



By Jerry Sorenson, General Manager

# STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM

## WE CONTINUALLY UPGRADE OUR SYSTEM TO IMPROVE RELIABILITY

Our line crews have been hard at work on multiple improvements to our distribution lines this year. The 2022 plan included improvements and upgrades to the co-op's electric distribution system, primarily focusing on replacing aging and deteriorating equipment and poles throughout the service area.

Riverland Energy prides itself on the safety and reliability of its electrical system. The poles are inspected and maintained on a regular rotation and replaced when necessary, sometimes unexpectedly. Maintaining our electric distribution system is the most important (and costly) component of providing safe, reliable electric service. Each year, the cooperative puts together a budget to determine the most cost-effective construction projects that will result in the greatest improved reliability for all members.

Rights-of-way for distribution lines that carry power to homes and businesses are typically a minimum of 10 feet on each side of the lines, while rights-of-way to either side of our transmission lines range from 30 to 50 feet. We need this clearance to safely maneuver our large utility vehicles as we and our contractors work to install, repair, and maintain electrical equipment.

If you receive service from us, you have granted easement rights to the cooperative. Do not build or place structures, locked gates, landscaping, or other obstructions in the right-of-

way. These can create safety hazards for our crews and slow or prevent maintenance, including power restoration, for you and those around you.

We want to stay ahead of growth on our system, while we also seek to ratchet up the quality of service we're providing to our existing members. I believe you're going to appreciate these improvements.



Another project for 2022 was building a tie line between Frenchville and New Amsterdam substations. This is part of a three-mile long re-build project along Hwy. 54/Silver Creek Road and ending at the intersection of Gillmeister Rd./Crystal Valley in the Galesville area. The right-of-way clearing was done by our contractor, Zielie's Tree Service.

## RIVERLAND ENERGY COOPERATIVE WINS STATEWIDE MAGAZINE AWARD



Beth Alesch, Riverland Energy (left), with Dana Kelroy, editor of *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*.

Riverland Energy Cooperative recently won an award of excellence for presentation of local news in the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*. Beth Alesch, manager of communications for Riverland Energy, is the editor of the co-op's local pages within the magazine. Awards were presented at the recent Electric Communicator's Conference in Wisconsin Dells.

Riverland Energy's magazine pages were adjudged to have been the best overall in the category of Co-op News for the previous year.

## CALL NOW FOR NEW ELECTRICAL SERVICE OR UPGRADE

If you need electrical service for a new home or a service upgrade for increased loads, such as crop-drying equipment, contact our operations department now. Unpredictable weather can cause delays in construction, so adequate lead time will help make sure that we're ready when you are.

Contact our operations department at 608-323-3381/800-411-9115.

## “Let There Be Light: And There Was Light”

The Trempealeau Electric Cooperative received its first energy Monday afternoon at 4:30 when the main switch of the substation was closed and energy turned on the first section of the distribution lines. Shortly afterward, seven farms were connected to the line and are receiving service. The first farm was that of E. R. Finner, President of the Cooperative.

Several crews are working to connect other customers as fast as the lines are energized and free from trouble. Tests of voltage at the customers' premises showed it to be very satisfactory.

The remaining 600 farms which have been wired will all receive service within the next few days.

Several snap-shots were taken by amateur photographers at the substation when the current was turned on.

Among those present were, E. B. Ways, Manager, Wisconsin Power Cooperative at Chippewa Falls which supplies the energy; M. J. Lawrence, Project Superintendent, Trempealeau Electric Cooperative; L. E. Parkyn, Resident Engineer; K. T. McHugo, Construction Superintendent of Snyder & Johnson, Inc., the contractors who con-

# OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Cooperatives practice seven business principles – here's how we observe them

## 1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Members' co-op history goes way back. In 1937 when the farmers had no electricity, they took matters into their own hands and campaigned their neighbors to join the new electric cooperative. Membership in a cooperative is open to all persons who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.

## 4. Autonomy and Independence

This one is the hardest principle to explain. The long explanation is “Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.” That’s



a lot of words to say that when making business deals or deciding members' electric rates, co-ops never compromise their autonomy or democratic member control. This is what makes a cooperative's business model different than an investor-owned utility or municipal. Cooperatives exist to serve the interests and needs of their owners.

## 2. Democratic Member Control

As a cooperative, Riverland is owned and operated by our member-owners (not shareholders) and focuses on your needs and local priorities. Because of our business philosophy, you are not considered a “customer,” you are a “member.” Riverland Energy was created not to make a profit, but simply to provide reliable electric service at affordable rates. Our goal is to exceed your expectations. You have a say in cooperative matters by voting on Bylaws and electing fellow REC members to serve on our board of directors.



## 3. Member's Economic Participation

As member-owners, you share in the cooperative's dividends called capital credits during profitable years. REC's board of directors decides when capital credits are returned. Distributions are based on a first-in, first-out basis, meaning capital credits from approximately 20 years ago are returned to those members first. In 2021, a distribution of a \$1.04 million was made, which represented electricity purchased in 1996. REC does its best to deliver capital credits to former or current members who have moved from their last known address or did not cash a check that was sent to them. However, when these members are not found, under state guidelines, unclaimed capital credits are donated to Federated Youth Foundation used for scholarships and other youth donations approved by the board of directors.



## 5. Education, Training and Information

In addition to making sure staff and directors are well-trained to do their jobs above expectation, cooperatives provide education and information to their members. Call Riverland's office to talk with one of our reps who can help you understand your energy usage and answer any co-op membership and program questions. We make sure to answer the phone during office hours so that you are not sent to another call center or a robot. You can also visit [www.riverlandenergy.com](http://www.riverlandenergy.com) for information 24/7. Education is also available in the form of free advice from knowledgeable energy specialists who help residential members learn how to save money on heating and cooling costs, and key account executives who can help business members with several energy- and money-saving opportunities.



## 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Linemen traveling to other electric cooperatives to provide mutual aid during times of widespread outages due to natural disasters is usually what comes to mind when talking about Cooperation Among Cooperatives. But sometimes the cooperation comes from behind the scenes. REC is a member of other cooperatives including wholesale power provider Dairyland Power Cooperative, billing and software provider National Information Systems Cooperative, financial institution



Cooperative Finance Corporation, branding cooperative Touchstone Energy, and purchasing cooperative RESCO. Staff and board members often serve on state and national committees and organizations to network, learn new ideas, and have Riverland's experience contribute to creating policies and procedures.

## 7. Concern for the Community

This principle is the one you hear about us the most. In addition to providing electricity to its members, cooperatives



brighten their local communities in other ways. REC sponsors town celebrations, county fairs, and other organizations that bring entertainment and enjoyment to the community. REC employees volunteer their time and talents to a variety of community organizations. From youth sports to church groups and from civic organizations to

blood drives, there's probably a REC employee lending a hand. Community Cares is a way for REC members to combine cents by rounding up their electric bills each month to contribute to local charities and organizations.

# OUT OF POWER? JUST TEXT US!

Members who have their phone number listed on their account can text in outages! Outage texting includes confirmation and restoral messages.

To utilize texting service, you will need to complete a short registration process.

## Sign Up

The sign-up process to text reports of power outages to Riverland Energy is easy. Note, however, that your cell phone plan's standard text messaging and data rates apply. To sign up, all you need is a computer and a cell phone to follow these steps:

- Visit [www.riverlandenergy.com](http://www.riverlandenergy.com) can click on Outage Center
- On the Outage Center, click on Sign up for Outage Texting
- Read and accept the website's terms and conditions; and
- On the Account Verification page, enter your account number and your cell phone number.

After doing so, a text will be sent to your cell phone revealing an account verification code. Enter the verification code in the applicable web page field and click the Submit button. To confirm successful completion of registration process, you will receive a text message thanking you for joining the outage texting service. If REC does not have your cell phone number on file, you will receive a message to contact us to provide the number.

You will then be directed to a screen listing the account number(s) associated with your cell phone number. On this screen, you'll find the number to which outages should be texted. Make sure to add this number to your cell phone's contacts list so it will be readily available when a power outage occurs.

In the instance that you may have multiple accounts with REC, you will be provided with instructions on how to set up key word indicators for each account (i.e., home, well, cabin, garage, barn, etc.). This process will increase the likelihood of reporting individual or full outages successfully. After entering/verifying your outage information and clicking the "Submit" button, you'll be all set to text your next power outage to us.

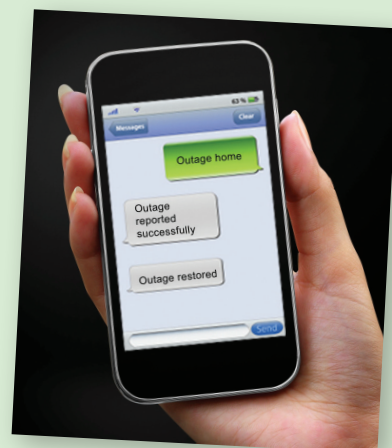
## Texting an Outage

Texting your outage to REC just requires a few simple steps:

- Open a new text message in your cell phone,
- Type "Outage" (without quotes, not case sensitive),
- Enter 55050 the "Send To" field, and
- Send the message.

## For More Information

As always, you can still report your outage to Riverland by calling 800-927-6206 or you can report your outage through SmartHub. If you happen to know the cause of an outage or see evidence of a dangerous electrical situation, you should always call and report this to one of our member service representatives as soon as possible. If you have any further questions about REC's texting service, please contact us at 800-411-9115.



## Commitment to Community

# COMMUNITY CARES FUNDS AWARDED

Funds were granted to four organizations throughout Riverland Energy's service area from the Community Cares Program. A total of \$2,000 was awarded by the Community Cares Foundation board at the August 31 meeting. Organizations receiving funds were:

- **RiverBend Party Animals**, supplies and food for camp for underprivileged youth: \$500
- **St. Boniface School**, rebuild basketball hoop: \$500
- **Fountain City Fire Association**, donation towards a brush truck: \$500
- **Trempealeau County Humane Society**, replace refrigerator: \$500

Other donations were approved at the regular board of directors meeting through our Federated Youth Foundation, an administrative trust overseeing unclaimed capital credits of former members. Those included:

- Arcadia-Independence Trap Team: \$550
- Buffalo-Pepin County Fair: \$500
- Colonel Larson Park Project (Whitehall): \$500
- Friends of Merrick State Park: \$500
- Ian Harris Eagle Scout Project: \$500
- Trempealeau County Fair: \$500

We're happy to support community organizations and projects in our area. If your organization is looking for donations, you can fill out a request on our website, or submit an application for a Community Cares Grant. The next grant applications are due February 20, 2023.



Riverland Energy also had the opportunity to provide local organizations with donations. Riverland donated \$2,500 for a new scoreboard at the Alma School District, and donated \$1,000 to the Nelson Fire Department. Funds are derived from Riverland Energy's Federated Youth Foundation.



l-r: Jerry Sorenson, Riverland general manager; Tim Ruff, fourth-grade teacher and baseball coach; Royce Kosik, Riverland Energy lineman; Heather Kosik, assistant principal for grades 7-12; and Rob Stewart, superintendent.



l-r: Brian Glass, Riverland Energy lineman and Nelson Fire Department volunteer; Wyatt Johnson, Nelson Fire Department volunteer, and Jerry Sorenson, Riverland general manager.

**Jerry Sorenson, General Manager**

608-323-3381 • 1-800-411-9115 • [www.riverlandenergy.com](http://www.riverlandenergy.com)

**Beth Alesch, Editor**



**Riverland Energy Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

### Arcadia Office

N28988 State Road 93,  
P.O. Box 277,  
Arcadia, WI 54612

### Holmen Office

1800 Granary St.  
Holmen, WI 54636

### Outages & Emergencies

Call 1-800-927-6206  
24 hours a day

### Office Hours

Arcadia: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.  
Holmen: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

### Officers of the Board of Directors:

David Paudler, Onalaska, President  
Dan Filla, Arcadia, Vice-President  
Dennis Frame, Osseo,  
Secretary/Treasurer