

Connections



March 2026

Your step-by-step efficiency guide



Learn where your home is leaking energy — and money — through drafty windows, energy vampires and inefficient heating or cooling systems. With a few simple checks, you can boost comfort and shrink your utility bills all year long.

We'll start with simple, no-cost changes you can do right away, then move on to tasks that take a little more effort.

Step 1: Adjust your thermostat

- Revisit your thermostat settings each season. Lowering the temperature at night or when no one is home is a simple way to cut costs.
- Use a smart thermostat for even greater savings. It automatically adjusts based on your schedule.

Step 2: Lower water heater temperature

- Lower your water heater temperature to save money and reduce the risk of scalding burns. Some water heaters are factory-set to 140 F, but most households only need 120 F.

Step 3: Find and fix energy drains

- Unplug appliances when not in use and fully power down devices like computers or gaming consoles.
- Use a smart power strip to shut off multiple electronics at once and stop energy waste at the source.

Step 4: Check your lighting

- Swap out older bulbs, like incandescent or CFLs, for LEDs. They use less energy and last longer.
- Add dimmers or timers to cut down on wasted electricity.
- Choose LEDs with features like daylight shut-off or motion sensors for outdoor fixtures.

Step 5: Review major appliances

- Look for the ENERGY STAR label when buying new. If your refrigerator, washer, dryer or heat pump is more than 10 years old, it may be worth replacing rather than repairing.
- Check your heating and cooling systems. Their lifespan can range from 10-30 years, depending on the type and maintenance.
- Replace air filters to keep your system running efficiently.

Step 6: Seal leaks

Air leaks can waste 10-20% of your home's energy each year, but they're often simple to fix. Here's where to look and how to seal them.

- Check baseboards, floor edges and wall-to-ceiling joints indoors.
- Focus on where different materials meet outdoors.
- Pay special attention to windows, doors, light fixtures, plumbing and outlets.
- Use caulk for gaps around windows, doors and baseboards.
- Add weatherstripping to doors and operable windows.

Step 7: Inspect insulation

Check attic insulation:

- Grab your dust mask and tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be at least 12 inches deep, but you may need more depending on the type and your climate. Check EnergyStar.gov for recommended R-values.
- Spread insulation evenly. Loose-fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy with even coverage, while rolled batt insulation should fit snugly with no gaps.

Inspect exterior walls:

- Check insulation by turning off the power, removing an outlet cover or switch plate and shining a flashlight into the cavity. Many homes built before the 1960s have little to no insulation, and houses from the 1960s-70s often need more.
- Call a professional to blow in insulation (from the outside or inside) if wall insulation is missing.

Don't forget the basement:

- Ensure rim joists (the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the first floor) are well insulated in unfinished basements.
- Insulate the underside of the floor between the joists in crawl spaces.
- Add insulation to pipes and ductwork for an extra efficiency boost.

Renters: You may not be able to make major upgrades, but you can ask your landlord to seal leaks or start small with temporary fixes.

Annual Meeting Details and Schedule



89th Annual Meeting
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
Windom Community Center
1750 Cottonwood Lake Dr., Windom

5:30pm - 6:10pm Dinner
6:15pm Official Meeting
Prize drawings for members attending the annual meeting!

Local Organizations Can Apply for Funds



Are you a local organization that helps improve the lives of the residents of Watonwan, Cottonwood and Martin counties? Your organization can apply for funding from the South Central Electric Association Trust.

The South Central Electric Association Trust distributes funds contributed by South Central Electric members through its Operation Round Up[®] program. The independent Trust Board, which consists of South Central Electric members, evaluates local funding requests and distributes the funds.

The South Central Electric Trust has provided over \$162,000 to local organizations and student scholarships since the program began in 2015. The Trust Board is seeking applications for its spring round of funding. Local organizations that improve the lives of area seniors, educate, provide emergency response, community service and other charitable programs may be eligible for funds. The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday, March 12, 2026.

Download your application from South Central Electric's Operation Round Up page on our website: www.southcentralelectric.com or call South Central Electric at 375-3164 to request an application.



Call our office to learn more at
(507) 375-3164

Protect your home and family with a Briggs & Stratton home standby generator

You can be confident that South Central Electric works hard every day to keep your lights on. For those times when mother nature strikes, we still have you covered with our generator program. You can purchase a whole home Briggs & Stratton Power Protect generator from South Central Electric. If you lose power, the generator automatically takes over. When power is restored, it automatically shuts down. Power when you need it without the hassles of portable or PTO generators.

Estimated Cost of \$9,000 to \$12,500 includes:

- Briggs & Stratton[®] Power Protect DX with industry leading 10-year warranty.
- Minnesota winter ready with battery warmer, oil heater & battery charger.
- Automatic transfer switch.
- **Electrician installation.**

Generators run on LP or Natural Gas. Estimate does not include costs of gas installation from your gas provider.

Looking for low-cost TV? Want to ditch the satellite dish? Try out CTV, which is owned by four local electric cooperatives, including South Central Electric.



What you need is a UHF antenna. Buy one from Walmart or online and install it yourself. Otherwise, reach out to a local TV antenna installer so they can climb the roof and add a booster, splitter and run the cable; find a list of installers at www.ctv.coop.

CTV operates three towers at Godahl, Jackson and Frost. The Godahl tower has about a 45-mile radius coverage area due to the tower height. Meanwhile, the Jackson and Frost towers have about a 30-mile radius coverage. A UHF antenna needs to be pointed toward the tower. Line-of-sight can be an issue, along with the summer heat and humidity, affecting CTV reception.

Today around 40 channels are available at each tower location in Godahl, Frost and Jackson. These channels do not come without cost. To maintain operation CTV charges \$8 a month. This makes CTV one of the best and most economical options for local TV. If you are interested in adding this option please call our office at 507-375-3164.

For channel updates please visit ctv.coop

2.1 TPT – Twin Cities PBS affiliate	9.6 Catchy Comedy	22.318 TBN (Godahl Tower only)
2.2 TPT MN (only on Godahl and Frost Towers)	9.9 Fox 9	22.319 TBN Inspire (Godahl Tower only)
2.3 TPT Life (only on Godahl and Frost Towers)	11.1 KARE – Twin Cities NBC	22.321 Unknown (Godahl Tower only)
2.4 TPT Kids	11.2 Quest	22.322 Positiv (Godahl Tower only)
2.5 TPT NOW	11.3 True Crime Network	23.1 WUCW 23 – The CW Twin Cities
2.6 TPT MN	11.5 Circle	23.2 Comet
4.1 WCCO 4 – Minneapolis CBS affiliate (only on Jackson and Frost Towers)	11.7 Twist	23.3 Charge Network – Movies
4.2 Start TV (only on Godahl Tower)	11.8 Home Shopping Network	23.4 TBD Network
5.1 KSTP – Minneapolis ABC affiliate	15-1 Infomercials	23.5 GRIT TV
5.2 Channel 45	15-2 Defy TV	23.6 Outside TV (Godahl Tower only)
5.3 MeTV – Television Classics	15-3 Outlaw	24.1 (Not finalized)
5.4 GetTV – Television Classics	15-4 Jewelry TV	41.1 ION TV – TV shows and movies
5.5 Defy TV	15-5 Salem News Channel	41.2 BOUNCE
5.6 ThisTV – MGM Movies	15-6 Infomercials	41.3 GRIT
5.7 H&I	15-7 The365	41.4 Mystery
9.1 FOX 9 – Minneapolis FOX affiliate	16.1 CTV local access channel	41.5 Laff
9.2 FOX+ – Minneapolis	16.2 AMG TV	41.6 Scripps
9.3 Movies TV – Classic movies	16.3 Right Now TV	41.7 Jewelry
9.4 Buzzer – Old game shows	16.4 Biz TV	45.5 Enlace TV – Spanish channel (Godahl Tower only)
9.5 The Grio (Godahl Tower Only)	16.5 Fun Roads	62.1 Daystar
9.6 Catchy Comedy	19.1 Laff	62.2 Daystar Espanol
9.9 Fox 9	21.1 WUMN – Spanish Univision Minnesota (Jackson & Godahl towers only)	62.3 Daystar Reflections
9.1 FOX 9 – Minneapolis FOX affiliate	21.2 Newsnet (Jackson & Godahl towers only)	
9.2 FOX+ – Minneapolis	21.3 SNHtv Sports New Highlights (Jackson & Godahl towers only)	
9.3 Movies TV – Classic movies	21.4 Shop HQ (Jackson & Godahl towers only)	
9.4 Buzzer – Old game shows	45.1 Trinity Broadcasting – religious (Godahl Tower only)	
9.5 The Grio (Godahl Tower Only)		



Business Spotlight

We're excited to launch our new monthly Business Spotlight, where we'll be highlighting outstanding businesses right here in our service territory. First up is Amo Creamery!



Nutritious Products for a Healthy Family

Putting the best food on the table for your family is something we all strive for—and that simple goal is what inspired the creation of Amo Creamery. Built on a multi-generation family dairy farm in southwest Minnesota, our farmstead creamery exists to serve our neighbors with honest, high-quality dairy made right where it begins.

Our herd has been carefully selected for the A2 gene, which produces a milk protein many people find easier to digest. We leave our milk in its natural state by not homogenizing, allowing a rich cream line to rise to the top. The result is milk that's full of flavor and healthy fats, just the way nature intended. Our cheese curds are made fresh on the farm, squeaking with every bite and tasting their absolute best.

A Family Rooted in Farming

Our story began generations ago. Ethan's grandpa, Maynard, grew up farming during the Great Depression, served in World War II, and returned home determined to build a future. In 1953, he married my grandma Ellen, and together they raised six children while working toward the dream of owning a farm. In 1969, that dream became reality when our family purchased the farm in Amo Township, where our dairy still operates today.

In 1987, my parents, Dean and Elizabeth Johnson, took over the farm with a strong focus on milk quality and animal care, while raising four kids—April, Chelsey, Jacob, and Ethan.



Bringing the Milk Home

After growing up on the farm, Ethan studied Dairy Science and Dairy Manufacturing at South Dakota State University, gaining hands-on experience in cheese and ice cream production. A visit to several on-farm creameries showed me that keeping milk close to home wasn't just possible, it was necessary. In 2023, I returned to the farm to build Amo Creamery.

Dairy farms across southwest Minnesota are disappearing, driven in part by rising hauling costs. By processing our own milk, we're continuing a long local tradition dating back to the original Amo Cooperative Creamery in 1896—of working together to keep dairying alive here.

You can visit Amo Creamery Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm to 7pm and Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm. Their address is 38382 County Road 13 Heron Lake MN. Check them out on their website Amocreamey.com. Or enjoy their products at Johnson Meat Market in St. James and Windom, Maynards Food Center Westbrook, Lamberton, Mountain Lake, Fulda, and Lakefield, and Schwalbach Ace Hardware in Windom.

-Ethan Johnson



South Central Electric Association

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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, 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.

Official monthly newsletter

South Central Electric

71176 Tiell Dr., PO Box 150
St. James, MN 56081-0150
(507) 375-3164

Outages: (888) 805-7232

E-mail address:
sce@southcentralelectric.com

Web:
www.southcentralelectric.com

Office hours:
7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Jim Haler, General Manager

Board of Directors

President, Ron Jorgenson
Vice President, Michael Miest
Secretary, Brad Asendorf
Treasurer, Matt Peters
Mark Sandberg, Director
Steve Sell, 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.