



POWER CONNECTION

member driven. community focused. energy smart.

JUNE 2019



IT'S A PANCAKE PARTY!

Mark your calendars now and join us for all you care to eat pancakes and family fun on Saturday, August 10, 2019 at the Freeport Community Center from 8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

The sausage will be sizzling, the syrup will be squeezing and the pancakes will be flying! Yes - FLYING!

WE'RE SAYING THANK YOU!

The goal for our member appreciation event is to say thank you and express our appreciation for your patronage throughout the year. It is also an opportunity for those of us at the Co-op to meet actively involved member-consumers like you, that support us and play a critical role in shaping and directing the future of this Cooperative.

BREAKFAST

As seen on the Food Network, Chris Cakes will be joining us to help serve up a delicious meal and some high flying entertainment.

The Chris Cakes story began in Pocahontas, Iowa in the late 1960's, when a local Kiwanis Club was preparing for their annual pancake supper. Since the preparation and presentation of the meal was labor intensive, requiring a large group of men, the idea of building a portable grill capable of serving large groups of people in a short span of time was born.

The unique grill created became the foundation of Chris Cakes' business and can cook up to 48 pancakes in 2 minutes. Chris Cakes uses their custom designed grill and a patented dispensing unit, their own multi-

grain brand of pancake mix, along with talented, fun-loving flip-masters to feed groups from 50 to 50,000 quickly and efficiently.

With their fancy pancake flipping and dose of humor, you are sure to enjoy a one-of-a-kind event and some delicious pancakes!

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

It's hard to think about it now, but August will bring with it back to school season, and as you prepare your children to return to the classroom, we want to help. Each child, between the ages of 2 and 18, that attends the Stearns Electric Pancake Feed, will receive an age appropriate bag of school supplies*.

*Children must be present at the event in order to receive a bag of supplies. Offer will be available while supplies last.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

SAFETY FIRST, AND LAST



I have heard it said before that there are no second chances in life. When it comes to working with electricity, this is an all too true reality. Electricity is a lethal commodity. You can't see it, hear it or smell it. Yet we benefit from the equipment and devices that it energizes and the illumination that it provides every single day. With no shortage of dangerous job functions and duties in an industry like ours, safety is a mindset we simply can't operate without at Stearns Electric Association.

Stearns Electric was recently selected by the Minnesota Rural Electric Trust (MRET) as this year's recipient of the Leroy Vanderpool Excellence in Safety Award. The award is named after Leroy Vanderpool, a distinguished safety professional who championed electrical safety for Minnesota electrical cooperatives. "Culture" focused, the award recognizes electric cooperatives for innovative programs and processes that promote workplace safety.



At Stearns Electric, we actively seek to achieve high standards in safety excellence. Our Safety Program includes:

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Our employee driven safety committee meets monthly

to discuss safety priorities, review safety concerns and recommend improvements to the Cooperative's Safety Program. This proactive group of employees engage in open dialogue about strengths and weaknesses while working to minimize and eliminate safety exposures.

SAFETY TRAINING: Employees engage in safety training and education on a regular basis. At least once a month employees that work in the field participate in hands-on training to practice proper safety procedures. In addition all employees receive safety education material to review individually and as a group during department meetings. Our emergency response plan was also recently put to the test in a practice drill designed to identify improvement opportunities.

SAFETY INSPECTIONS: While ongoing training and education is important, Stearns Electric inspects building facilities, vehicles, substations and crews regularly. Doing so ensures that we meet the national, state and local safety codes and that all employees follow safe OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) work practices.

FIND IT FIX IT: Because prevention is imperative to safety, the Cooperative launched a new program in 2019 titled "Find It, Fix It," to compel employees - at any level - to speak up and report hazardous conditions or unsafe work practices. Employees are encouraged to not only report concerns but also offer solutions. This program allows employees to take more ownership in creating a safe work environment. All Find It, Fix It reports are reviewed by the Safety Committee and issues are quickly resolved. In addition, the reporter is recognized as a safety

leader and results are shared with the Cooperative as a whole.

THIS IS MY WHY: Another program that focuses heavily on improving safety culture is our "This is My Why" campaign. Designed to demonstrate to employees that their safety is a priority and valued by their co-workers, Stearns Electric created a video series that captures employees and their families sharing their "why" behind working safely. The videos create a personal connection to safety and serve as a great reminder that the main purpose for teaching and living out safe work practices is to make sure that each of our employees return home safely each day to their "why." You can view "This is My Why" videos on the Stearns Electric Facebook page.

SAFETY MILESTONE: Over the course of the last four years, Stearns Electric employees have driven over one million miles without an accident. We have about 45 vehicles in our fleet consisting of bucket trucks, digger derricks, material trucks, pickups and SUVs. Reaching a million miles driven without an incident is certainly cause for celebration, especially with the winter road conditions in Minnesota!

Stearns Electric is honored to receive the Leroy Vanderpool award for our commitment and efforts to create a culture where safety is important. We will always put safety first.

Sincerely,

Robin C. Doege
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

JOIN THE MEMBER ENGAGEMENT GROUP FOR A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT YOUR COOPERATIVE.

Stearns Electric Association is currently seeking members to serve on the Cooperative's Member Engagement Group. The Member Engagement Group serves two purposes. First, it gives you, our member-consumers, a chance to learn more about the Cooperative and our services. At each meeting it is our goal to provide new and valuable information about what is happening at the Cooperative and the ways in which we can serve you. Second, this committee is a resource for our Board members and management staff, a sounding board if you will, for ideas and proposals for new programs and evaluations of existing services.

Serving on the committee is a two-year commitment for a total of 8 meetings. Meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of September, November, February and May at 6:30 p.m. A light supper is provided. In return for your participation, members on the committee receive a \$50 honorarium for each meeting attended, in addition to a mileage reimbursement. There are limited spots each year on this committee. If you are interested in joining, visit www.stearnselectric.org and apply. If you have questions you can call our office during business hours at (800) 962-0655 or email the Member Engagement Group Coordinator at communications@stearnselectric.org.

STEARNS ELECTRIC WINS TWO NATIONAL COMMUNICATION AWARDS



Stearns Electric Association's communication and marketing team, Amanda Groethe, director of communications and marketing (pictured), and Whitney Ditlevson, communications and marketing specialist, recently received recognition at the national level in the 2019 Spotlight on Excellence Awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

The duo received a Gold Award in the Best Total Communication Program category for their work in building awareness for electric vehicles on their Road Trip; Recharged. The

team also received a Gold Award in the Best Use of Digital Story Telling category for their safety campaign "This Is My Why." The annual Spotlight on Excellence Awards program recognizes the best communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related industry organizations.

BOARD MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Stearns Electric Association was held on April 25, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. at the Stearns Electric Association office located in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

CEO Robin Doege reported on how the new GRE rate structure will affect power costs. The primary driver of the future costs is in helping our members use energy when it is the cheapest vs. the current load control practice.

Director of Communications and Marketing, Amanda Groethe explained NRECA's Lexicon Project. The purpose of the project was to determine how electric cooperative members viewed themselves as member-owners in an effort to use language more readily identifiable to them than what is already used within the industry.

Manager of Engineering Matt O'Shea reviewed the St. Augusta and Sobieski single phase underground cable replacement notifications. The first shipment of lights has arrived for the upcoming Security Light Replacement project which starts May 6.

Manager of Operations Glenn Blommel provided an update on current activities of the crews including how Stearns Electric was able to help out at People's Energy Co-op after the April 11 snow/ice storm. Similarly, weather has also delayed vegetation management plans. Mr. Blommel reported the electronic job briefing app is now fully implemented and used consistently prior to every job.

After attending the Annual Meeting, Attorney Scott Dymoke reported the new hybrid voting process went very well. In supervising the balloting process, Mr. Dymoke also remarked it was efficiently administered by Survey and Ballot Systems.

Mr. Rothstein suggested the Board by-law committee set a May meeting date to begin the review of the board by-laws and present any changes to the rest of the board for approval.

Next Meeting: June 27, 2019

TAKE CONTROL OF HIGH SUMMER BILLS



We expect summers to be hot, but most of us do all we can to keep our homes as comfortable as possible, even as outdoor temperatures edge thermometers upward.

When it comes to electricity, each of us has the power to help control our costs—we just have to make thoughtful choices to make energy savings pay off in dollars and cents.

Look toward the west. If you don't have trees, a porch overhang or awnings shading windows exposed to afternoon sun, there's a good chance radiant heat could be driving up indoor temperatures and adding to your overall cooling costs.

Window coverings can help. Blinds or shades can deflect intense sunlight, and draperies lined with a thermal radiant barrier can block up to 95 percent of sunlight and 100 percent of ultraviolet rays.

Comfort and cooling are easier to maintain when we take advantage of air flow. A ceiling fan can pull warm air up above your living zone, making a difference during summer months. The evaporative effect of circulating air blowing across our skin makes us more

comfortable, but that benefit completely disappears when we leave the room, so turning fans off in unoccupied rooms will save energy.

HVAC filters have a lot to do with airflow through your heating and cooling systems. Dirty filters restrict circulation through your returns, requiring your cooling system to work harder. If you can see dirt in a filter, it's likely 50 percent clogged. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on replacing disposable filters or cleaning permanent ones. If you've got pets, consider checking them more frequently.

You can save money and electricity by time-shifting some of the most energy-intensive activities away from peak energy use periods that normally occur during the hottest hours of the day. Cooking, doing laundry and using power tools can increase both heat and humidity inside your home, making it harder to reach or maintain a comfortable temperature.

Remember, controlling energy costs will always work better with buy-in from everyone in the household.

One open window anywhere can be like an uncapped chimney, pulling the conditioned air you pay to cool outside.

A gaming system, computer or big screen television left on but unwatched produces nearly as much heat as it does when it's in use.

Lighting and ventilation fans add convenience and provide benefits when they are needed but when left on and unattended, they use energy.

A bag of ice poured into a cooler will chill summer beverages as effectively and less expensively than a refrigerator in a hot garage.

MOVE OVER FOR ROADSIDE CREWS



If you see utility or emergency crews working on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over when possible.

When the power goes out, so do Stearns Electric Association's line crews. Line workers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

The Minnesota Move Over Law is intended to keep emergency workers safe and prevent motorists from crashing into stopped vehicles. This law includes and protects utility crews. **There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

HERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA

Want to light up your outdoor space without increasing your energy use? Try outdoor solar lights! They're easy to install and virtually maintenance free. Remember, solar lights work best when the solar cells receive the manufacturer's recommended hours of sunlight.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKUP

APPLIANCES

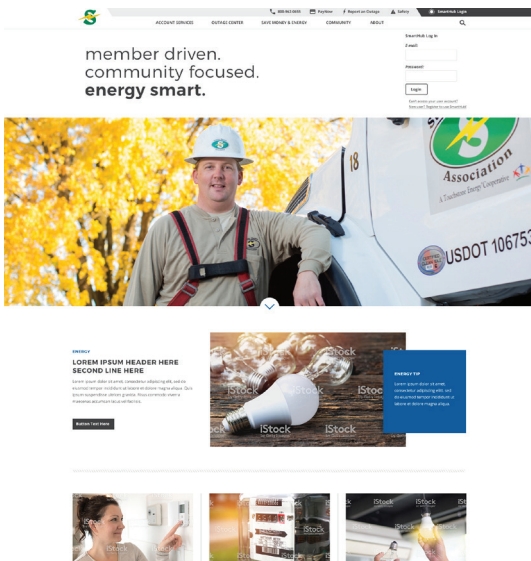
Appliances that generate heat, such as clocks, televisions and computer monitors, should be given several inches of clearance all around for good air circulations and cooling. Do not drape clothes, toys or other items over warm appliances.



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UPDATED WEBSITE



STEARNS ELECTRIC LAUNCHES NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE

We are proud to announce the release of our newly redesigned website. It has been crafted to reflect our Cooperative values, what our members need now, and builds upon technology capable of addressing future needs. We redesigned our website to improve your online experience. We hope you enjoy the website's fresh look, find it easier to navigate, and see that it improves the way you do business with us online.

Immediately you will notice streamlined menus, simple navigation and access to the information you need, any time of day. We have designed the new Stearns Electric Association website as a resource hub for account information, energy education, and tools that provide expanded capabilities for learning, sharing and interaction.

KEEPING YOU COOL

AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS: *A smarter solution for heating and cooling your home.*



HEATING AND COOLING FROM ONE UNIT

Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) provide home cooling and supplemental heating with 72% less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces. You can switch between cooling and heating directly from the thermostat, putting you in complete control. These whisper-quiet pumps work their dual magic without an open flame. They don't create any products of combustion such as carbon monoxide. No need to vent—or worry.

QUALITY CONTROL

Compared to conventional furnaces, the warmth provided by ASHPs distributes more evenly and holds its moisture better, resulting in a more natural, comfortable warmth. The pumps work in tandem with conventional furnaces and automatically select the most ideal balance between the two heating sources, based on your desired indoor temperature.

AN ADVANCED ADVANTAGE

The key to these units' dramatic efficiency is their ability to transfer more energy than they consume. This is accomplished by using advanced technology to extract and relocate ambient heat from the air. When you need to cool your home, it pulls heat directly from your indoor air and pumps it outside. This process is reversed for the purposes of home heating.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN ANY SEASON

When you need to cool your home, ASHPs outperform standard central air conditioners by extracting the existing heat from inside your home and pumping it outside. The cooling process is reversed when you use ASHPs to provide supplemental heat. By extracting the existing warmth from the outdoor air and pumping it into your home, you'll be able to run your furnace less. In fact, during the spring and fall, you may not need to run your furnace at all.

Rebates for new air source heat pumps are available. Learn more at www.stearnselectric.org.

NEWS

**THE STEARNS ELECTRIC OFFICES
WILL BE CLOSED ON THURSDAY,
JULY 4 FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY.**



TWINS PLAY BALL! MN YOUTH CLINIC DATES

Each year Stearns Electric Association sponsors the MN Twins Play Ball Youth Clinics within our service territory. The clinics are FREE, and focus on hitting, fielding and throwing.

Paynesville

Friday, July 12
High School
Baseball Stadium
Ages 6-9: 2 p.m.
Ages 10-13: 3:30 p.m.

St. Cloud

Saturday, July 20
Whitney Field C2
Ages 6-9: 10 a.m.
Ages 10-13: 11:30 a.m.

JUNE DAIRY MONTH



***During National Dairy Month, Stearns Electric salutes
the Central Minnesota dairy farmers.***

We are proud to provide the electricity that powers your farm and energy solutions to save you time and money. Visit www.stearnslectric.org to learn about the programs and rebates available for efficient lighting, water heating, robotic milking stations and more.

On behalf of Stearns Electric - thank you to all of our agricultural members for your contributions to our community.



cookingcorner

CREAMY LEMON GARLIC SHRIMP PASTA

Submitted by: Kelly Troska

Ingredients:

Pasta of Your Choice
3 Tbsp Butter
Shrimp
(deveined and shelled)
4 garlic cloves crushed
1 Cup Cream
2-3 Tbsp Fresh Lemon Juice
Fresh Parsley Finely
Chopped
Salt to Taste
Pepper to Taste

Directions:

Cook the pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain and reserve 1 cup of cooking water. In the meantime, melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet/ frying pan and cook the prawns in batches until golden brown and opaque. Season the prawns to taste. Remove from the pan and set aside. Add the remaining butter and garlic and cook for a few seconds, until the garlic is fragrant then pour in the cream, lemon juice (start with 2 tablespoons and add more if you wish), parsley and season to taste. Allow to simmer over gentle heat until the sauce coats the back of a spoon. Add the shrimp back in and adjust seasoning. Add the pasta and a little of the cooking water and toss until the pasta is coated in the sauce. Serve with lemon wedges and chopped parsley. Enjoy!

CONTEST DETAILS:

One member per account may submit one recipe per month. Recipes will be saved for future publications. The recipe selected each month will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Submit recipes to communications@stearnslectric.org or mail to: Stearns Electric, Cooking Corner, PO BOX 816, St. Joseph, MN 56374.



STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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**PERIODICALS
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DON'T GET LEFT IN THE DARK.

THREE *easy* WAYS TO REPORT AN OUTAGE.



SMARTPHONE APP:

DOWNLOAD SMARTHUB TO REPORT
OUTAGES WITH THE PRESS OF A BUTTON.



ONLINE:

LOG INTO SMARTHUB AND
CLICK "REPORT AN OUTAGE"



PHONE:

CALL OUR OUTAGE LINE
ANYTIME AT (800) 962-0655