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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

July 2025



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

WECN CELEBRATES 85 YEARS!

**EFFICIENCY TIPS
FOR OLDER HOMES**

COOPERATIVE YOUTH

MACARONI RECIPES





RICHLAND ELECTRIC WELCOMES DENNIS BROWN TO THE BOARD



**Richland Electric
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We are excited to introduce Dennis Brown as the newest member of our Richland Electric Cooperative Board! With a commitment to our community and a desire to provide reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy to our members, Dennis brings a new perspective to the cooperative.



We caught up with Dennis to learn more about his vision for the cooperative and what inspires him to serve in this important role.

What interests you most about serving on the board of Richland Electric Cooperative?

Dennis: I am most interested in learning about the electrical grid and how it works, but additionally learning how the co-op impacts its members.

What do you believe makes for a strong, effective board of directors?

Dennis: I believe everyone working together and keeping the best interest of both the co-op and its members in the forefront makes for a strong and effective board.

What challenges do you anticipate in your role on the board, and how do you plan to address them?

Dennis: Working with a computer is a challenge for me. I think I will be much more comfortable with the technology I will be utilizing with time, but that is the biggest challenge I can foresee.

What values do you prioritize when making decisions, especially in a cooperative environment?

Dennis: When making decisions, my focus will be making ones that not only benefit the co-op members but ones that also allow the co-op to grow and improve services in all areas that represent our cooperative principles.

What does "member-driven" mean to you, and how can our cooperative best reflect that in our work?

Dennis: Member-driven is that the members have a voice in how the co-op is run. As a cooperative, we can best reflect that in our work by listening and using member ideas to improve our processes.

How do you think we can foster more member engagement and participation in the cooperative?

Dennis: I think if we can continue to provide opportunities for members to learn more about the workings of REC and insight into what happens behind the scenes, that would help foster member engagement. Additionally, if we could find ways to increase attendance at the events we do hold, that would be very beneficial for REC and the members we serve.

What motivates you to be involved in the energy sector, and specifically, with a cooperative?

Dennis: I want to learn more about solar energy and keeping costs down for our members while learning more about our co-op. Now that I am semi-retired, I have time to give back to things, like working with our cooperative.

Where do you see the energy sector evolving over the next five years, and how do you think our cooperative should respond to those changes?

Dennis: I see more solar energy/alternative energy sources. I think as a cooperative, we need to implement some of those changes and advances to keep costs down for members.

What are your passions or hobbies outside of your professional life?

Dennis: I enjoy traveling within the U.S. There is so much to see right here. I also enjoy traveling abroad with my wife to visit family and exchange students as the opportunity allows.

How do you balance your professional responsibilities with personal time, and how might that influence your role as a board member?

Dennis: I am semi-retired, so I have the time to involve myself in other areas such as the REC board. In the next 10 years, I see my own professional responsibilities being less. This will allow me to have ample time to be involved with the REC board and yet still have plenty of home time. We do not have any children of our own but do enjoy family time.

We are confident that Dennis's leadership will have a positive impact on our cooperative and the communities we serve. Please join us in welcoming Dennis to the board! We look forward to the exciting journey ahead.

HOW TO KEEP DEVICES CHARGED WHEN YOU ARE OFF THE GRID

Spending time outdoors is important. It's also important to stay connected while you're camping, hiking, or on the water so you can track weather conditions and handle emergencies.

Without easy access to outlets, keeping your electronics charged requires planning. Here are ways to extend battery life and stay powered up and safe outdoors.

Charge before you go

Fully charge your phone, camera, GPS, or other devices before you hit the road. Don't forget extra batteries for flashlights or headlamps.

Keep chargers in your car, but only charge devices while the engine is running to avoid draining the car battery. Hide cords and chargers from view if you leave your car unattended.

Pack smart

When you're camping, everything you pack needs to be worth its weight in gold, or at least double as a backup battery. Bring lightweight power banks and multi-use gear like solar lanterns with USB ports, emergency radios, and portable speakers.

Optimize battery life

Switch to airplane mode to prevent your phone from searching for a cell signal. This also helps you fully unplug without the distraction of text messages or Instagram notifications.

Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and GPS when not in use. Dim screen brightness or enable power-saving mode — or simply turn your phone off when not in use. Save your battery for essential tasks such as navigation or emergencies.

Choose campsites with power

Look for campgrounds with electric hookups to make charging simple and stress-free. Bring an outdoor-rated extension cord to charge multiple devices at once.

Harness alternative energy

Flexible solar panel chargers are perfect for sunny days outdoors. Hook one up directly to your phone or power bank. For overcast conditions, hand-crank chargers can offer enough power for an emergency phone call, while wind, water, and fire-powered options provide additional backup.

Protect your devices

Keeping your devices safe and functional is just as important as keeping them charged.

- *Use waterproof cases to guard against rain or spills.*
- *Avoid extreme temperatures, as batteries drain faster in hot or cold weather. During cold weather, keep electronics close to your body for prolonged battery life.*
- *Store devices securely to prevent damage from falls or dirt exposure.*

With these tips, you'll stay safe and connected while you recharge in the great outdoors — ready for any adventure!

Quick Tips:

- **Bring power banks and a solar charger for backup power in the wilderness.**
- **Keep chargers in your car to recharge while you're on the road.**
- **Use airplane mode, dim screen brightness or simply turn off your phone to save battery life.**
- **Make sure you pack flashlights and extra batteries.**

Five Tips To Reduce Wildfires

Wildfires are no longer confined to the western United States. Traditionally associated with dry, fire-prone regions like California, wildfires are now affecting areas in the Midwest and even parts of the Southeast.

This shift is driven by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and changing weather patterns, which are creating conditions ripe for fires in regions that historically saw fewer of them. As a result, more communities are now facing growing threats from wildfires, prompting a need for broader awareness and preparedness nationwide.

Richland Electric Cooperative is working to reduce the risk of wildfires throughout our service territory. Through regular vegetation management and grid maintenance and hardening practices, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.



As a member of our community, there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires.

- *Properly extinguish campfires. Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.*
- *Don't burn on windy days. Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.*
- *Clear vegetation and debris. Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches, and other flammable materials.*
- *Use equipment safely. Tools like lawnmowers or chainsaws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.*
- *Follow local fire regulations. Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.*

For more information on wildfire prevention and preparedness, visit www.redcross.org.

ANNUAL Cazenovia Celebration 2025

No carry-ins | All profits benefit the Cazenovia Memorial Park
Not responsible for any accidents, injuries, or illnesses.

ALL WEEKEND: Food and Refreshments | Free Bounce Houses | Scavenger Hunt
Find the Celebration Burger - clues given on social media throughout the weekend, finder gets 10 free cheeseburgers!

FRIDAY, JULY 18TH

11 AM - 1 PM 2nd Annual Take Your Burger to Work Day
7 PM Free Bounce Houses Open
7:30 PM Caz Reds vs. Dodgeville Knights
8:30 PM - MIDNIGHT Swing Crew

SATURDAY, JULY 19TH

7:30 AM Registration / 8 AM Start Tracy G. Jennings Memorial Scholarship 5K Run/1 Mile Walk (\$25)
7:30 - 10 AM Pancake Breakfast (pancakes, sausage, apple sauce, & milk or coffee)
\$8 adults, \$5 kids 5-12, 4 and under free
7:30 AM Registration / 8 AM Start Free Kids Fishing Contest
Sponsored by the Cazenovia Turkey Busters (Ages 4-15)
Bring your own pole - a limited number will be available to use. Cash prizes!
8 AM 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
8 AM Free Bounce Houses Open
11 AM Cazenovia Legion 491 Baseball Games
11 AM - 2 PM Weston Volleyball Ice Cream Sundae Stand
12 PM Luck of the Draw Bags Tournament
1:30 PM Start / Race at 2:30 PM Hope It Floats Raft Race (life jackets required, please bring your own)
4 PM Pasture Golf (bring your own clubs, will need ATV or UTV to access the course)
8 PM - MIDNIGHT High Mileage
DUSK Fireworks

SUNDAY, JULY 20TH

11 AM Parade - "Saturday Night Live"
Parade Marshal: Cazenovia American Legion Post 491
AFTER PARADE: Cazenovia German Band | Car & Camper Show | Bounce Houses Open
Chicken or Smoked Pork Dinner Sponsored by Cazenovia Private Landowners ATV Club
12 PM Lee Lake Duck Race Sponsored by Cazenovia Private Landowners ATV Club
Buy your ducks at local businesses, prizes for 1st-3rd place
12 PM Weston Volleyball Ice Cream Sundae Stand
1 PM Kindschi Pedal Pull
1 PM Weston Class of 2026 Bossy Bingo
2 PM Caz Reds vs. Mazomanie Mustangs
2 PM Weston Silver Eagle Foundation Raffle

CONTACT

3 on 3 Basketball - John Atkinson (608) 548-1344 | Raft Race - Jeffrey Even (608) 415-0054
5K Run/1 Mile Walk - Tracy Jennings (608) 415-0605 or Mariah Green (608) 415-2248
Lee Lake Duck Race - Brenda Gilmore (608) 604-9973
Kids Fishing Tournament & Pasture Golf - Nick Stittsburg (608) 604-6474
All other inquiries - Maegle Landsinger (608) 963-8994

Photo: LK Design & Photography

72% of Lightning Fatalities OCCUR JUNE THROUGH AUGUST

Take extra care when enjoying outdoor sporting events and activities when weather turns threatening. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. That is why the National Weather Service advises: "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from rain, even if you don't see clouds.

Safe Electricity urges everyone to understand the importance of lightning awareness and how to stay safe. Learn more at SafeElectricity.org

Safe
Electricity.org

HAPPY
Fourth of July

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON
FRIDAY, JULY 4TH

Amy Martin, Manager/CEO


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www.rec.coop • Find us on Facebook 

Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

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Board of Directors

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Dennis Brown, Jim Goplin, Steven Fuller, Jeff Monson, Kevin Kepler