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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* May 2023 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

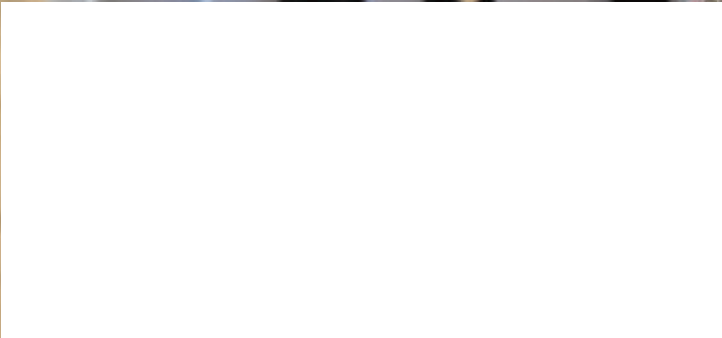
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MAY IS NATIONAL BIKE MONTH

HARNESSING HYDRO

SPRING IS A TIME FOR ADVOCACY

BEEF RECIPES





OPPORTUNITIES AROUND FOR CO-OP YOUTH

By Trevor Clark, Director of Outreach Services

Throughout years I have written many articles for the local pages of the *WECN* magazine, and I think it is fairly apparent what pieces I have been passionate about. Those of you who continue to read the magazine and have read my articles will undoubtedly know I am passionate about working with our youth—everything from coaching, awarding scholarships, Youth Leadership Conference (YLC), Youth Tour, the list goes on.

In this day and age, the opportunities and possibilities are endless for our youth, so much that it can be intimidating for them to find what they are passionate about or what they want to “do” for the rest of their lives. As adults we have an obligation to help guide our youth by offering knowledge, experience, internships, or even just to lend an ear—these young people are our future, after all. Even now, I try to think of ways I can prepare my kids to have the best life possible, and they are only 3 and 1.

Makenna Monson, currently a junior at Richland Center High School, has been selected to participate as a youth delegate this June for the 2023 Youth Tour held in Washington, D.C.

Living in small-town America has its challenges, but it also has its blessings. One of the challenges we are facing is the exodus of our youth. Many want to experience life outside of our area by attending colleges farther away, traveling the world, or moving to the big cities. One of the blessings of a small community is we have each other’s backs and are willing to help at a moment’s notice. Typically, there is someone in our area who knows someone who is looking for help, or knows of an employment opportunity. I suppose this could be a blessing or a curse.

Each year, we inform our membership of the opportunities we provide to our youth, mainly with scholarships and YLC. I have been fortunate enough to have served as a chaperone with our statewide organization for the National Youth Tour event for the last several years. And each year I come back reinvigorated with new ideas on how we can support our youth.

In the past, students elected to the youth board at YLC could participate in Youth Tour at the cooperative’s expense. Unfortunately, due to the size of REC and the resultant lower percentage of our youth participants in YLC, the probability of one of our students being selected to the youth board is lower. Although the process of campaigning for the youth board is a great experience, we feel it is important to provide one of our students with the opportunity to experience Youth Tour.

Youth Tour is a weeklong event where students from across the country travel to Washington, D.C. All these students are sponsored by electric cooperatives from different states. Many states will sponsor more than 50 students to attend the event. Wisconsin averages around 15 students, a number I would like to see increase based on the number of electric cooperatives in Wisconsin. Students have the opportunity on Youth Tour to visit sites such as Smithsonian Museums, Arlington Cemetery, Mt. Vernon, national memorials, and more.

It is very common to run into delegations from other states while on tour, which leads to the ever popular “pin trading.” Students trade pins with students of other states, and many pins are a hot commodity. Since Wisconsin has fewer participating students than most states have, our pins are considered more rare, and I quickly learned our students are much better at bartering than we give them credit for. There is little question of which pin is the most valuable—that title belongs to Alaska, which sponsors one student each year.

Continued



Wisconsin’s 2022 Youth Tour delegation poses at the World War II Monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



Makenna Monson attended WECA's Education and Lobby Days in Madison earlier this spring, where she and three other youth representatives were granted a private 45-minute talk with Miss America Grace Stanke (Makenna is immediately at right of Miss America in the photo at left). Later, Mackenna helped out in WECA's annual ACRE auction.

As cooperatives we frequently discuss the many ways we can engage and support our youth as well as provide them with insight into the cooperative world. Cooperative jobs are not typically flashy and often times are related to linework; however, there are many other opportunities such as communications, accounting, safety, human resources, mechanics, and many other areas that are often competitive.

Our hope is by providing the Youth Tour opportunity to a student, it may open several doors or provide them with more career path possibilities.

Monson, along with three other YLC students in attendance, were awarded the opportunity to speak with Miss America in private for about 45 minutes while all the adults were standing outside awaiting photo opportunities.

the student also serve on the YLC board. Instead, Makenna's responsibilities will include participating in cooperative events like the member appreciation picnic and annual meeting.

Most recently, Monson requested to attend the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association Education & Lobby Days in Madison. This event is not catered towards youth and much of the information provided likely goes over their heads; however, it is an important event for electric cooperatives to learn of upcoming legislation and to speak with local legislators. Miss America Grace Stanke was a special guest speaker at this year's event as she promoted her platform "Clean Energy, Cleaner Future," with an emphasis on nuclear energy.

Monson, along with three other YLC students in attendance, were awarded the opportunity to speak with Miss America in private for about 45 minutes while all the

adults were standing outside awaiting photo opportunities. Monson also assisted WECA with their auction, where items are donated and then auctioned off to support electric cooperatives' political action committee. We received many compliments from directors and staff from all over the state, thanking Makenna for her participation.

These are the type of opportunities we try to provide for our youth, and we must not dismiss opportunities "we" think will not interest them. Ask them. Find out if they are interested and they may surprise you. It all starts with the Youth Leadership Conference. Attending this conference is the first step to earning opportunities such as this.

Four Easy Steps for a Safe, Happy Home



DON'T place flammable items, like potholders, napkins, or dish towels, near the stove while cooking.

DO keep electrical devices away from water to prevent electric shock.



DON'T overload electrical outlets with more devices than the circuit can handle.

DO ensure you're using the correct wattage in all light fixtures.



May is National Electrical Safety Month



CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



July 11–13, 2023
UW-Stout



The annual Youth Leadership Congress is a dynamic three-day event for youth leaders across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the purpose, operation, and scope of cooperative businesses.

Who: Area high school sophomores, juniors and seniors

When: July 11–13, 2023

Where: UW–Stout campus

Price to you: FREE

Take the opportunity to...

- See what makes the cooperative business model different and successful, then apply this knowledge to fun and challenging cooperative activities.
- Identify and learn how to develop your own leadership skills.
- Discuss cooperative careers with industry professionals.
- Be entertained and challenged by acclaimed motivational speakers who understand teens and cover topics that are relevant in your life.
- Run for a spot on the Youth Board, which plans the next year's conference and has the opportunity to attend the National Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., in the spring.



**SIGN UP
TODAY!**

Deadline is June 7, 2023

Contact Richland Electric Cooperative, 608-647-3173, to request sponsorship and registration forms to attend the Youth Leadership Congress.



A STORY OF THREE LARRYS

By Dennis Siebert

On March 15th, the Ides of March, I had just finished taking a shower. Several minutes later I noticed the light with the dimmer switch stayed on dim. My new air fryer would light up, but it produced no heat. As I went to the kitchen sink to draw a glass of water, there was none.

Like any average person I saw my life savings drifting away like melting snow. I began my search calling **Larry** the plumber. Upon inspection he assured me the problem was not in my cabin but elsewhere. Next, I called the well person to see if my well needed replacing. His first name was also **Larry** and he assured me that he would check it out tomorrow.

I spent the rest of the day and part of the next collecting snow so it would melt, and I could flush the toilet and water the cats. To save on snow I sometimes stood on my back steps relieving myself and used the toilet only for the big stuff.

On the 16th a dim light came on in my head and I decided to call Richland Electric Cooperative. After discussing my problem with a secretary, she referred me to another person. Within an hour and a half two men appeared on the scene—Mark, director of energy services, and you guessed it, another **Larry**, chief operations officer. I felt like the calvary had just arrived,

that Tonto and the masked man would make it all right. As you can see by the picture, my cat and I were safely inside while the REC boys got to work on my problem.

As the two evaluated the situation with some weird-looking instruments, they found my problem in some oblong-looking box beneath the electric meter. They both took time telling me the ins and outs about how all this electrical stuff works, but I just shook my head like I was understanding it all.

During this discovery that I would not need a new pump for the well, **Larry** number two showed up, the well man. **Larry** number two informed **Larry** number three and Mark that he had the part needed to fix my problem back in his office.

Being the troopers they are, REC **Larry** and Mark

headed off to Center to get the new part from **Larry** number two. About an hour later the REC boys returned and replaced the burned-out part with a new one. Then the superheroes spent time walking through my cabin-style house making sure that everything was all right.

I was always a fan of the Richland Electric Co-op, but **Larry** and Mark just placed an exclamation mark on my beliefs. They both went out of their way to ease my life. I AM DEEPLY INDEBTED TO ALL OF YOU.



Amy Martin, Manager/CEO

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www.rec.coop

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