


Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2025 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



DASHING THROUGH
THE SNOW

A NEW YEAR FOR NUCLEAR

**EVER-CHANGING, FAST-GROWING
DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY**

KIDS AND CRITTERS





THE FUTURE OF RELIABLE ELECTRICITY



Richland Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

As our country’s economy continues to grow, so too does the demand for reliable electricity. Data centers, new manufacturing facilities and our daily lives are requiring more and more electricity. In fact, U.S. power consumption is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, and the demand for electricity in the U.S. is expected to at least double by 2050.

Meanwhile, our supply of electricity is already decreasing as always-available power plants are being prematurely shut down. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation has warned that 19 states could see rolling blackouts during times of high electrical usage over the next five years. We all know what happens when supply can’t meet demand—prices go up, and the lights go off.

As we prepare for this rising demand, Richland Electric Cooperative is planning ahead to ensure local families and businesses have access to an affordable, reliable supply of electricity.

Meeting the challenge

To meet these challenges, REC is utilizing a balanced mix of always-available energy sources as a safeguard to maintain a reliable energy supply. We’re also researching innovative



technologies to bolster grid resilience and enhance data management to improve operational efficiency, expedite outage response times and minimize service disruptions.

As electricity demand in the U.S. continues to rise, upgrading and building new infrastructure will be critical. That’s why REC is collaborating with other electric co-ops by pooling resources and expertise on projects that advance technology, security, infrastructure and innovative energy sources to meet the increasing needs of our communities.

REC was built by the community it serves, providing essential services that drive growth and pave the way for an energy future that prioritizes reliable electricity at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!

FINANCIAL FITNESS

Just as many resolve to improve their physical health in the new year, we think January is a great time to boost your financial fitness. Begin by assessing your current financial situation—review your income, expenses, debts and savings. This snapshot will help you identify areas for improvement.

Next, set clear, achievable financial goals for the year ahead. Whether it’s building an emergency fund, increasing retirement contributions or paying off debt, having specific targets may help keep you motivated.

Create a realistic budget that aligns with your goals. Track your spending for a month to understand where your money is going, then adjust as needed. Look for areas to trim expenses and redirect funds toward your priorities.

Financial fitness is a journey, and it is important to stay committed. Stay informed about personal finance topics through books and podcasts or seek guidance from a financial professional. Small, consistent steps may lead to improvements in your financial health over time.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS

With cold days and long, dark nights, here are some tips to keep the winter blues away:

- **Limit alcohol.** Alcohol can worsen symptoms of seasonal depression.
- **Set health goals and put them on your calendar.** Reminders help us stay on task.
- **Make plans!** Getting out of the house with friends or family gets us out of our ruts and keeps us active.
- **Eat foods high in Vitamin D,** they are known to help mood and stave off depression.
- **If the weather allows it, a brisk walk will do the body and mind good.** Walking for 20 minutes can burn up to 100 calories, strengthen your heart, lower your blood pressure, and relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety.

And remember, Spring is just two months away!

2025 BOARD ELECTIONS

Co-op Principle # 2: Democratic Member Control

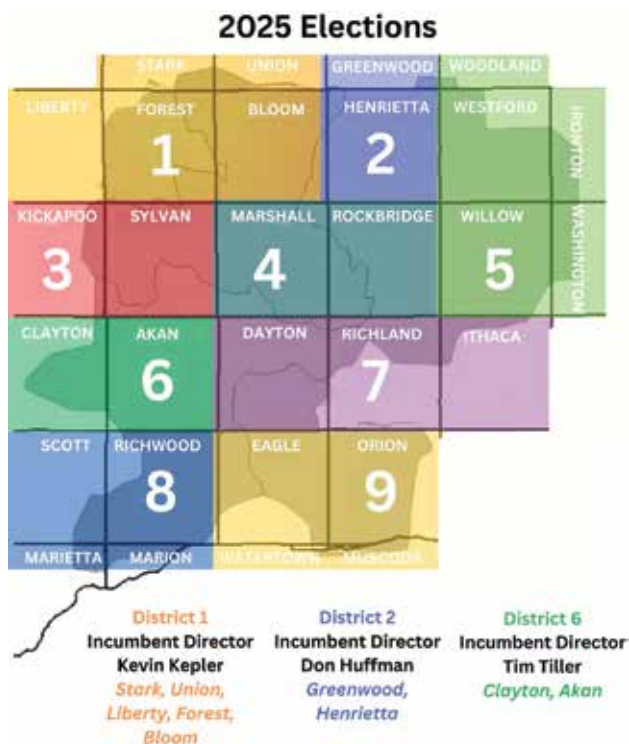
One of the driving principles of Cooperative membership is that members are in control of the organization through the election of a Board of Directors. Each year three directors are up for election. To be eligible for a director seat, you must follow the election process and meet qualifications to get your name on the ballot.

Interested in becoming a Richland Electric Cooperative Director?

Each year three directors are up for election. The process for becoming a director starts in January, with the start of a candidate forum, where interested candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about what it means to be an REC director.

A candidate can run for a director position in two ways:

1. Selection during the Nominating Committee Meeting – The nominating committee consists of five members of the REC membership that meets in January at the Richland Electric Cooperative headquarters.
2. Nomination by Petition – Additional nominations for director may be made by petition signed by not less than ten (10) members. Petitions must be submitted to the Cooperative not less than 40 days prior to the Annual Meeting.



Responsibilities of Directors

While representing the membership, elected directors become a part of a nine-member board tasked with making decisions in the best interest of all members and the cooperative business. Directors work with the management team to provide direction and general oversight of the cooperative. Directors set policies, including retail rates.

To be effective, Directors must be able to read financial statements, forecasts, and strategic reports. Director oversight ensures the democratic functioning of the cooperative in accordance with the Cooperative's Bylaws and respects the confidentiality of information provided or discussed.

The following are items that are expected by the Director to gain background information and knowledge needed to make informed decisions on complex matters concerning Richland Electric Cooperative. Due to the commitment of time to serve, Directors receive a per diem and travel reimbursement for attending meetings, conferences and training.

1. Attend 12 regularly scheduled monthly Board Meetings.
2. Attend national, regional, state and/or other meetings, conferences, and/or training seminars accounting for 3-10 days per year.
3. Encouraged to become a NRECA Credential Cooperative Director by attending 3-5 training courses per year.
4. Spend considerable time reviewing and analyzing data and other information presented to the Board.
5. Disclosure of any existing or potential conflict of interest with any Board membership, position, investment, or business.
6. Must successfully pass a background check during the election process.



Director Qualifications

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements as specified in the Cooperative’s Bylaws. Among the qualifications and responsibilities outlined in the Bylaws, nominees must be:

1. A current member receiving electric service at their primary residence, and
2. The primary residence must be in the district up for election.

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who:

1. Is not a member and a bona fide resident of the area served by the Cooperative whose residence, in the judgment of the Nomination and Rules Committee, satisfies the geographic diversity requirements of any policy adopted pursuant to Section 1, above; or
2. Is employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling energy or supplies to the Cooperative; or
3. Has been employed by the Cooperative at any time in the prior five (5) years; or
4. Has pursued any claim or litigation against the Cooperative or any of its employees or directors at any time in the prior five (5) years, or is delinquent on any obligation owed the Cooperative for more than 60 days;
5. Has at any time been convicted of a felony or of any other offense involving dishonesty.

TIMELINE TO 2025 DIRECTOR ELECTION



There will be a Director Candidate Forum held on **January 6, 2025, at 1:00 PM**, where candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about what it means to be a REC director. REC management and directors (who are not up for election) will be available to provide insight and answer questions. If you would like to attend, pre-registration is required by calling 608-647-3173.

COMMITMENT to COMMUNITY

Karen Olson, Director of Finance at Richland Electric Cooperative, presents a check to the Cazenovia Area Ambulance Service on October 25. REC, partnering with Dairyland Power Cooperative, provided funds for the Ambulance Service to purchase a Rad-57 oximeter to monitor carbon monoxide levels in patients.



On December 12, Amy Martin, CEO of Richland Electric Cooperative, presented a donation on behalf of REC to Tony Anderson, NRECA president and founder of the Cooperative Family Fund. The purpose of the Cooperative Family Fund is to provide support for children of electric cooperative employees when they experience the loss of a parent while actively employed at a cooperative.

Richland Electric Cooperative and its employees volunteered at the 2024 Rotary Lights in the Park. It was definitely a cold one!



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.gov

JANUARY 10 IS NATIONAL CUT YOUR ENERGY COSTS DAY



Amy Martin, Manager/CEO

30 E. Robb Rd., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581

608-647-3173

www.rec.coop • Find us on Facebook

Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Board of Directors

Calvin Sebranek, President • Daniel Hillberry, Vice President • Judy Murphy, Secretary • Tim Tiller, Treasurer
Don Huffman, Jim Goplin, Steven Fuller, Jeff Monson, Kevin Kepler