

2021 Potthast Award: Larry Hallett



Larry Hallett, chief operations officer with Richland Electric cooperative has been selected as the recipient of the 2021 Herman C. Potthast Award. Hallett's career spans more than 40 years progressing from linework to management. Nominators laud Hallett's unwavering commitment to safety of the course of his career.

Richland Electric Cooperative General Manager and CEO Shannon Clark writes in part, *"In 1998 Richland Electric Cooperative had a workers compensation experience modifier of 1.76. The cooperative had not made any attempt to become a RESAP (Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program) Accredited*

System due to the 'laundry list' of things that would have had to improve. Beyond that, employee morale was such that very few took an active interest in improving the culture. When I interviewed Larry, who was then a journeyman lineman for the operations manager position he made it abundantly clear that if he were to be selected, changing our safety culture would be the number one priority. In 2003 I selected Larry to serve as the Operations Manager at Richland Electric Cooperative.

Locally, Larry has been instrumental in moving us from a system with some serious safety issues to one that has a safety culture that is ever-present and never complacent. On average our experience modifier ranges near .78. We have experienced but one lost-time accident in recent years. We have been a RESAP Accredited System for about 20 years. Perhaps you can't measure the accident that didn't happen, but you can certainly measure the results of a system where accidents haven't happened."

Clark also lauds Hallett's development of the in-house "Safety Pays" programs which rewards employees who make a personal commitment to safety and his participation in the WECA JT&S Committee and rules sub-committee. Nationally, Hallett was active in participating with national safety summits and provided written input to the RESAP Delegate Committee during the efforts to revise and improve the RESAP program.

In summary, Larry Hallett has gone above and beyond simply keeping the lights on to making sure that our cooperative and many others in the industry recognized that without safe working practices the world would be a much darker place," Clark writes.

Pat Hawes, journeyman lineman and transmission maintenance supervisor with Dairyland Power Cooperative writes, *"Whenever we've had the opportunity to work together Larry makes sure that every aspect is addressed to ensure the safety of everyone. His ability to communicate safety concerns and issues causes everyone on the job to step up their game just a little bit extra to ensure people go home to their families at night."*

WECA congratulates Larry Hallett, recipient of the 2021 Herman C. Potthast Award.

About the Award: The Herman C. Potthast Award is named for a man of great dedication to training and safety who served Wisconsin rural electric cooperative for 29 years. He was a state and national leader, instrument in implement and promoting instruction and training to ensure safety among those working in the electric cooperative field. Potthast passed away in 1972.