



Spring into Tax Day with Energy-Efficient Tax Breaks

It's tax time, time to save on energy costs and increase your energy-efficiency with these federal tax credits. With federal energy efficiency credits alone, you can claim up to \$3,200 this year.

Home energy audit

Not sure where to start? Claim up to \$150 for a home energy audit that can estimate the energy and cost savings of efficiency improvements and recommend the best options for your home. Visit [energystar.gov](https://www.energystar.gov) for more details.

Energy-efficient home improvement credit

Upgrade your doors, insulation, and windows and get 30% back—up to \$1,200.

Install heat pumps, water heaters or a biomass stove

Save 30% (up to \$2,000) on energy-efficient upgrades including heat pumps, water heaters, biomass stoves, and biomass boilers. For details visit <https://www.energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits>.

Going renewable

Claim up to 30% back on the cost of clean energy installations, completed by December 31, 2025, including solar, wind, geothermal and battery storage, with no annual or lifetime dollar limit (except for fuel cell property). To learn more, visit [energystar.gov](https://www.energystar.gov), or to find information about specific technologies visit solar energy systems, geothermal heat pumps, and battery storage.

Home energy rebates

These rebates help reduce the cost of energy-saving upgrades for both single-family and multi-family homes. You can use these discounts for things like Energy STAR appliances, insulation, and more. Check the Energy STAR's Rebate Finder tool to start saving: <https://www.energystar.gov/rebate-finder>

Is your contact information up-to-date? Don't get left in the dark! Keeping your phone and email current ensures you receive service-related outage notifications, emergency safety updates, and billing reminders. Update your profile today!

Please take a moment to complete the form to the right with your current information.

Return with your payment or mail to :
REC
P.O. Box 439
Richland Center, WI
53581

You can also update your information on SmartHub.

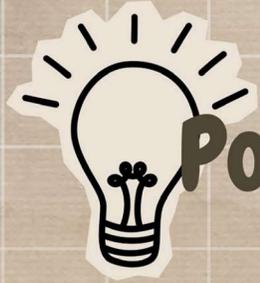
Name

Account Number

Billing Address

Mobile

Email



Powering Forward

Richland Electric Cooperative is looking forward to celebrating a monumental event next month: our 90th Annual Meeting! This milestone honors our deep roots, tracing back to our formation in 1936, and the energization of our first lines in 1937. We're proud to be a part of history as Wisconsin's first electric cooperative. But it's been a journey...

Let's take you back to 1936 when electric energy was primarily in urban areas with only 10% of rural homes in the United States having access to reliable, grid-supplied electricity. This was because private utility companies saw rural areas as unprofitable to serve. However, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act (REA) in 1936 that authorized federal, low-cost loans to farmer-owned cooperatives to build their own distribution systems. This laid the groundwork for the expansion of the national power grid and the opportunity for the formation of Richland Electric Cooperative. By 1952, 85% of rural homes across the United States had access to electricity.

Fast forward to 1969 when electric power now supported essential modern appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, and washing machines, and it was especially crucial for modern farming. It powered equipment like milking machines, milk coolers, and feed grinders. Kerosene lamps had been replaced by electric lights, and homes had access to radio and television, bringing the outside world into residents' homes. Richland Electric Cooperative provided essential power to farms and homes, transforming rural life.

Pictured below is the marker for the first home to be electrified by a rural electric cooperative in Wisconsin; Richland Electric Cooperative in 1937. It is located on US-14, approximately 0.7 miles east of County Highway Z.



However, by the 1970s, the nation would face an energy crisis, with physical shortages of oil and natural gas, and electric utility companies facing financial crisis. Rural residents faced increased costs for electricity and electric cooperatives, such as REC, were challenged by rising wholesale power costs. This crisis spurred a reevaluation of energy policies and encouraged the development of energy conservation programs and alternate energy sources, such as wind and solar.

Blink your eyes and we are in 2026. Though we still face challenges, they are different than the ones we faced in the 20th century. Our focus is now on a diversified energy portfolio, integrating renewable sources like solar energy. The "smart grid" has allowed for proactive outage management and greater efficiency. We have developed systems for industrial efficiency, helping businesses convert to LED lighting and improve power quality.

Technology has also made member interaction instantaneous with the ability to manage your account right from your computer or smartphone utilizing SmartHub. We continue to serve our members with new services, rebates, and modern account management. We are consistently engaged in efforts that support our community such as the Richland Electric Scholarship fund and the Youth Leadership Congress. We volunteer at community events and, during Covid, we offered our members a drive-in annual meeting, a historic first for REC.

Our cooperative model has remained the same in principle these last 90 years, but the execution has evolved. We are still governed by the same democratic principles: one member, one vote. The capital credits system, which returns excess revenue to members, continues to underscore our not-for-profit commitment and Richland Electric Cooperative is a vibrant, modern entity.

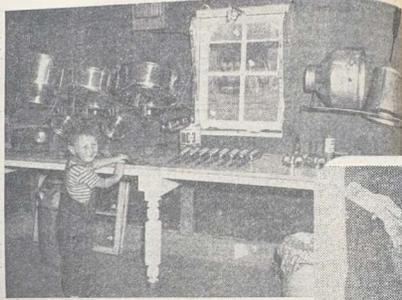
Our 90-year journey has remained rooted in a timeless ideal of neighbors banding together to provide a vital service that drives local economic growth and enhances quality of life. The 90th Annual Meeting is a reminder that while technology changes, the enduring spirit of cooperation continues to light the way forward.

Pictured on page 17 are original magazine excerpts. The magazine was different then, featuring members from across the state. However, we found a few local faces. Do you recognize any of them?





1952



CONDENSARY PATRON

A CONDENSARY PATRON, Bill Jewell of Gillingham, Richland county, is equipping his new milk house with a water heater and 6-can cooler. His grandson, Larry Jewell, 4, above, points out the handy work counter made from an old dining room table and a marble slab that used to be on a soda fountain in Chicago. Jewell did the concrete work himself, but had the rest of the 12x14 milk house built for a cost of \$800 including wiring which cost \$75. At the right, Jewell is applying the first coat of dairy plant enamel to the inside walls, giving them a hard, smooth and durable surface, easy to keep clean and well protected against steam and condensation. He's a member of Richland electric co-op.



LEFT: Waffles on the menu mean second and third portions for John Klang, Rockridge, because he says Mrs. Klang's waffles are so good. The Klangs are members of the Richland Co-op.



Richland Electric Cooperative News Section

1969

Page 2



THE GLEN HALLETT FAMILY



ONCE THERE WERE LAMPS



1976

Our Youth



From Route 3, Muscoda

Electric Co-op Youth Congress will provide fun, learning experience

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Ed. Note: First term nominees are pictured below the incumbent director each will oppose in annual meeting elections this year.



Incumbent Bernard Foley

Foley operates a 250-acre dairy and grain north of Boaz. He and his wife, Vila, have six, two in school and one working on con-



Incumbent Gilman Moe

It's dairy and hogs on the 480-acre farm that Gilman and Randy Moe operate in the town of Willow. Kenneth is in the first grade and a daughter, Sandra, Mrs. Dan Rice, is studying at Platteville.



Incumbent Roland McCauley

Poland and Madalene McCauley milk 60 cows on their 305-acre farm. Lorraine farms with his father and Mrs. McCauley is the bookkeeper at Equality Livestock.



Nominee Cecil Keehn

Polin has a 240-acre dairy and beef farm in flow. The Keeths have four children, two at two in Madison.



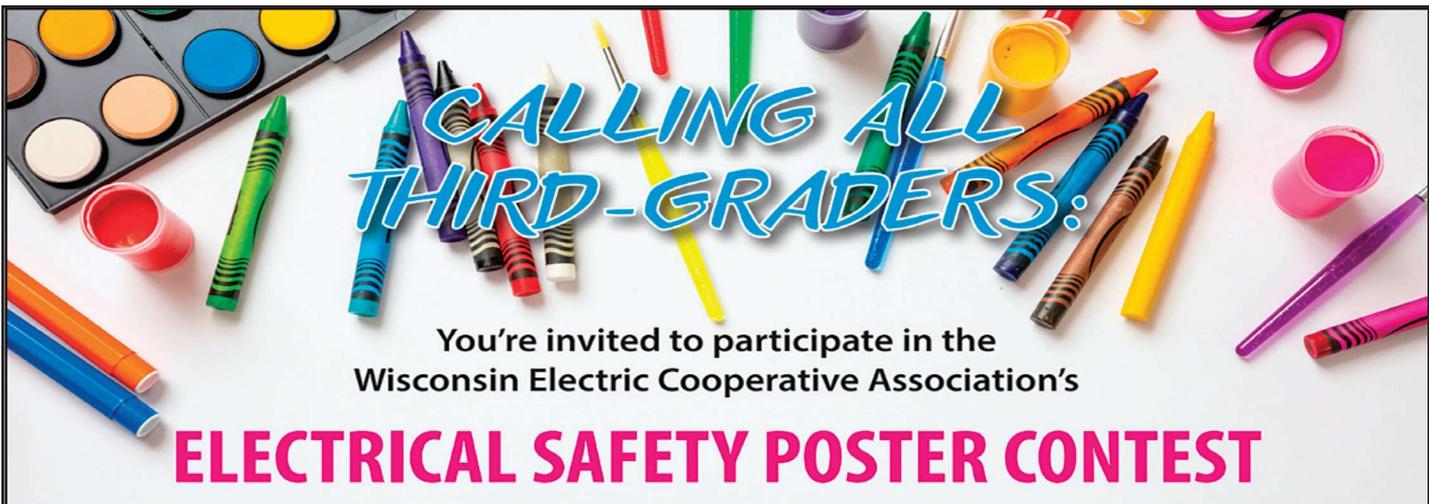
Nominee Daniel E. Manning

Dan and Yvonne Manning farm 285 acres below Loyd. There are two boys and a girl attending school at Itasca. It's all dairy on the Manning farm.



Nominee Robert Johnson

Bob Johnson farms 510 acres with Lester Keller. He's a Vietnam veteran and he and his wife, Cam, have one boy, Chad. Cam is our former beauty queen.



CALLING ALL THIRD-GRADERS:

You're invited to participate in the
Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's

ELECTRICAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Submit an original poster supporting electrical safety to your local electric cooperative by **April 30, 2026**, for a chance to win a **\$25 gift card!** The top three posters will be entered into the statewide poster contest for a chance to win one of three great prizes:

- 1st place – Chromebook
- 2nd place – \$100 Gift Card
- 3rd place – \$75 Gift Card



Posters should be at least 8.5x11 inches, but no larger than 11x14 inches.

Entries must include completed entry form and student's name on the back of the poster.

Contact your local electric cooperative or go to www.weca.coop for registration forms.

Spring Forward

➤ March 8, 2026 ➤



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.

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



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