



POWER CONNECTION

member driven. community focused. energy smart.

JULY 2019



IT'S A PANCAKE PARTY!

6th ANNUAL MEMBER APPRECIATION PANCAKE FEED

Join us for a flippin' good time on Saturday, August 10, 2019 at the Freeport Community Center for a Member Appreciation Pancake Feed.

Our 2019 Member Appreciation Event is just around the corner! Chris Cakes, featured on the Food Network, is sure to provide an entertaining breakfast if you join us for the Pancake Feed on August 10.

But you may be wondering why does my electric company have an appreciation event? To say THANK YOU.

We're a Cooperative, and that makes us different. You are a member of Stearns Electric Association – not a

customer. And that means you have a voice when it comes to the way we do business. Each spring you have the option to vote for your board of directors. These directors play a key role in making important decisions for our co-op, which is why members' voices must be heard.

Our member appreciation event is an opportunity for us to meet our members and thank each of you for your business, your support, and your involvement in shaping and directing the future of this Cooperative.

Join us for the Stearns Electric Member Appreciation Pancake Feed for all you care to eat pancakes and sausage, and a school supply

giveaway on Saturday, August 10, 2019 at the Freeport Community Center from 8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Chris Cakes will be joining us to help serve up a delicious meal and some high flying entertainment. 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 flipmasters 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! Join us and let us say thank you.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

ALIGNING FOR THE FUTURE



Your Stearns Electric Association board of directors and management team conduct strategic planning at a minimum every three years. During strategic planning we set our priorities for Stearns Electric's corporate goals. At this year's strategic planning session we also updated our mission and vision statement(s).

The updated mission statement for Stearns Electric is:

"To safely provide competitively priced and reliable electric service, beneficial energy solutions and a positive member experience".

Our updated vision statement is:

"Stearns Electric Association is a critical asset to our members and our communities."

Our responsibility as directors and leaders of your electric cooperative is to position our organization to be successful, and sustainable, into the future. The main reason that we conduct regular strategic planning is so that we have a good understanding of what the future holds for Stearns Electric and adapt to that future. One of our strategic priorities is to be sure that our organization structure effectively

supports our future business goals. Also, to make sure that our workforce plan is appropriate for our future needs.

With that said, Stearns Electric has developed an updated organizational structure that will improve member experience, and position Stearns Electric to be successful for years to come.

Stearns Electric leadership began working on this process last fall, prior to our strategic planning session in February 2019. We focused on organizing around these strategic areas:

- Member-Consumer Service
- Financial Strength
- Electrical System Reliability
- Safety
- Wholesale Power Cost

Our strategic planning exercise earlier this year confirmed that we needed to design our organization around these key areas for the best results. Over the last few weeks new organization alignment has been implemented at the Cooperative.

Our new organization structure consists of two divisions, Engineering and Operations, and Administration and Finance. Matt O'Shea has been promoted to Vice President of Engineering and Operations and Vicky Herkenhoff has been promoted to Vice President of Administration and Finance to lead their respective divisions. In addition, departments and many other employees have been realigned under these divisions.

While it will take time for this transition to take its full affect and properly cross-train employees, this new organization design will allow us to more efficiently meet and exceed our Stearns Electric strategic goals. In the energy business, one thing is certain: the industry is constantly changing. Now, Stearns Electric is prepared to tackle changes that comes our way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robin Doege".

Robin C. Doege
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Congratulations to Matt O'Shea who has been promoted to Vice President of Engineering and Operations.



Congratulations to Vicky Herkenhoff who has been promoted to Vice President of Administration and Finance.



RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
AGRICULTURAL • MEDICAL

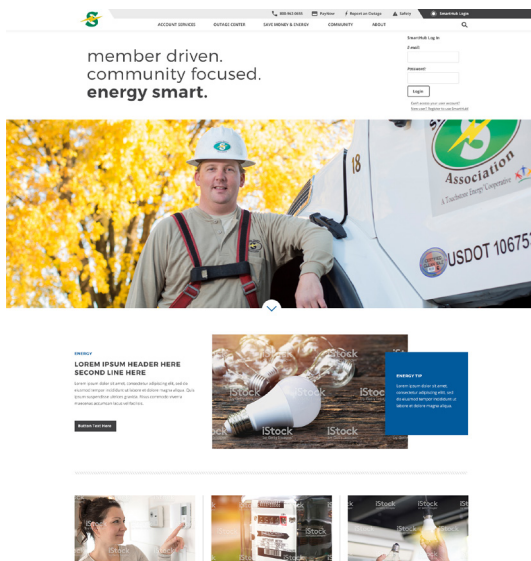
SAY YES TO ADVENTURE.

Our smart security systems warn you about intruders, carbon monoxide, fire, and other threats. You can relax and enjoy summer, knowing everything at home is safe.

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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.

BOARD MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Stearns Electric Association was held on May 30, 2019 at 1:40 p.m. at the Stearns Electric Association office located in Melrose, Minnesota.

Early in May, CEO Doege sent a formal letter to the Great River Energy Member Management Group and leadership outlining Stearns Electric's preference for GRE wholesale energy, capacity, embedded cost, and transmission rates.

The Stearns Electric Cooperative articles of incorporation and bylaw review has begun with a thorough review. Attorney Scott Dymoke and three Board members will be assisting in the review. A red-lined version of both documents is planned for Board recommendation in the fall followed by a member-owner vote in conjunction with the 2020 Board member election and Annual Meeting.

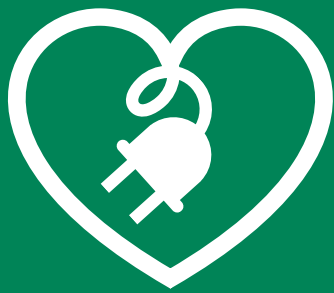
Director of Finance Cindy Anderson, reviewed financial and statistical information with the Board for April 2019. A motion to approve the financials subject to audit carried.

Phone and address listing changes related to the change in St. Joseph business operations were presented. The long term strategy is to move to only one 800 number which allows for more simplified, streamlined management of phone numbers.

Manager of Administrative Services Vicky Herkenhoff suggested Thursday, April 2, 2020 as the 83rd annual meeting of the Cooperative. A motion to accept the date carried. In an effort to align the Member Resource Committee with our core messages, the MRC has been renamed the Member Engagement Group. Members are needed for the 2019-2020 MEG year.

Manager of Operations Glenn Blommel provided an update on current activities of the crews and contractor progress. The crews have been very busy installing new services in the Sartell and St Joseph areas.

Next Meeting: July 25, 2019



myco-op CARES



As part of Stearns Electric Association's 'My Co-op Cares' community involvement program, Cooperative employee volunteers spent the morning of June 26 on Pelican Lake near Avon fishing with residents of area nursing homes as part of Midwest Outdoors Unlimited's annual event.

Midwest Outdoors Unlimited is a local organization committed to providing outdoor recreational activities for disabled veterans, youth and individuals in Minnesota. The organization offers safe, guided, hands-on outdoor experiences that include fishing and hunting.

On Wednesday, June 26, Midwest Outdoors Unlimited coordinated a fishing outing for residents of Mother of Mercy nursing home in Albany and Pine Villa Care Center in Melrose. Five Stearns Electric volunteers also participated in the event. Cooperative volunteers greeted individuals as they arrived at the event, helped fit participants with life jackets, assisted people onto their pontoon boats and helped individuals bait hooks and catch fish. Afterwards, participants enjoyed their fresh-caught fish and lunch at The Landing.

"My favorite part of the event was being able to assist the residents directly and make an impact on their day," said one Stearns Electric volunteer. "It was so wonderful to be outside and create new memories with strangers."

My Co-op Cares is a new initiative which bundles all of the Cooperative's current and future community initiatives under one umbrella. One pillar to the My Co-op Cares program is allowing employees the opportunity to volunteer during working hours within Stearns Electric's service territory. Three times per year, Stearns Electric sends teams of employees out to local organizations and charitable causes to share their time and talents.

"Allowing employees time away during the work week is a wonderful community building event," said another employee volunteer. "It is also good for employee morale!"

Visit our Facebook page to view more photos from the day. Visit www.stearnselectric.org/community to learn more about the Cooperative's commitment to community and other community outreach programs.



CONGRATULATIONS!

ONE MILLION MILES AND COUNTING

Stearns Electric Association employees drive one million miles with no accidents.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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



Eric Peterson of Grey Eagle, joined the Member Engagement Group in 2017 because he wanted to get more information about his Co-op - to see how it all worked. The Member Engagement Group (MEG) was just what he was looking for because it exists to give member-consumers a chance to do just that. 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. The Member Engagement Group is also a resource for our management team, a sounding board if you will, to gather thoughts on new ideas and evaluation of existing services.

"Even with 18 years experience in the utility industry, I didn't realize how much it cost for the Co-op to do its work or purchase its equipment. For example, the tree trimming project, to me it is mind blowing how many dollars it takes to trim trees away from power lines across the Stearns Electric service territory. It was also very interesting to learn how computerized the Co-op has become on the plant side of the business. The data they collect and use for detecting outages and other issues from self reading meters alone is impressive," Eric shared. "Participating in the group really showed how the board and management team have the members' best interest in mind. I look at the new project of changing out all of the safety lights to LEDs. The amount of savings that it is showing on paper is astounding! That is happening because of a proactive group wanting to reduce outages and reduce spending."

Serving on the committee is a two year commitment, 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 their participation, members on the committee receive a \$50 honorarium for each meeting they attend in addition to mileage reimbursement. "I would recommend to anyone to spend two years on the MEG. It is only 8 meetings! One of the greatest learning experiences I have ever had," Eric encouraged. There are limited spots each year on this committee. If you are interested in joining, visit www.stearnsselectric.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@stearnsselectric.org.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

HERE'S A QUICK ENERGY TIP TO HELP YOU BEAT THE SUMMER HEAT!

When it's warm out, avoid using the oven. Try cooking on the stove, using the microwave or grilling outside instead.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKUP

OUTDOORS

Install Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) outdoors and install weatherproof electrical boxes or covers on outdoor outlets.



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WHY ELECTRIC VEHICLES

SAVINGS, CONVENIENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

As someone who has always driven a gasoline-powered vehicle, it can be difficult to think of making the switch to an all-electric car. But with how affordable they are becoming, the convenience of “fueling up” at home and the added bonus of knowing you’re positively impacting the environment, it could be a more practical option than you first think.

COST SAVINGS

While electric vehicles (EVs) are less expensive to own and operate than a traditional gas-powered vehicle over the long-term, they can cost more upfront to purchase. That’s where incentives come into play. For example, the federal government offers consumers a tax credit of up to \$7,500 to put toward the purchase of a new EV, which can significantly lower the price tag. The primary cost of an EV is its battery, but innovations in design and manufacturing have driven battery prices down more than 80 percent between 2010 and 2018.

Once you own an EV, the fuel cost savings start adding up. Electricity prices are far more stable than

gas prices, and EVs are three times more energy efficient than gasoline-powered vehicles. This means that a typical EV can travel about 43 miles on \$1 worth of electricity. While total savings depend on current gas prices and your driving habits, someone who drives 12,000 miles per year could save \$1,300.

CONVENIENCE

You already charge all your personal electronics at home – why not your vehicle, too? Your local electric cooperative offers another cost savings solution, this time on a home EV charger. By enrolling in Stearns Electric Association’s ChargeWise program, you’ll be able to receive a rebate for up to \$500 to offset the cost to install an EV charger. Plus you’ll pay nearly half price electricity for charging the vehicle overnight.

Another convenience factor of EVs is that very little maintenance is required beyond changing windshield wipers and tires. They have fewer moving parts to break down – no carburetors, spark plugs, starters/alternators, etc. – which

means they’re also more reliable than their gasoline-powered counterparts. EVs are also extremely quiet since they don’t produce combustion noise.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Overall, EVs have better environmental attributes than traditional vehicles because of their higher efficiency, lower energy consumption and no tailpipe emissions.

Plus, utilities like Stearns Electric and its wholesale power provider Great River Energy are producing energy from many renewable sources, including hydro and wind. As the source of electricity gets greener, so does the vehicle.

There’s even a program you can enroll in once you own your EV that will ensure that you are “fueling” your vehicle with 100 percent wind energy for its lifetime at no additional cost. By signing up for Revolt, Stearns Electric will dedicate wind energy renewable energy credits on your behalf to offset the energy used to power your vehicle.

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

NEWS

STEARNS ELECTRIC TO HOST FARMFEST BUS TOUR ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

All Stearns Electric Association agricultural members are invited to join us on the bus to Farmfest!

The Stearns Electric Bus Trip to Minnesota Farmfest 2019 on August 7th includes:

- Round Trip Coach Bus Transportation
- Continental Breakfast
- Admission to Minnesota Farmfest on August 7, 2019
- Happy Hour Social in Willmar (two drinks and appetizers included)

Cost is \$10 for members of Stearns Electric and \$15 for non-members. Registration deadline is August 2, 2019.

For complete details or to register, visit our website <https://www.stearnselectric.org/farmfest-bus-tour/> or call (800) 962-0655.

COAL CREEK TRIP

The annual tour of Coal Creek Station and Falkirk Mine took place June 5-7, 2019. Thirty-eight Stearns Electric Association members enjoyed the three day trip learning about how electricity is generated and delivered to your homes.



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www.facebook.com/stearnselectric

View additional pictures from the tour on our Facebook page.



cookingcorner

SAUSAGE AND VEGGIE FOIL PACKET

Submitted by: David Young



Ingredients:

16 oz Smoked Turkey or Chicken Sausage, coiled
2 C baby red potatoes, quartered
2 C green beans, trimmed
3 corn on the cobs, sliced
4 cloves minced garlic
4-6 Tbsp unsalted butter
1 tsp paprika
1.5 tsp dried parsley
2 tsp Italian Seasoning
1/2 tsp each: Garlic Powder and Onion Powder
Salt and Pepper
Optional: fresh parsley, grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

Prepare the grill by heating to medium-high heat. Prepare 4-6 large sheets of heavy duty foil; lightly spritz with cooking spray. Prep the ingredients: wash and dry the veggies. Coin the sausage. Slice the baby red potatoes in half and then half again. Trim the green beans. Shuck the corn on the cobs and slice into thick coins. Add the prepped sausage, corn, green beans, potatoes and garlic to a large bowl. Toss with all of the seasonings (paprika, dried parsley, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder, and a generous sprinkle of salt + pepper if desired). Toss until well combined. Divide the mixture evenly among the prepared sheets of foil and place 1 Tbsp of butter in each packet. Seal the foil packs tightly so no air escapes. Grill for 25-30 minutes flipping at the half way point. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley and freshly grated Parmesan cheese. 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@stearnselectric.org or mail to: Stearns Electric, Cooking Corner, PO BOX 816, St. Joseph, MN 56374.



STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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Fuller Creative

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT



A STACK OF
THANKS
all you care to eat pancakes and sausage links!

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 10**

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT:
FREEPORT COMMUNITY
CENTER 8A.M. -11:30A.M.

FREE PANCAKE BREAKFAST: Join us for all you care to eat pancakes and sausage from 8-11:30 a.m.

SCHOOL SUPPLY SEND OFF: Each child, ages 2-18, that attends will receive* an age appropriate bag of school supplies.

MEET A LINE WORKER: Don't miss your chance to meet a line worker, learn about their tools and get your picture in front of a bucket truck.

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