

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* October 2025 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

POWERING THE FUTURE

BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL ENERGY SCAMS

OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH

PORK RECIPES



Electric cooperatives provide power with purpose.



MY CO-OP



Richland Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

NATIONAL
CO-OP
MONTH



By Amy, CEO/General Manager

Powered by Purpose

In October, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you—the members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

As the CEO of Richland Electric Cooperative, I see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you—our members, our neighbors, and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible—because we know how much

rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And when storms hit or outages occur, Richland Electric Cooperative's crews are here and ready to respond quickly because we live here too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines.

Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs, or partnering with volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought—it's part of our mission.

We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both. That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer—you're an owner, a stakeholder, and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected, and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.

4 BEST BETS TO STAY CYBER SAFE

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Protecting yourself online doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A few simple habits can dramatically reduce your risk of falling victim to cybercrime. While you can never be "hackproof," you can become resilient in the online world.

At the heart of online safety are four essential behaviors the National Cybersecurity Alliance call the Core 4. These simple steps will help shield your personal information, protect your online accounts and keep your devices secure.

1. Use long, unique, and complex passwords. Your passwords are the first line of defense between a criminal and your sensitive information. Here's how to have amazing passwords:

- Every password must be long, unique, and complex. Nowadays, every password should be at least 16 characters long, which significantly overwhelms password-cracking programs. Use a random mix of letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Don't reuse passwords. Every account needs a unique password. Unfortunately, making small changes, like adding numbers or switching out an S with a \$, doesn't count as a unique password.
- Use a password manager to store and generate strong passwords. If you're wondering how to manage so many unique, long passwords, the answer is a password manager! There are many free, secure options. Password managers are the safest way to store your passwords. If you prefer to keep a password notebook, treat it like cash.

2. Enable multifactor authentication (MFA). Multifactor authentication (sometimes called 2FA) adds an extra security layer by requiring something more than just your password to log in. Think of it as using two locks on your digital door instead of only one. This could be:

- A one-time code sent to your phone
- A biometric scan like a fingerprint scan or FaceID
- A physical security key

Enable MFA on your accounts—especially email, banking, and social media. It's a simple way to supercharge the security on your accounts. Also, never share MFA codes with anyone—this includes not sharing them over the phone, through texts, or via email. Only scammers will ask for MFA codes.

3. Keep software updated. Software updates don't just bring new features. They often fix security flaws that criminals exploit. It usually takes a few minutes, but updates are worth it. Here are some tips:





- Turn on automatic updates when possible for your devices and apps. You can usually find these options in your Settings menu.
- Install updates promptly for your operating systems, browsers, antivirus tools, and apps.
- Don't click Remind Me Later—the security is worth it.
- Remember your phones, smartwatches, and tablets are computers, so keep these devices updated as well!

4. Look out for phishing and scams. Phishing remains the most common online threat. Criminals send fake emails, texts or social media messages to trick you into revealing sensitive information or clicking malicious links. These messages aim to get you to click before you think by playing your emotions. Scammers will even call you! Here's how to look out for phishing and scams:

- Be highly skeptical of unexpected messages, especially those urging immediate action or asking for personal details.
- Phishing emails can light up positive emotions ("You've won our sweepstakes!") or negative ones ("You've been hacked!").
- Don't click suspicious links or download unexpected attachments.
- Report phishing attempts to your email provider, social media platform, or IT department.
- If you're unsure if a message is legit, ask a friend, coworker, or family member. A second set of eyes can be invaluable in spotting scams.



Capital credits are headed your way!

What are capital credits?

Capital credits are a unique benefit of your cooperative membership. They are funds that are paid back to our members in the form of a bill credit. Be sure to keep an eye out on your October bill for your credit.

Thank you for your membership.

Make Time for Safety

AVOID HAZARDS WITH OVERHEAD POWER LINES

Fall harvest is the most likely time of year for farm-related accidents and fatalities. The number one factor in electrocution on the farm is an auger that hits a power line when being moved. Be aware of your surroundings and look up often.

SAFE ELECTRICITY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING HARVEST SAFETY TIPS:

1. Check the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
2. Be aware of the location of power poles and lines, including field entry and exit points, and plan a safe equipment route.
3. Always keep a minimum 10-foot safety radius around an electric line.
4. Use a spotter when moving tall loads near electrical lines.
5. Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving equipment.
6. Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
7. Know what to do if your equipment does make contact with a power line. It's almost always safest staying in the cab. Call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait until the electric utility says it's safe to get down.

Learn more at:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Leaks reduce indoor comfort and lead to higher heating costs.

If you can see daylight around the edges of a window frame or if a window rattles slightly when touched, air is likely leaking.

Caulking and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows. These materials are available in a variety of compounds and forms, each designed for different types of surfaces. Choose the right product and apply it properly to reduce heat loss, improve comfort and lower energy bills.

TRICK-OR-TREAT TRAIL IN THE PARK

OCTOBER 24 • 4:30 PM - 6 PM

Krouskop Park 1050 N Orange Street
Richland Center, WI 53581




REMINDER

Don't forget to
send in your entry
for the October
Daily Giveaway

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Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



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