



The building of a cooperative legacy

October is Cooperative Month, a great time to acknowledge the difference co-ops have made in the lives of the American people. There are nearly 30,000 cooperatives in the United States, providing products and services ranging from food to electricity.

The birthplace of the modern cooperative was England. A group of weavers and artisans from Rochdale banded together in the early 1800s to start a store that followed principles now known as the Rochdale Principles. The principles basically stated that the store was open to all to join and patronize, independently governed by those it served. Each member had one vote and equal shares in the success of the business. These principles became the foundation of the cooperatives we know today, including ECE, your local electric cooperative.

Electric cooperatives are present in 47 states and deliver power to 42 million Americans. Because of the rural nature of electric cooperative service areas, the percentage of American consumers served is 12 percent, but the power lines needed to deliver the electricity cover about 75 percent of the United States. The reach of the local electric cooperative goes beyond U.S. borders to countries throughout the world. In the last 50 years, electric cooperatives have delivered

light and hope to 100 million people in more than 40 countries.

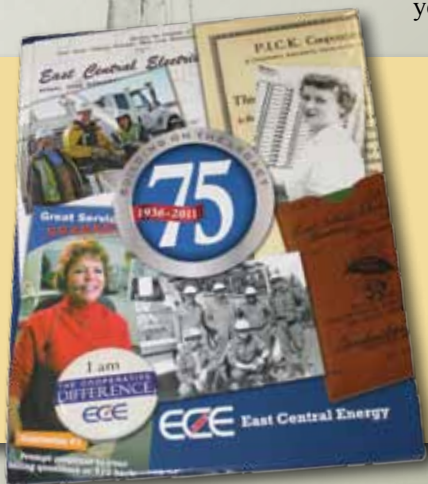
ECE is proud of its 75-year heritage. Electricity that we rely on today started with a desire to improve lives. Rural Americans had been living in the dark, while urbanites were enjoying the light. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt saw the need for all Americans to reap the benefits of electricity. In 1935, he signed Executive Order 7037, which made funding and resources available to rural communities to build an electric system. That was just the beginning of the enlightenment of rural America. Your local electric cooperative began when a 1935 letter to Pine County's newspaper editors planted the seed, and local farmers rose to the challenge. Combining brainpower and brawn, they built themselves an electric system and started the legacy that delivers power to over 57,000 homes, farms and businesses.

International Year of the Cooperative begins in 2012 to celebrate the vital roles cooperatives play in communities they serve. Join the celebration by learning more about the co-ops you are a part of. It may surprise you.



The year was 1948

In 1948 ECE extended its lines, bringing the total membership to about 8,000.



Purchase a piece of history

The commemorative 75th anniversary book includes pictures, along with information, highlighting the cooperative's dynamic legacy.

Books can be purchased for \$10 at any ECE service center while supplies last. All proceeds go to the Caring Members program. For details on the Caring Members program visit eastcentralenergy.com.

A gift for you

In honor of Co-op Month stop in at any ECE service center in October and receive a free 75th anniversary key ring. *While supplies last.*



Prevent electrical fires in your home

It's almost time to snuggle in for the winter. Make sure your haven will be safe and warm by checking for the risks of electrical fire. Most of these fires are preventable if we don't overlook the hazards.

- Don't overload electrical circuits. Each circuit should not exceed 1,500 watts.
- Any popping or sizzling sounds behind walls, light switches that are hot to the touch or lights that flicker or spark are a sign that immediate attention is needed. Call a professional electrician.
- Install a smoke alarm on every floor of your home, including the basement. Test the alarms monthly.
- Look for cracked or damaged cords and loose-fitting plugs on extension cords as well as appliance cords. Replace or repair damaged cords and plugs.

Watt's Cookin'

Congratulations to Sandra Thompson of Ogilvie, MN, for winning the Watt's Cookin' pumpkin recipe contest. She will receive a \$25 energy credit for sharing her "Pumpkin Dip" recipe.

Pumpkin Dip

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|---|--|
| 4 c. powdered sugar | Mix all ingredients together until smooth. Serve with graham crackers (fun option – Teddy Grahams®) or gingersnap cookies. Store in an airtight container in the fridge. Yields about seven cups of dip. |
| 2 - 8 oz. packages cream cheese, softened | |
| 30 oz. pumpkin pie filling | |
| 2 tsp. cinnamon | |
| 1 tsp. ginger | |

To enter our next Watt's Cookin' contest, mail your favorite cookie 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 October 28, 2011. The winning recipe will be featured in a future edition of the Co-op Advantage. Recipes can also be entered via fax at 1-763-689-8060 or email to info@ecemn.com.

Sales tax exemption for electric heat

If you are a Minnesota resident, you are eligible for a sales tax exemption on your electric bill from November through April each year if electricity is the primary source of heat in your home. To apply for a sales tax exemption, call 1-800-254-7944, visit eastcentralenergy.com, or pick up an application at any ECE service center. If you have applied in the past, there is no need to reapply. Your exemption will be automatically granted until ECE is notified of a change in your heating system.

Residential accounts in Wisconsin are automatically exempt from sales tax from November to April.

savings with a twist

Special pricing from September 12 - November 30, 2011



ENERGY STAR® qualified light bulbs:

- Use up to 75 percent less energy
- Last up to 10 times longer
- Save an average of 30% in energy costs over their lifetime
- Produce 75 percent less heat
- Help the environment by saving energy

Save on ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs. Savings applied at checkout. For a list of participating stores, visit eastcentralenergy.com or call 1-800-254-7944. Offer good on the purchase of up to 12 ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs, while supplies last.

CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, and if improperly disposed of, can be harmful to the environment. It is illegal to place them in the trash. Go to www.earth911.org to find a recycling center in your area.

The Londgrens choose safe, efficient electric heat



ECE members Dan and Allison Londgren with their children, David, Carsyn, and Brooke.

Dan and Allison Londgren wanted a safe heating system when they built their new home near Braham, MN, two years ago. A young working couple with a growing family, they didn't want to worry about dangerous fumes, dust and soot or frequent maintenance.

"I knew I wanted to go with electric," said Dan. "I hate the risk of a leak with gas, and we didn't want

the tank in our yard. There is always a smell with fuel oil. My brother has this same furnace and also off-peak storage water heating. He's happy with it."

The Londgrens chose a Steffes Comfort Plus electric thermal storage furnace. It comfortably heats their entire 2,400 sq. ft.

of living space, including the basement play area where sons, Carsyn, five, and David, two, spend a lot of time. An air source heat pump cools the house in the summer and provides heat until the temperature drops below about 30 degrees. The family also has electric water heating on ECE's off-peak program.

The low heating bills that have come with their worry-free system are an added bonus to Dan and Allison, who welcomed baby daughter, Brooke, to the family in July. The Londgren's heating bill last January was \$120, putting them on pace for average annual heating costs of about \$600. That's approximately half the cost of heating with liquid propane or fuel oil at recent winter fossil fuel prices.

Because their storage furnace "charges" during the eight-hour off-peak period, when electricity use is lowest, the Londgrens receive a special 4.2 cents per kilowatt-hour rate* from ECE. They pay just 5.9 cents per kilowatt-hour* for the energy produced by their air source heat pump. They also received an ECE rebate totaling about \$900 on their furnace and heat pump.

"The rebate was impressive," Allison said. "We moved in on Labor Day weekend and didn't have to pay our first electric bill until February."

"I wouldn't do anything different," Dan said.

ECE has electric heating programs that can be used with your existing heating system to reduce your costs. Ask about storage heating, dual fuel or heat pumps. Rebates are available on qualifying systems. Visit eastcentralenergy.com or call 1-800-254-7944 to learn more.

**Reduced rates do not reflect any variable wholesale power cost adjustment that may be required.*

The phase-out of incandescent light bulbs

The traditional incandescent light bulb will be phased out beginning in 2012 when new energy-efficient lighting standards, approved by Congress in 2007, take effect.

The new standards require light bulbs to use 25-30 percent less energy than the incandescent bulbs we've used for so many years. While the traditional bulbs have not been banned, finding replacements in stores will become difficult as they are phased out: 100-watt in 2012, 75-watt in 2013, and 40-60-watt bulbs in 2014.

Fortunately, the newer, energy-efficient options will allow us to light our homes to the same level we do now for less money. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and light emitting diodes (LEDs) cost more up front but are designed to last many years longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. Energy-efficient halogen incandescent bulbs look just like

the ones we've been used to but use about 25 percent less energy and last three times longer.

The most affordable option, CFLs come in a wide range of lighting colors, a variety of shapes and sizes and use about 75 percent less energy than the bulbs they replace. Dimmable CFLs are available. Because they last up to 10 times longer, each CFL actually costs about \$30 less over its lifetime than an incandescent bulb. They do contain a very small amount of mercury and must be recycled.

LEDs are a developing technology for home use. They're currently available as replacements for 40-watt and 60-watt incandescent bulbs, as reflector bulbs used in recessed lighting and as small track lights. LEDs are relatively expensive now, but the price is expected to come down as the technology expands.



Retired ECE Lineman
Brian Schultz

Brian Schultz retires

For a guy who relishes relationships like Brian Schultz does, retirement doesn't come easily. Ask him what he likes best about his job, his hobbies, his life, and his answer is always the same. It's all about people.

"It's not hard to retire from the work itself," said the 30-year veteran of ECE's line worker team. "It's a young man's game. The friendships...that will be the hardest part, not seeing the people you work with every day."

Brian came to ECE in March 1982 after a 10-year stint with the municipal utility in LeSueur, MN. A job with the REA (Rural Electrification Administration), he said, was a coveted career move. Even though he and wife, Mary, knew almost no one in Braham, they packed up and headed north with their 11-year-old daughter in tow.

They found a workplace and a community that nurtured the Schultz's cooperative spirit and their passion for adventure. Brian has been ECE's man behind McGruff® for several years and a willing volunteer for the charitable causes ECE supports. As owners and operators of the Braham flower shop from 1993 to 2007, he and Mary have long been active in their community.

"There's so much that needs to be done all around us," Brian said. "We just get into doing whatever there is to do. It's being part of a community."

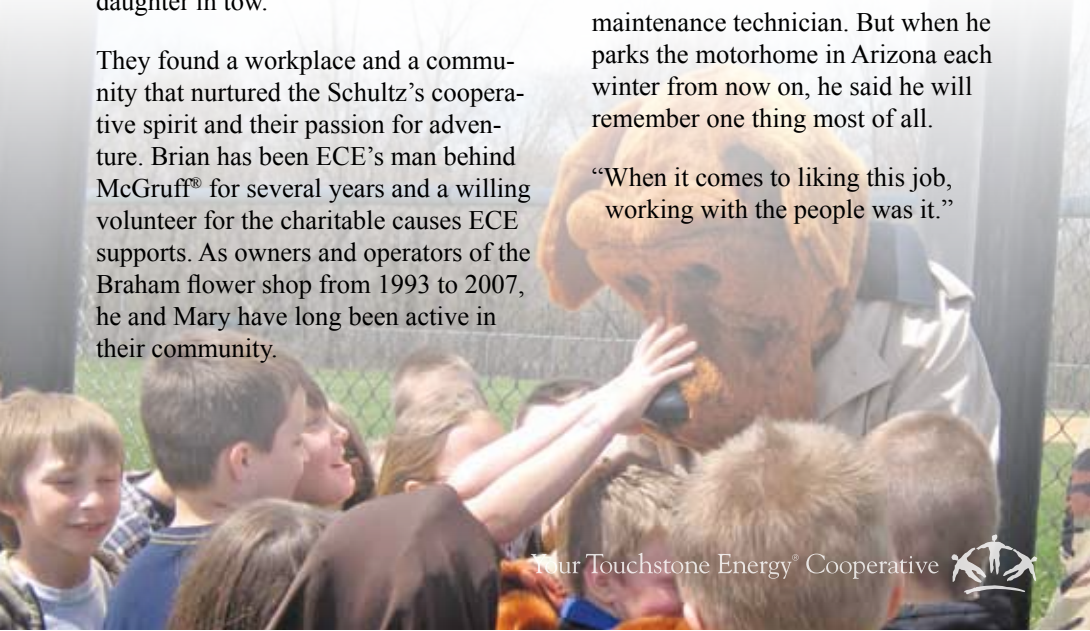
A self-described lifelong motorhead, Brian loves to drag race. He proudly drives the same car he and Mary brought to the Winter Nationals at Pomona, CA on their honeymoon. He's won National Hot Rod Association meets over the years and an International Hot Rod Association national event in 2003.

"I do it for the fun of it," he said, "and I'll keep doing it as long as I can."

He and Mary are looking forward to spending time with their family and friends. In addition to daughter, Angie, 42, they have two sons, Matt, 36, and Nick, 33, one grandson, Drew, four, and another grandson on the way.

Brian's career has given him a lot of satisfaction, from "helping to build lines from the ground up to working the storms." He's proud to have advanced from lineman to crew foreman to district maintenance technician. But when he parks the motorhome in Arizona each winter from now on, he said he will remember one thing most of all.

"When it comes to liking this job, working with the people was it."



Our Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



East Central Energy

P.O. Box 39
Braham, MN 55006

Service Centers are located at Braham, Milaca, Finlayson, and Superior.

Monday - Friday.
Hours vary by service center.

Call 1-800-254-7944.

General business calls are answered from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Emergency and outage calls are answered 24 hours a day.

Website

www.eastcentralenergy.com

Email

info@ecemn.com

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

The Co-op Advantage newsletter is published by East Central Energy, a not-for-profit, member-owned, local electric cooperative. Contact us if you have any questions or suggestions about this publication.

Gopher State One Call

(Minnesota) 1-800-252-1166 or 811
two business days ahead

Digger's Hotline

(Wisconsin) 1-800-242-8511 or 811
three business days ahead

Member survey

This fall ECE will conduct random surveys by phone to measure member satisfaction and gather important information about energy use. Thank you for sharing your views.

