

ROAD TRIP RECHARGED

**SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE:
BEST TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**

SUBMITTED BY:



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ROAD TRIP; RECHARGED

A CROSS COUNTRY EV EXPEDITION



INTRODUCTION

2,600 miles across rural America in an electric vehicle creates research and awareness.

In May 2018, the Stearns Electric Association Communications team endeavored on a cross-country electric vehicle expedition to gain the hands-on experience their Cooperative needed to stand as the trusted source of energy information for their member-owners.

Together, Amanda Groethe, director of communications and marketing, and Whitney Ditlevson, communications and marketing specialist, traveled over 2,600 miles in a Tesla S across rural America. They kept an extensive driving log, collected data for research, provided electric vehicle education and shared their experiences along the way.

The main purpose of this trip, was three-fold: participate in a hands-on research project coordinated by Touchstone Energy's Drive to Connect EEvent, use that data for research to assist Great River Energy in its electric vehicle communications, and bring hands-on experience and data back to Stearns Electric.

With only ten days to plan before hitting the road for a week, they began researching everything they could about electric vehicles. They used their personal connections to learn what people were most interested in and most concerned about regarding electric vehicles and created a marketing plan to not only educate followers on electric vehicles but also engage a variety of audiences across the country. Their ultimate goal was to share information and data in a fun and informative way.

When they hit the open road, set their insecurities aside and donned their colorful sunglasses - the two Minnesota millennials had no idea that their story would reach over two million viewers.

THE OPPORTUNITY



TOUCHSTONE ENERGY DRIVE TO CONNECT EV EVENT:

The opportunity to take a road trip in an electric vehicle became available as part of Touchstone Energy's Drive to Connect EVent. In coordination with an electric vehicle pre-conference session, Touchstone Energy organized cooperative employees from across the country to drive electric vehicles to the 2018 Connect Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah to collect data and share stories from the road. The data would be used in continued electric vehicle research that would be shared with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.



GREAT RIVER ENERGY SELECTION:

Great River Energy, Stearns Electric Association's wholesale power provider, made the opportunity to participate in the Touchstone Energy Drive to Connect EVent available to all 28 member-owner cooperatives. While the initial opportunity had a limited scope of collecting data for research purposes and sharing information from the road, Amanda and Whitney immediately had a vision for a much greater public awareness campaign. After submitting an initial communication plan proposal to Great River Energy, the Stearns Electric team was selected to represent Minnesota.



VALUE TO STEARNS ELECTRIC:

While the opportunity to take a road trip in an electric vehicle brought value to Touchstone Energy through data collection and even to Great River Energy with added electric vehicle awareness communication, it wouldn't have made sense to participate if the project didn't bring value back to Stearns Electric as well. By focusing on employee education, innovation, communications excellence and electric vehicle awareness, Road Trip; Recharged brought hands-on experience, communication case studies and educational content back to the Cooperative. The project also helped position Stearns Electric as a knowledgeable resource on electric vehicles for our members and communities.

THE TEAM



AMANDA GROETHE

Amanda Groethe is the Director of Communications and Marketing at Stearns Electric Association where she leads the Cooperative's communication strategies, publications, and community and member engagement activities.

Amanda was hired in 2010 as a Communications Specialist and has spent the last eight years building a dynamic communications program for Stearns Electric. She is passionate about the power of communications and storytelling. She excels in designing creative visuals and marketing campaigns, transforming complex information into a medium member-owners can easily understand, and creating content adaptable for the ever expanding digital world. She is known for her attention to detail, project management skills and motivation to create an excellent member experience.

Amanda holds a bachelor's degree in Communication as well as Business Management and Marketing from the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. She earned her Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) designation in 2017. She serves on both the REMA Member Services Planning Board and as the advertising chair for the MN Touchstone Energy Group.



WHITNEY DITLEVSON

Whitney Ditlevson is a Communications and Marketing Specialist at Stearns Electric Association. She started her career with Stearns Electric in October 2017 and while still new to the electric cooperative industry, she has taken the lead on Stearns Electric's internal safety communications and Operation Round Up program. She holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations and a minor in Communication Studies from St. Cloud State University.

The highlight of her time at Stearns Electric, so far, was the opportunity to show off her communication and marketing skills as part of the two-person Road Trip; Recharged electric vehicle research project team. Her favorite work activities include writing feature stories for the monthly newsletter, editing Cooperative publications and facilitating Stearns Electric's Energy Education Program for area fourth graders.

RESEARCH AND PREPARATION



OVERVIEW:

A great amount of time was put towards research. At the beginning of this project, Amanda and Whitney were “EV newbies” and while Stearns Electric Association offers an off-peak charging program for electric vehicles, the Cooperative had not prioritized electric vehicle education.

Amanda and Whitney began their research by asking their peers, colleagues and Stearns Electric members what they wanted to know about electric vehicles. Based on responses the team rigorously researched to create a frequently asked questions guide that formed a base level of knowledge for the trip. The team consulted with the Stearns Electric Energy Services department, local contractors and car dealerships, and partners Great River Energy, Touchstone Energy and the National Rural Electric Association (NRECA) to gain further understanding of the impact electric vehicles will have on Cooperative business. Finally the duo reviewed extensive industry research.

RESEARCH EFFORTS INCLUDED:

- Discussions with Stearns Electric electric vehicle owners
- Review of Great River Energy, Touchstone Energy and NRECA electric vehicle communication and education materials
- Discussions with local car dealerships and contractors
- Internet research
- Market conditions research
- Review of case studies
- Review of consumer surveys
- Pricing evaluation
- Hands-on experience

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS:

Research shows that while consumers do have concerns over the perceived lack of charging stations, high costs and range, the largest barrier to electric vehicle adoption is a lack of awareness. This information reinforced the idea that a highly visual road trip campaign would bring value to the audience and the cooperative network.

Research also identified that there is a significant acceleration by automakers towards electrification primarily driven by global regulations that target internal combustion engines in order to limit pollutants. This research reveals that timing of the road trip was ideal to begin educating and creating awareness with member-owners, allowing cooperatives to equip their employees, create charging programs, create awareness and learn from early adopters.

Generalized research provided the Road Trip; Recharged team with the knowledge needed to educate project followers.

RESOURCES:

- Blink Charging
- Charge Hub
- ChargePoint
- Clean Technia
- Edmunds
- Electrek
- Fleet Carma
- General Motors
- Google Maps
- Great River Energy
- HybridCars.com
- Mark and Kathleen Bernick, *member-owners, Stearns Electric*
- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
- Nissan
- Plug In America
- PlugInConnect
- PlugShare
- Quartz
- RBC Wealth Management Market Primer
- Reuters
- Stanford
- Star Tribune
- Target
- Tesla
- Touchstone Energy
- U.S. Department of Energy
- USA Today
- Volkswagen
- ZEF Energy

THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

PURPOSE

RESEARCH

The opportunity to participate in Touchstone Energy's Drive to Connect Event was founded on data collection. The Stearns Electric Association team was given a plug-in data collector that provided Touchstone Energy real time data from the Tesla on the road. In addition, in depth data was tracked by hand. Mileage, energy use, terrain, weather, charging time, locations and more were all documented. Data was shared throughout the road trip in a consumer friendly format on the project blog and was compiled by Touchstone Energy with the data from the six other teams that participated in the Drive Event to be used for continuing research purposes.

Beyond data collection, Road Trip; Recharged was also an opportunity for Stearns Electric to research electric vehicles and educate employees. Being a mid-west, rural electric cooperative -- electric vehicles are not commonplace in our service territory yet. While Stearns Electric does offer an off-peak charging program, and has a handful of members that own an electric vehicle and participate in the program, prior to this trip we would not have considered our employees knowledgeable about the benefits of electric vehicles.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The second purpose of Road Trip; Recharged was to generate awareness and educate various audiences on electric vehicles. Prior to departing, Amanda and Whitney reached out to their connections to see what people were most interested in about electric vehicles. The team educated their audience with blog posts dedicated specifically to answering their most frequently asked questions, including the most popular areas of interest - charging and batteries. Through the trip, the duo was also able to demonstrate the functionalities and features of electric vehicles by using live video.

RELATABLE AND RELAXED CONTENT

While cooperatives have come a long way in the last ten years in regards to social media use, most still feature a highly corporate tone on a medium meant to create interaction and provide relatable content. As two millennials, the Road Trip; Recharged team set out to provide a case study for Stearns Electric and others proving that more relatable, relaxed, even "fun" messaging can be just as, if not more, effective in delivering messages and connecting with a community.

STRATEGY

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Due to the time constraints of this project, digital media served as the primary method of communication. The trip's blog served as an information hub and social media served as the delivery method. Amanda and Whitney's first priority was to create easy to understand educational content that would be supported by fun and relatable social posting.

EXPERIENCE OF THE ALL-AMERICAN ROAD TRIP

Despite a solid foundation of strong content, generating an audience on short notice to deliver messaging to was recognized as a challenge. Further more, if the audience didn't stay engaged over the course of the trip, the team wouldn't be able to deliver the full spectrum of messages. Amanda and Whitney decided to capitalize on the beauty and experience of the all-American road trip. They created play-lists and road trip games, visited sightseeing venues, and more. Using social media, the duo connected online by tagging the restaurants they ate at, the brands they consumed, the businesses they visited and the people they met along the way. The team also created connections within the cooperative network by visiting local cooperative offices and posting cooperative shout-outs as they traveled through various cooperative service territories.

PERSONAL STORY | HUMAN CONNECTION

In an effort to keep messages positive but real, Amanda and Whitney had to let their guard down. Live, raw and real content would create relatability and connection. This required vulnerability by the team – even if it meant Facebook live videos with messy hair to share their feelings and what they were experiencing. Their personal story was the connection between the content and the audience.

Strong efforts were also made throughout the trip to create human connections at each stop by meeting with local business owners, other electric vehicle owners and community members. The team shared these stories and interactions online. Ultimately these connections created dialogue about and interest in electric vehicles - even with unlikely audiences (such as traveling rail road workers.)

AUDIENCE

MEMBERS/GENERAL PUBLIC

Ultimately the project's focus was to educate member-owners and the general public in a creative and engaging format. Road Trip; Recharged provided relevant content through story, experience and community engagement.

EMPLOYEES/BOARD MEMBERS

All employees, not just Energy Services representatives, need to understand the basics of electric vehicles, be able to answer member questions and recognize the impact this technology will have on the electric energy industry. Road Trip; Recharged created content and guides to educate and equip Stearns Electric employees to fulfill their role as energy experts.

COOPERATIVE NETWORK

Data collected by Road Trip; Recharged and the other six teams that participated in Touchstone Energy's Drive to Connect Event was compiled and will be used for continued research and education in the cooperative network. Additionally, Road Trip; Recharged exemplified the power of human connection and community engagement that stand at the foundation of the cooperative difference.

MESSAGE FRAMING

KEEP IT POSITIVE BUT REAL

Amanda and Whitney were well aware of the challenges that exist in attempting to drive an electric vehicle across rural America and the concerns consumers carry. The team knew that while they couldn't ignore these challenges, they could choose to frame the message in a positive way. In order to do so, content would need to be relatable, honest and engaging.

KEY MESSAGES

- Electric vehicles are an economical purchase despite higher upfront costs when compared to life-cycle costs of an internal combustion engine.
- There are electric vehicles available at a variety of price points.
- Electric vehicle charging primarily takes place at home or work not at a public charging station.
- Electric vehicles are good for the environment, good for utilities and good for the consumer.
- Electric vehicle battery technology is rapidly improving in regards to both range and price.
- Electric vehicle charging is simple and electricity for charging is affordable.
- Many electric utilities, including Stearns Electric, offer off-peak charging programs at a reduced price per kWh and some even offer time-of-use rates which provide even greater savings and more personal control and comfort.
- Long distance electric vehicle trips are not only possible but also realistic, and provide an exciting experience.
- Electric vehicles are fun to drive.
- Public charging infrastructure grows exponentially every year.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

WEBSITE

www.roadtriprecharged.com

An independent website was created to host Road Trip; Recharged content in a blog format. The site served as the cornerstone of the project from which educational content was shared on social media.

FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/roadtriprecharged

Road Trip; Recharged used Facebook as the project's primary communication channel for connecting with our members and the community. An emphasis was placed on live, raw and real content to share the team's personal story from the road while educating the audience about electric vehicles along the way.

INSTAGRAM/SNAPCHAT

www.instagram.com/roadtriprecharged

www.snapchat.com/rt_recharged

Stearns Electric does not utilize Instagram or Snapchat in the Cooperative's communication plan, so Road Trip; Recharged was a perfect opportunity to explore the use of these social channels to evaluate their effectiveness in communicating with an audience. Of all the communication channels utilized in this project, Instagram and Snapchat hosted the most casual and fun content.

PARTNERSHIPS

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY

Touchstone Energy organized the national Drive to Connect Event as a research project and provided a data logger to actively record travel information.

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Great River Energy selected the Stearns Electric Association team to represent the state of Minnesota on the Touchstone Energy Drive to Connect Event based on an initial communication plan proposal. In addition, Great River Energy supported the trip by providing the funds for the Tesla rental.

BUDGET

\$2,500

Road Trip; Recharged was not an anticipated or budgeted project for Stearns Electric in 2018, however the opportunity was too good to pass over. Therefore, the budget for this project was limited and largely supported by Great River Energy. The leading expenses of the trip were basic travel costs and the Tesla rental. Great River Energy generously paid for the vehicle rental and Stearns Electric made room in the budget for the remainder.

ITEM	EXPENSE
Travel Expenses (<i>Lodging and Meals</i>)	\$550
Tesla Rental (<i>Funded by Great River Energy</i>)	\$1,200
Road Trip; Recharged T-Shirts	\$150
Digital Advertisements (<i>Boosted Facebook Posts</i>)	\$50
Web Development	\$50
Miscellaneous Supplies	\$100
TOTAL	\$2,100

CHALLENGES

TIME

From idea to implementation, Road Trip; Recharged faced a significant challenge: time. Amanda and Whitney learned that their proposal was selected to represent Great River Energy at the Drive to Connect Event with less than two weeks before they would need to leave for Salt Lake City. By the time the Stearns Electric Executive team approved Amanda and Whitney to take advantage of this opportunity, they had only 10 days until departure. A lot of preparation needed to happen in order to be on the road for seven full days. Amanda and Whitney needed to name their project, create a logo, determine the logistics of the trip, find a place to stay for the conference, research electric vehicles, build a blog and create social media accounts to document their journey, develop blog content to be shared along the way, and generate an audience. This was all in addition to completing their normal Cooperative work.

BUDGET

With a budget of only \$2,500, primarily spent on travel expenses, Road Trip; Recharged was a true grass roots effort and a highly organic digital campaign. Less than \$300 was spent on t-shirts, web development and digital advertising.

THE ACTION PLAN



PRE-TRIP TIMELINE

DATE	ACTIVITY
THURSDAY, APRIL 26TH	
8 a.m.	Confirmation that an electric vehicle road trip is confirmed and approved by the Stearns Electric Association executive team.
10:30 a.m.	Meet with Stearns Electric staff to prepare and finalize work plan for road trip.
	Book hotel rooms for conference; confirm conference registration.
	Brainstorm potential content, blog ideas, social media posts, trip logistics, road trip route, vehicle specifications/range, etc.
FRIDAY, APRIL 27TH	
	Reach out to connections to explain trip and come up with a name for the project.
	Research WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Squarespace to select a platform for blog and begin creating blog.
	Begin creating media lists and writing press releases.
	Set up childcare plan, prepare families, prepare at work to be gone/out of the office for a full week.
SATURDAY, APRIL 28TH	
	Work on blog creation, introduction, and background.
	Research anything/everything about electric vehicles for blog posts; ask personal connections for the top information they are interested in.
SUNDAY, APRIL 29TH	
	Work on blog creation, blog introduction and team background.
	Continue research of electric vehicles.
MONDAY, APRIL 30TH	
	Set up social media sites: Facebook, Instagram and Snap Chat.
	Research cooperatives along the way and prepare shout outs.
	Finalize blog set-up.
	Finalize media list for trip.
	Continue research of electric vehicles.
TUESDAY, MAY 1ST	
	Continue research of electric vehicles.
	Finalize media list.
PM	Dinner brainstorming – social media and blog post outline for the trip. Finalize last details.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 2ND	
	Connect with Great River Energy to confirm vehicle pick-up.
2 p.m.	Meet with Stearns Electric executive team to finalize trip and present final proposal.
	Create blog posts.

THURSDAY, MAY 3RD	
	Create blog posts.
FRIDAY, MAY 4TH	
	Interviews with local media: St. Cloud Times; WJON.
	Set up stops with media and cooperatives along the way.
	Complete other office work before departure.
	Create blog posts.
SATURDAY, MAY 5TH	
AM	Stearns Electric Association 5K/send off for Road Trip; Recharged.
Afternoon	Pick up the vehicle in Maple Grove.
PM	Photo shoot with Times Media and the Tesla in St. Cloud.
SUNDAY, MAY 6TH	
6 a.m.	Departure time!

CONTENT PLAN

DATA

Data collected on the road trip was used to create summary blog posts at each charging stop. Now known as Road Trip Recharges, Amanda and Whitney took “boring” data and shared it in a simple, fun and engaging format that included photos, stories and an inside look at their experience.

EDUCATION

Beyond data collection, Road Trip; Recharged shared a significant amount of educational content. The team started with basic electric vehicle information but also covered things like how to plot an electric vehicle road trip to more complicated questions about electric vehicle batteries and elements that effect range.

The team addressed the challenges of owning or driving an electric vehicle keeping in line with the decision to frame all messages with a positive tone. For example, in the rural Midwest charging infrastructure is minimal. So instead of focusing on the lack of charging stations they addressed it and then researched and shared the investments local companies and manufacturers are making to improve the infrastructure in the area. The duo also spent a lot of time working to break the mindset the public has about charging. It is so difficult to get people to change the way their mind thinks about the traditional gas station – they subconsciously think that every time an electric vehicle has a low battery they have to run to a fast charging station. The reality is charging an electric vehicle is much more like charging your cell phone. You plug it in at home or work and when you leave you have a relatively full battery. It’s actually more convenient.

On another note, people are clearly concerned about the costs of owning and operating an electric vehicle. Road Trip; Recharged once again addressed these issues but compared the upfront costs of an electric vehicle to the life cycle cost of an electric vehicle. The project recognized the current high cost of battery replacements but also addressed how quickly this technology is changing and how fast battery costs are coming down.

Of course beneficial electrification was a priority message. Amanda and Whitney were transparent about the utility benefit of electric vehicles but also explained it’s a win-win technology for our members.

ROAD TRIP FUN

To keep the audience engaged through the course of the trip, Amanda and Whitney shared all the excitement from the road - showing that on a long distance trip, charging stops were not necessarily an inconvenience but an opportunity to explore the sights, meet incredible people and have a lot of fun. Touristy stops included Wall Drug, the Corn Palace, Mount Rushmore, and a Diners, Drive Ins and Dives location. Additionally Amanda and Whitney made it a priority to talk to all the people they met along the way, making connections with business owners, hotel receptionists, electric vehicle drivers, baristas and waiters, and even cooperative employees. Photos, Facebook live videos, games, graphics and delicious food all worked together to keep people interested in the story.

CONTENT TIMELINE

DATE	POST	METHOD	
THURSDAY, MAY 3RD			
PM	Announcement of Trip	Press Releases (local media and media along our route; cooperatives along our route)	X
PM	Announcement of Trip	Social Blog Stearns Electric Social Stearns Electric Blog	x
FRIDAY, MAY 4TH			
	Planning Post: - Amanda, Whitney and James video - Perhaps multiple posts with video intro about the trip (Why, How we were chosen, Why we submitted a proposal, etc.)	Social Blog	x
	EV Tips from Member	Social Blog	x
SATURDAY, MAY 5TH			
AM	How to Plot a Trip	Social Blog	x
PM	Picking up the Car	Social	X
Early Evening	Elevator speech/excitement post to leave – both of us with car	Social	X
Evening	Live video to first vehicle reaction	Social	
SUNDAY, MAY 6TH			
	Pick up car in St. Joseph/photo in front of Stearns Electric	Social Stearns Electric Social	x
	Stop #1 – Clearwater Travel Plaza (Check-in and Review Post)	Social	X
	Clearwater Travel – MN Shout out (donuts)	Social	X
AM – before Worthington	Video – how we are feeling/was charging easy/how is car operating	Social	X
	Packing list	Social	X
	Playlist Day #1	Social	X
In Worthington	Stop #2 – Ground Round Grill/Lunch (check-in/Review)	Social	X
	Stop #2 – Video: How to Charge	Social	X
During lunch	Types of chargers/types of charging stations	Blog	X
After Lunch	Okabena Lake stop/photo	Social	
Before exiting MN	Charger map of MN	Map on Social	
	MN/SD Border Photo	Social	X
In Mitchell	Stop #3 – Mitchell, SD (check-in/review)	Social	X
	Dairy Queen/Country Store Post	Social	X
After leaving Mitchell	Corn Palace Post	Social	X

PM	Five resources for locating chargers	Blog	X
	Missouri River Crossing	Social	X
In Murdo, SD	Stop #4 – Murdo, SD (check-in/review)	Social	X
	Dinnertime post	Social	X
	Antique store post	Social	
PM (1/2 way to Rapid City)	Live check-in: half way to our final destination for the evening	Social	
	Post about the time change	Social	X
In Rapid City	Arrival Post	Social	X
	Live video from hotel: how we are feeling; was it inconvenient to stop? Did we stay on our time line? How did first day of charging and traveling go?	Social	X
OPTIONAL PM	Mount Rushmore	Social	
	Haunted Hotel/Drink in Rapid City	Social	
MONDAY, MAY 7TH			
Breakfast	Vehicle Comparison Chart	Social Blog	x
AM	General post about Rapid City Area	Social	
	Playlist Day 2	Social	X
On the road	Hot Springs/Black Hills/ Badlands	Social	X
	Cross Wyoming Border	Social	X
Stop #1 Day 2: Lusk	Stop #1 – Lusk (check-in/review)	Social	X
Departing Lusk	Lusk Feature Story from Hotel	Social Blog	X
Mid-Day	Companies investing in charging/lack of chargers	Blog Social	X
	Cross Platte River	Social	
OPTIONAL	Independence Rock State Historic Site (side of the road)	Social	
	Scenery post (mountains/hills)	Social	X
Before Rawlins	Range Anxiety post – this is the longest trip between charging stations – how are we feeling)	Social	X
Stop #2 Day 2: Rawlins	Stop #2 – Rawlins (check-in/review and celebration post)	Social	X
After Rawlins	Home charging	Blog	X
Stop #3 Day 2: Rock Springs	Stop #3 – Rock Springs (check-in/review)	Social	X
	Dinner post	Social	X
	Why we are going to Salt Lake City / Intro to the CONNECT conference – setup for the pre-conference	Social	X
	Wyoming/Utah border		X
Stop #4 Day 2: Salt Lake City	Video Arrival/recap for the day	Social	X
TUESDAY, MAY 8TH			
AM	Pre-Conference Coverage	Social	X
Afternoon	Salt Lake City Coverage	Social	X

Potential PM	Winners – awards regarding EV projects/ programs	Social	X
WEDNESDAY, MAY 9TH			
AM	Video – other teams traveling by EV feature/videos	Social	X
1:30-2:30 p.m.	PRESENTATION: “Beneficial Electrification”	Blog	x
	POST: Beneficial Electrification		
Evening	PRESENTATION: “Maximizing the Value of Solar”	Blog	
	POST: ReVolt Program		
Night	Video check-in – Day #1 Conference wrap-up	Social	
THURSDAY, MAY 10TH			
AM	PRESENTATION from yesterday: Emerging Technologies	Social	x
	POST: Programs available/SEA commitment to innovation		
2:30-3 p.m.	PRESENTATION: Creative Approach for Engaging Every Generation	Social	
	POST: poll? Or discussion about cooperative difference?		
Night	Video check-in – Day #2 Conference wrap-up/travel update for tomorrow	Social	x
FRIDAY, MAY 11TH			
Early AM	Depart from Salt Lake City video/photo	Social	X
	Utah/Wyoming border	Social	X
Stop #1: Evanston	Stop #1 - Evanston (check-in/review)	Social	X
Stop #2: Rock Springs	Stop #2 – Rock Springs (check-in/review)	Social	x
	Breakfast post	Social	X
After departing	EV Battery differences	Blog	X
Stop #3: Rawlins	Stop #3 – Rawlins (check-in/review)	Social	X
	Lunch post OR ice cream from Deb B’s Espresso and Ice Cream	Social	X
Afternoon	FAQ Batteries	Blog	X
	Bamforth National Wildlife Refuge (pass to the north)	Social	
Stop #4: Laramie	Stop #4 – Laramie (check-in/review)	Social	X
	We pass some canyons – Sparks Canyon and Webb Canyon	Social	
Stop #5: Lusk	Stop #5 – Lusk (check-in/Review)	Social	X
	Dinner post	Social	X
	WY/SD Border	Social	X
Stop #6: Rapid City	Stop #6 – Rapid City (check-in/review / celebration)	Social	X
	Evening activity – Mount Rushmore? Olympic Junior Softball Tournament	Social	N/A

SATURDAY, MAY 12TH

	Last Day – departing Rapid City, SD	Social	X
Stop #1 Day 2: Murdo	Stop #1 – Murdo (check-in/review)	Social	X
	Is it cost effective to own an EV	Blog	
Stop #2 Day 2: Oacoma	Stop #2 – Oacoma (check-in/review)	Social	N/A
Stop #3 Day 2: Mitchell	Stop #3 – Mitchell (check-in/review)	Social	X
	EV Maintenance	Blog	
Stop #4 Day 2: Worthington	Stop #4 – Worthington (check-in/review)	Social	X
Last stop: Maple Grove	Arrival at Great River Energy, Maple Grove (check-in/review)	Social	X
Home sweet home	Home Sweet Home Stearns Electric	Social	X

JUNE

	Power Connection Feature Story	Social	
	Stearns Electric Newsletter	Blog	
		Stearns Electric Social	X
		Stearns Electric Blog	

POST TRIP

Upon return, Amanda and Whitney wrote a final summary of their trip to share with members in the Cooperative's monthly newsletter the Power Connection. They also prepared for presentations of their experience with the Stearns Electric Board of Directors, employees and Minnesota cooperatives. There was also an anticipated opportunity for presentations to be made for local civic groups and other interested audiences.

DATE	PRESENTATION
May 2018	Stearns Electric Executive Team
May 2018	Stearns Electric Employee Meeting
May 2018	Stearns Electric Board Meeting
June 2018	Great River Energy - Demand Side Management Meeting
June 2018	Minnesota Rural Electric Association - REMA Member Services Meeting
August 2018	Minnesota Rural Electric Association - Energy Issues Summit

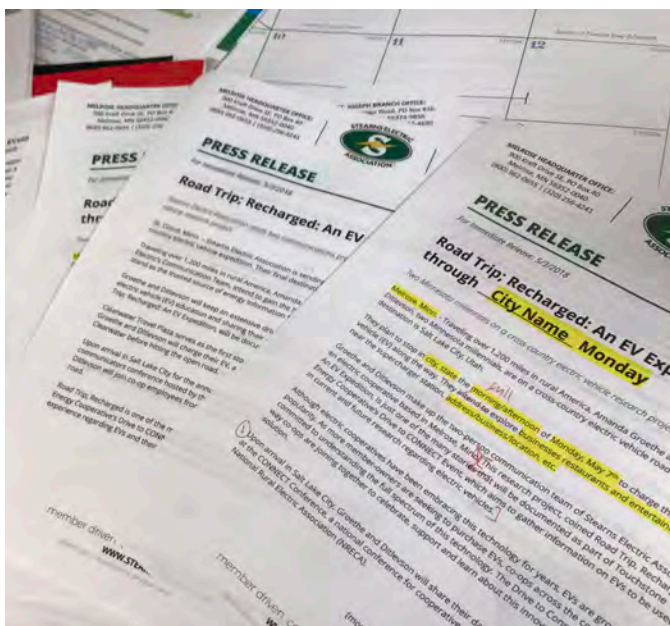
What was not expected was the overwhelming number of requests for presentations following the team's return. Amanda and Whitney were inundated with requests to share their stories, experiences and lessons learned. A summary of the presentations can be viewed on page 31.

KICK OFF

CREATING AN INITIAL BUZZ

In order to be effective, the Road Trip; Recharged team knew they needed to generate an audience quickly. At the initial start Amanda and Whitney found much success by using their personal social media accounts to ask their connections to follow their story, emailing other Minnesota cooperative communication staff to share their links and boosting an initial kick off post for \$20 on the Road Trip; Recharged Facebook page.

The team also created an extensive media list not only for their service territory but also for the road trip route. Prior to departure, they issued 90 press releases with the hopes to gain some public traction.



PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCEMENT:
With 36 local media sources and 42 on the road, in addition to industry connections, a total of 90 press releases were issued prior to departure.

[Click here to view press releases and media list.](#)



SOCIAL MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT:
Announcement posts were made not only to the Road Trip; Recharged social channels, but also on Stearns Electric's, Amanda and Whitney's, and neighboring cooperatives' platforms.

NEWS COVERAGE



Whitney Ditlevson and Amanda Groethe smile next to the Tesla electric car they will use for their journey to Salt Lake City, Utah. DAVE SCHWARTZ

Road trip

Continued from Page 1A

"We will be connecting with a number of electric co-ops as we drive through."

In planning their trip, Ditlevson and Groethe found resources through the Department of Energy, private companies and internet searches, they said.

One of their planned stops is in Lusk, Wyoming. There, Ditlevson and Groethe will meet with members of the chamber of commerce, a radio station and hotel managers of the charging station they will stop at.

The duo has some 'range anxiety,' however.

The Tesla can make about 250 miles on one charge, said Groethe, but the longest stretch on the trip falls in Wyoming at approximately 220 miles.

They are both nervous and excited about that, according to Groethe. The car will factor in speed and activities such as using the air conditioner and playing music to determine when the drivers need to stop to charge.

"Trust the car," said Ditlevson. "That's the most important part. It factors everything in."

All of their approximately five planned charging stops are at Tesla superchargers, according to Groethe. They found those stations by looking at sites such as Tesla's interactive map and

traditional road-trip route map.

While areas such as the Dakotas and Wyoming have charging fewer stations, she said, their route is close to the traditional route and follows all the major highways.

A map of the U.S. shows the proliferation of electric vehicles in a U-shaped pattern, said Groethe, with concentrations opening mostly on the coasts.

The goal of this trip is to educate the association's consumers about electric vehicles.

Electric cars are growing in popularity, said Groethe, and will become common in rural places, too. "It's a matter of if, it's a matter of when," Groethe said.

Ditlevson and Groethe will leave the Tesla on Saturday, but they will have someone to teach them how to navigate the car and its features.

"We're on our own," said Ditlevson. "The person who scheduled the car told them the car has a 'safety display' and is 'silly,' however."

The pair will take the Tesla starting early Sunday morning at the water Travel Plaza.

They will spend a day, including charging the car, and plan to leave on Monday night.

Ditlevson and Groethe even have a themed playlist set for the entire trip assembled by their husbands.

While Ditlevson and Groethe do not know what will be on the playlist,



NEWS INTERVIEWS:

Amanda and Whitney participated in interviews with both the St. Cloud Times and WJON, the two biggest news resources in the St. Cloud area. They were featured on the front page of the St. Cloud Times on Monday, May 7.

Additionally, the Road Trip; Recharged story was featured in numerous online news sources, industry news platforms and interviewed by KARE 11 (a Minneapolis based TV news station) as a potential story.

[Click here to read the St. Cloud Times story.](#)

[Click here to read the WJON story.](#)



RADIO INTERVIEWS:

Amanda and Whitney stopped for live in-studio radio interviews along the route and participated in phone radio interviews as well.

WWW.ROADTRIPRECHARGED.COM

In twelve days, Road Trip; Recharged published a total of thirty-six blog posts. Nineteen road trip recharge (charging stop) summaries and seventeen educational pieces.

How to Plot a Route for an EV Road Trip

Posted on May 5, 2018



Yes, We Drove a Tesla, but What About Charging Other Cars?

Posted on May 12, 2018



Beneficial Electrification: Efficient, Smart and Clean!

Posted on May 10, 2018



Road Trip Recharge #12: Rock Springs, WY

Posted on May 11, 2018



Impending Infrastructure: Company Investment

Posted on May 7, 2018



The Future of Public Electric Vehicle Charging Locations

Road Trip Recharge #14: Lusk, WY

Posted on May 11, 2018



What Does an Electric Vehicle Really Cost?

Posted on May 8, 2018



ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #10: SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Posted on May 8, 2018



Stories from the Road: Driving Cross Country in Your EV

Posted on May 11, 2018





BLOG POST CONTENT

Hyperlinks to each of the thirty-six Road Trip; Recharged blog posts are provided below.

01. [A CROSS COUNTRY EV EXPEDITION](#)
02. [MEET THE DRIVERS: AMANDA](#)
03. [MEET THE DRIVERS: WHITNEY](#)
04. [WHAT IS ROAD TRIP RECHARGED?](#)
05. [EV ROAD TRIP 101: EV TIPS FROM STEARNS ELECTRIC MEMBER-OWNERS](#)
06. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #1: CLEARWATER, MN](#)
07. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #2: WORTHINGTON, MN](#)
08. [HOW TO PLOT A ROUTE FOR AN EV ROAD TRIP](#)
09. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #3: MITCHELL, SD](#)
10. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #4: MURDO, SD](#)
11. [5 RESOURCES FOR FINDING CHARGERS ON THE ROAD](#)
12. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #5: RAPID CITY, SD](#)
13. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #6: LUSK, WY](#)
14. [SUPERCHARGER STORY: LUSK, WYOMING](#)
15. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #7: LARAMIE, WY \(AKA ROAD TRIP RE-ROUTE\)](#)
16. [EV CHARGING 101](#)
17. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #8: RAWLINS, WY](#)
18. [IMPENDING INFRASTRUCTURE: COMPANY INVESTMENT](#)
19. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #9: ROCK SPRINGS, WY](#)
20. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #10: SALT LAKE CITY, UT](#)
21. [BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION: EFFICIENT, SMART AND CLEAN!](#)
22. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #11: EVANSTON, WY](#)
23. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #12: ROCK SPRINGS, WY](#)
24. [ELECTRIC VEHICLE BATTERY BASICS](#)
25. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #13: RAWLINS, WY](#)
26. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #14: LUSK, WY](#)
27. [STORIES FROM THE ROAD: DRIVING CROSS COUNTRY IN YOUR EV](#)
28. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #15: RAPID CITY, SD](#)
29. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #16: MURDO, SD](#)
30. [WHAT DOES AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE REALLY COST?](#)
31. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #17: MITCHELL, SD](#)
32. [EV BASICS](#)
33. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE #18: WORTHINGTON, MN](#)
34. [YES, WE DROVE A TESLA, BUT WHAT ABOUT CHARGING OTHER CARS?](#)
35. [ROAD TRIP RECHARGE: HOME](#)
36. [ROAD TRIP; RECHARGED – AN EV EXPEDITION](#)

FACEBOOK

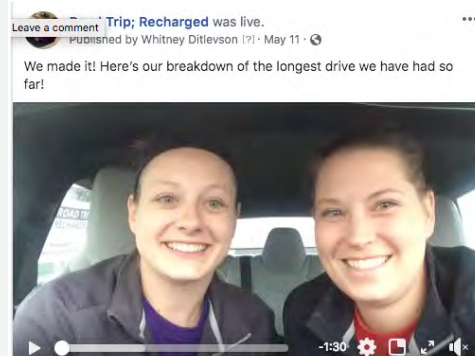
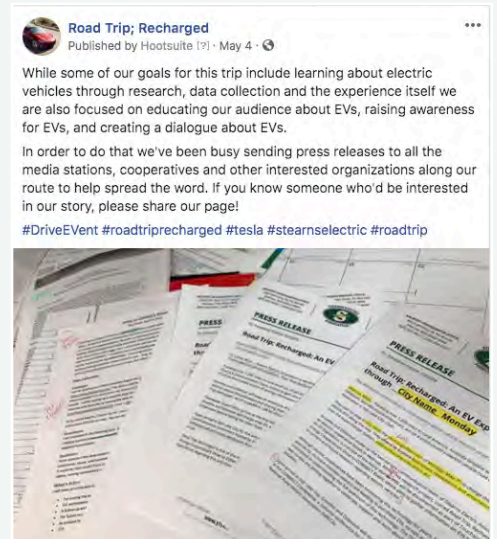
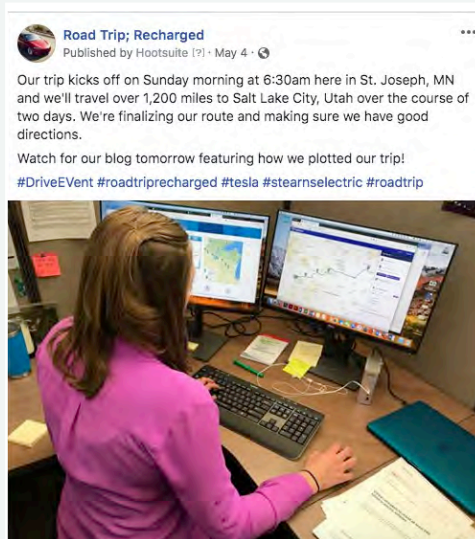


WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ROADTRIPRECHARGED

In 12 days, Road Trip; Recharged posted over 150 times to Facebook. Facebook was the trip's primary delivery method for messages created on the road.

FACEBOOK CONTENT

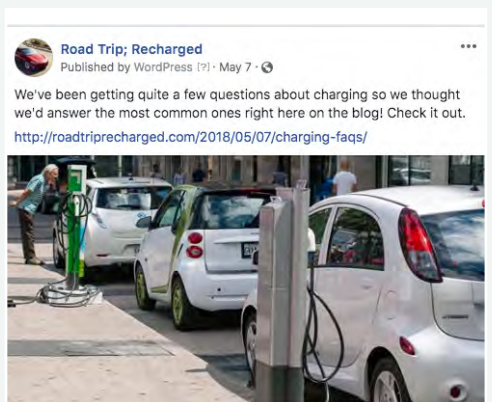
Content shared on Facebook included glimpses of preparation, blog sharing, Facebook live videos, photos from the road, song playlists, car features, strange encounters and more.





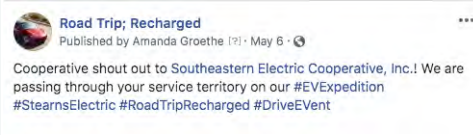
BLOG POST SHARING

While our blog served as the foundation to house our content, Facebook was our primary delivery vehicle. All thirty-six of the Road Trip; Recharged posts we shared on Facebook to drive traffic back to our website.



COOPERATIVE SHOUTOUTS

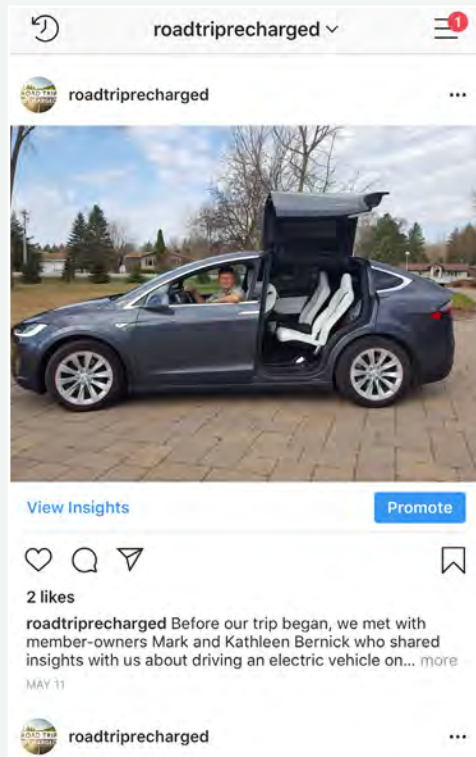
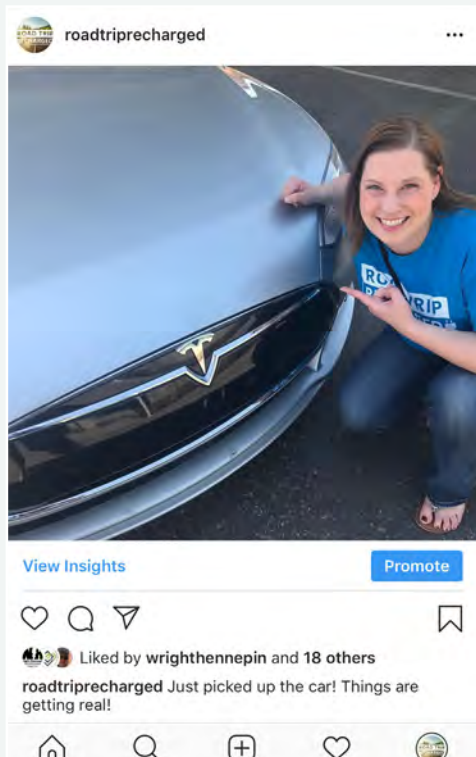
Prior to the trip, we mapped out all the Cooperative territories our route would take us through and noted their Facebook handles to post shout outs as we drove through their service areas.

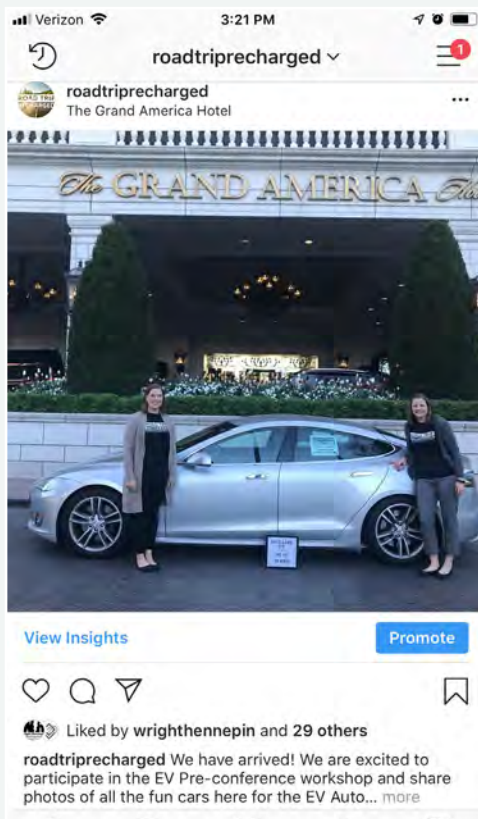
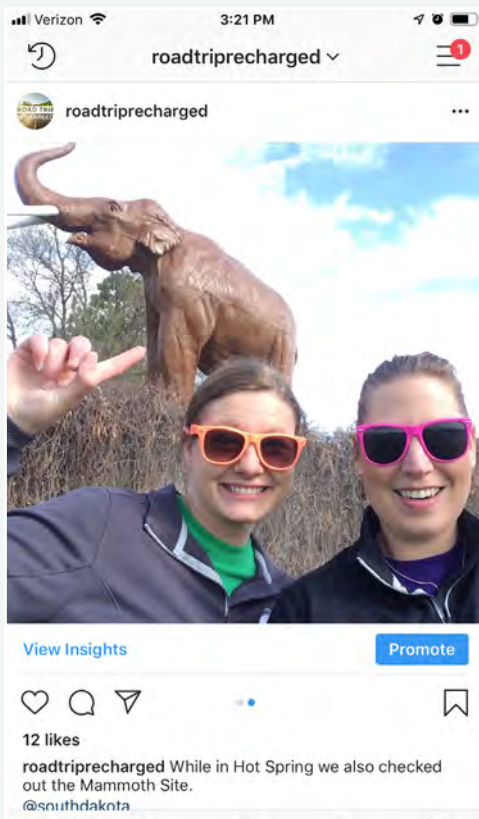


INSTAGRAM

WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/ROADTRIPRECHARGED

Content similar to that on Facebook was shared on Instagram with a more casual tone. In addition, the Road Trip; Recharged Instagram account featured additional photos from the road.





INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

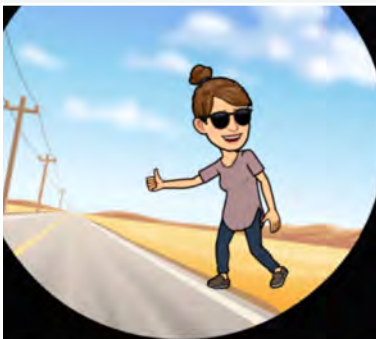
Prior to the trip, we researched the top hashtags for electric vehicles, road trips, energy and travel on Instagram to utilize in our posts. We had a list of over 150 hashtags to pull from on our road trip. Of course we also made our own and expressed our thoughts through hashtags as is intended on Instagram.

SNAPCHAT



WWW.SNAPCHAT.COM/RT_RECHARGED

On Snapchat, followers got to see some of the little details from the trip that weren't shared on the other social media platforms - the inside scoop. Snapchat also allowed Amanda and Whitney to receive direct video and photo responses from followers along the way.



Thanks for the follows! Hopefully this is not us next week... #RoadTripRecharged #DriveEvent #tesla #stearnsselectric #roadtrip



It's the end of the official work week and we are ready to rock and #RoadTrip! Stay tuned- we pick up the #tesla tomorrow #DriveEvent #RoadTripRecharged #stearnsselectric



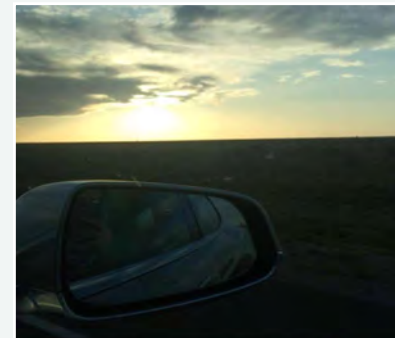
And we're off! #RoadTripRecharged



Lunch stop!! Trying to be healthy after those morning donuts #RoadTripRecharged #DriveEvent



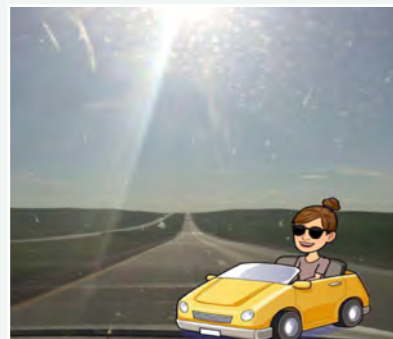
It's so fancy! #Tesla #RoadTripRecharged



Beautiful sunset in Wyoming 🌅



T-Rex Sitting. Where Is Chris Pratt when we need him? #DriveEvent #JussasicWorld #RoadTripRecharged



Driving through South Dakota - lots of looks from vehicles we pass or that pass us!



Cotton Candy blizzard it is then!

Which Blizzard will rule your summer?

EV PRE-CONFERENCE

Road-Trip; Recharged was just one of several teams that participated in Touchstone Energy's Drive to Connect Event Pre-Conference Workshop. The goal of the pre-conference workshop was to bring cooperative industry leaders together, along with electric vehicle vendors such as Tesla, Nissan and ChargePoint, to discuss and share ideas regarding the importance of creating cooperative programs and promoting the use of electric vehicles for cooperative members.

In addition to sharing their stories from the road, the Drive to Connect Event teams showed off their vehicles and answered questions about their experiences. The vendors presented information on upcoming electric vehicle releases and increases in public charging infrastructure. The event concluded with an electric vehicle car show where participants could view the different electric vehicles from the teams and vendors, and even take a test drive.

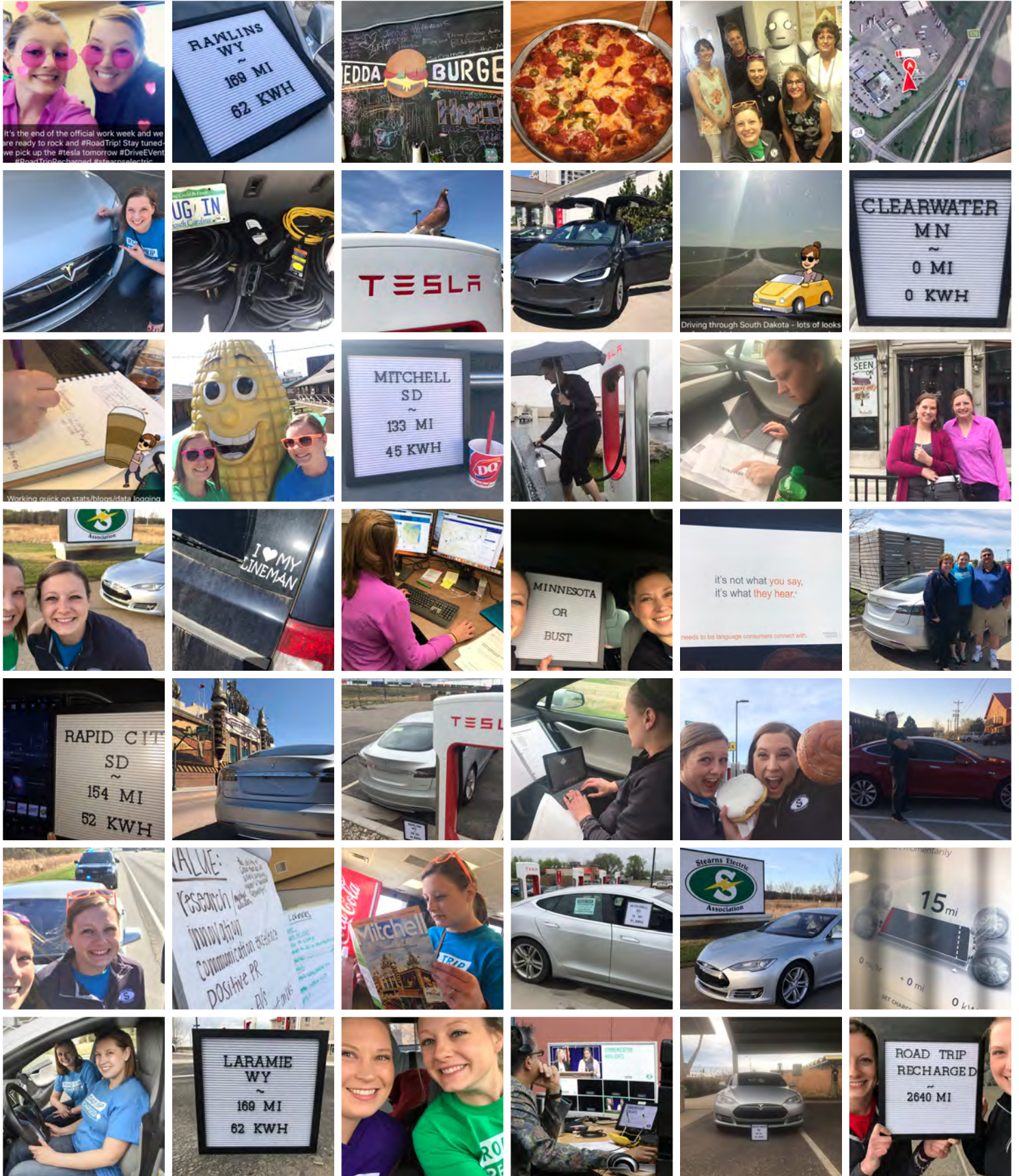


[Click here to view the final data log from all six teams that participated in the Drive to Connect Event.](#)

[Click here to view videos of some of the other Drive to Connect Event teams.](#)



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



[Click here to view all the photos.](#)

ADVOCACY

THE MOST POWERFUL ADVOCACY: CREATING CONNECTIONS

Ultimately Road Trip; Recharged was entirely about advocating for electric vehicles to the average consumer. Most importantly though, Amanda and Whitney made connections along the way. They met other EV Drivers including Dan – a Tesla enthusiast that taught them more about the Tesla they were driving at a charging stop in Murdo, South Dakota than they could have ever learned researching online before they left. Dan also stayed in touch with the team throughout the trip, even helping Amanda and Whitney answer a number of difficult questions from their audience. Amanda and Whitney also met an electric vehicle owner in Rapid City, South Dakota who drives her Tesla as an Uber – not because she needs the extra cash but because she enjoys using the opportunity to educate her riders about electric vehicle technology. These connections highlighted the fact that early adopter electric vehicle owners are excited to come alongside the utility to share the technology and its benefits.

Connections didn't end with other electric vehicle drivers. The duo met Brandon, a lineman in South Dakota, and all the gals in the office at the local cooperative in Lusk, Wyoming. Connecting with the cooperative family showcased the strong network cooperatives have when they work together.

Additionally, at each and every stop Amanda and Whitney prioritized meeting business owners, employees and community members with access to a charging station. The team interviewed people about the decision to install a charging station, the impact the charger has had in their community, and their personal opinions and concerns about electric vehicles. It was a great opportunity to talk with, educate and learn from the people they met while demonstrating the cooperative difference.

Human connection, community engagement and a creative story led to an incredible dialogue about electric vehicles with the average consumer which continues to this day. Whitney and Amanda can't even go to the grocery store without someone asking about the trip and what it was like to drive an electric vehicle.

COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATIONS

Upon returning from the trip, Amanda and Whitney continue their electric vehicle education efforts through written content and presentations. The team published a summary feature story for their members, have presented to numerous industry and community groups and continue to be a resource of information for employees and energy consumers.

In addition to electric vehicle advocacy, Amanda and Whitney have found themselves representing the voice of cooperative communicators to leadership teams about the power of using social media to reinvent the community engagement cooperatives are founded on in the new digital era.



POWER CONNECTION

A complete summary of Road Trip; Recharged was published in the Cooperative's June edition of the Power Connection, a monthly newsletter sent to over 27,000 Stearns Electric member-owners and industry connections. Additionally, this feature story was posted on the Stearns Electric blog and social media accounts, as well as the Road Trip; Recharged blog and social media accounts. This feature story kicked off an educational series on electric vehicles in the Power Connection based on the content created during the road trip that will continue to educate member-owners well into the future.



POWER CONNECTION

member driven. community focused. energy smart.
JUNE 2018



ROAD TRIP RECHARGED

AN EV EXPEDITION: 2,600 miles across rural America in an electric vehicle creates research and awareness.

In May, the Stearns Electric Communications Team endeavored on a cross-country electric vehicle expedition to gain the hands-on experience our Cooperative needs to stand as the trusted source of energy information for our member-owners.

Together, Amanda Groethe, director of communications and marketing, and Whitney Ditlevson, communications and marketing specialist, traveled over 2,600 miles in a Tesla S across rural America. They kept an extensive driving log, collected data for research, provided electric vehicle education and shared their experiences along the way.

"Ultimately our goal was to learn

as much about electric vehicles as we could and share that with our member-owners," shared Groethe. "Awareness is key for the future adoption of electric vehicles. Buying a car of any kind is a significant purchase and it's easy to stick with what you know and are comfortable with. Exposure and understanding of electric vehicles will help change that."

Road Trip; Recharged is one of the many stories documented as part of CONNECT Event. Although electric cooperatives have been embracing this technology for years, electric vehicles (EVs) are growing in popularity. As more member-owners seek to purchase EVs, Stearns Electric



is committed to understanding the full spectrum of this technology. The Drive to CONNECT Event is one way co-ops across the country have joined together to celebrate, support and learn about this innovative energy solution.

Continue reading on page 4.

NEWS & INFORMATION FROM
STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
POWER CONNECTION | VOLUME 18 | ISSUE 06

p3 PANCAKE FEED

p4 EV ROAD TRIP

p6 AGRICULTURE ENERGY AUDIT

VEHICLES

TRIP; RECHARGED

meant to be both fun. As EV 'newbies,' real-life adventure," "We had ten days to electric vehicles, create content and become the Cooperative."

searched taught us learned by actually tric car and creating ps along the way."

trip was their blog, www. ted.com. Each ved the team to share ata about energy use t also about what ig and encountering addition to data load Trip Recharged d as hub for in-depth itent. There you can ummaries about ctric vehicles, the ins rging, the outlook re and batteries, c vehicles are good utilities and the ke.

afraid to discuss of electric vehicles as awhile to find in the range of first two days, we tery tick down bar he time we turned home we had a feel how weather, terrain ted our battery life," n. They also shared and convenience struggles they the road and what f they ran out of

blog, the Stearns nications team also air trip on social



media with photos, live videos, playlists and sight-seeing. Using these methods, Amanda and Whitney reached an audience of nearly 100,000 people in 12 days.

"We had a lot fun, learned a lot and came back from the trip to educate our fellow employees, neighboring Cooperatives and ultimately our member-owners," Groethe concluded.

You can revisit their electric vehicle expedition here:

BLOG:
www.roadtriprecharged.com
FACEBOOK:
roadtriprecharged
INSTAGRAM:
roadtriprecharged
SNAP CHAT:
rt_recharged

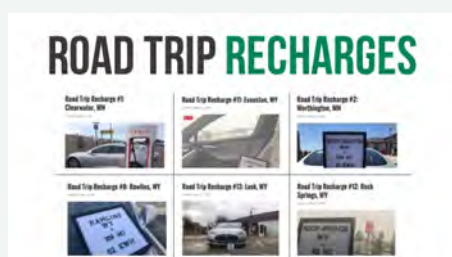
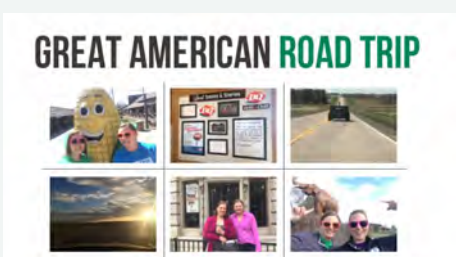
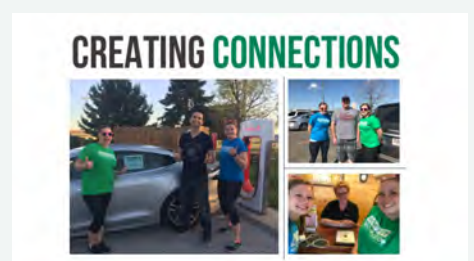
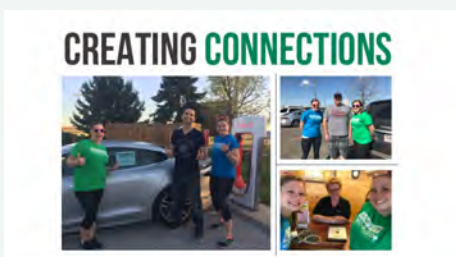
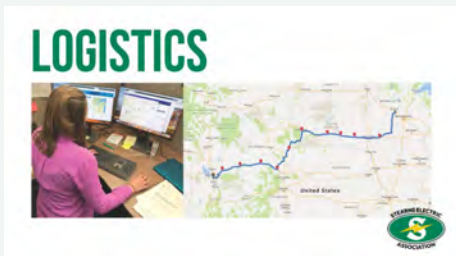
Power Connection | June 2018

[Click here to view this issue of the Power Connection.](#)

PRESENTATIONS

Over the last seven months, the Stearns Electric communications team has presented on Road Trip; Recharged to over 3,000 individuals, with additional presentations scheduled for 2019. Audiences for these presentations have included Cooperative leadership, professionals in the finance, communications and energy services fields, and community and civic engagement groups. The Road Trip; Recharged team has also been asked to participate in community-wide discussions and to serve on strategic communication work groups.

Amanda and Whitney have presented their story from the road, electric vehicle information and even communication strategies.



[Click here to view a variety of Road Trip; Recharged presentations.](#)

EVALUATION

MEASUREMENT:

The best measurement of success for the Road Trip; Recharged project's goal of education and awareness is the number of unique views of and acts of engagement on content. With over two million impressions and over 60,000 likes, comments and shares, the team feels that the project far exceeded its goals. But more meaningful are the relationships that were made and the discussions shared along the way. Returning from the trip and being overwhelmed by the number of speaking opportunities supports the project's level of success. In addition, the team was awarded most followers and best story from the road out of the seven teams participating in the Touchstone Energy Drive to Connect Event.

FACEBOOK

STATISTIC

NUMBERS

(Through December 4, 2018)

PAGE LIKES:

The number of people subscribed to the Road Trip; Recharged page.

337

ENGAGEMENT:

*The number of people who have interacted with Road Trip; Recharged content.
(likes, shares, comments)*

66,213

REACH:

The number of people who have viewed Road Trip; Recharged content.

468,129

IMPRESSIONS:

The number of times Road Trip; Recharged content was displayed.

2,159,240

VIDEO VIEWS:

The number of times Road Trip; Recharged videos were viewed.

70,642

WEBSITE/BLOG

STATISTIC

NUMBERS

(Through July 31, 2018)

SUBSCRIBERS:

The number of people subscribed to receive email updates when Road Trip; Recharged blog posts were published.

368

VISITORS:

The number of people who visited the Road Trip; Recharged website.

1,737

PAGE VIEWS:

The number of page views on the Road Trip; Recharged website.

6,364

TOP REFERRAL: Facebook

INSTAGRAM

STATISTIC

NUMBERS
(Through July 31, 2018)

FOLLOWERS:

The number of people subscribed to the Road Trip; Recharged account.

149

ENGAGEMENT:

*The number of people who have interacted with Road Trip; Recharged content.
(likes, shares, comments)*

701

REACH:

The number of people who have viewed Road Trip; Recharged content.

2,018

SNAPCHAT

STATISTIC

NUMBERS
(Through July 31, 2018)

FOLLOWERS:

The number of people subscribed to receive snaps when Road Trip; Recharged posted on the platform.

72

INTERACTIONS:

The number of people who replayed or replied to snaps.

122

FORMAL PRESENTATIONS

DATE

EVENT

AUDIENCE

ATTENDANCE

5/8/18

Touchstone Energy -
Drive to CONNECT Event
(pre-conference workshop)

Cooperative Network

150+

5/16/18

East Kentucky Power Cooperative
(video)

Cooperative Network

50+

5/22/18

Stearns Electric Association -
Executive Team Meeting

Cooperative Management

10

5/22/18

Stearns Electric Association -
Employee Meeting

Employees

60

5/24/18

Stearns Electric Association -
Board Meeting

Board Members

20

5/31/18

Great River Energy -
The State of Electric Vehicles

Cooperative Network

50+

6/13/18

Minnesota Rural Electric Association -
Demand Side Management Meeting

Energy Management

50+

6/15/18	Minnesota Rural Electric Association - REMA Members Services Meeting	Member Services	80+
8/8/18	Minnesota Rural Electric Association - Energy Issues Summit	CEO and Board Members	400+
8/23/18	Minnesota Rural Electric Association - REMA Finance Managers Meeting	Finance	90+
8/31/18	Touchstone Energy - Cooperative Insights Webinar	Cooperative Network	180+
9/18/18	National Rural Electric Association - Regions 5&6 Meeting	CEO and Board Members	1,000+

2019: Road Trip; Recharged already has three additional presentations scheduled in 2019 at the time of this submission, however the team has been contacted by numerous people and organizations wanting to hear their story and anticipates this number to increase.

CONCLUSION

When two, bright-eyed millennials decided to take a road trip across the country in an electric vehicle with their iPads and cell phones to share their story -- they never knew that their endeavor would embody the cooperative spirit and begin a nationwide discussion on electric vehicles. The Stearns Electric Association Communications team had a big vision, strong messages and an ambitious plan but the success of Road Trip; Recharged far exceeded their expectations.

Documenting every aspect of their journey, Amanda and Whitney shared videos of the car's features, provided real-time stories from the road, explained how the car operated, shared the challenges they faced and how fun the Tesla was to drive. They were also able to show off the entertaining side of the all-American road trip by sharing daily music play-lists, setting fashion trends in colorful sunglasses and documenting their tourist stops along the way. All this "fun" created an engaged audience to share electric vehicle educational information with.

It was easy to see the impact they had as they increased their followers along the way, but once Amanda and Whitney arrived in Salt Lake City, it was evident to see how far their reach really extended, not only in the cooperative industry, but also among the public. Since their return, the Road Trip; Recharged team has presented to several different industry audiences and participated in several focus groups. The duo continues to receive questions about their trip and electric vehicles from cooperative member-owners, friends and family members, and even random individuals they run into at the grocery store.

Amanda and Whitney are extremely proud of their success. In a total of 17 days, the team created the concept, completed their research, developed a marketing plan, finalized a strategy, wrote extensive content, traveled 2,600 miles, attended a professional conference, met some amazing people and created electric vehicle awareness - evident by more than two million impressions and over 60,000 likes, shares and comments on the trip's social media platforms.

Ultimately, Road Trip; Recharged was most successful because the team connected with their audience in an exciting and creative way which resulted in dialogue about and interest in electric vehicles with the average consumer.

Of course the road trip project taught Amanda and Whitney so much about electric vehicles, that they will be able to share with member-owners for many years to come. However the project is also living proof that there's a time and a place for corporate communication, and there's a time and a place to be relatable. Road Trip; Recharged demonstrates that human connection and community engagement can have a real impact.

**ROAD TRIP
RECHARGED** 

