



## RURAL Act passes and preserves co-ops' tax exempt status

Thanks to the strong advocacy efforts of electric cooperatives across the country – including those in Minnesota – and many of the congressional leaders who represent cooperative districts, the RURAL Act provision is included in the final U.S. FY 2020 budget agreement. The U.S. House passed the legislation and it passed in the Senate on December 19. The legislative package now goes to President Trump, and he is expected to sign the bill into law.

The RURAL Act (1-8-76) protects electric cooperatives throughout the nation from the risk of losing their tax-exempt status when they accept government grants for disaster relief, broadband service and other programs that benefit co-op members.

The RURAL Act was the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's top legislative priority for 2019 because of the profound threat to the business model of not-for-profit co-ops. Tens of thousands of co-op leaders, employees and members across the country rallied to advocate passage of the bill.

The legislation attracted more than 300 co-sponsors in the 435-member House and more than half of the senators. The effort was led in the House by Reps.

Terri Sewell, D-Ala., and Adrian Smith, R-Neb., and in the Senate by Rob Portman, R-Ohio, and Tina Smith, D-Minn. NCE is grateful for the support of lawmakers who supported this bill and especially for Sen. Smith's leadership.

The bill's passage fixes unintended consequences of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which redefined government grants to co-ops as income rather than capital. That change made it difficult for many co-ops to abide by the 15 percent limit on non-member income to keep their tax-exempt status. The RURAL Act once again exempts grants from being counted as income and is retroactive to the 2018 tax year.

Without the fix, some co-ops would have had to start paying taxes this spring after receiving grants in 2018 or 2019 to repair storm damage, bring high-speed internet to rural communities or invest in renewable energy and energy-efficiency programs. Many co-op leaders feared they would have to raise rates for members to pay the new taxes.

It's truly a testament to the power of the electric cooperatives' unified voice and advocacy efforts that this legislation passed. We are grateful for the role everyone played in protecting the cooperative business model.

## Energy saving tip

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Mark your calendar

Jan. 25 ..... Electric bills due  
Feb. 14 ..... Happy Valentine's Day!

### Did you know NCE crews maintain

# 2,272

### miles of distribution line?

That is equivalent to a **round** trip from Worthington, Minnesota, to Rochester, New York.



Guest Columnist



Applications are open for the 2020 Youth Tour



Our hydroponic gardening system is here

## Our promise to members: Energy that's clean, without the added cost



Guest columnist  
**David Saggau**

Great River Energy President  
and Chief Executive Officer

Your electricity comes with more renewable energy and lower carbon emissions than ever before – all while remaining safe, reliable and affordable.

Twenty (30-21-13) years ago, Great River Energy (GRE) began receiving electricity from three wind turbines in southern Minnesota. Today, there are nearly 350 turbines spinning to provide you emission-free electricity.

Now, GRE is striving to serve Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) with energy that is 50 percent renewable by 2030. We are ahead of schedule, too, reaching 30 percent this year.

Meanwhile, (539-38-15) GRE's average wholesale electric rates have remained flat.

GRE and its 28 member-owner cooperatives are committed to providing clean energy that is as affordable and reliable as ever.

### Carbon emissions are declining

GRE has long sought strategic ways to reduce the carbon emissions on its system, and we have made real progress.

We exited two contracts for coal-based electricity and closed a long-running coal power plant. Those decisions were made for economic benefit while also providing for re-

ductions in carbon emissions.

### Using electricity in new ways

Electricity is improving so rapidly that it has become a favored energy source for transportation, which is currently the state's largest source of carbon emissions.

Minnesota is encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions because they have no tailpipe emissions. Members are drawn to them because they require no stops at the gas station and very few trips to the mechanic.

Your cooperative has programs that make it easier to purchase an electric vehicle and at-home charger, as well as other efficient electric devices such as air conditioners, water heaters and heat pumps.

### Remaining focused on our members

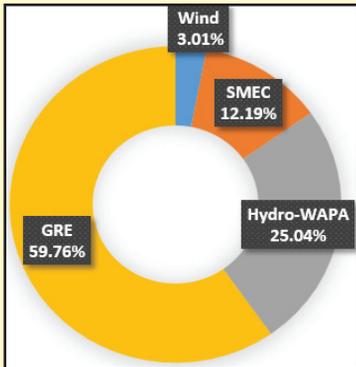
The electricity you receive is improving because of you, the cooperative membership. Our research shows that members strongly believe adding more renewables is a good idea and support our efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Cooperative members want electricity that is affordable, reliable and clean. As your wholesale power supplier, that is what we will continue to provide.

*GRE is a wholesale energy provider to NCE. Like NCE, GRE is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by its members.*

The 2007 Minnesota Legislature adopted a renewable energy standard requiring that at least 25 percent of electric utility annual energy sales come from renewable energy by 2025. Great River Energy met Minnesota's renewable energy standard of 25 percent renewable energy in 2017, eight years ahead of the state's requirement.

### Your cooperative's energy mix



Have you ever wondered where your power comes from? NCE purchases power from GRE, Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC, formerly Alliant) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). 25 percent of the energy we receive is from hydro-electric power from dams along the Missouri River delivered by WAPA. The remaining 3.01 percent of the power we receive is from our 2.1 MW wind turbine that was installed in 2008.

## Students don't miss out on a trip of a lifetime and a chance at a scholarship

**Youth Tour:** NCE sponsors a high school student to go on an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. This trip is a life changing opportunity. The deadline to apply is February 28.

**Scholarship:** NCE offers a \$500 scholarship to one high school senior that applies for the Youth Tour. Be sure to have your student apply today!

Some people argue that leaders are born, not made. While it's true that some people are born with certain traits that make them more comfortable in leadership roles, all great leaders need help developing their skills. Many others who might not be perceived as "natural" leaders can become exceptional leaders if given the right coaching and an opportunity to shine.

Do you know a student that (539-39-19) would be a perfect choice? Let them know about this great opportunity to participate in a nationally recognized leadership program.

Every summer, more than 1,800 bright and talented high school students from across rural America converge in Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, including a representative from NCE.

These young men and women represent our next generation of leaders. They are the people who will make our communities better places to live and lead businesses that

will provide good jobs and valuable services.

Participants in the Youth Tour spend a week in Washington, D.C., where they:

- Learn about electric co-operatives and the cooperative business model
- Spend a day on Capitol Hill, including face-to-face meetings with their senators and members of Congress
- Visit monuments and memorials
- Explore museums
- Build lifelong friendships with other young leaders from across the country

This isn't just a field trip to Washington, D.C. It's a transformational experience that shows students the power of democracy and the importance of leadership.

This experience is offered at no cost to the student or family. The only out-of-pocket expenses are for incidentals, such as souvenirs and snacks.

For more information about NCE's Youth Tour program, call 800-776-0517 or visit [www.noblesee.coop](http://www.noblesee.coop).





## TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS

Scammers can threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Here are a few reminders from your electric co-op.

- Co-op employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.



### Find your location number and win a \$10 credit

If you find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue, you will receive a \$10 credit.



*Our GroShed was delivered on Monday, December 23. You'll be hearing more about it the next few weeks and months. This fully-automated "plug, fill and plant" hydroponic gardening system can produce vegetables all year long, even in the coldest climates. NCE will be offering tours in 2020 and the fresh produce will be donated to the local food shelves.*

**January Auto Pay Winner:  
Scott & Rebecca Runkle!**

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 bill credit. A winner is chosen each month.

## Statement of nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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## Country Cupboard

### Caramel Apple Oatmeal Cookies

1/2 c. butter, softened	1/2 c. unsweetened applesauce
3/4 c. packed brown sugar	1 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
1/4 c. sugar	1 tsp. baking soda
1 pkg. (3.4 oz.) instant caramel pudding mix	3 1/2 c. old-fashioned oats
2 lg. eggs, room temperature	1 med. apple, peeled and chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl cream butter, sugars and pudding mix until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and mix well. Beat in applesauce. In (13-2-28) another bowl, whisk flour and baking soda, gradually beat into creamed mixture. Stir in oils and apple. Drop dough by tablespoonfuls. Bake on greased baking sheets until golden brown 15 to 18 minutes. Cool on pan for 3 minutes.

Send your favorite **soup** recipe to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All entries must be received by January 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a **\$10 credit** on their electric bill.

**Alverda Meyer  
Reading**



**Nobles Cooperative  
Electric**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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22636 U.S. Hwy. 59  
P.O. Box 788  
Worthington, MN 56187-0788  
Phone: 507-372-7331,  
507-836-6107 or 800-776-0517

### Website

[www.noblesce.coop](http://www.noblesce.coop)

### E-mail address

[nce@noblesce.com](mailto:nce@noblesce.com)

### Office hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

### 24-Hour outage service

800-776-0517

### Gopher State One-Call

800-252-1166 or 811

### Electrical inspectors

Murray County  
Randal Maha - 507-274-5261  
Nobles County  
Adam Feste - 507-690-2741

### General Manager

Adam Tromblay

### Board of Directors

Ronald Schwartau, President - 734-3052\*  
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Cindy Hokeness, Sec./Treas. - 478-4965\*  
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Jerry Beckering, Director - 227-4074\*  
Gary Clarke, Director - 605-201-1903  
Gary Sieve, Director - 926-5455\*  
\*Telephone prefix 507

### Next Board Meeting

January 23, 2020

*This cooperative is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer.*

