

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

May 2025



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

FORAGE FOR FUN AT THE MUSCODA MOREL MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

COOPERATIVE FAMILY FUND

TIPS TO BEAT THE ENERGY PEAK

BEEF RECIPES



MY CO-OP



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A DAY IN MAY

It was an average day in May – one that started like any other, when Cody Conrady was at work for an ag fertilizer company.

He was an assistant manager, and it was his next-to-last day on the job. They were understaffed that day, and Cody was filling in wherever he was needed.

He jumped in the truck to try and get ahead of the sprayer. Once the sprayer was in position, he hopped out to fill the tank with fertilizer.

He and his coworker inside the cab were unaware that the sprayer boom had either made contact or gotten too close to a power line.

7,400 volts of electricity traveled through the boom and electrified the equipment and ground where Cody was standing. Unfortunately, Cody's body became the path to ground.

Since that day, Cody and Bailey began a tough road of recovery, together. For him, it was true grit, determination and living the ups and downs that come with this type of recovery. For her, it was emotional strength and fortitude – witnessing Cody's setbacks and victories and supporting him through them all.

Cody took his first steps as part of his recovery four months later – days before their September wedding.

Cody and Bailey share their experiences to increase awareness about power line safety.

Electricity can travel through anything in its path. Unintended contact can happen in an instant. To learn more about how to be safe around electricity go to www.safeelectricity.org





89th Annual Meeting

IN CASE YOU MISSED THE MAIN EVENT

Richland Electric Cooperative held its 89th Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 22. Richland Electric CEO Amy Martin provided the financials, emphasizing the increase in technology costs and the importance of keeping technology updated and secure.

In her manager's report, Amy provided key updates on the cooperative's technology advancement, highlighting improvements in load management and strategies for effective rate design. She outlined the co-op's 5-year budget, indicating a more aggressive approach to vegetation management, particularly in response to the loss of ash trees. Amy addressed tariffs, noting the impact of a 5-25% increase in aluminum and steel costs and the importance of the partnership with RESCO. She also encouraged support for the ROFR bill and stressed how it will benefit local communities and help stabilize rates. In closing, she explained the importance of contacting the cooperative before installing solar and battery storage to ensure safe connections and highlighted efforts to boost attendance at the Youth Leadership Conference.

Guest speaker Jeremy Browning, Vice President, Generation at Dairyland Power, followed with a presentation outlining a forward-looking strategy aimed at infrastructure investments, renewable energy expansion, and the challenges of balancing diverse energy sources. Browning noted that

Dairyland Power has secured federal funding, including \$600 million in grants for renewable projects and \$15 million for broadband support. Dairyland is also investing in battery storage solutions and major transmission projects, such as the Cardinal-Hickory Creek line, which will enhance energy distribution across the region.

As the energy landscape shifts, Browning explained that Dairyland is adapting by balancing traditional and renewable power sources while keeping options open for future developments, including nuclear energy. With a diverse energy portfolio of coal, natural gas, wind, solar, and hydro, he acknowledged the challenge of navigating resistance to various energy sources, from concerns over nuclear power and coal to criticism of wind and solar farms. He emphasized the need for a balanced and flexible approach to power generation, ensuring all options remain viable until the industry reaches a more sustainable equilibrium. "There's not one power source that I'm more prone to than the other. I think diversity in your power portfolio really helps build your strength," he said.

In the board elections, incumbent Kevin Kepler secured re-election in District 1, defeating challenger Steve Carrow. In District 2, Dennis Brown was elected, unseating longtime director Donald Huffman, who had served since 1992. Incumbent Timothy Tiller was re-elected in District 6, running unopposed.



Beautify your yard, not utility equipment

As you beautify your yard this spring and summer, Richland Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity remind you of these safety tips:

- Do not plant shrubs and trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment. Limiting or restricting access to the box in your yard could delay restoration work during an outage and create a serious safety hazard. We need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the side that is padlocked), as well as four feet of clearance on the other three sides.
- Contact us with questions about landscaping around or installing fencing near a padmount transformer (or any other changes) to learn what is allowable.
- Contact us if the transformer becomes unlocked or if it or any other type of utility equipment



appears to be damaged. Call 811 prior to digging around a transformer and respect the clearance requirements

noted above. If you dig near a transformer (even if it is beyond the clearance requirements), you could inadvertently hit a live underground cable. Always call 811 or REC prior to any digging.

- Keep a clear path to the transformer. Even though the transformer seems like it is in “your yard,” it is technically on an easement, and our workers need clear access to it to maintain equipment and keep power running smoothly.

Contact us with any questions or concerns about the safety of padmount transformers. Always teach children that they should not sit on, open, or play around the green boxes.




MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR
— ★ ★ ★ —
REC offices will be CLOSED
on **May 26, 2025** in honor of
Memorial Day

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

If you suspect you're dealing with a utility scam, it's crucial to slow down and take your time before taking any action. Scammers will often pressure you to make quick decisions or immediate payments. Instead, take the time to verify the legitimacy of the communication by contacting your utility directly. Use a phone number from a reliable source, such as your bill or the utility's website. Taking this simple step can help protect you from falling victim to utility scams.

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Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



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