Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY Cooperative NEWS

August 2025

Richland Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

GROWING HOPE

COOL SAVINGS

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

PEACH RECIPES

Richland Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Finding Stability in Uncertain Times

Electricity is a crucial part of our daily lives and smart electricity use helps keep rates stable.

Providing electricity to all members exactly when it's needed is part of a larger, complex effort between Richland Electric Cooperative, our wholesale power provider Dairyland Power Cooperative, and the regional grid operator—the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). MISO oversees the reliable generation and delivery of electricity for 45 million people in 15 states and Manitoba, Canada.

Purchasing power from our wholesale power providers accounts for 65% of REC's retail rate to members. However, the price of electricity purchased from MISO changes every five minutes, based on the need for electricity balanced with available generation resources. As need—or demand—rises during the day, the price of electricity increases because more generation resources (power plants, solar arrays, wind turbines, etc.) are needed to power homes, businesses, and other buildings or devices. When temperatures cool and things quiet down for the night, electricity demand drops, as do electricity prices.

Through Richland Electric Cooperative's load management, daily storage, and Summer Shift programs, members can voluntarily shift non-essential electricity use to times of lower demand and prices. Some of these programs may also include a lower electricity rate in exchange for letting a device, such as interruptible heat or an electric vehicle charger, operate during times of lower demand on the regional grid. Using less electricity at high prices helps keep rates stable for all members. The more members who participate, the more impactful these savings become. For example, thanks to the combined participation in a load management program of REC members with members from Dairyland's other 23 electric cooperatives, the amount of electricity Dairyland would have to purchase during times of peak demand has been reduced by the equivalent of a small power plant. This does not mean REC will never need to raise rates, but shifting electricity use to off-peak or lower demand times can reduce how often these increases might have to occur.

Load management and daily energy storage programs are only successful if the technology is updated and reliable infrastructure is in place. Dairyland and Richland Electric Cooperative are in the process of upgrading the devices utilized to initiate the load management and daily storage programs.

Grid reliability is at the forefront of strategic planning for utilities. Not only does there need to be enough electricity to power our lives, but there must be the right infrastructure in place to deliver the electricity from where it is produced to where it is needed.

Soaring Demand

65%

Data Centers

Driven by explosions in artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.

Economic Growth

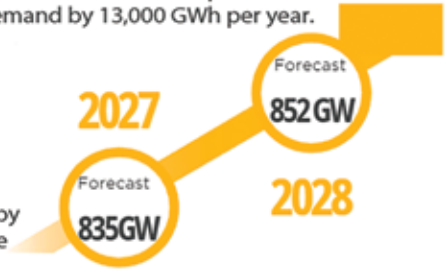
Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14% to 22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.

Manufacturing Growth/Onshoring

New, expanding and "onshored/reshored" manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.

Total Demand

Analysts predicted in 2023 that U.S. peak demand will increase by at least 38 GW over the next five years, nearly double the growth rate predicted in 2022.



Sources: NRECA, EPRI, Grid Strategies, U.S. EIA, International Energy Agency; Design: Jerry Mosemak

After decades of flat or declining electricity demand, the United States is in the midst of a boom in power use. Recent data shows that power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least 38 gigawatts between now and 2028. This trend would ordinarily be great news for the power industry. But government policies aimed at shutting down fossil-fuel-based generation and years-long delays in permitting and siting for new transmission lines are turning this power boon into a capacity crisis.

Summer Spending Without the Sizzle

As August heats up, so can your spending. Summer activities, vacations, and home cooling costs may lead to budget burnout. Instead of letting your finances melt away, use this season to strengthen your financial foundation.

We suggest establishing a dedicated "summer fund" for seasonal activities. By setting aside specific amounts for barbecues, day trips, and energy bills, you might be able to enjoy summer without the financial hangover.

You may want to take advantage of seasonal opportunities: local libraries offer free summer reading programs, and community centers frequently host events at no charge.

Consider a "financial cooldown" by evaluating subscription services you use less during the outdoor months. Could you temporarily pause streaming services while you're enjoying the sunshine? Simple adjustments such as using fans, closing blinds during peak-sun hours, and grilling outside instead of heating your kitchen can help reduce utility bills. Enjoy your summer while keeping your financial future bright!

Have you ever driven by a wind farm on a breezy day and wondered why the turbines aren't spinning? While some may be under repair, if you see an entire group of turbines standing still, it's likely because there isn't enough room on the existing transmission lines to accommodate the additional electricity the wind turbines can provide.

Dairyland recently announced an agreement with GridLiance Heartland, LLC—a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Transmission, LLC—to jointly develop and co-own the MariBell Transmission Project. The 139-mile, 765 kilovolt (kV)/161 kV double-circuit transmission line will extend from Marion, Minn., to Bell Center, Wis., spanning six counties.

It was also affirmed by the Trump Administration that the $595 million Empowering Rural America (New ERA) grant Dairyland received in 2024 will proceed. The award will benefit Dairyland's cooperative members—including Richland Electric Cooperative—by providing downward rate pressure, increasing reliability and resilience, creating job opportunities, supporting economic development, and generating new sources of tax revenue for local communities.

Who Owns What?

Understanding Electric Equipment Responsibilities

Summer not only brings longer days and rising temperatures, it also brings the potential for severe weather. Summer storms can arrive quickly and hit hard, sometimes causing significant damage to essential electric equipment throughout our community.

Richland Electric Cooperative is always prepared to respond swiftly to outages and restore power safely, but it is also important for homeowners to understand which parts of the electric system are their responsibility and which are maintained by us at the co-op. Understanding these key differences can help speed up repairs and ensure everyone stays safe when the weather turns rough.

REC is responsible for maintaining and repairing the equipment and lines that run to your home, including utility poles, distribution power lines, electric meters, and pad-mounted transformers.

Our members are responsible for the equipment located between the electric meter and your home or business, including any underground service lines that lead into the structure and the service panel. Members are also responsible for the weatherhead and service mast located outside the home.

If any equipment that you (the homeowner) are responsible for is damaged, please call a licensed electrician to conduct the repairs. A professional has the experience and know-how to assess and manage these types of repairs.

When severe weather damages electrical equipment, it's important to note that any necessary repairs to the homeowner's equipment must be conducted before REC crews can restore power to your home or business. By understanding the equipment you are responsible for, the repair and restoration process will be smoother and faster.

Our community takes great pride in the beautiful trees and landscaping that contribute to the natural beauty where we live, however, regular trimming is essential to ensure reliable electric service and minimize damage from severe weather. Richland Electric Cooperative regularly trims trees throughout our service territory to improve service reliability. If you spot a tree limb that is obstructing a distribution power line outside your home, please contact us to discuss available options.

By working together to understand the essential equipment that powers daily life, we can all be better prepared to start the repair and restoration process if severe weather impacts our community.

If you have any questions about your electrical equipment, we're here to help. You can reach our office at 608-647-3173.

Heading to College

Electric Safety Tips for a Smooth Dorm Move-In and a Safe Semester

BLEND UP Summer REFRESHMENT

Nothing beats a refreshing smoothie on a hot summer day! Before you blend, keep electrical safety in mind:

- Dry your hands completely before plugging in or operating your blender.
- Plug your blender (and other high-wattage appliances) directly into an outlet instead of power strips to prevent overheating.
- Make sure kitchen outlets, and any outlets near a water source, have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protection to help prevent shock.
- Replace appliances with broken plugs or cords that look frayed, worn or cracked.
- Unplug your blender before removing stuck ingredients or cleaning it.
- Never submerge the blender base in water.

SafeElectricity.org®

TROPICAL SUMMER SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1 banana
- ½ cup coconut water
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- ½ cup pineapple chunks
- Ice as needed for desired consistency

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add the mango, banana, coconut water, yogurt and pineapple to blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Add ice and blend until smooth.
4. Pour into glasses, enjoy!

(makes 2 servings)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat such as clothes dryers and dishwashers during the evening when the outdoor temperature is lower. Running heat-emitting appliances in the evening will reduce indoor heat gain during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest and ultimately keep your air conditioner from working harder than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

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