

Connections

South Central Electric
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

SCE
South Central Electric Association
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

November 2025

Leadership Changes



Jeff Benson



Mark Meier and Luke Malmgren



Nick Willardson

There are exciting changes happening at South Central Electric (SCE), marked by a heartfelt farewell and an enthusiastic welcome to a new generation of leadership.

After a remarkable career spanning over 31 years, Jeff Benson, our esteemed Operations Manager, is officially retiring. Jeff's unwavering commitment, steady leadership, and deep knowledge of our operations have left a lasting impact on the co-op and everyone who's had the privilege to work with him. His dedication has helped shape SCE into the cooperative it is today, and while we'll miss his presence greatly, we're incredibly grateful for the legacy he leaves behind.

As we honor Jeff's service, we are thrilled to announce the promotion of Luke Malmgren as our new Operations Manager. Luke has been with SCE for over 24 years, starting as a lineman and then serving as Line Superintendent since 2022. His experience in the field and leadership ability makes him a natural fit for this important role, and we're confident he will continue to uphold the values and high standards that Jeff helped to instill.

Stepping into Luke's previous role is Mark Meier, who has been a dedicated lineman at our Jeffers shop for the past 20 years. Mark brings a wealth of hands-on experience and a strong commitment to hard work and teamwork to his new position as Line Superintendent.

And rounding out these leadership transitions, Nick Willardson will be taking over Mark's position as our new Jeffers Foreman. Nick's work ethic and knowledge of our systems make him a great fit for this new opportunity, and we look forward to seeing his continued growth in this leadership role.

These changes represent more than just new job titles—they reflect the strength of our team and the bright future ahead. Please join us in thanking Jeff for his remarkable service and congratulating Luke, Mark, and Nick as they take on their new responsibilities and help lead South Central Electric into its next chapter.

Holiday Hours: Our offices will be closed Thursday, November 27th for Thanksgiving

Area 4th Graders Learn About Electric Safety



The start of school brings an annual event for area 4th graders, attending field and safety days. The Cottonwood County Extension office coordinates a four-day event with safety and education programs at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton. South Central Electric and East River Electric, an SCE power provider, performed electric safety and education demonstrations at the Outreach Center. Similar events occurred for Watonwan County schools at the fairgrounds in St. James and Martin County schools at Heritage Acres in Fairmont. Over the six days of electrical safety demonstrations, South Central Electric spread our safety message to over 1,300 students around southern Minnesota.

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 **\$750**. 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.



2025 REBATE PROGRAMS



The recipient must be a South Central Electric member. Any checks or credits will be made in the name or account of the member. The program will end when funds are exhausted; additional rebates may be added at a later date. The completed applications will be processed on a first come first served basis as they are received in our office. Rebate applications can be requested by calling the St. James office or available online at www.southcentralelectric.com.



Must be an Energy Star® appliance to qualify.

REBATES:

Please see rebate applications for details.

Dehumidifier\$20

Credit applied to the energy bill

Air Source Heat Pumps (ducted)\$300

HSPF rating over 9.5 **\$500**

Ductless/Mini-Split Heat Pump.....\$350

Ground Source Heat Pump.....\$300/ton

(Limit 10 tons)

Air Conditioner Tune Up\$30

Managed Electric Heat.....\$20/kW

Radio controlled, qualifies for a discount of **\$.031/kWh** on system usage. Stored or dual fuel heat.

Heat pumps are not eligible for this program.

LED Yard Light.....\$25/ea.

limit 3

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL REBATES:

Rebates are available on a custom basis. Rebates will be based on kW reduction on retrofit projects. To be eligible for a rebate the project must have a minimum savings of 1kW. We do not have rebate programs for new construction. Call SCEA for information on these rebates.



Heat your Home

efficiently and cost-effectively this winter

As the summer heat begins to fade away and cooler air returns for another season, members may find themselves considering how to efficiently and cost-effectively heat their home throughout another Minnesota winter.

Advances in electric heating technology, particularly air source heat pumps (ASHP), are helping to make electricity the go-to choice. They perform well in cold climates and have quickly become cost competitive with conventional furnaces — even beating them in upfront cost when coupled with federal, state and local utility incentives.

ASHPs are three to five times more efficient than most traditional heating systems because it takes less energy to move heat around than to produce it. With a natural gas furnace, heat must first be created by burning gas and then additional energy distributes it throughout your home.

With an ASHP, the heat energy itself is taken from the air outside (even when temperatures drop well below freezing), meaning energy is only needed to transport and distribute that heat indoors. As a result, ASHPs are often far less expensive to run than other heating systems, translating to hundreds of dollars in annual savings for an average household.

While the annual expected cost of heating a home with a natural gas furnace can be slightly cheaper in some areas, ASHPs are far more affordable than propane. Members could expect to save \$600 annually to deliver the same amount of heat by switching from a propane furnace or boiler to an ASHP. You'll also no longer be subject to the price volatility of oil, propane and gas. Factor in available federal tax credits (30%, up to \$2,000 when installed before Dec. 31, 2025) and rebates from your local electric cooperative, in addition to ASHPs offering the dual benefit of providing a home's cooling needs, and it becomes an even more appealing investment.

Contact South Central Electrics Member Service Manager, Lucas Sandbo, at 507-375-3164 to learn how much you can save on an ASHP as well as other residential energy efficiency rebates offered to members.



Can I get by with electric space heaters?

Even though ASHPs and portable space heaters both run on electricity, their efficiency and overall cost to operate are vastly different. While it may be tempting to plug in a few space heaters throughout your home as an alternative, this short-term solution can lead to long-term costs.

A single space heater running for 8 hours a day at \$0.14 per kilowatt-hour would cost upwards of \$50 per day — and that's just for one room. Multiply that by several rooms or longer hours, and it can quickly rival or exceed the cost of using a whole-home ASHP system.



Update Your Life-Support Member Listing with Us

For family members or friends with a medical condition electricity is a lifeline for their medical equipment.

Your local electric co-op likes to know about any members who are on life-support equipment, such as:

■ oxygen concentrators ■ respirators ■ home dialysis / other life-threatening conditions.

Your electric cooperative maintains this list for two reasons. First, in case of a planned outage where crews will work on the lines, the co-op tries to inform these members before the outage. Secondly, during an unplanned outage, priority is given to restore power to these members with such medical equipment.

If you haven't notified your local electric co-op, please complete this coupon and return it to us with your next bill payment. Otherwise, e-mail, fax or mail the information right away. In addition, if the person with the medical condition moves off the co-op's system, no longer needs life support or has passed away, please inform the co-op so our list stays current.

***Yes, I'm on life support equipment OR
Please remove
from the co-op's life support list***

Name _____

Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Phone number _____

Your location number (as found on your electric bill)

Type of life support equipment or medical condition:

Battery backup? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how long will the batteries last? _____

Is there a generator on site for backup electricity? ☐ Yes ☐ No



Official monthly newsletter

South Central Electric

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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, 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.

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