



Co-op Advantage

Sweepstakes winners loved their electric ride

Two ECE members drove a Tesla Model S for a week last fall as winners of our first Electrify Your Ride sweepstakes. They came away from the experience wowed by the car and confident that EVs have a promising future.

Calenn Heppner, Foreston, MN, and Lindsay Izzard, Foxboro, WI, had never driven an electric vehicle when they entered our sweepstakes.

A mechanical engineer who works in downtown Minneapolis, Calenn and his wife have five children and another on the way. He took the car on three 120-mile round trips to Minneapolis, made a few short trips into Milaca, and traveled to Cedar Rapids, IA, on the weekend.

"We plugged our Iowa destination into the Tesla navigation system, and it plotted our route via Supercharger locations to make sure we got there. That was one of my favorite features of the car," Calenn said.

While it took over an hour extra to get to Iowa, he said it was fun to go to each Tesla Supercharger site and charge-up for free in 30-45 minutes. At home, he was able to charge the car to full battery every night on a 240V outlet, giving him a range of over 230 miles.

Calenn praised the quickness and handling of the Tesla, as well as the style and comfort, but he questioned the practicality of any EV for a family his size. He also has concerns about not being able to repair or maintain the car himself.

Lindsay and her husband have two kids and live 10 miles south of Superior, WI. She works in Duluth as a registered nurse. She drove the car at least 1.5 hours each

day and charged it on the 240V outlet in their garage four to five times during the week.

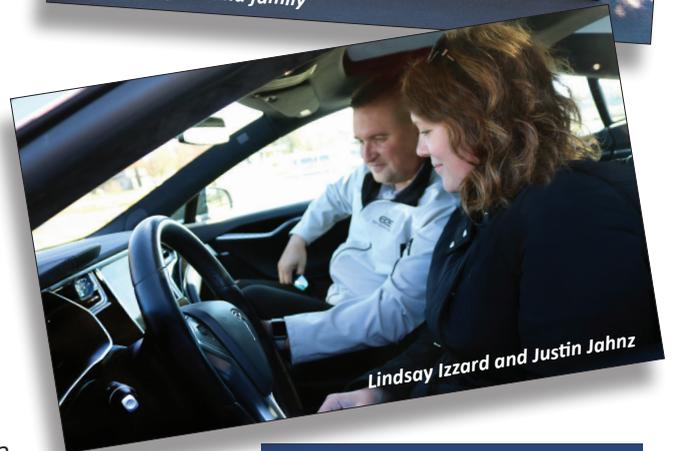
"It was so smooth and quiet...lots of bells and whistles. I liked the questions from onlookers. There really was nothing I didn't like," she said. "Honestly, the only thing that would keep me from buying an EV is the price."

The Electrify Your Ride sweepstakes was sponsored in September by our power supplier, Great River Energy, and its 28-member co-ops, including ECE. Minnesota Power and Otter Tail Power were also sponsors.

"Electric vehicles have become a viable option for car buyers," said Justin Jahnz, ECE Manager, Energy Services and Strategic Projects. "Not everyone can purchase a Tesla Model S, but many manufacturers have added EVs to their inventory at prices comparable to gas-powered vehicles. Range of over 200 miles is common. Our 7 cents-per-kWh nighttime and weekend charging rate is equivalent to buying gasoline for less than 80 cents per gallon."



Calenn Heppner and family



Lindsay Izzard and Justin Jahnz

ANNUAL MEETING

April 11, 2019

**Braham Event Center
and
ECE Superior
Operations Center**
(via live video)

Registration begins 5 p.m.
Business meeting 6 p.m.

Watt's Cookin'

Congratulations to Terry Ribaud, a member from South Range, WI, for winning the Watt's Cookin' potato recipe contest. Terry will receive a \$25 energy credit.

CROWD PLEASER POTATOES

8 medium potatoes
8 oz. sour cream
1 can cream of chicken soup
½ c. butter
½ c. onion (finely chopped)
2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
2 c. crushed potato chips

Boil potatoes with skins on until tender. Let cool. Mix sour cream, soup, onions, and cheese together. Once potatoes have cooled, peel and cut into small pieces. Add to cheese mixture and stir. Place in greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Add butter in small amounts over potatoes. Top with crushed potato chips. Bake at 350° for 40-50 minutes until hot and bubbly.

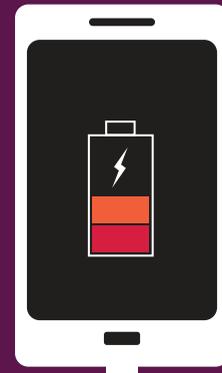
To enter our Watt's Cookin' contest, mail your favorite bacon recipe to Watt's Cookin', P.O. Box 39, Braham, MN 55006. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number, ECE account number, and be received by Feb. 15, 2019. The winning recipe and the contributor's name and city will be featured in a future edition of the Co-op Advantage. Recipes can also be emailed to info@ecemn.com.



2 1.800.254.7944

Safe
Electricity.org

TIPS TO SAFELY CHARGE YOUR ELECTRONICS



Sale

Don't buy cheaply made, off-brand charging cubes and cables. They can be **potential fire hazards**, cause electrocution, or damage the device.



Throw away charger blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and **make sure they are not hot** when charging devices.

**NOT
IN BED**

Only charge devices on a **hard, flat, noncombustible surface** to allow for adequate ventilation.



Do not touch any electronic devices that are charging **when you are wet** or standing in water.

Auto Pay WINNER



Visit our website to learn about Auto Pay. If you would like to be entered in the monthly drawing, sign up for Auto Pay today!

Members who currently participate in Auto Pay will automatically be entered in the drawing.

Congratulations
Raymond Zachrison, Lindstrom, MN

Powering our pollinators by creating habitat



Andy Olson
Supervisor, Forestry Services

There's been a lot of buzz about the birds and the bees at ECE recently as we embark on a dedicated effort to power our pollinators.

"The seventh cooperative principle is concern for community," said Andy Olson, Supervisor, ECE Forestry Services. "The loss of pollinator habitat affects our human community by disrupting the plant and animal ecosystems we count on for our food supply. By creating habitat, we will support pollinator communities."

We are researching locations where we can create pollinator-friendly habitat at our facilities.

The projects will provide an example of "the kind of ecosystem we are working to create on our rights-of-way through

our Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program," Olson said.

In addition to preventing outages by pruning and hazard tree removal, IVM controls problem weeds and brush in the power line corridors and encourages the growth of plants that are beneficial to native wildlife. The practice keeps the area accessible for our crews and can shorten the duration of outages. The presence of low-growing native plant communities in rights-of-way can help minimize the need for mowing, spraying and trimming, which reduces our costs.

As our pollinator project progresses, watch our website for updates and information on how you can support pollinators in your home landscape.

"Power Up" your future with a scholarship



Applications are being accepted until Feb. 26, 2019, for our Power Up scholarship program.

The program is open to non-traditional students (defined

as those already in college or those returning to college after a hiatus), high school seniors who attend homeschool, private educational institutions, or a high school located outside our service territory, or seasonal ECE members.

Applicants must be an ECE member or the dependent of an ECE member. The application form and more information can be found on our website. Five \$1,000 Power Up scholarships will be awarded.

As part of our focus on community, we also provide scholarship opportunities to college-bound seniors at participating high schools within our service territory. Most of these scholarships are funded by unclaimed capital credits. Visit our website for a list of participating high schools. Contact your high school guidance or career counselor for information and the application. Submit the completed application to your school counselor.

To learn more about our scholarship opportunities, visit our website or call us at 1-800-254-7944.



ENERGY MATTERS

with ECE President/CEO Steve Shurts

No rate increase in 2019

No rate increase in 2019 for residential members! Yes, you read that correctly. We are not increasing rates for our residential members or our load management programs in 2019.

I can point to a few reasons. We trimmed discretionary expenses in areas that didn't hurt safety, reliability or member service. The cost of power from our supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), is not increasing in 2019. And though energy sales are still less than the peak of 2007, they have finally climbed out of the valley. We are seeing load growth!

Determining the right amount to charge our members is a complex, analytical process that involves both inside and outside expertise. In-house, we review our rates every year to determine if we are collecting sufficient revenues to cover our costs. Every three to four years, we hire an

independent consulting firm to do a more detailed analysis, which not only determines if we're receiving sufficient revenue, but ensures we are collecting the right amount of revenue from each rate class—that is, from each type of member. These analyses indicated no changes to residential and load management rates are needed in 2019.

What about the future? The good news is GRE isn't projecting significant increases for the next 10 or more years. That's a great help to us, but it all boils down to what we, at your co-op, can control. Rest assured, we'll continue to make prudent decisions without compromising a safe and reliable system. And our greatest assets, the employees who reside in your communities, will continue to provide premier member service when responding to your phone calls and needs.

If you have a power concern, we want to know about it

Low levels of AC (alternating current) voltage on the grounded conductors of an electrical wiring system are a normal and unavoidable consequence of operating electrical equipment. This voltage, sometimes called stray voltage, is referred to as neutral-to-earth voltage (NEV) when it can be measured between two objects which may be simultaneously contacted by livestock.

If you suspect NEV or other electricity related issues, such as low voltage,

electromagnetic fields, or power quality concerns, contact us. We have qualified employees who can answer your questions and investigate any suspected problems.

Please note if a person feels an uncomfortable tingling sensation, the condition is probably not NEV but a serious problem with your wiring system or faulty equipment. This situation requires immediate attention and an electrician should be contacted to investigate and correct the problem.

4 1.800.254.7944



East Central Energy
P.O. Box 39
Braham, MN 55006

Service Center locations:
Braham, Milaca, and Finlayson
Monday-Friday
Hours vary by service center.

1.800.254.7944
General business calls are answered from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Email: info@ecemn.com

The ECE Board of Directors meets monthly. Please call Executive Administrator Julie Johnson at 763-689-8046 to confirm meeting information.

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, your not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website:
eastcentralenergy.com



 Find us on
Facebook





You got to be in it to **WIN** it **Sign up for Auto Pay today!**

Auto Pay allows you to pay your bill automatically each month from your checking or savings account or by credit card.

Participants have the chance to win a \$25 energy credit every month. Set up Auto Pay online using SmartHub or call ECE for more information.

ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ECE 1.800.254.7944
eastcentralenergy.com