

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY Cooperative NEWS

November 2026

Richland Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

READY BEFORE THE STORM

HEROES ARE NEVER THAT FAR AWAY

THE NEXT GENERATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

PECAN RECIPES



2026 Cooperative Day of Service

Electric Cooperatives Unite to Revitalize Richland County Fairgrounds

The familiar adage, "Many hands make light work," truly came to life during the first week of October. To kick off National Co-op Month, nearly 120 employees and directors from Dairyland Power Cooperative and 11 of its member cooperatives joined forces for the fourth annual Cooperative Day of Service on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026. Operating under the cooperative principle of "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," local cooperatives, including Richland Electric Cooperative, combined their resources, machinery, and skills to tackle massive workloads that would have taken months to complete on their own.

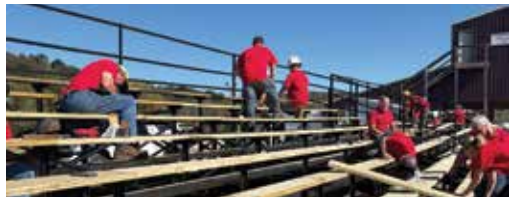
While multiple service initiatives took place across the region, Richland Electric Cooperative, with Dairyland Power Cooperative, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, and Vernon Electric Cooperative focused on upgrading a vital community hub: the Richland County Fairgrounds. First established by the Richland County Agricultural Society in 1857, the fairgrounds moved to their current 20-acre location on County Highway AA in 1873 to accommodate growing crowds. Recognizing the venue's historic role as the heart of community and connection, REC designated it as a primary focal point for their synchronized day of volunteerism. The grounds serve as the backdrop for countless local memories, however, high-traffic public spaces require ongoing maintenance. Cooperative volunteers, including linemen, office staff, and board members, tackled bleacher restoration by replacing the existing seating with sturdy, fresh lumber.

By the end of the day, the physical transformation of the fairgrounds was completed. However, the true success of the Day of Service extended far beyond the upgraded bleachers. The project reinforced the unique "cooperative difference." The fairgrounds revitalization was one of five major regional infrastructure and conservation projects coordinated during the Day of Service event. Other co-op teams across the state line and surrounding counties spent their day clearing trails at state parks, weatherizing cabins for disabled outdoor programs, and building wildlife structures. The annual event proves that when local cooperatives combine resources, their collective impact stretches far beyond delivering reliable electricity.





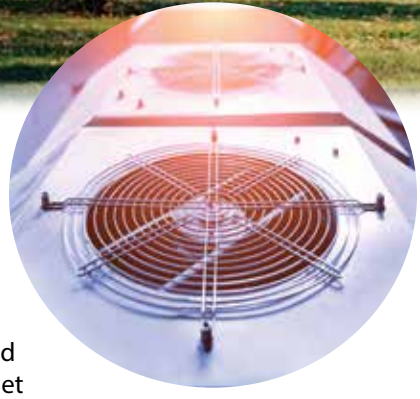








Optimize Your HVAC



As November settles in and temperatures begin to drop, your HVAC system will soon become one of the hardest-working appliances in your home. Before your system undergoes all that extra work this winter, now is a great time to ensure it is optimized and ready to go.

Start with something simple. One of the easiest and most effective measures you can take is checking filters. A clogged or dirty filter makes it harder for air to move through your system, which can cause it to work longer and harder than necessary. Check filters regularly and replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Vents matter too. Take a look around your home to make sure furniture, curtains, rugs, and other household items aren't blocking any supply or return vents.

If you have a heat pump, your outdoor unit also deserves extra attention this time of year. Falling leaves, limbs, and other debris can collect around the unit and restrict airflow, so keep the area around your outdoor unit clear. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning recommendations. If you have a traditional central air conditioning system, your outdoor unit will likely remain idle during winter months, but it's still good practice to keep it clear of debris.

Don't overlook what you can't see. With forced-air systems, ductwork plays an essential role in delivering heated air throughout your home. Leaks, gaps, or disconnected sections can allow conditioned air to escape before it reaches the rooms where you need it. If you've noticed rooms that never seem to get comfortable or unusually high energy use, ask an HVAC professional to inspect your ductwork.

Fall is also an ideal time for a professional tune-up. A technician can inspect your heating system, identify potential problems, and make sure it is operating safely and efficiently before the coldest weather arrives. Regular professional maintenance can also help extend the life of your equipment.

Finally, take more control of your energy use by proactively managing your thermostat. There's no reason to heat an empty house. Lowering the temperature when you're asleep or away can help reduce energy use. Better yet, a programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatically, taking one more thing off your to-do list.

Your home heating system has an important job this winter. Giving it a little extra attention this fall to help the system operate more efficiently and reduce unnecessary energy use can potentially prevent an inconvenient breakdown on a cold winter night.

Maximize System Performance. **Minimize** Energy Waste.

Whether your heating and cooling system is brand new or 10 years old, regular maintenance can help your system run efficiently, keep energy costs in check and extend its life.

Filter Care
Every 2-3 months

- Check your air filter and replace it as recommended. A dirty filter can re-strict airflow and make your system work harder.
- Keep return and supply vents clear of furniture, rugs and other obstructions. Dust them regularly.



Outdoor Unit Care
Once or twice a year

- Keep leaves, grass and other debris at least 2 feet away from the outdoor unit.
- Gently rinse dirty condenser coils with a garden hose, following your manufacturer's recommendations.



Proactive Service
Twice a year

- Schedule professional tune-ups in spring for cooling and fall for heating.
- Have ductwork checked for leaks or disconnected sections, and seal leaks with mastic or foil-backed tape.



Thermostat Smarts
Year-round

- Adjust your thermostat when you're asleep or away. In summer, set it a little higher; in winter, a little lower.
- Consider a programmable or smart thermostat to automatically manage temperatures and save energy.





STATEWIDE MAGAZINE HONORS

Richland Electric Cooperative earned an Award of Excellence for its local pages in Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News, the voice of Wisconsin's rural electric cooperatives. The award was presented during the 2026 Communications Power Conference held in Madison on September 2, 2026. Trina Duffy-Brauer serves as editor of the cooperative's local pages.



The cooperative received Honorable Mention recognition in the Energy Education category for the 2024-2025 judging cycle.

REC SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Our August school supply drive was a resounding success thanks to the generosity of our community. Between the donations from our members and the donation made by REC, we delivered two significant gifts to our local schools. These essential supplies ensure our students have the tools they need to thrive, learn, and succeed in the classroom. Your support makes a massive impact, and we are deeply grateful for your dedication to our youth. Together we are building a brighter future and making a real difference in students' lives. Thank you for your kindness and community spirit!





COVER CONTEST

CAN YOU CAPTURE A GREAT PHOTO? DO YOU HAVE AN EYE FOR ART? YOUR PHOTO COULD BE THE COVER OF OUR 2027 WECN ANNUAL MEETING EDITION.

EMAIL YOUR COVER CONTEST SUBMISSIONS TO TDUFFY-BRAUER@REC.COOP
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS 12/31/2026



*THERE ARE NO LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF PHOTOS YOU CAN SUBMIT.

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
Dennis Brown, Jim Goplin, Steven Fuller, Jeff Monson, Kevin Kepler