



JUNE
2026

member driven.
community focused.
energy smart.

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Every Call. Every Climb.

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(800) 962-0655
STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG

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THANKS BY THE STACKS! DON'T MISS THE CO-OP'S MEMBER APPRECIATION PANCAKE FEED SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2026 | 8 – 11:30 A.M.

NEW LOCATION!

Melrose Headquarters
700 Kraft Drive SE, Melrose

You're invited! Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our annual Member Appreciation Pancake Feed for a complimentary pancake and sausage breakfast! This year, we are in a new location – our new operations center and headquarters in Melrose. Come see the new warehouse while enjoying this fun, family tradition. Please note, no tours of the facility will be provided.

WE'RE SAYING THANK YOU!

Each year, our Member Appreciation event gives us the chance to celebrate you, our members, and thank you for your continued support throughout the year. We love connecting with engaged member-consumers like you, whose support and participation play an important role in shaping the future of our Cooperative.

BREAKFAST

Our local Kimball Lions Club will prepare delicious pancakes and breakfast sausage again for us this year.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

As you prepare your children to return to the classroom, we want to help! Each child between the ages of 2 and 18 who attends the Stearns Electric Pancake Feed will receive an age-appropriate bag of school supplies*.

MEET A LINeworker

Don't miss your chance to meet a lineworker, learn about their tools and take your picture in front of a bucket truck!

Visit stearnselectric.org for complete details. We hope to see you there!

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

ENERGYWISE® SUMMER REMINDER

For members enrolled in our Interruptible Irrigation, Interruptible Program (generator back-up) and/or Cycled Air Conditioning, we are in summer control hours. Control hours are limited to peak demand periods.

Our EnergyWise® programs help the Cooperative reduce overall energy demand during times when energy is most expensive. Your participation in these programs is the reason we can keep local power reliable and affordable, even when the thermometer, and the power supply market, hit extremes.



INTERRUPTIBLE IRRIGATION

- Control period is four hours, normally from 4-8 p.m.
- Irrigators may be controlled only one time in a 24-hour period
- Irrigators are re-energized by 9 p.m. any time there is a control



INTERRUPTIBLE PROGRAM

- Up to 10 continuous hours of control on any given day
- Up to 300 hours of control annually
- Generator must be 50 kW or larger



CYCLED AIR CONDITIONING

- Control period of 15-minute intervals on peak demand days
- Control periods usually occur in the late afternoons and early evenings
- Up to 6 hours of control per 24-hour period
- Total control will not exceed 200 hours per cooling season (May - September)

Contact our Energy Services department at (800) 962-0655 with any questions or visit stearnselectric.org for more information.

GET INVOLVED: MEMBER ENGAGEMENT GROUP



Active and engaged members are critical to the success of every cooperative. That's why we appreciate hearing from you. One of the easiest ways to get involved is through our Member Engagement Group (MEG).

The MEG gives members a chance to learn more about the Cooperative and our services, and serves as a sounding board, helping the Co-op Board and staff gain ideas and proposals for new and existing programs.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Committee members must be member-consumers of Stearns Electric Association
- Committee members' primary residence denotes the district they represent on the Member Engagement Group
- Committee members cannot be a Cooperative Director or an employee of Stearns Electric

COMMITMENT

- Two-year term; eight meetings total
- Meetings are usually held at a Co-op office the second Wednesday in September, November, February and May beginning at 6:00 p.m. (light supper is provided)

COMPENSATION

- Committee members receive a \$50 honorarium for every meeting attended
- Committee members receive a mileage reimbursement for every meeting attended

SIGN UP TODAY!

Sign up by August 14 at stearnselectric.org, or by contacting our MEG coordinator at (800) 962-0655 or communications@stearnselectric.org.

CEO MESSAGE

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY: LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Cooperative organizations consistently work to better their local communities. It's one of the Seven Cooperative Principles – Commitment to Community. Stearns Electric lives out this principle in various ways throughout the year, such as through our scholarship programs.

STEARNS ELECTRIC OPERATION ROUND UP® SCHOLARSHIPS

Through our Operation Round Up® program, Stearns Electric and our member-consumers award \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors every year. We have 21 high schools in our service territory, and every year, four of those schools are selected for scholarships on a rotating basis. Every fifth year, we award five scholarships.

Recipients must be enrolled in one of our local high schools and must plan to pursue some form of secondary education. Additionally, the recipient's parent or guardian must be a Stearns Electric member at their primary residence.

Congratulations to this year's recipients: (pictured left to right)

- Jacinta Radermacher, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa High School
- Brooke George, ROCORI High School
- Adalyn Godfrey, Sauk Rapids-Rice High School
- Jack Hamak, St. Cloud Cathedral High School



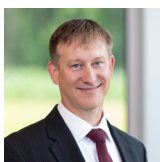
NORTHERN CO-OP FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Stearns Electric is a founding partner of the Northern Cooperative Foundation. Through the foundation, scholarships are awarded annually to students in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota who are seniors in high school or post-secondary students pursuing higher education. Applicants must be a member of a cooperative and take courses in business or economics related to the cooperative principles.

This year, eight students from our service territory were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship through the Northern Co-op Foundation:

1. Gavin Dahle, St. Augusta
2. Austin Klein, Holdingford
3. Gavin Olmscheid, Richmond
4. Jennifer Olmscheid, Richmond
5. Katie Orth, Randall
6. Blake Schaeffer, Clearwater
7. Gabbriella Schoenberg, Melrose
8. Luke Van Erp, Cold Spring

For more information on our scholarship offerings, please visit our website. Congratulations to all recent graduates! We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors, whatever they may be.



Sincerely,



Matt O'Shea
Chief Executive Officer

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Stearns Electric Association was called to order on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph office of Stearns Electric Association.

A longer summary is available on the Board Minutes page on our website.

Highlights of the meeting include:

- Director Randall Rothstein was recognized for 20 years of service on the Board and Director Greg Blaine received his Board Leadership Certificate through NRECA.
- Directors approved:
 - The 2027 Annual Meeting date of April 8
 - Loan funds for a new community fire hall
 - A contract with L&L Substations for the Pillsbury Substation steel package
- Resolutions amending, restating and extending the Power Purchase and Transmission Service contracts with Great River Energy (GRE) to 2060.
- After nominations for the GRE representative position, District 1 Director Blaine was selected for a one-year term.
- Directors discussed items brought up at the 89th Annual Meeting.
- Each Board member and Co-op executive leader signed Conflict of Interest Certification and Disclosure Statement, and Gift Statement forms, per Cooperative policy.
- A facility update was provided noting that a contract with a daycare provider is expected by May 1.

NEXT BOARD MEETINGS

June 25, 2026

July 23, 2026



EVERY CALL. EVERY CLIMB. POWERED BY PURPOSE.

Stearns Electric works diligently to maintain a safe and reliable distribution system. However, outages happen, and when they do, we are here for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Providing reliable energy is more than our mission. It's our purpose.

It's 2:47 a.m. when the fan cuts out waking you from your sleep. You notice the fan kick back on momentarily, but then it goes off again and your house is completely quiet. You grab your cell phone, open your SmartHub app and report your outage.

It's now 2:57 a.m. and the phone rings, awakening someone from a deep sleep. It's the after-hours call center dispatching the on-call lineman to an outage. The lineman powers on his iPad, reviews the outage map and determines the extent of the outage. The lineman then contacts his crew, quietly tells his loved ones goodbye, dons his specialty clothing, grabs his keys and a snack, and heads to the office.

OUTAGE RESTORATION

There are a variety of circumstances which can lead to power outages beyond our control. Some of the most common causes of power outages include severe weather, trees, animals and vehicle accidents.

"When an outage happens, it's important that you report it to us at the Cooperative," Melissa Welle, Engineering and Operations Support Supervisor, said. "Day or night, reporting your outage is the fastest way for us to identify the outage cause, resolve the problem and safely restore your power."

Our line crews are ready to respond at any time, day or night. They rotate after-hours and weekend on-call shifts throughout the year.

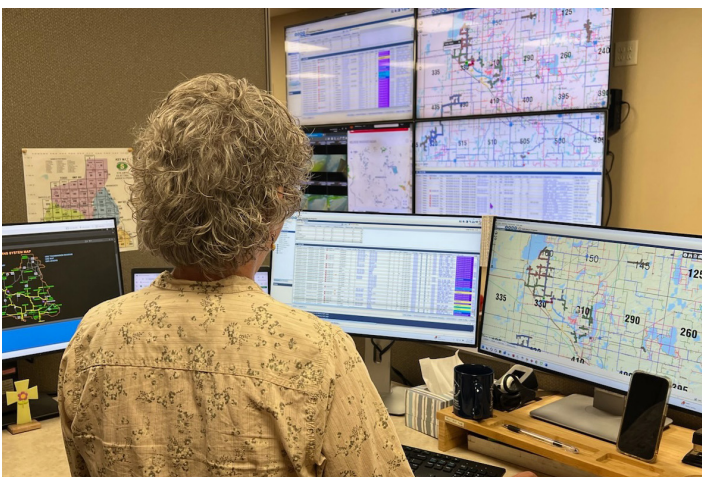
"All of our linemen are required to live within a 15-mile radius of their designated office," Manager of Operations Glenn Blommel explained. "This helps ensure our outage response is as efficient and timely as possible."

When it comes to outage restoration, our linemen and outage support teams make the most crucial repairs and restore power to the largest number of members first.

"Our first priority is safety for our line crews and the general public," Blommel said. "Downed power lines and other reported hazards become a priority for quick response."

After that, crews focus on, in order:

- **Substation outages** – replacing a fuse or transformer often restores power to several hundred or even thousands of members immediately.
- **Major distribution feeders** – these lines carry electricity out of our substations. Outages at this level usually impact several hundred members at one time.
- **Tap lines** – these are the power lines that carry electricity to a group of homes. Outages at this level usually impact a hundred people or less at one time.



Our dispatch team works behind the scenes on outage restoration.

- **Individual service lines** – these are the power lines that carry electricity directly to the meter on your property.[^] Outages at this level usually only impact one member.

[^]The Cooperative is responsible for getting electricity to your meter. However, the mast on the house (the pipe in which the wires run down to the meter panel) is your responsibility.

One important thing to know is not every outage is the same.

“While at times it may seem like a long wait for your power to be restored, our crews are trained to follow specific safety measures to protect themselves, the public and infrastructure before they can reenergize the power lines,” Blommel said. “Occasionally, crews must remove a fallen tree from the power lines before restoration work can even begin. Sometimes crews have to patrol the line slowly for a few miles to find the cause of the outage. When a power pole needs to be replaced, that takes additional time.”



Line crews work to replace a power pole following a 2025 storm.

4 WAYS TO REPORT YOUR OUTAGE

Members can report a power outage one of four ways. We recommend using SmartHub for convenience and speed, but any of these options work:

1. SmartHub App

Download the SmartHub App to report your outage with a press of a button on your smart phone or tablet.

2. Online using SmartHub

You can also access your SmartHub account via an internet browser to report your outage.

3. By Phone

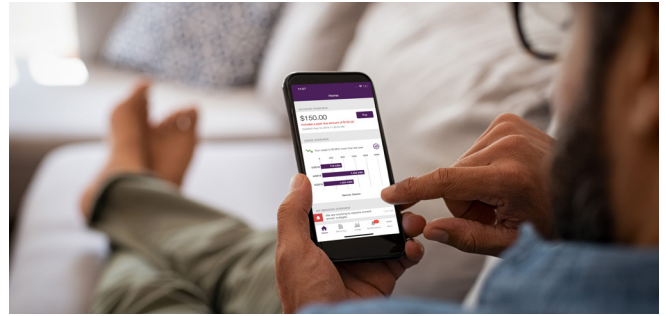
Call (800) 962-0655 to report your outage anytime.

4. By Text

Text OUT to (855) 939-3705.*

*Please note: In order to use text messaging to report an outage, you must have a SmartHub account AND text messaging must be enabled in the notification section. Additionally, only one account number can be tied to your mobile phone number.

We know power outages are inconvenient and disruptive. Our employees live and work in the same communities we serve, and they are committed to restoring power safely and as efficiently as possible, day or night.



SIGN UP FOR SMARTHUB!

Manage your Stearns Electric account 24/7 by computer, smartphone or tablet with a free online application called SmartHub.

With SmartHub, you can:

- report your power outage
- make a payment
- check your electric usage
- notify Stearns Electric of account issues
- communicate directly with the Cooperative
- sign up for and receive outage text message and/or email notifications

SmartHub is easy to navigate. It's simple and quick to report a power outage, make a payment or view your bill. You can compare your monthly bills and find out what day of the week you typically use the most electricity. You can also choose to receive an email alert when a payment is due or when other account activity occurs.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SMARTHUB:



**POWERED
— BY PURPOSE —**

As your local electric cooperative, we are proud to provide you with the reliable electric service you depend on. When your power goes out, we are committed to providing efficient outage response and a positive member experience.

That's the cooperative difference!



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, you have the power to help control your costs with a few simple choices.

1. Window Coverings: If you don't have trees, a porch overhang or awnings that shade windows to the west of your home, there's a good chance radiant heat could be driving up indoor temperatures and adding to your overall cooling costs.

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.

2. Proper 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.

3. Clean Filters: Similarly, 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 filters more frequently.

4. Shift Energy Usage: 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.

Controlling energy costs always works better with buy-in from everyone in the household. Visit stearnslectric.org for more ways to save!



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

During the warm summer months, a smart thermostat can help keep your home comfortable while reducing cooling costs. It learns your routine, adjusts the temperature when you're away or asleep, and cools things down before you return. You can also control settings from your phone, so you're not cooling an empty house. Many models offer reports and tips to help fine-tune energy use and keep bills in check.

MEMBER NEWS

OFFICES CLOSED

Stearns Electric Association will be closed on Friday, July 3 in observance of Independence Day. If you experience a power outage or emergency during this time, please call us at (800) 962-0655 or report your outage via SmartHub. Crews are on call 24/7 and ready to respond to any emergency situation.

REBATES AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER TUNE-UPS

Stearns Electric members can receive rebates when you hire a professional contractor to tune up your central air conditioner or air source heat pump (ASHP) this summer. Rebates will be issued as a credit on your electric bill.

- Central Air Conditioning Tune-up: \$25
- ASHP Tune-up \$100

Download an application at stearnslectric.org/rebates.



GET MORE BACK WITH AN AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP

There has never been a better time
to upgrade your home comfort system.

Enroll a qualifying new air source heat pump in our EnergyWise® programs by August 31 and take advantage of limited-time promotional rebates.

LEARN MORE: STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG/ASHP

ENERGY WISE 



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know one lightning arrester on the Stearns Electric distribution system costs \$120?

Stearns Electric purchases an average of 900 lightning arresters annually.

Lightning arresters protect electric utility equipment against damage caused by power surges from lightning strikes.

COOKING CORNER

FUMI SALAD

Submitted by: Donna Dold

INGREDIENTS

- 2 bags chopped cabbage
- 8 Tbsp slivered almonds
- 1 tsp butter
- 8 Tbsp sunflower seeds, salted and roasted
- 8 Tbsp green onion, chopped (tops only)
- 1 packaged ramen noodles, crunched up
- 4 Tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp pepper
- 2 tsp accent seasoning
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 C oil
- 6 Tbsp white vinegar

DIRECTIONS

In large bowl, mix cabbage and onion and set aside. Combine oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar and accent seasoning to make dressing and pour over cabbage mixture. Refrigerate. In sauté pan, brown almonds and sunflower seeds in a teaspoon of butter, just to brown a little. When cool, mix with ramen noodles. Just before serving, add the ramen and seed mixture to the salad and stir. Enjoy!



SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$10 BILL CREDIT

Members may submit one recipe per month by email at communications@stearnselectric.org or mail to: Stearns Electric Cooking Corner, PO Box 816, St. Joseph, MN 56374. The recipe selected each month for publication will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Recipes not selected will be saved for consideration in future publications.



STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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POWERED
BY PURPOSE

EVERY CALL. EVERY CLIMB.

Efficient Outage Response

When your power goes out, our Cooperative employees are ready 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our engineering and operations teams log outage reports and dispatch line crews, while our linemen respond to each outage as efficiently and safely as possible. Day or night, in all conditions, we keep reliable electricity flowing for our members.

