulk and weather-stripping as a gift, but these useful energy-saving home project ideas are perfect to protect against the winter chill. ❄️

— *Information courtesy of EnergyStar.gov*

LED Christmas lights have many benefits



Running LED holiday lights on one six-foot tree for 12 hours per day for 40 days can save 90 percent or more energy when compared to traditional incandescent holiday lights. LEDs have an operational life span of roughly 20,000 hours — enough to last for 40 holiday seasons. Because they use less power, it is safer to connect multiple strings of LED holiday lamps end-to-end without overloading the wall socket. ❄️ — *Information courtesy www.energysavers.gov*

Perfect Santa's helper: the Orb vac



Santa always appreciates a good helper for cleaning up Christmas tree needles, cookie crumbs and glittery messes! The Black & Decker Orb Vac is a perfect gift or little helper.

This ultra-compact hand vacuum provides quick pick-up of small crumbs and spills, dirt on desks, dust on keyboards and more. In addition, its compact shape and designer look allow users to decoratively store the orb vac out in the open for handy access — any time.

Unlike other hand vacs, the orb vac easily converts from a palm-sized sphere (weighing less than three pounds) to a mini-hand vac with the touch of a button; it reveals a nozzle and handle that flip open to quickly clean up small messes. The Orb Vac easily retracts back to the orb shape, when not in use, for convenient and stylish storage on counter-tops, desks and more. The Orb Vac features an exclusive 360-degree recharging base that includes an LED light. It contains an easy-to-empty dirt bowl for a mess-free cleanup every time. Use the extended brush and crevice tool for cleanups in hard to reach places.



Give the gift of fast and easy clean ups with the Black & Decker Orb Vac. Touch a button and the “ball” shape opens up with a handle and vacuum nozzle.

The Orb Vac's dimensions are 6"x9"x6" and comes with a two-year warranty. It was just released last month so look for it at Amazon.com for about \$35. 🗑️

12 Days of Holiday Safety

It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!



Day 1

What's that noise?

Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.

Day 5

Ouch! Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.

Day 9

Nice and warm. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.

Day 2

What a shocker!

Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.

Day 6

Kids eat the darndest things! Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.

Day 10

Can't touch this! Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.

Day 3

Two's company, three's a crowd. Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.

Day 7

Thirsty? Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

Day 11

Escape Route: Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.

Day 4

Is it working? Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.

Day 8

Make a wish! Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

Day 12

Hot stuff! Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at holidaysafety.org.

Federated Focus

Annual Meeting prize winners:

Nook E-reader: James Wohlhuter, Welcome. Digital video camera: James Klüber, Fairmont. Blu-ray player: Raymond Dahna, Estherville. \$100 Welcome TV gift certificate (GC): David Gratz, Fairmont. \$80 Federated bill credits: Dennis Clason, Fairmont; Neal Potthoff, Dunnell; & Douglas Paulson, Jackson. \$75 Bergen Meats GC: Gary Vanderwerf, Windom; & Richard Kruse, Welcome. \$75 Lakefield Butcher Shop GC: William Nielsen, Fairmont; & Gene Cross, Fairmont. \$75 Welcome Meats GC: Eva Godden, Welcome; & Joan Adams, Winnebago. Floor steamer: Brockmann Brothers, Granada. LED Christmas lights: Bruce Brockmann, Granada. \$50 Watonwan Farm Service GC: Donna Brown, Sherburn. \$50 Vet's Whoa & Go, GC: James Grantz, Jackson. Federated bag w/105-watt CFL & solar/crank flashlight/radio: Harry Knutson, Jackson. \$45 Bergen Bar & Grill GC: Keith Zoellar, Blue Earth. \$45 Hi-Lo Club GC: Steven Olsen, Welcome. \$45 Horse Barn & Hunt Club GC: Darrell Wannarka, Fairmont. \$45 Tri-County Implement GC: Lester Evers, Windom. \$45 Korte's Bar & Grill GC: Art Benda, Jr., Alpha. \$45 Welcome Hardware GC: Keith Moeller, Welcome. \$45 Godfather's Pizza GC: Verlyn Sandersfeld, Fairmont. \$45 Tami's on the Avenue GC: Vernon Potthoff, Dunnell. Federated bag w/85-watt CFL & solar/crank flashlight/radio: Virgil Storm, Jackson. Carbon monoxide detector: Richard Sanders, Granada. Smart Strip: Jeff Mayo, Sherburn. \$30 Casey's GC: Milo Holmen, Windom. \$20 Welcome Café GC: Norman Stenden, Lakefield. \$20 Burger King GC: Louetta Masters, Wilder. \$20 Enchanted Flowers GC: Norma Najt, Jackson. \$20 Flower Market GC: Bonnie Hedquist, Wilder. Poinsettia: Kenneth Klug, Fairmont; Robert Young, Welcome; Dale Opheim, Estherville; & Larry Petrowiak, Fairmont. Fire extinguisher from Heartland Security: Gary Anderson, Dunnell; & Cordell Kolander, Lakefield. Kids' iPod Shuffles winners: Ashley & Alec Harder, Jackson. 🍀

2011 Annual



“Good tidings we bring to you and your kin...” The Martin County West Show Choir performed holiday tunes for the crowd during Annual Meeting registration. Bravo!



Bulb recycling was made easy November 19! Members brought in many fluorescents to the Annual Meeting for recycling with the first four being free! Matt and Nick Holm, Fairmont, assisted lineman Mike Scheff in collecting bulbs.

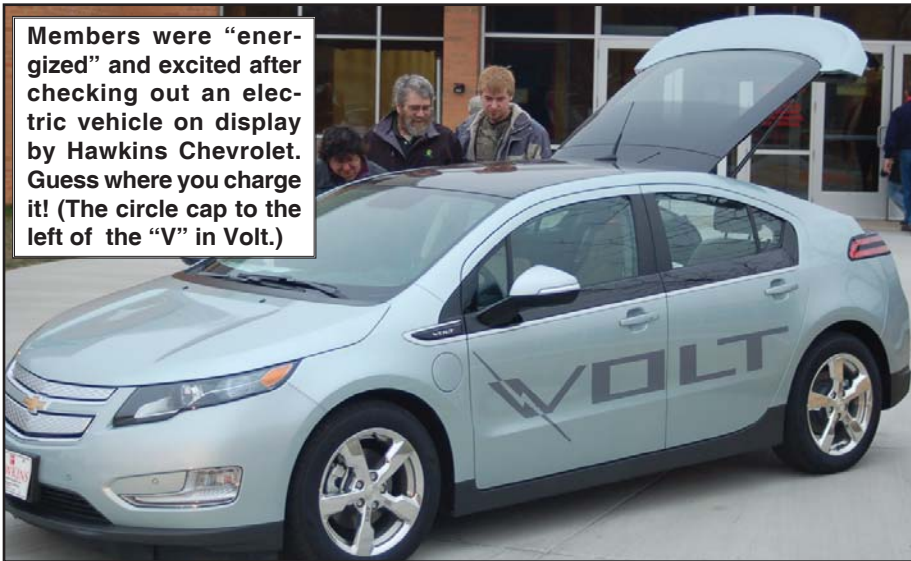


Members “flipped” over the tasty pancakes and sausages prepared by the Jackson and Sherburn Lions Clubs. 551 attendees enjoyed the hot breakfast on a cold day. Lion Pat Barnett wows the crowd with his flapjack flipping skills!

Meeting moments



Nominating Committee members Harry Knutson and Cordell Kolander (right) collect the members' ballots. Members elected Doug Landsteiner, Fairmont; and Bruce Brockmann, Granada; to the Nominating Committee. Director Jon Saxen, Welcome, was re-elected to the Board.



Members were "energized" and excited after checking out an electric vehicle on display by Hawkins Chevrolet. Guess where you charge it! (The circle cap to the left of the "V" in Volt.)



350 members registered at the meeting and received hammers as attendance gifts. Linemen Jake Soderholm and Kerry Ella helped these members.



Congratulations go to the top prize winners: Ernest Hand, Fairmont, with Bunn coffee maker; Juanita Cegelske, Winnebago, with iPod Touch; and JoAnn Bretzman, Lakefield, with Charbroil electric grill.



Senator Julie Rosen spoke with Federated members about energy legislation coming from the state energy committee she chairs; she also shared her 2012 outlook. 🙏

This is only a test...(not)



Everyone is familiar with the emergency broadcast system message: “This is only a test...” Your electric cooperative encourages you to test your generator before Mother Nature strikes this winter. Failing the generator test can cost you money and time, plus fixing it is no fun during a blizzard.

If you are on the co-op’s genset load control program, please make sure your genset runs on the monthly test days. If your genset doesn’t start, it gives you a chance to identify the problem before a control day.

To make sure any genset is always ready, perform regular maintenance checks.



Generators come in many shapes and sizes, such as small home models at left and big farm models above. But no matter how big or small, they don’t do any good if they don’t run. Make sure your genset passes the winterized test!

- Does it have enough winterized fuel?
- Does it have sufficient winterized oil?
- When is the last time a mechanic has looked at it to make sure everything is ship shape? 🛠️

There it is... Miss (or Mr.?) Efficiency!

Stay on the cutting edge in water heating efficiency with a Marathon water heater. Not only can they reduce utility bills; they also have a limited lifetime warranty. Call your cooperative for details.





Cock-a-doodle-do! We're calling for chicken recipes

Share with us your chicken recipes, whether it's for fried chicken, grilled, baked, nuggets, soup or hot dish. Mail your recipe by December 27 to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop. Otherwise, drop it off at your local electric co-op. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing! 🐔

Crouton Hotdish by Bev Hines, Bingham Lake

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1½ to 2 pounds ground beef | 1 stick margarine |
| 2 c. water | 7 oz. seasoned croutons |
| 1 c. onion, chopped | 1 can cream of chicken soup |
| 1 c. celery, chopped | 1 can cream of celery soup |

Put ground beef in 9x12" pan (sometimes I brown the beef first and other times I use lean raw meat and put it the 9x12" pan to cook). In a saucepan boil water, onion, celery and margarine until onion is transparent. Add the croutons and put on top of the ground beef. Combine soups and spread over hotdish. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.



Sweet Dressing for Fowl by Mary Mills, New Ulm

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1½ pound loaf of day-old white bread, cut or tear in small pieces (I often use 12 hamburger buns) | Dash of pepper |
| 1 quart milk or less, pour over bread to soak. (May use some water). | |
| 1½ T. salt | 2 c. chopped apples (more or less to suit your tastes) |
| ½-¾ c. granulated sugar | 1 c. raisins (more or less to suit your tastes) |
| ½ tsp. ground allspice | Add 2 beaten eggs |

Mix all together and bake with your bird. Otherwise, you can also bake this in a casserole dish. 🐔

The true cost of space heaters



Some electric space heater advertisements promise 50 percent savings on heating costs. The idea is that you use them for spot heating and turn down your whole-house thermostat. This causes you to spend less on furnace fuel. That is where the savings come from. "50 percent" savings don't come from exaggerated claims of the electric heater's efficiency.

All electric heaters are 100 percent efficient, whether they cost \$25 or \$400. The only feature that affects the amount of heat an electric space heater can generate is its wattage. A 1,500-watt heater with a \$25 housing provides as much heat as a 1,500-watt heater with a \$400 housing.

Watts x hours of use ÷ 1,000 x cost per kilowatt-hour = cost of operation

This means that if a 1,500-watt heater ran 24-hours at a rate of 8 cents a kilowatt-hour, the cost would be \$2.88 a day (1,500 x 24 ÷ 1,000 x \$0.8). For a month that would amount to \$86.40 added to the electric bill of the average customer. Many consumers who buy into the "50 percent" savings claim are often surprised at the rise in their electric bill.

Spot heating is what portable electric heaters do best. If a portable heater is used in one room and the entire home's thermostat is lowered, energy savings are possible. If the thermostat isn't lowered, savings are not likely to be achieved.

The best portable heaters have their own thermostats so they don't run continually. Multiple settings also allow you to choose the best setting to stay comfortable. 🐔

Swiss Chicken Casserole by Aimee Dirksen, Sleepy Eye

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 6 slices Swiss cheese
- 10¾ oz. can cream of chicken soup
- ¼ c. milk
- 1 regular box stuffing mix
- ¼ c. melted butter

Preheat oven to 350°. Arrange chicken in a greased baking dish. Top the chicken with cheese slices. Combine soup and milk; stir well and spoon mixture over chicken. Sprinkle stuffing mix on top and drizzle melted butter over stuffing. Cover and bake 50-55 minutes or until chicken is done. 🐔

Call before digging



1-800-252-1166

Contact Gopher State One Call (GSOC) before doing any digging more than 12-inches deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register on the website at www.gopherstateonecall.org. This gives utilities time to mark their underground lines up to your meter so you are safe! Then contact a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 🐔



Richard 'Rick' Burud

Manager's Message

Annual Meeting wraps up

As I write this column, the Annual Meeting is a wrap and we're on to the Budget and Work Plan for 2012. I want to thank everyone who attended the Annual Meeting despite icy roads and inclement weather. Participants were entertained by the Martin County West Show Choir and enjoyed guest speaker Julie Rosen, our state senator and a Federated member.

Sign our Troops Banner



Federated members attending the Annual Meeting signed the Troops Banner and made donations as well. You're invited to sign it too!

Stop in the office through December and sign our "Troops Banner." This banner will be sent to our national guard troops, which are deployed. Also, make a donation (Federated will match it) with all funds going to care packages for our troops. What a great project our employees have undertaken!

WAPA contract approved

Late last week I received an e-mail that our Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) contract extension will be completed in 2012. This 30-year extension allocates hydropower to our cooperative from

2021 to 2051. This is great news and a key element to our power supply future.

Did you see the rates letter with December's bill?

Earlier this month you received a letter indicating a rate adjustment for 2012 of about six percent; it was included with your December 1 electric bill. Complete information is available at our office or on our website (www.federatedrea.coop).

Happy Holidays!

As we approach the holiday season be sure to take time to enjoy the "reason for the season" and your family and friends. ❄️



Rural Electric

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Darvin Voss — 662-6679

The Board of Directors generally meets the last business day of the month at 9 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.

Board meeting highlights

Federated Rural Electric's Board of Directors met November 30. All directors were present. They acted on these board items.

- Approved the Audit Committee's recommendation and approved the recent audit by Eide Bailly.
- Approved the salary committee recommendations.
- Provided direction on setting the date, time and place for the 2012 Annual Meeting.
- Reviewed 2011 Annual Meeting results and what could be adjusted.
- Approved director delegates for 2012 meetings and committees.
- Updated on upcoming meetings for directors.
- Heard reports from the department managers and subsidiaries. ❄️



Federated will be
closed Dec. 26 & Jan. 2
Happy Holidays!



17 organizations funded through Operation Round Up

Organization	Amount	Purpose
Dunnell Book Room	\$63	Books and crafts for Summer Reading Program
JCC Riverside Elementary, Jackson	\$236	Games, books, yoga balls, Therapy Putty & Moon Sand for Student Support Center
SW/WC Service Cooperative	\$250	Training for School Crisis Response Team in this region
Pleasantview Elementary, Lakefield	\$365	For grades 3-4 to attend anti-bullying seminar at Rainbows Inc.
Jackson County Historical Society	\$370	Software upgrade for artifacts database
Truman Preschool	\$425	To purchase literacy bags to optimize learning
MCW Community Education	\$450	To offer Music Therapy Program for preschool students
JCC High School Library	\$479	To purchase new library books for students
Lakefield Fire Department	\$495	Toward a Traverse Rescue Stretcher
MCW High School Special Ed.	\$500	Life-skill building curriculum for disabled students
JCC Robotics Team, Jackson	\$500	Toward parts for the competition robot
Northrop Area Baseball Assn.	\$630	To purchase catcher's gear and batting helmets
Sherburn Fire Department	\$650	For an Injectable Training Arm to practice giving shots
Jackson Volunteer Fire Department	\$991	To purchase two pagers
Granada First Responders	\$1,000	Toward an oxygen regulator, O2 tanks and back board, suction kit, pro-splint, c-collars and other equipment
Jackson Co. Dept. Human Services	\$1,000	To assist Federated customers with emergency energy assistance
American Red Cross, SW MN	\$1,500	Toward the cost of two nursing kits for use during disasters
Total	\$9,904	



The Trust Board received 24 applications totaling \$18,243 in this 34th round of funding. The Trust Board will meet again in the spring to determine the next round of funding. The deadline for submitting applications is February 24. Interested organizations may go to www.federatedrea.coop to download the application and information, e-mail info@federatedrea.coop for an application or call 507-847-3520; ask for Sherry or Andrea. Thanks Federated members for your participation! 🍷

Students: apply by Feb. 1 for 2 \$1,000 Basin scholarships



This is the fifth year that Federated Rural Electric, Jackson, will award two \$1,000 Basin and 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 Richard Burud, Federated's general manager. "Basin awards 120 of these scholarships to local electric cooperatives. Federated is excited to distribute the scholarship materials and select two local students to receive the \$1,000 scholarships."

The scholarships are available to high school seniors and college students who will be enrolled fulltime in an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school working on an undergraduate or master's degree.

Applicants must complete a two-page application, include a grades' transcript, ACT/SAT scores, write an essay and have an outside appraisal (reference checklist). The topic of the one-page essay should answer the following question: *How would you describe the value of your local cooperative to you and your immediate family?*

The deadline for this scholarship is February 1. Applications are available from Federated's website (www.federatedrea.coop), at Federated's office (507-847-3520 or info@federatedrea.coop) or from local high school counselors.

The scholarship must be used for college during fall 2012. Checks will be made payable to the school as paid by Basin/L&O. Scholarships will be distributed in two equal installments in August and January.

In addition, the Federated Rural Electric Operation Round Up scholarship details will be finalized after the trust board's March 23 meeting; these applications for high school seniors will be available around April 1.

Last year's winners were Breanne Rentschler, Lakefield; and Matthew Stoffel, Sherburn. 🍷

Go to www.federatedrea.coop, call Federated or see your school counselor for the application & details

High school freshmen, sophomores or juniors: Win a free trip to Washington, D.C. June 16-21

- Submit Youth Tour application & 300-word essay on energy-related topic by Feb. 1 to Federated
- 5 finalists called back for 15-minute interviews Feb. 27
- First 10 to apply receive \$20 Amazon.com gift cards

Go to www.federatedrea.coop, call Federated or see your school counselor for the application & details

