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A NEW LEAD AT REC



A new era has begun at Richland Electric Cooperative (REC) as Amy Martin takes the reins of the cooperative. Martin, who joined the cooperative in 1998 as the chief financial officer, assumed her duties as CEO & general manager following the retirement of Shannon Clark. She has local roots, being raised on the family farm and graduating from North Crawford High School. She achieved her Associate Degree in Accounting from Western Technical College

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– Calvin Sebranek, REC board president

while working full time in the banking industry before joining a neighboring electric cooperative where she worked in a variety of roles. “Amy’s 25 years of experience at REC has provided her with the experience necessary to lead REC into the future. She has been an integral part of the management team for many years and understands both the challenges and opportunities that future may hold,” said Calvin Sebranek, REC board president.

Many REC members are familiar with Martin as she rarely misses an opportunity to meet with members whether at our annual meeting, picnic, or rotary lights.

“I look forward to our continued commitment to our community and feel it is very important to do so. I

will also continue looking for new opportunities for our membership with new technology,” said Martin.

“The cooperative is ever-changing. Take, for example, this past year where we had staff housed in different buildings, a construction project going on, major upgrades in technology and pending staff retirements—including mine. Keeping all of this moving in the right direction requires a great team and leadership that always remembers that our members come first. Amy has always been a huge part of the planning and execution and I have no doubt that the board made the right choice in selecting her as the next CEO & general manager. I take comfort in knowing that Amy is in that role,” said Clark.

Martin and her husband, Dan, have two grown children, Hollie (Dan) Portwine and Tyler (Samantha) Martin, and one granddaughter, Charli (6 months).

Change does not always come easy, especially when the leadership at REC has been the same for many years. However, we are fortunate to have a person with a long history of the community and will continue with the culture established at the co-op.

“I look forward to the annual meeting and open house of the new headquarters building on March 25. We hope to see you there,” said Martin.

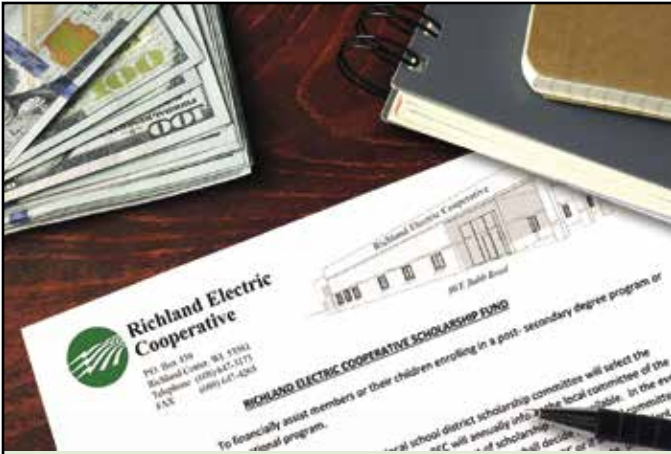
WELCOME TO REC, JADON OLSON

Let me take this opportunity to introduce you our newest employee, Jadon Olson. Olson is currently an apprentice lineman in his fourth step and will take his test next month along with Grant Butcher to become a journeyman lineman.

Rarely do you come across a young man or woman in their freshman year of high school who knows what they would like to do for a career. Olson was one of those rare students as he enrolled at Southwest Technical College (SWTC) for electrical power distribution as a freshman due to the waiting list. After graduating SWTC, he was hired by Wright Tree Service, which has contracts with many cooperatives for tree clearing or foliar applications.

Eight months later, Olson applied for an opportunity to join Dairyland Power Cooperative as part of their tree trimming crew, knowing it would be a great step towards becoming a lineman. The move would prove to be a smart one as he was able to join a Dairyland construction crew, and REC hired him on December 19, 2022.

On a more personal note, Olson has a 3-year-old daughter (Ava) and graduated from North Crawford High School in 2013. Like most people who work mainly in the outdoors, hunting is a passion of his. Jaden spends a lot of hours in the woods. He is excited to take his journeyman test as it has been a long time coming. We know he will do great, and we are happy to have him.



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Richland Electric Cooperative has scholarships available to qualifying students entering a post-secondary or vocational educational program.

Visit our website, rec.ccop/scholarships, for more details and an application form.

Scholarship applications are due at the REC office March 15.

Richland Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting SATURDAY, MARCH 25

REC Headquarters
30 E. Robb Rd., Richland Center

Watch for more details

SAVE THE DATE!



BEAT THE PEAK



If you look around your home, you likely have more devices and equipment that require electricity than ever before. Our connected lives are increasingly dependent on more electricity to function. At the same time, as demand for electricity rises, Richland Electric Cooperative (REC) must deliver an uninterrupted 24/7 power supply—regardless of market conditions or other circumstances.

As you would expect, based on your family’s habits, electricity use fluctuates throughout the day according to consumer demand. We must be able to provide enough electricity to meet the energy needs of all members during times of highest energy use, or “peak hours.” These peak times are typically in the morning as people start their day and in the evening as people return to their homes.

What you may not know is that electric utilities including REC typically pay more for electricity—either from a power plant or from another utility with excess power—during those morning and evening “energy rush hours.” In addition, the demand for electricity is even higher when it’s especially cold outside, when heating systems must run longer to warm our homes.

If the “peak times” concept is a bit puzzling, here’s an easy way to think about it, and it’s similar to a major concert. We know costs go up when there is strong demand for tickets (or electricity), and both are subject to the basic economic laws of supply and demand. When a lot of people want the same thing, it’s more expensive. When they don’t, it’s cheaper—like a bargain matinee or an “early bird” special at a restaurant.

During peak periods when the cost to produce and

purchase power is higher, we encourage you to take simple steps to save energy, such as turning your thermostat down a few notches, turning off unnecessary lights, and waiting to use large appliances during off-peak times.

You can also save energy by plugging electronics and equipment such as computers, printers, and TVs into a

During peak periods when the cost to produce and purchase power is higher, we encourage you to take simple steps to save energy.

power strip, then turning it off at the switch during peak hours. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings to sync with off-peak periods.

When we all work together to reduce energy use during periods of high electricity demand, we can relieve pressure on the grid and save a little money along the way.

Another benefit of this time-of-use approach to electricity use is it allows greater control over your bill. Reducing the peak impacts the power-supply cost to every co-op member. This is particularly noticeable as energy costs have risen across the United States. Collectively, everyone conserving energy and making small changes can truly make a difference.

Remember, taking simple steps to save energy throughout the day and shifting energy-intensive chores to off-peak hours is a smart choice for you and our community.



THE WATER PAIL AND THE OUTHOUSE

By Al Cornell

Even though the house was uninsulated, with fires in the living room and kitchen stoves, it would get quite warm when it was minus 10 outside. One of us, sitting there in a T-shirt, would grab the empty water pail from the kitchen counter and dash to the pump 90 feet from the porch steps.

We had gotten electricity when I was five, so pumping water was just a matter of flipping a switch. If the electricity was off for a matter of hours, the cast iron pump handle could be attached, but mostly it was just a relic.

Though the bone chill would settle in while waiting for the pail to fill, prudence called for a full-to-the-brim bucket to reduce the number of trips to the pump. By holding the pail level during the sprint to the house, hardly a drop splashed out. The dipper in the water pail pretty well ensured that everyone in the household got exposed to whatever illnesses were brought home.

A slop pail under the sink captured dumped water from dishwashing, hand washing, and potato scrubbing. Prudence called again, this time for emptying a not-so-full bucket to ensure that it did not overflow onto the floor.

The outhouse was a necessary part of not having indoor plumbing. It wasn't entirely single purpose. One day, Mom handed a little package to a little boy. Something small was wrapped up nicely in a page out of a catalogue. Mom said, "Throw this down the toilet hole. Don't open it." I returned with a bloody finger. What had I discovered in that little package? Used razor blades.

Sometime later, we dug a new toilet hole. Dad built a new outhouse. One of the amenities of the new version was the piece of linoleum that Dad cut to lay on the seat area. It

looked nice and may have been more sanitary. However, on every winter trip to the outhouse, I longed for the old wood seat. Linoleum gets mighty cold.

My first exposure to an indoor toilet occurred when I started first grade. Both sets of grandparents lived in West Lima and had outhouses. Well, one was built into the woodshed and had nicely molded wood seats.

So, when I started school, I had no experience with indoor plumbing. Those fancy school toilets unnerved me. It became apparent that

I frequently arrived home with a dire need to get to the outhouse. Dad, wondering what was going on, talked to me about the situation. He said he had frequently waited to use the school toilets because the seats were warm. I never admitted why I didn't use the school facility.

However, I then felt obligated to make that transition. It was scary. In the outhouse I understood where things went. But at school it just went out of sight. And the toilet paper was not a page out of the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. It was nice little squares. I supposed I should use just one. I know this will seem whacky to those whose mammas wiped their butts and threw the soiled paper in the stool from the time they were 20 months old, but I didn't know what to do with that little square. If I threw it in there where I didn't know where stuff went, would that cause a big problem? So that first time, I threw it down behind the toilet. The janitor, my great uncle Stub Griffin, got to deal with that.

Next time, I took a chance on throwing it in the stool. It disappeared, and nobody ever asked, "Are you the one who threw toilet paper in the stool?"




Amy Martin, Manager/CEO

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