



Jerry Sorenson,
General Manager

QUESTIONS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

I would like to thank each of you who took the time to attend our virtual annual meeting in September. We did not have a question and answer session during the meeting, but questions were brought forward through the chat feature, with answers to be published in this magazine. I will do my best to answer those questions below. If you have any further questions on these topics, feel free to contact me.

We received a number of questions related to the format of the meeting. In order to hold a meeting with the COVID-19 pandemic, we needed to do it virtually. Yes, it was a short meeting. There were no elections or bylaw changes that would have required a vote so it was a very quick meeting. We did receive a number of comments that were very positive and we do appreciate those. Every household who attended will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill. Even if you have multiple accounts, you will only receive one credit of \$10.



Question: How is Riverland's debt compared to other Wisconsin energy cooperatives? What range of debt is ideal or considered appropriate?


Riverland has over \$60 million in debt as I write this response. While it seems like a large amount of money, it has been used to install \$112.6 million in assets. Those assets bring electricity to your home. Riverland has over 3,432 miles of line throughout the six counties that we serve. This debt is larger than most Wisconsin energy cooperatives but we are larger than most Wisconsin energy cooperatives. The ideal range is probably in the 55–60%. This allows us to get good interest rates on debt.

Question: Are district representatives compensated and how much is it?

Yes, the directors of cooperatives are compensated. They are paid a per diem of \$350. Our directors, on average, put in nine hours per week in the duties for the cooperative. The directors are going to meetings, preparing for the meetings, keeping up-to-date on cooperative issues, and responding to members.



Riverland Energy
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Question: I believe a new building was erected over the past year. Is this building for wintering of vehicles? If so, do you anticipate a longer life cycle of vehicles that are housed in the new building?

Riverland did build a new district office this year in Holmen, replacing the Onalaska office. We had vehicles and equipment sitting outside at the old location, and are now able to provide indoor storage for them at our new site. It does have an impact on the life cycle of those items.

Question: Can Riverland members suggest where Community Cares Foundation money goes to? Does the decision have to be local?

Riverland members cannot suggest where Community Cares Foundation money goes, but can recommend organizations and nonprofits fill out an application. The Community Cares Foundation Board of Directors consists of the Marketing and Communications Committee of the Riverland Energy Board of Directors.

Question: How can more be learned about youth ambassadors?

Please go to our website at riverlandenergy.com and go to the Programs tab and click on Youth Ambassador Program. Information can also be found in issues of our magazine throughout the year. You can also call our office ask to speak with Beth.

Question: Will safety demonstrations be held in 2020 or in the near future? How can schools receive the info?

We will conduct safety demonstrations when the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. We contact the schools on an annual basis during the month of May for Electrical Safety Month, but can do them anytime throughout the year. If you are interested in having a safety demonstration once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, you can fill out a form on our website, or contact our office and ask for Beth to set one up.

Questions Related to Operational Costs

We received a number of questions and concerns about the cost of electricity and costs associated with the operations of the cooperative. Riverland strives to keep our costs as low as possible in order to keep the cost to you as low as possible. All costs savings lower your electrical costs.

Communications: We use our bill inserts and magazine to inform the members of the things going on at your cooperative. We are looking into having these items sent to you electronically in order to lower the cost and you will hear more about that in the future.



FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 23

September 23, 2020 will be noted in the history of Riverland Energy Cooperative as a first in the way it engages its members. Prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic, that marked the first time the cooperative's annual meeting was held virtually. The meeting not only proved to be a successful alternative to hosting an in-person gathering, but the participation level was great, too.

The number of registered households who joined the meeting was 438, making the attendance similar to the number who gather for a traditional annual meeting. Each household who viewed the meeting will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill.

The meeting consisted of the business meeting only, with the report on registration and announcement of quorum, the approval of the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes, and any new or old business. There were no bylaw changes or any director elections.

The feedback we received was very favorable. One member commented, "Thank you for all your efforts organizing it—this was a fun opportunity to participate. I know these things take a long time to organize and can be challenging to pull off—but this has been flawless! Great job! Thank you!"

We had several additional chat messages come in during the meeting, which we addressed in this issue of the *Wisconsin*



Riverland Energy Board President David Paudler conducts the virtual annual meeting.

Energy Cooperative News magazine, or directly to the individual member.

Holding a virtual annual meeting proved to be a way to keep employees and members safe while continuing to serve the co-ops business needs and obligations. In short, it was a success!

RIVERLAND ENERGY DONATES \$1,000 TO THE VILLAGE OF STRUM

Giving back has always been a priority at Riverland Energy Cooperative. Last month, Riverland Energy provided a \$1,000 donation to the Village of Strum for a new electronic scoreboard for their baseball field. Tyler Webb, a high school baseball player for Eleva-Strum, thanked Riverland Energy for the donation.

"The team appreciates your donation to the new scoreboard and your efforts to help us improve our field," Webb said. "I'm looking forward to a great high school career on that field."

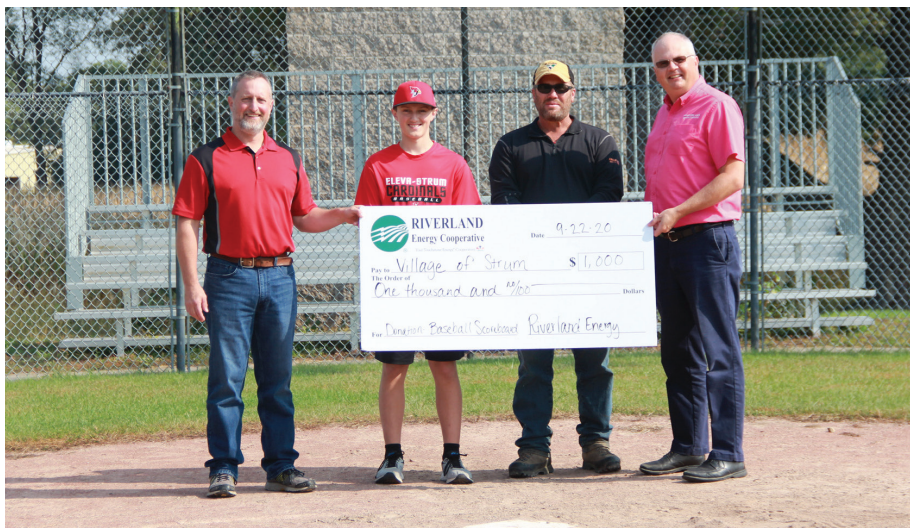
Funds for the donation come from our Federated Youth Foundation, which is funded by unclaimed capital credits.

Members Support Community through Community Cares

Riverland Community Cares distributes funds to local nonprofit organizations in need of financial support. The funds distributed by Community Cares are a result of members electing to round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar. Members can contribute to the Community Cares fund by signing up through SmartHub, or through our website at riverlandenergy.com. Members can also request an opt-in form by sending an email to info@riverlandenergy.com.

In October, \$1,500 was awarded to local organizations throughout our service area. C-FC Food Pantry, Buoyant Force, the Disability Action Network, St. Patrick's Quilting Group, and the Whitehall/Pigeon Rod and Gun Club each received a \$300 grant for their organization or community project.

If you are an area nonprofit agency seeking financial help, or looking for funding on a community project, the deadline for the next applications is February 15, 2021.



Buck Webb, Tyler Webb, REC Lineman Todd Hong, and General Manager Jerry Sorenson.

MONTHLY BASE SERVICE ELECTRIC CHARGE

Members may ask the question, “What is the base service charge for on my electric bill?”

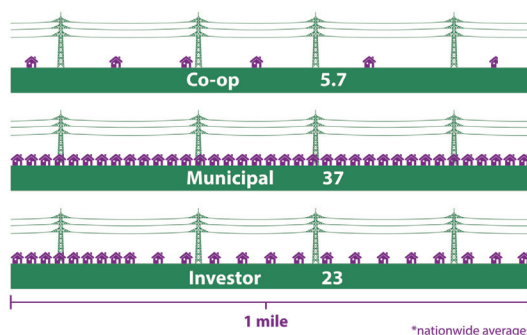
The current base electric charge is \$1.18 per day and covers the cost for construction and maintenance of poles, wires, transformers, meters, right-of-way clearing, and other fixed expenses that enable you to access electric service at your location. This is a daily charge, so it may be a different total each month, depending on how many days are in the month.

Cost regardless of usage

It costs the same to build and maintain the system, regardless of how much energy you use. Fixed costs are spread among all members equally, meaning the basic charge is—and should be—the same for all members, regardless of energy use.

Fewer members in rural areas to share costs:

Fixed costs to build and maintain the system are shared equally among all co-op members. REC has just five members per mile of line to share fixed costs, while urban utilities spread costs among 20 or more consumers per mile. The basic charge is higher in rural areas because costs are shared by fewer members.



EMPLOYEE NEWS

Happy Retirement, Laurie

Laurie Stuhr retired last month from her position as a member service representative. Laurie started at Riverland Energy on December 3, 2018, and worked out of the Onalaska/Holmen office. Her last day was October 9.



Your cooperative family and friends wish you good health and best wishes. Congratulations on your retirement, Laurie!



Welcome, Sarah Ott

Riverland Energy would like to introduce our new member service representative, Sarah Ott. Sarah started with us on October 1 and will be working out of our Holmen office. Welcome, Sarah!

Questions

(Continued from page 15)

Energy Assistance: Riverland participates in energy assistance programs through Western Dairyland and Coulee CAP. If you are having trouble paying your bills, please contact these local community action programs in your area.

New Meters: Riverland has been installing new RF meters over the last three years. These new meters allow Riverland to proactively respond to outages and bring in meter readings in on a timely basis. These meters have been approved by the Federal Communications Commission and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

Questions Related to Dairyland Power and Power Production

Dairyland Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, has announced the closing of the Genoa 3 power plant due to operational costs. They did sign contracts for coal to be delivered there and since it will not be used there, it is being transported to Alma to be utilized at the JPM power plant. It is my understanding that the costs are less transporting versus running the Genoa plant.

There was also a question on small nuclear power plants as an alternative power supply. Right now that is not on the table. Most of these plants are in design and study stages and not ready for commercial use.

NEED HELP WITH HEATING COSTS?

Energy assistance available for qualifying members

Energy assistance provides home heating assistance, crisis prevention, energy-related repairs, energy conservation, emergency assistance, and referrals to other programs and services. Members can see if they qualify for energy assistance through the county where they reside. To apply, contact your county’s provider at the number below:

Trempealeau County:

Trempealeau County Social Services: 715-538-2311
Western Wisconsin E.O.C.: 715-985-2391

Buffalo County:

Buffalo County Human Services: 608-685-4412

La Crosse County:

La Crosse County Human Services: 608-784-4357
Salvation Army: 608-782-6126
CouleeCap: 608-634-4575



SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

Managing and paying your bill has never been easier!

Pandemic-induced social isolation has altered the relationship members have with technology. With the physical world now slowly receding, consumers are suddenly more reliant on apps for communication, shopping, staying healthy, and entertainment.

To make managing and paying your bill easier, Riverland Energy offers SmartHub, an online application to help you manage your account 24/7.

With SmartHub, you can:

- make a payment
- check your electric usage and view your usage history
- notify us of account issues
- receive email or text alerts
- report an outage
- make updates/changes to your account

SmartHub is available in both mobile apps and a web version to give members secure access whether at home, at work, or on the go. Members with smart phones or tablet devices can download the SmartHub app from iTunes or the Android Marketplace. (Use search term "NISC SmartHub" or scan the QR code at right.)



For more information about SmartHub or other programs, visit our website at riverlandenergy.com.

SEASONAL REMINDERS

Snowbirds

If you are planning to leave your home for an extended period of time this winter, remember to make billing arrangements while you are away. Riverland Energy has a couple of options to offer:

- Automatic checking/savings withdrawals or credit/debit card payments.
- Online Payments, readings, account management, and daily/monthly power use available through SmartHub or download the SmartHub App for android and iOS users.

2020 Rebates

Riverland Energy has a variety of rebates available to members who purchase energy efficient products and appliances that meet or exceed specific criteria. Those rebates are only available until funds are depleted, or December 31, whichever comes first. Rebate forms are available online at riverlandenergy.com or by calling 800-411-9115.

Interruptible Heat Test Nov. 18

If you participate in Riverland Energy's interruptible heating (also known as dual fuel or load management), your system will be tested on Wednesday, November 18, beginning at 5 p.m. At that time, the electricity powering your electric heating system will be interrupted and cause your backup heating system to operate. All power will be restored by 11 p.m.

This annual test is conducted to ensure that your backup heating system is working and will adequately keep your home at a comfortable temperature during control periods this winter. The test also ensures the control equipment is functioning properly.

Thanksgiving Closing

Riverland Energy will be closed November 26–27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Call 800-927-6206 to report outages at any time, night or day, weekends or holidays. You can also report outage through SmartHub.

Jerry Sorenson, General Manager

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Beth Alesch, Editor



Riverland Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

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1800 Granary St.
Holmen, WI 54636

Outages & Emergencies

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

Office Hours

Arcadia: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Holmen: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

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