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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative*

February 2026

NEWS



Richland Electric
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

THE FEMA **EMERGENCY**

SUPPLY CHAIN STILL A CHALLENGE

COME HAVE A PIECE OF CAKE

KIDS AND CRITTERS





WINTER SAFETY: DON'T GET LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

Tens of millions of people are under storm alerts throughout the winter season. Powerful weather systems will sweep across the Midwest leaving snow-covered roads — causing accidents as major highways inevitably get shut down by snow and ice, and temperatures drop well below normal.

Winter storm warnings and weather advisories are put in place due to snowfall, freezing rain and hazardous road conditions. The warning signifies severe weather with heavy snowfall or significant sleet accumulation is expected to occur within the next 12 to 36 hours. A winter weather advisory indicates less severe conditions, but still warns of snow, sleet, or freezing rain capable of causing travel hazards.

These storms can bring down power lines and utility poles and cause power, heat, transportation, and communication disruptions. They are responsible for hundreds of deaths in the U.S. each year, primarily due to vehicle crashes, overexertion, and exposure.

Proactive measures can be taken to mitigate the risks associated with these storms and stay safe.

—Staying home is your best defense against weather-related accidents. It also allows emergency personnel to get where they need to be. However, if you need to be on the road, be sure you have an emergency kit for winter driving with you.

— Close blinds to keep the heat in and close off rooms you aren't using to conserve heat. Additionally, you can place towels in cracks under doors to prevent drafts.

— Always use generators and grills at least 20 feet away from structures.

— Shoveling can be strenuous and may lead to a heart attack. If you must perform a strenuous task, take frequent breaks.

— Dress in layers, where the inner layer is a moisture wicking fabric and



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COLD WEATHER CAN BE DANGEROUS IF YOU'RE NOT PREPARED.

Follow these tips to stay safe when working outdoors:

- Check the temperature often.
- Take short, frequent warm-up breaks.
- Dress in loose, warm layers.
- Wear insulated, waterproof, EH-rated boots.
- Cover head with FR/AR hard-hat liners or balaclavas. Avoid bulky hats or loose scarves.
- Consider glove liners or insulated gloves for ground work, but always use voltage-rated gloves with leather protectors near electricity.
- Keep dry and change wet clothing quickly.
- Drink warm fluids, stay hydrated and eat high-energy foods.
- Carry a winter vehicle emergency kit.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia.

HYPOTHERMIA

Core body temperature drops too low



Safe
Electricity.org®

Signs of hypothermia:

- Shivering
- Stiff muscles
- Confused, slurred speech
- Exhaustion and drowsiness

Treating hypothermia:

- Call 9-1-1. Move indoors to a warm, dry place if possible.
- Provide warm drinks, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
- Remove any wet clothing; warm with layers of blankets or clothing.
- Wrap the body and head, leaving the face uncovered.
- If layers are not available, add body heat.

the outer layer is water and wind resistant. Wear a hat and mittens, mittens are warmer than gloves. Adding a scarf or knit mask can protect your face. Warm socks and insulated, waterproof boots will help keep your feet warm and dry.

Finally, if you need to be outside during an extreme weather event, recognize the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite can begin with numbness and stinging while

shivering is one of the first symptoms of hypothermia. It is a sign that your body is losing heat. Exhaustion, confusion, or slurred speech are also an indicator of hypothermia. If you or someone else exhibits these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.

We cannot stop extreme weather, but we can protect ourselves by taking the right precautions during a storm.

FEMA Partnerships Help Keep the Lights On

When a storm rolls through, Richland Electric Cooperative is ready to respond. Our crews work around the clock to restore power, repair damage and make sure every member's lights come back on as quickly and safely as possible. But when that damage is severe, the cost of rebuilding can add up quickly—and that's where the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) steps in to help.

Most people think of FEMA when they respond to natural disasters that make national news, such as hurricanes or widespread wildfires. But electric co-ops also rely on FEMA after smaller, localized events—the kinds of storms that may not always make national headlines but can still cause significant damage.

A few inches of ice or a sudden flash flood can snap utility poles, damage substations and leave miles of power lines on the ground. In rural areas, where electric co-ops serve fewer members across larger territories, repairing that damage can be especially challenging and expensive. FEMA assistance helps ensure those costs don't fall entirely on co-op members and that power can be restored quickly without putting financial strain on small communities.

FEMA's Public Assistance program helps co-ops like ours rebuild critical infrastructure after disasters, large or small. This essential partnership ensures that we can focus on restoring power and supporting our community instead of worrying about how to fund large-scale repairs.

The FEMA Act of 2025 is making its way through Congress and aims to modernize the agency's programs, making it easier and faster for essential service providers like REC to restore and rebuild. It's an important step toward keeping disaster recovery fair, efficient and focused on the people who depend on reliable electricity every day.

Whether it's a large-scale storm or a localized event that only affects a few towns, FEMA's support helps electric co-ops do what we do best—serve our members and keep the lights on, no matter what Mother Nature brings. Learn more at www.electric.coop/fema.

DECEMBER HOLIDAY GIVEAWAY
Congratulations!

Winners

John D.

Susan H.

We LOVE Our Lineworkers

The best gift this Valentines Day is reliable electricity! Sending a little extra love to our linemen — you make our members hearts GLOW!



Score a Superbowl Win For Your Wallet



Did you know using small kitchen appliances instead of your big oven can help you save a surprising amount of money on your energy bill? Small appliances use significantly less power, can heat up faster, and keep your kitchen cooler. No matter who wins the big game, you are sure to be a winner with these cost saving recipes courtesy of your Richland Electric Cooperative staff.

Buttery Ranch Mushrooms

Curt - Line Superintendent/Journeyman Lineman

1 pound fresh whole button mushrooms
1/2 cup butter, melted (1 stick)
1 packet of dry ranch dressing mix

1. Clean mushrooms thoroughly, then place in bottom of slow cooker.
2. Whisk ranch dressing mix into melted butter, then pour over mushrooms. Mix so all mushrooms are coated.
3. Cover and cook on LOW for 3 hours. Check for desired tenderness, and cook a little longer if needed.



Reuben Dip

Nicole - Operations Assistant

1 8 ounce package plain cream cheese, softened
1/2 pound sliced corned beef chopped (about 1 1/4 cups, chopped)
1 1/4 cups Swiss cheese freshly grated (4 oz)
1/4 cup thousand island dressing (optional)
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup sauerkraut drained
1 package of crackers of your choice or cocktail rye bread

1. In a crock pot, add all ingredients and stir. Cover and cook on high for 2 hours, stirring about every half hour until all the cheese has melted.
2. When done serve with rye bread or crackers.



Bourbon Whiskey Meatballs

Susanne - Billing Supervisor

1 pound bag of frozen meatballs
1/2 cup ketchup (heaping)
1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
1/4 cup bourbon whiskey
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1. In a medium bowl, combine all your ingredients, except meatballs, and mix well.
2. Place frozen meatballs in crockpot and pour the whiskey sauce on top. Mix it all up so each meatball is coated.
3. Set your crock pot on high for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
4. Once the meatballs have thawed, place the crockpot on low until it appears the sauce has thickened and meatballs are done.



Annual Meeting



SAVE THE DATE



Saturday

April 18, 2026



Location

30 E. Robb Rd., Richland Center, WI



Registration 8:30-9:00 a.m.

Meeting 9:00 a.m.



Amy Martin, Manager/CEO

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www.rec.coop • Find us on Facebook

Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



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