



POWER CONNECTION

member driven. community focused. energy smart.

DECEMBER 2019



DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN IN DISTRICTS 1, 7 AND 8

Stearns Electric Association Directors are member-consumers just like you who understand and listen to the community. They represent you on the Co-op's Board, while responsibly overseeing the business of the Co-op and determining its strategic direction.

The cooperative model depends on its members to provide leadership and guidance. Therefore, each year an election takes place in three of the Cooperative's nine districts to elect a Director. The election process ensures that every member has a voice in the operation of this organization and that any member in good standing may seek election for the Board of Directors.

Nominations are now open for the Board of Directors in Districts 1, 7 and 8. If you live in these districts and are interested in becoming a nominee, please contact a member of the

Nominations Committee (listed to the right) for a Director nomination packet.

This packet includes general Cooperative information, director qualifications, a copy of the Stearns Electric Bylaws and the application for candidacy. Applications must be returned to a member of the Nominations Committee by January 20, 2020.

Not sure if the role is right for you? Learn more about the qualifications and responsibilities of a Director on page 3. If you have additional questions about the nomination process or becoming a director, please contact the Stearns Electric Election Coordinator during regular business hours at (800) 962-0655.

Stearns Electric retains the services of Survey and Ballot Systems, an independent contractor, to conduct the election in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on April 2, 2020.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

DISTRICT 1

Richard & Shirley Japp (218) 575-2521
Wayne Pugh (320) 749-2051
Alan Poser (320) 749-2449

Serving Minnesota townships: Scandia-Valley, Cushing, Clough, Parker, Darling, Green Prairie, Culdrum, Pike Creek, Swanville, Swan River, Elmdale and Two Rivers in Morrison County.

DISTRICT 7

Cindy Bruder (320) 732-6896
Dennis Pastian (320) 859-4648

Serving Minnesota townships: Turtle Creek, Little Elk, Leslie, Reynolds, Long Prairie, Bruce, Gordon, Little Sauk, Round Prairie, Burnhamville, West Union and Grey Eagle in Todd County; and Orange Township in Douglas County.

DISTRICT 8

Patrick Stepan (320) 219-3002
Jane Stepan (320) 491-1395
Bruce Wanquist (320) 249-3790

Serving Minnesota townships: Kandota and Birchdale in Todd County; Westport in Pope County; Ashley, Sauk Centre and Melrose in Stearns County.

CEO'S MESSAGE

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

A PROUD VALUE LIVED OUT AT STEARNS ELECTRIC



At Stearns Electric Association, we are proud to offer electric service that keeps homes warm during Minnesota's cold and snowy winters. During the holidays, indoor and outdoor lights shine brightly and serve as festive reminders of the season.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative created to serve the needs of area residents, one of our core cooperative principles is "Concern for Community." In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, giving back is a cornerstone of our business model. We work hard to help our communities thrive not just during the holiday season, but all year long.

Amid the hustle and bustle of this season, it's also a wonderful time to slow down and reflect. Stearns Electric Association directors and employees feel privileged to be able to give back to our local communities. Because of your electric Co-op's local ownership structure, we're members of the community just like you and are proud to help make a meaningful

impact right where we all call home. Our employees generously volunteer their time to support several area community organizations, youth programs, and fire and emergency services, as well as provide public service and guidance for local government and boards.

As a member-consumer of Stearns Electric, you are also an owner. Therefore, you play an essential role in contributing to our mission to be good stewards of the communities that we serve.

Throughout the year, Stearns Electric supports efforts for community service, public safety and food shelf assistance through our Operation Round Up and My Co-op Cares programs.

Investing in the next generation of leaders is important to every electric cooperative. By providing safety programs, funding scholarships, donating school supplies and sending students on an all-expense-paid Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., devoting resources to youth is another important way we give back every year.

There are other ways we help the community, such as investing in economic development projects by helping attract and retain area businesses. Stearns Electric members, employees and directors know that no matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community. We're proud of how you, our members, help us to support these efforts.

Sharing with others, either through charitable giving or volunteering your time and talents, is one way to strengthen our communities. This holiday season we are grateful for the opportunity to serve our members and our communities. On behalf of the Stearns Electric family, we hope your holidays are safe, merry and bright!

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

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

Robin C. Doege
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



ARE YOU READY TO BE A BOARD MEMBER?

As a Stearns Electric Association consumer, you are a member of the Cooperative. The Cooperative depends on its members to provide leadership and guidance. This is your opportunity to participate in the business decisions of a successful electric utility.

THE DIRECTOR ROLE:

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Legal: Ensure the legal right of the Cooperative to exist.
- Trusteeship: Act in the best interest of the members.
- Planning: Develop strategic programs and carry out plans based on ideals that reflect the thinking of its members, with realistic goals adjusted to the purposes of the Cooperative.
- Resources: Assure the availability of basic resources, including personnel, loan funds, wholesale power and revenue, according to the Cooperative's size and needs.
- Control: Monitor operations to assure compliance with Board policy, budgets, member relations, loan covenants, contractual compliance, and long-range planning.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Be a member in good standing of the Cooperative and a resident of the district you wish to represent.
- Not be employed by, or have financial interest in, a competing enterprise.
- Have the time available to attend a minimum of 12 regular daytime board meetings, additional meetings and training sessions.

For a complete list of qualifications and responsibilities, contact a member of the Nominating Committee for your district (listed on the front page).



FACEBOOK GIVEAWAY

From now through Christmas Day (December 25, 2019) share a photo of your holiday lights on the Stearns Electric Facebook page for your chance to win a new LED holiday light gift pack (a \$100 value)!

BOARD MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Stearns Electric Association was held on October 24, 2019 at 12:10 p.m. at the Stearns Electric Association office located in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

In an effort to address operational changes and practice good governance, earlier in the year, the Board Bylaw review committee began assessing the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Lengthy discussion has taken place since June of 2019. Scott Dymoke read the resolution that applied to bringing the proposed changes to the membership for a vote in 2020 in tandem with the regular Board election. The membership will receive a copy of proposed changes before the election. A motion was made and carried to approve the proposed Bylaws.

Manager of Finance Cindy Anderson reviewed the September 2019 financial and statistical information with the Board. Ms. Anderson provided the Board with a thorough review of Form 990. The Form 990 is available to members in person at the Cooperative.

CEO Robin Doege reported on the financial condition of the Cooperative's subsidiary businesses. Following Mr. Doege's review of the Karian Peterson financial information, Mr. Dymoke introduced the resolutions related to the sale of membership units currently owned by Stearns Electric. Discussion took place regarding the resolutions and related process of finalizing the sale. A motion to accept the resolution was carried.

VP of Administration and Finance Vicky Herkenhoff reviewed her written report with the Board, which included an Energy Services matrix illustrating the extensive work in cross training and reassignment of tasks due to the recent realignment. Ms. Herkenhoff explained how Stearns Electric is working with GiANT Worldwide to create a culture that wins. Staff are working to incorporate specific points of accomplishment to improve culture.

Next Board Meeting:
December 26, 2019



OPERATION ROUND UP

EDEN VALLEY BUILDS NEW FOOD SHELF

With The Support of Operation Round Up and Other Area Organizations

Stearns Electric Association's Operation Round Up® (ORU) program gives our member-consumers the opportunity to give back to their local communities by rounding up their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar. The rounded-up funds (between 1¢ and 99¢) are placed in a trust fund and administered by a Trust Board appointed by the Cooperative's elected Board of Directors. Operation Round Up® and Stearns Electric members have awarded over \$2.3 million to local non-profit organizations and community service programs since the program's inception in 1993.

'Tis the season for gathering, celebrating and giving back. This year, the Cooperative's Operation Round Up program provided over \$151,500 to 195 area organizations. At the October distribution, over 80 organizations received funding, including \$2,000 each to the 19 food shelves within the Stearns Electric service territory.

One of these food shelves recently built a brand-new facility to serve

their local community. The Eden Valley Food Shelf unveiled its new building on November 20. The community food shelf serves about 20 families consistently, but anyone who lives within the Eden Valley – Watkins school district is welcome to use the food shelf, which is run by about 10 volunteers. The property is owned by the Church of God in Eden Valley, but all of the local churches and many local organizations provide support and volunteers.

"The new building was built on the same site as our previous food shelf location," Pat Arnold, director of the Eden Valley Food Shelf, said. "When construction started last May, we moved all of our supplies to the nearby church garage and operated the food shelf out of there for the last six months or so. It's so nice to be in our new, permanent space before the winter."

The new 2,040 square foot food shelf includes a large open space for individuals to shop for food and another large waiting area.

"Our old facility was so small and

individuals had to wait in their cars until there was space for them to come inside," Arnold explained. "Now, we have this large waiting area, which allows individuals to come in, stay warm, sit down and relax until they can shop."

Additionally, the new building has two offices, a utility room, bathroom and an unloading area featuring a large garage door.

"With the new unloading zone, we don't need anyone to help us unload the delivery truck when it arrives anymore," Arnold said. "It used to take three people to help get a delivery into the food shelf. Now, the truck driver can pull right up to the building and easily unload everything."

Several community organizations stepped up to help the Eden Valley Food Shelf make this new building possible.

"The Lions Club in Eden Valley was a huge supporter of this project," Arnold said. "Farmers and Merchants Bank matched some donations, and we also received support from Stearns Electric,

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

WHEN IT'S TIME TO DECK YOUR HALLS, REMEMBER THIS TIP!

Trim your holiday energy costs by choosing energy efficient LED lights! LED holiday lights use less energy and can last up to 40 seasons. They're also easier to install – you can connect up to 25 LED strings without overloading a wall socket!

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKUP

APPLIANCES

Never plug high power capacity appliances, like space heaters, refrigerators, or microwave and toaster ovens, into power strips or extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. These appliances have a higher power capacity and need to be plugged directly into a wall outlet.



Some of the volunteers of Eden Valley Food Shelf: Carol Kelm, Karin Haag, Millie Jensen (president of the Food Shelf), Jon Lapp (Church of God treasurer), and Pat Arnold (director of the Food Shelf).

Cenex and Land O' Lakes in Paynesville, Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association, the Watkins VFW and many, many other organizations and community members."

"The Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts helped us move out of our old building and into our new facility," she continued. "Our new shelving units were donated by Casey's in Belgrade and two of the new freezers were donated by Electrolux, formerly of St. Cloud. Other donated items include grocery carts, volunteer time, money and non-perishable food items."

"We really appreciate all of the help we have received from our local businesses, organizations and community members to make this project possible," Arnold concluded. "And thank you to the Operation Round Up Trust for your continued support."



In November 2019, Stearns Electric and ORU contributed \$78,100 to 81 area organizations. View the complete list of recipients online at www.stearnsselectric.org. Operation Round Up® and Stearns Electric members have awarded over \$2.3 million to local non-profit organizations and community service programs since the program's inception in 1993.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/stearnsselectric

WIN A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



ONE HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR OR SENIOR COULD WIN AN ALL EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C. IN JUNE!

Each year, rural electric cooperatives across the nation sponsor roughly 1,500 students on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The Youth Tour program continues to foster the grassroots spirit of the rural electric cooperatives by demonstrating to high school students how our government works and what the electric cooperative business model is all about.

In 2020, Stearns Electric Association will send one high school junior or senior on an all expense paid trip to the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour.



The selected student will visit with congressional representatives, tour some of the most famous museums in the world, and make memories and friends that will last a lifetime.

Contest Purpose:

To select one student to represent Stearns Electric at the NRECA Washington, D.C. Youth Tour.

Eligibility:

The contest is open to any current high school junior or senior whose family is a member of the Cooperative.

Requirements:

- Complete the Stearns Electric Youth Tour Application.
- Write and submit a 300-word essay on the benefits of the Cooperative business model.
- Submit a recommendation letter from a teacher or advisor.
- The top finalists will be interviewed by a judging committee.

Awards:

- First Place: All expense paid Washington, D.C. Youth Tour trip.
- Second Place: First Alternate and \$150.
- Third Place: Second Alternate and \$100.
- The first 15 applicants receive a \$20 gift card.

Additional Information:

- Tour Dates: June 20-25, 2020
- Completed applications, essays and recommendation letters must be received no later than 4 p.m., February 14, 2020.
- Applications are available at the Stearns Electric offices, online at www.stearnselectric.org or at your school's counseling center.

If you have questions or need more information about this opportunity, please visit www.stearnselectric.org.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Night Bus Tour of Monuments
- 9/11 Memorial
- Arlington Cemetery
- Walking Tour of Monuments: (Lincoln, Vietnam and WWII Memorials)
- Holocaust Museum
- Mount Vernon
- Smithsonian Visits: (The Smithsonian Castle, Hirshhorn, Air & Space, American Indian, American History, and Natural History Museums)
- Newseum
- Capitol visits with Senators and Representatives
- U.S. Capitol Tour
- Library of Congress
- Show at the Kennedy Performing Arts Center
- New Friends

NEWS

NOTICE TO ALL IRRIGATION MEMBERS

Farmers who plan to install electric irrigation systems or convert their system from diesel to electric for the 2020 growing season must contact Stearns Electric Association. The information is used by our Engineering Department to determine supply needs for the 2020 construction season. Materials and transformers will be ordered soon. Please call the Engineering Department during business hours at (800) 962-0655.

COOPERATIVE CLOSED

We will be closed Tuesday, December 24 and Wednesday, December 25 for the Christmas holiday. We will also be closed Wednesday, January 1 for New Year's Day.

Please call (800) 962-0655 or use SmartHub in the event of an outage or emergency.

MY CO-OP CARES

A few groups of Stearns Electric employees wrapped up Stearns Electric's 2019 "My Co-op Cares" community volunteer program by bell ringing for The Salvation Army. On November 20 and December 4, employees rang bells at locations in Sauk Centre, Waite Park, St. Joseph and St. Cloud. The 'My Co-op Cares' program allows Cooperative employees to volunteer during working hours to benefit communities within our 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.



cookingcorner

SHORTBREAD CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Submitted by: David Young



Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon pure almond extract
2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sprinkles

Directions:

Add butter, powdered sugar, salt, vanilla extract and almond extract to the bowl of a large food processor. Process until smooth. Add flour and pulse until mixture looks crumbly and chunky. Add sprinkles and quickly pulse several more times, until the sprinkles are just evenly incorporated. Turn the dough out onto a work surface and shape into a rough ball. Cut ball in half and form each piece of dough into an 8-inch long log. Tightly wrap each log in plastic wrap and freeze for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove dough from the freezer and cut into 1/4-inch thick slices. Arrange cookies on parchment lined baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until cookies turn a light golden color around the edges. Allow to cool on baking sheets. 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

900 Kraft Drive SE, PO Box 40
Melrose, MN 56352

(800) 962-0655

www.stearnselectric.org

**PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID**

The Power Connection (USPS 016053) is published monthly (plus an Annual Report) by Stearns Electric Association, P.O. Box 40, Melrose, MN 56352, Subscription rate: \$4 annually. Stearns Electric Association is an equal opportunity employer.

Periodicals Postage Rate is at Melrose, MN, 56352 and additional mailing offices.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

• RANDY ROTHSTEIN

• *President, District 4*

• ARLYN LAWRENZ

• *Vice President, District 2*

• STEVE NOTCH

• *Secretary/Treasurer, District 6*

• GREG BLAINE

• *District 1*

• RJ DICK NATHE

• *District 3*

• TONY AMPE

• *District 5*

• LONNIE IVERSON

• *District 7*

• JERRY FRIES

• *District 9*

STAFF

• ROBIN DOEGE

• *Chief Executive Officer*

• VICKY HERKENHOFF

• *Vice President of Administration and Finance*

• MATT O'SHEA

• *Vice President of Engineering and Operations*

• CINDY ANDERSON

• *Manager of Finance*

• GLENN BLOMMEL

• *Manager of Operations*

• DARLA HONKOMP

• *Manager of Member Accounts*

• JAMES PACHAN

• *Manager of Engineering*

• RYAN ZIERDEN

• *Manager of IT*

CONTRACT EDITOR

• AMANDA GROETHE

• *Fuller Creative*

season's greetings



and warm holiday wishes from all of us at Stearns Electric Association