

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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# Connections



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2012

International

Year of

Cooperatives



Electric cooperatives and other members of the co-op family take center stage globally in 2012, designated the International Year of Cooperatives.

The International Year of Cooperatives' theme, "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," resonates with co-ops in the electric, banking, food, retail, housing and marketing arenas.

"We're surrounded by a diverse mix of cooperatives," said Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). NRECA is the national service organization for more than 900 not-for-profit electric cooperatives and public power districts. "No matter what kind of co-op you belong to, two things are clear: we put people first and we are innovators. By getting neighbors and communities to work together, co-op members build a better world."

### What are co-ops?

Cooperatives are a global network of independent, local businesses owned by those they serve.

"We share a common set of business principles and values like self-help and democracy," English said. "Each co-op exists to meet the needs of its members."

According to the Washington, D.C.-based National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), more than 29,200

cooperatives nationally employ 2 million Americans. One in every four Americans is a co-op member, but the scope of the cooperative network doesn't stop at the border.

"Co-ops are a major economic force in industrialized countries and provide a powerful business model for developing nations," said Paul Hazen, NCBA president and CEO.

More than 1 billion co-op members exist worldwide; co-ops generate 100 million jobs globally. Cooperatives strive for sustainable development of communities through member-driven policies with co-op leaders elected by members.

"As a member, you have a voice in how your co-op operates. That keeps the co-op's focus on you and how best to meet your needs," English said.

The innovative practices of co-ops provide consumer-focused solutions that can adapt quickly to change. Unlike competitive, profit-driven businesses, co-ops cooperate with each other to fashion programs that improve service. For example, food co-ops introduced food nutrition labels long before they were federally required in 1994. Credit unions fought the predatory practices of payday lenders by introducing salary advance loans that double as savings accounts.

Electric cooperatives are leading the way nationally in deploying technologies that enhance service reliability.

"You can find co-ops for all walks of life," English said. "When people unite with a common goal, the co-op business model comes into play."

### Lighting the world

Electric cooperatives are leaders, delivering power and light to 42 million consumers in 47 states covering more than 75 percent of the nation's landmass.

Not only does 2012 mark a global celebration of the cooperative business model, it also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NRECA International Programs, a division of NRECA. The theme, "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," shines in the work NRECA International Programs does every day.

Working together, more than 300 U.S. electric cooperatives have delivered the benefits of safe and reliable electric — *Continued on Page 7*

  
**Federated**  
**Rural Electric**

Connecting our co-ops & members to a progressive future



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## Arm yourself now to caulk up savings



The greatest sources of heating and cooling losses in your home are often invisible — air leaks. As a result, controlling air leaks provides the best way to extend the life of your home, conserve energy, save money, and increase comfort.

Bottom line? If you don't tighten up your home first, money spent on insulation may be wasted.

Fortunately, you can seal a lot of leaks around your home's exterior with less than \$100 worth of caulk. It's generally possible to seal openings up to one-quarter inch between window frames and siding or around door frames. For larger gaps add a backing material before caulking, or use a spray foam sealant instead.

Most types of outdoor caulk are sold in tubes that fit a caulking gun. In addition, some caulks come in aerosol cans; they're a good choice for filling gaps up to one-half inch around pipes and wires.

When shopping for caulk, many choices exist. Prices range from a couple of dollars to several dollars per tube. Read the labels and choose a product that will adhere best to the materials you're sealing. (See chart on Page 6.)

If your budget allows, spend a little more for a higher-quality caulk. Inexpensive caulks may last only a few years, while premium-priced caulks are rated for 20 years or more.

### Caulk like a pro

- As a rule of thumb, you'll prob-



**Frost buildups like this can be a sign that your windows could benefit from being sealed with caulk. Look for these air leaks now.**

ably use half a cartridge per window or door and up to six cartridges for foundation work.

- Most caulks pose no known health hazards after they're fully cured. However, some high-performance caulking compounds contain irritating or potentially toxic ingredients; you should carefully read the manufacturer's instructions and take the appropriate precautions.

- The best time to apply caulk is during dry weather when outdoor temperatures are above 45 degrees. Low humidity is important during application to prevent cracks from swelling with moisture. Now is a great time to see where caulk is needed. Look for the frost build-up inside or feel a draft.

- If the gap you're sealing is too wide, use a special filler made for the purpose. You'll find fillers in the caulking department of your local hardware store or home center. However, note

that fillers are not designed for exposure to the elements; so you'll need to caulk or seal over it.

- Before applying new caulk, remove the old caulk or paint residue with a putty knife, stiff brush or special solvent.

- Make sure your work area is dry, so you won't seal in moisture.

- Hold the caulking gun at a consistent angle; 45 degrees is best.

- Caulk in a straight, continuous stream, avoiding stops and starts; make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of the crack or seam.

- Send caulk to the bottom of an opening to avoid bubbles.

- Release the trigger on the caulking gun before pulling it away from the crack to prevent applying too much caulk. A caulking gun with an automatic release makes this much easier.

- Don't skimp. If the caulk shrinks, — *Continued on Page 6*

# You don't have to watch out for that first step with a HeatTrak Doormat



Does your front step or sidewalk turn into a skating rink during the winter? Prevent falls and save your back from shoveling with the HeatTrak Heated Doormat.

This electric doormat prevents snow and ice accumulation wherever you put it. The mats will maintain an average temperature of 40 degrees above the ambient temperature. So for example, if the ambient temperature is 0 degrees Fahrenheit, the mat's temperature will be approximately 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The cost to operate the HeatTrak mat depends on the size of the mat. On average, each mat costs approximately 15 cents an hour to operate. Assuming the mat is on for 4-6 hours per snow day, the approximate cost per snow day to operate is between 60 and 90 cents.

The mat plugs into any standard outlet and melts snow at a rate of two-inches per hour. The heated doormat is built



Heated doormats make shoveling and slipping less likely.

tough. It is designed to be left outside for the entire winter season and comes with its own ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Up to four mats can be daisy-chained together, but a special power unit (\$30) and extension cords (\$13) are required.

The HeatTrak Heated Doormat comes in charcoal color, has a two-year warranty, is tested to UL standards and is available in three different sizes. The 24"x36" mat is \$90. The 20"x60" costs \$75. The 10"x30" is \$50. Look for it on Amazon.com. For bigger jobs industrial-sized heated mats are available. The rubber material that is used for the Industrial Mats is more durable than the thermoplastic material used in the Residential Mats. As a result, the Industrial Mats are better suited for high traffic areas with hundreds of people walking on them every day. The Residential Mats are meant to handle a few people a day.

For more information visit [www.heattrak.com](http://www.heattrak.com).

## Guard yourself from shocks with a ground-fault circuit interrupter



When a light goes out, you notice the bulb needs to be replaced (unless you like to stay in the dark). Yet, how can you tell if your electrical outlets are working properly? You don't want an electrical fire to serve as your wake-up call that's something is amiss.

"Many homes are equipped with new technologies to help prevent electrical fires and injuries," explained Brett Brenner, president of the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). "Unlike a light bulb that goes out when it needs to be replaced, you may not notice when outlet safety features aren't working properly. That's



The small GFCI outlet adds up to big safety protection. Protect yourself from shock by testing them to make sure they are functioning properly.

why ESFI recommends testing them every month."

Ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets and combination-type arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) circuit breakers are just some of the many safety features in your home that

need regular attention.

"It's possible an outlet or circuit may work, but the protection isn't there — the only way to know is to push the 'test' button," Brenner noted. Make passing this electrical safety test one of your New Year's resolutions!

"Taking care of these safety items on the first of the month when you're paying bills is a great time to knock a few things off the list. Then you don't have to worry about them for the rest of the month," Brenner added.

Learn more about home electrical safety by visiting ESFI's Virtual Home for more safety videos and tips at <http://virtualhome.esfi.org>.  
— Courtesy of [esfi.org](http://esfi.org)

# Federated Focus

## Bright 4-H electricity winners!

At the November 4-H banquets Federated presented incentive awards to the grand champion electricity project winners:

- Jackson County: Joshua Christoffer, Round Lake, son of Dean and Andrea.
- Martin County: Carson Kahler, Sherburn, son of Ryan and Janet.

## Iowa members' complaints

If you have a concern or complaint regarding Federated Rural Electric, it should be addressed to: Richard Burud, manager, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or call 507-847-3520.

If Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from: Utilities Board, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple St., Des Moines IA 50319-0069 or call 515-281-5979.

If your complaint is related to service, rather than rates, and Federated does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division too.

## Start your fire with a remote!



The days of starting a fire with wood and newspaper can be history with an electric fireplace from Federated. 50 models ranging from "stone" hearths, wood mantles to even mini-woodstoves. You can convert your woodburning fireplace to electric by buying just the electric insert. You'll love the remote to start it. With electric fireplaces you can adjust the flame, use the air purifier or even use the flame only. Call or e-mail to request an informational booklet; ask for Jon. 📞

## See the Jefferson, Lincoln & Washington Memorials... Win free D.C. trip; enter Youth Tour Contest



Washington, D.C. is calling. Will you accept the call to enter Federated's Youth Tour Contest?

Encourage a local high school freshman, sophomore or junior to apply by February 1. Applications for the free trip June 16-21 to Washington, D.C. are available from local school counselors, [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop) or call/e-mail Federated.

Fill out the application and write a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic. Five finalists will be interviewed February 27 starting at 4 p.m.. The first 10 applicants also receive a \$20 Amazon.com gift card. 📞

## Two \$1,000 scholarships available! Apply for Basin scholarships by Feb. 1



Remind your high school senior or college student with a year remaining to apply for the two \$1,000 Federated scholarships by February 1. Applications are available from school counselors, [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop) or call/e-mail Federated. The student completes the application, writes an essay topic on *How would you describe the value of your local cooperative to you and your immediate family?*, submit a transcript, ACT scores and a reference fills out a checklist. The parents must be Federated members.

Details on the Operation Round Up scholarship program will be available around April 1. 📞

## Federated posts nondiscrimination notice

Federated is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. Otherwise, call toll free 1-866-632-9992 (voice) or 1-800-877-8339 (TDD) or 1-866-377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Even electric meters can be recycled!



**Goodbye mechanical meters! Federated's Warehouseman Brian Anderson loads the first pallets into the semi trailer December 28 to start the recycling process.**

or 3,456 meters, which frees up valuable Federated warehouse space. Once the Dual Heat AMI conversion is completed in 2012, Federated will have a second shipment for meter recycling.

Pacific Trading's Tony Pearson explains how these meters are recycled. "We ship all meters to Alabama where the glass and cardboard are removed and recycled," he said. "It's not profitable to ship glass to China due to freight and import taxes. Then the meters are shipped to our sister plant in China where the meters are disassembled by hand to retrieve all of the metals and plastics. No material goes to landfill.

"Meters have a variety of metals such as copper, aluminum, nickel and steel," Pearson added. "By taking the meters apart by hand, all materials are recoverable. No meters are resold or parted out; all meters are 100 percent recycled." ♻️



## Go GREEN!

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[www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop) (click on Easy2Pay) or call us

# Co-op's last main meter changed to AMR meter



**Federated reached a milestone December 22. The last main meter was changed out to the new electronic automated meter reading (AMR) system. The last meter was installed in the town of Wilder. Federated Journeyman Lineman Matt Madden programs one of the final installs.** ♻️

# Dual Heat meter changes hits the two-thirds mark






The Dual Heat finish line is approaching!

Federated Electrician Dave Berlin has been changing out the mechanical Dual Heat meters to the new electronic meters for the automated meter reading (AMR) system since this summer.

As of the end of December, 66 percent were completed. Dual Heat meters are second or even third meters used to record electric heat under Federated's money-saving program.

Federated calls members to set up appointments for these changeouts as most are located in the home's basement. If you dropped your land line or changed your cell phone number, call or e-mail Federated; ask for Andrea. Update your phone number and schedule your dual heat meter changeout appointment. Federated hopes to complete this phase in early 2012. ♻️

# Common caulking compounds

Caulk Type	Recommended Uses	Clean Up	Shrinkage	Adhesion	Comments
Silicone 	Seals most dissimilar building materials such as wood, stone, vinyl, metal flashing and brick	Immediately with dry cloth and mineral spirits or naphtha	Little or none	Good to excellent	Permits joints to stretch or compress. Will stick to painted surfaces, but paint will not adhere to most cured silicones.
Polyurethane, expandable spray foam 	Expands when curing. Good for larger cracks. Use in non-friction areas, because foam becomes dry and powdery over time.	Immediately with solvent such as lacquer thinner	None; expands quite a bit	Good to excellent	Quickly expands to fit larger, irregularly shaped gaps. Flexible. Can be applied at variable temperatures. Must be painted for exterior use to protect from ultraviolet radiation.
Water-based spray foam 	Around window and door frames in new construction or remodeling projects; smaller cracks	Water	None; expands only 25%	Good to excellent	Takes 24 hours to cure to a soft consistency. Will not overexpand to bend window frames. Must be exposed to air to dry. Not useful for larger gaps, as curing becomes difficult.
Butyl rubber 	Seals most dissimilar materials such as glass, metal, plastic, wood and concrete. Seals around windows and flashing; bonds loose shingles	Mineral spirits or naphtha	5%-30%	Good	Lasts 10 or more years. Resilient, but not brittle. Can be painted after one week. Variable shrinkage may require two applications. Does not adhere well to painted surfaces.
Oil or resin-based* 	Seals exterior seams and joints on almost all building materials	Mineral spirits or naphtha	10%-20%	Good	Low cost. Rope and tube forms available. Oils dry out and cause material to harden and fall out. Low durability; lasts 1-4 years. Poor adhesion to porous surfaces such as masonry. Should be painted. Limited temperature range.

— Continued from Page 2

reapply it to form a smooth bead that completely seals the crack.

- If caulk oozes out of a crack, use a putty knife to push it back in.

- Once you've applied caulk, it takes time for it to dry or cure. Tack-free time tells you how quickly the fresh caulk's outer surface will dry or skin over. The total cure time indicates the time required for the caulk to become completely stable — or reach the point where no further drying or shrinking will occur.

- Don't allow pets and small children to come into contact with fresh caulk.

### Use expanding foam for large gaps

- Polyurethane expandable spray foam works well around pipes and gaps around the foundation. However, this type of caulk expands with so much force that it can cause damage to window frames and door frames. In those spots use a water-based spray foam specifically designed for the job.

- Expanding foam is ideal for filling cracks that caulks can't handle. It comes in aerosol cans and takes a short time

to cure. The foam is very sticky and attaches itself quickly; be prepared to pick up any messes fast.

- To seal gaps too wide for foam use foil-faced bubble wrap. For really large holes cut sections of rigid foam insulation to fit and then glue into place with expanding foam before covering the area with appropriate building material.

Find more tips at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com). 📌

— Information courtesy of U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency, ENERGY STAR, and product manufacturers



## Cover the spread! We're calling for cream cheese recipes!

Share with us your cream cheese recipes. How do you use it to make meals creamier or tastier? Mail your recipe by January 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! 📧

### Chicken Deluxe Casserole by Jane & Bob Sorenson, Hanska

4 c. (8 oz.) Pepperidge Farm Herb stuffing mix      1 scant c. melted butter

Mix together in a large bowl. Press half into a greased 9x13" baking dish and set this aside.

**Topping:** 1 large can evaporated milk      10 oz. pkg. frozen corn

4 c. cooked chicken (or turkey), chopped or shredded

2 cans cream of mushroom soup      Optional: diced onion  
salt and pepper to taste

Mix the topping ingredients and pour over crumbs that are in baking dish. Sprinkle remaining half of crumbs on top.

Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees. Allow to stand 15 min. after baking. This is a tasty, fail-proof casserole. Enjoy! 📧



### Sesame Chicken Nuggets by Laura Greiner, Truman

1½ lbs. deboned, skinless chicken breasts      1 T. salad oil

1 T. soy sauce      2 egg whites

2 T. white wine or cooking sherry      ½ tsp. ground ginger

4 T. bread crumbs      4 T. sesame seeds

Cut chicken into bite-sized cubes. Stir with salad oil, soy sauce, wine, egg whites and ginger. Marinate one hour. Combine bread crumbs and sesame seeds. Roll chicken cubes into this mixture. Arrange in a single layer on a shallow nonstick baking pan. Bake uncovered at 475° for eight minutes. Serves six. 📧

## Co-ops bring their business model to other nations

— Continued from Page 1

service to more than 100 million people in 40-plus countries since November 1962.

“Building a better world takes experience, and no group has more experience in bringing low-cost power to remote areas than electric co-ops,” your cooperative’s general manager stated.

In the United States co-ops helped electricity evolve from a luxury to an essential part of daily life. Yet, more than 2 billion people around the globe still live without power — 64 million in Latin America, 500 million in Africa and more than 1 billion in Asia.

Learn more about how you can help electric co-ops build a better world at [www.NRECAFoundation.coop](http://www.NRECAFoundation.coop). For more information about co-ops visit [www.go.coop](http://www.go.coop). 📧



Since the 2010 earthquake in Port au Prince, NRECA International has been working alongside Haiti’s national electric organization, Electricite d’Haiti, to rebuild and train the local line workers.

### Sweet & Spicy Chicken Pasta by Sandy Flohrs, St. James

2 large chicken breasts, cooked & cubed

14.5 oz. can of petite diced tomatoes

½ c. water      2 T. brown sugar

2 T. vinegar      1/8 t. salt

2 T. Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp. chili powder      8 oz. egg noodles

1 tsp. ground mustard

½ tsp. celery seed

½ clove garlic (or to taste)

1 small can black olives

Combine all ingredients (except the black olives and noodles). Simmer on medium heat for 45 min. Add black olives. Serve over cooked egg noodles. 📧

## 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](http://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

### Holiday and cooperative traditions important

As I write my column, the Christmas season is in full swing: wrapping presents, Christmas programs and celebrations, excitement from the children and yes...the family together for the holidays. Does tradition play a part in your family?

As a young boy growing up in North Dakota, I remember my "traditional" Christmas Eve.

Usually, I worked late in the hardware store either delivering that washer/dryer with a red bow or wrapping late shoppers' small appliances for that last-minute husband. Then we would go to church followed by Christmas supper at Aunt Margaret's house. Christmas Day was spent at my Dad's family in West Fargo.

After moving to Jackson the tradition changed, but yet remains the same: candlelight service around 5 p.m., supper at home, then Christmas with the children and now grandchildren. Yes, turkey and dressing continues as the standard.

Well, how does tradition effect you and your cooperative? Well, I think you could tell me many stories, but for all of us at Federated we believe tradition is a direct relationship with you, the member-owner. Yes, these characteristics include service, reliability, responsiveness, respect, integrity, commitment and the like. We promise you that we'll keep up such tradition in the years to come: no 1-800 number in a foreign country, real people willing to listen and help.

I hope you had a great holiday season from all of us at Federated. 🍷

Purchase a new Heartland System by January 31, 2012 and receive three months of FREE monitoring. (Certain restrictions apply; cannot be combined with other offers.)

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### Rural Electric

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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 December 14. All directors were present. They acted on these board items.

- Conducted a joint board meeting with Nobles Cooperative Electric's directors. Listened to the power suppliers' reports by local directors, along with reports regarding the statewide and national organizations for electric cooperatives.

- Approved director voting delegates for the upcoming national annual meetings.

- Approved the 2012 work plan and budget meeting for February 29.

- Updated on the Western Area Power Administration's contract rewrite with the presentation of the new contract.

- Updated on upcoming meetings for directors.

- Reviewed written reports from the department managers. 🍷

**Learn more about us at [www.federatedrea.coop](http://www.federatedrea.coop)!**