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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* September 2025 NEWS



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POLLINATOR PATH WITH A PURPOSE

WHAT SETS CO-OPS APART
FROM OTHER POWER PROVIDERS

PIE FOR DINNER

KIDS AND CRITTERS





Young, Bold, and Leading: The POWER of Youth Leadership



**Richland Electric
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By Nicole
Operations Assistant

Richland Electric Cooperative sponsored six students from area schools to attend the 2025 WECA Youth Leadership Conference (YLC). The students

represented Richland Center, Riverdale, and North Crawford School Districts.

During the three-day conference, students statewide — all sponsored by electric cooperatives — learned about cooperatives and spent time improving their leadership skills. Students were separated into smaller groups (called “districts”) led by peers that were elected to the Youth Leadership Board at the 2024 conference.

The event featured several speakers who engaged the participants in team-building exercises, leadership development activities, and shared insights into the cooperative business model. Special guest speaker Hunter Gillet captivated the attention of all attendees as he shared his story of surviving a plane crash in 2017, just days before his high school graduation. After his talk, students reflected on how his message really made you think about making the most of each day, as you never know what tomorrow will bring.

The second night, featuring an etiquette dinner and a hypnotist, always provides some of the favorite moments of the conference. There were a lot of good laughs seeing chaperones and students under hypnosis.



Richland Electric Cooperative representatives at the Youth Leadership Conference, from left to right: Dalton, Caleb, Ella, Macy, Thomas, and Lainey.

Held on the UW-Stout campus, the conference gives students a feel for what college life will be like by staying in a dorm and having meals in the cafeteria.

Here are some comments from REC participants about the conference:

Ella: “My favorite part of YLC was all the amazing people I met. Unlike many other camps, YLC is led by the student body. The peer leaders are the same age as me and can relate with me. They keep you involved through education and endless entertainment. You get what you take out of YLC.”

Macy: “My favorite part about YLC is getting to meet and talk to new people. At first, it was a little scary, but there are a ton of genuinely great people there!” and “You get to learn about cooperatives and all the great things that they offer.”

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The POWER of Youth Leadership

Continued from previous page

For any area high school students interested in attending Youth Leadership Conference 2026 but not quite sure, this is what Macy has to say: “As someone who was nervous to go, my words to someone who is thinking about going is GO! I am not a super outgoing person, but the welcoming environment that is created at YLC is very special! This unique experience is not offered anywhere else. It is scary meeting new people, but YLC does it in an open and fun way! From games to making TikTok’s, there isn’t anything scary about it! Make the most of your time there you will learn a lot as well as meeting a ton of great people!”

If you are interested in attending a WECA Youth Leadership Conference, feel free to reach out to Nicole at Richland Electric Cooperative, nprochaska@rec.coop or (608)647-3173.



At Richland Electric Cooperative, we think co-op month is the perfect time to celebrate you, the members of our community. As a thank you, every day throughout the month of October, we will give away a prize! To be entered into the daily drawing, fill out and return the form below. Only one entry per household. Return to: REC, PO BOX 439, Richland Center, WI 53581

Co-op Month Giveaway Entry Form

Name	<input type="text"/>
Account #	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>





WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, WE ARE WORKING HARD TO RESTORE IT

We hate it when the power goes out just as much as you do. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible. Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR A POWER OUTAGE?

STORMS —

Conditions brought on by storms such as high winds, ice, and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning itself does not impact outages as much as people think, but it can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can cause a problem, however, if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer. Strong winds and ice that accumulates on lines can also impact distribution.



TREES AND VEGETATION — Branches, limbs or trunks can fall on lines and vegetation, such as vines, can grow around poles, lines, or other equipment. Ice and wind can make matters worse. This is why we work so hard to keep power lines and equipment clear.

ANIMALS — Many outages are caused by our furry friend the squirrel. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Other critters like turkeys, snakes, and seagulls can interfere with service too.

ACCIDENTS — Cars, trucks, and farm equipment that have a run-in with a utility pole can cause an outage.

PUBLIC DAMAGE — Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism, or theft can all cause interruptions in the energy chain.

OVERLOAD — This happens where demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.

EQUIPMENT ISSUES — We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly, however, sometimes equipment malfunctions. We strive to address any problem as soon as it happens.

WHAT HAPPENS BEHIND THE SCENES WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT?

Here in the U.S., we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. We are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day.

Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours a year.

WHAT HAPPENS ON OUR END WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT?

Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs that will restoring power to the greatest number of people first.
- Evaluating power plants for damage and restore them to working order.
- Repairing transmission lines that carry power to large areas.
- Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations, distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore it as safely and efficiently as possible, day and night. Please contact us at 608-647-3173 with questions about outages or to learn more about the steps we take to provide reliable service.

BACK TO SCHOOL: Staying Safe On Your Ride

School buses are among the safest vehicles on the road — but the greatest risk comes when children are getting on or off the bus. Whether you're a driver, parent or student, knowing these safety tips will help keep everyone safe.

FOR PARENTS:

Teach your child to arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early, and how to play it SAFE:

- Stay at least ten feet — five giant steps — from the curb.
- Always wait for the bus to stop and the driver to signal before boarding.
- Face forward and buckle up if seat belts are available.
- Exit carefully, look both ways and cross in front of the bus — never behind. Make eye contact with the driver before crossing.

FOR DRIVERS:

- **Slow down:** Reduce speed in school zones and near bus stops.
- **Keep your distance:** Stay back at least 10 feet from a school bus — this is the most dangerous area for children.
- **Know the signals:**
 - » Yellow flashing lights: bus is preparing to stop — slow down.
 - » Red flashing lights + stop arm: bus is loading/unloading — stop and wait until the bus moves again.
- **Never pass a stopped bus** on an undivided road — it's illegal in most states.
- **Stay alert:** Watch for kids who may unexpectedly enter the road, especially near bus stops.
- **Respect the zone:** When flashers are blinking in a school zone, stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and take extra care to look for children near playgrounds, parks and residential areas.

As students head back to school, remember: a moment of caution can prevent a lifetime of regret.



Amy Martin, Manager/CEO

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