

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and joyful Holiday Season!

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# Connections

**South Central Electric**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**SCEA**  
South Central Electric Association  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

December 2022

## Attention Students and Parents! ★ Sophomores and Juniors Win a FREE Trip to Washington D.C.

Area sophomores and juniors have an opportunity to win an all-expenses paid trip to Washington D.C. Students will travel with others from around Minnesota and the country as they visit the sites in and around our nation's capital. Over 1,500 delegates from electric cooperatives around the country visited Washington D.C. in 2022. The students visited with their congressional representatives, toured famous museums and made memories and friends that will last a lifetime. ★

**Don't miss this opportunity to make lifetime memories.**

1. To enter the contest the student must live within the South Central Electric service area or attend one of the following schools: Butterfield/Odin, Comfrey, Madelia, Martin County West, Mt. Lake, Red Rock Central, St. James, Truman, Windom Area, or Westbrook. ★
2. Each contestant must submit a contest application form and an essay on the following topic: **"How do you and your family benefit from electricity?"** ★
3. Applications are due at our St. James office by March 17, 2023 and the applicant must complete a personal interview on March 22, 2023. Interview times are between 4pm and 6pm. ★

### Prizes

- 1<sup>st</sup> **All-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. June 13-18, 2023.**  
(No substitute prize if unable to make the trip.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> \$150 cash award and will serve as first alternate.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> \$100 cash award and will serve as second alternate.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Seniors and College  
Students**  
**\$1,000 Scholarship Available  
to SCEA Member Dependents**



**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION  
DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 24, 2023**

South Central Electric is honored to partner with Basin Electric to award a \$1,000 scholarship to a dependent of a South Central Electric member. The scholarship is available to high school seniors and college students enrolled full-time in an accredited two or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school working on an undergraduate or master's degree.

**These applicants are also eligible for scholarships through South Central Electric's Operation Round Up® program.**

The scholarship deadline is February 24, 2023.  
Applications can be obtained at our St. James office, on our web site ([www.southcentralelectric.com](http://www.southcentralelectric.com)) or by calling 507-375-3164.

### How to Apply

Contest rules and application forms for the Washington D.C. trip are available at our St. James office, on our web site ([www.southcentralelectric.com](http://www.southcentralelectric.com)), or by calling 507-375-3164.

Learn more at the national Youth Tour website: [youthtour.coop](http://youthtour.coop), or check out the Minnesota Youth Tour Facebook page *Minnesota Rural Electric Association Washington D.C. Youth Tour*.

**Holiday Hours: Our offices will be closed at 11:00am on Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> and all day Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>.**



# Use Space Heaters and Electric Blankets Safely This Winter



Nothing can put chills down your spine quite like winter weather creeping its way through every crack of your home. In order to save money and stay warm, many chose to turn down the heat and plug in space heaters or electric blankets. While these products may be a simple solution from the cold, the Safe Electricity program warns that they can also cause fires if caution is not used.

Safe Electricity offers the following tips for safely using space heaters and electric blankets:

- Read and follow all space heater and electric blanket instructions.
- Check space heaters and electric blankets before use. Cords should not be frayed, brittle, or cracked. The blanket should not have any charred or dark areas.
- One of the biggest causes of fires is one of the most easily avoidable. Many fires start when flammable products are placed too close to heating devices, such as space heaters. Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper, and other flammables.
- Place space heaters out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Look for a space heater that has guards from heating elements and automatically shuts off if it is tipped over or overheating.
- Do not attempt to warm your entire home using space heaters. Space heaters are useful in small areas, such as a study or living room. However, if you need to keep large areas warm, your home heating system will do the job more efficiently.
- Plug space heaters directly to the outlet, and never use an extension cord.
- Only use electric blankets with an automatic shut off designed to prevent the blanket from overheating.
- Pets should never be allowed to sleep on top of electric blankets.
- Electric blanket wires should never be bent or tucked under a mattress.
- Replace old or damaged electric blankets.
- Choose a space heater or electric blanket with a safety certification. You should look for the UL, ETL, or CSA mark on the device. These verify that the product has been tested and is safe to use.

Always remember to turn off space heaters and electric blankets when not in use. Never leave one of these devices on unattended or after going to bed.

To learn more on how to avoid electrical hazards, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).



# How Electricity Gets to You



Whenever you flip a switch, charge your smart phone or store food in the freezer, you're relying on the grid to bring you reliable electricity.

At a basic level, the electric grid is a set of interconnected wires connecting places where energy is produced to where it is used. Over time, the grid has become smarter, more dynamic, and increasingly interconnected due to advancements in technology along with additional wind and solar energy resources.

Great River Energy is a wholesale power supplier to South Central Electric and uses the grid to move energy and information to ensure reliable electric service and quick response times when there is an issue on the electric system.

## But how does the grid work?

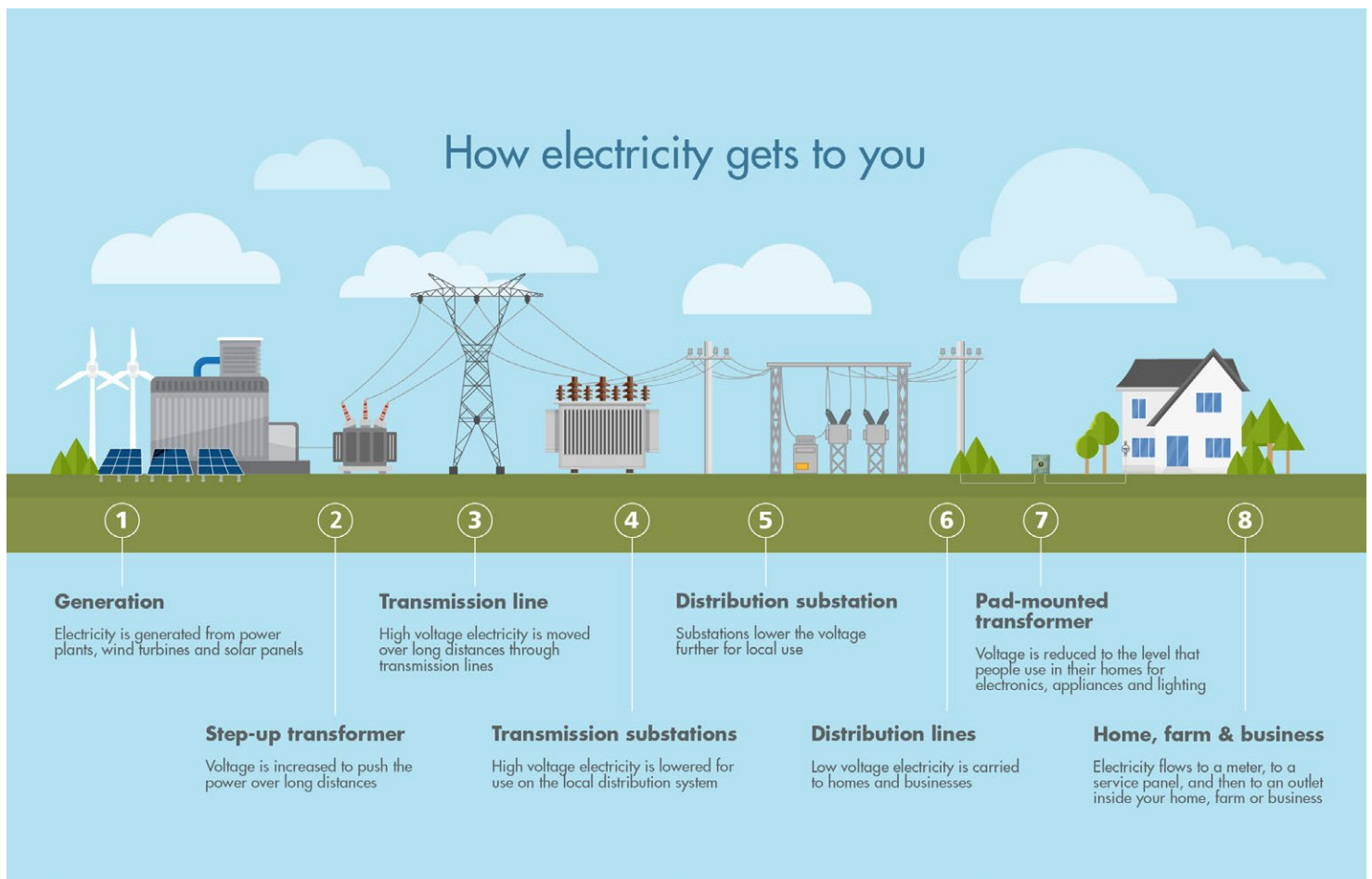
Electricity is made by huge spinning turbines at generating stations using coal, wind, natural gas or water. Electricity from these generators, located at places like power plants and wind farms, is pushed along high

voltage transmission lines to substations where the voltage can be "stepped down" to lower, more usable levels. Then, it is sent along smaller distribution lines, like those owned by South Central Electric, to be delivered to neighborhoods and farms.

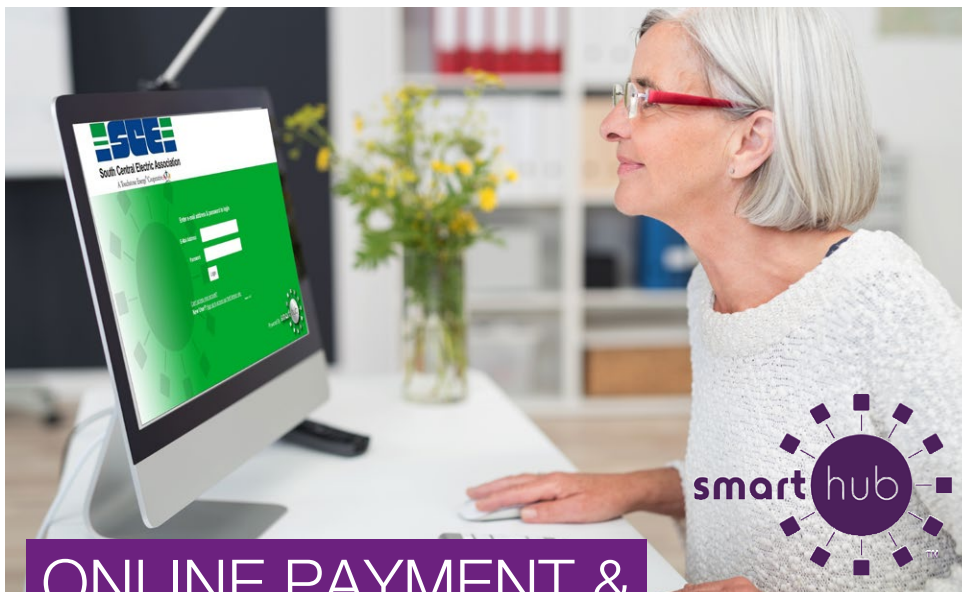
From there, smaller transformers reduce the voltage again to make the power safe to use in homes, schools, farms and small businesses. These smaller transformers may be mounted on poles or sitting on the ground (they're the big green boxes called pad-mounted transformers).

Electricity then runs underground from the transformer to your house and passes through a meter that measures how much each home or business uses. Then, it goes to a service panel where breakers or fuses protect the wires inside your house from being overloaded. Electricity then travels through wires inside the walls to the outlets and switches that we use every day in homes and businesses.

That's how reliable power gets to you in our increasingly power-dependent world.







## ONLINE PAYMENT & BILLING WITH SMARTHUB

Pay your bills on-line with South Central Electric's on-line bill payment system, SmartHub. Download the SmartHub app for your mobile device or tablet from the APP Store or Google Play.

To get started visit our web site [southcentralelectric.com](http://southcentralelectric.com) and click on the SmartHub logo. Once you are at the SmartHub site you'll have to sign up as a first time user by clicking the "New User" link and follow the prompts.

## SCEA WATER HEATER PROGRAM

SCEA's peak shave water heater program provides members with a Marathon water heater at a discounted price for participating in the load management program.

The cost for water heaters is \$500. This is a great value for members. SCEA pays the cost of the electrician to wire the water heater and radio control. The member would pay any costs incurred by a plumber.



Official monthly newsletter

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**Office hours:**

**7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Ron Horman, General Manager

**Board of Directors**

President, Ron Jorgenson

Vice President, Michael Miest

Secretary, Brad Asendorf

Treasurer, Matt Peters

Brent Imker, Director

Mark Sandberg, Director

Bill Kunz, Director

The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at South Central Electric's building at 71176 Tiell Dr., St. James, MN.

Please see our website for a summary of the board meetings.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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OUR WEBSITE!**

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