

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* October 2026 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

DYNAMIC DAIRY

CO-OP MONTH AND COW LESSONS

PORK RECIPES

KIDS AND CRITTERS



Richland Electric
Cooperative

Your Local Electric Cooperative

NATIONAL
CO-OP
MONTHAmy M., CEO/
General Manager

When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Richland Electric Cooperative.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: they're led by the people they serve—

and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives—like Richland Electric—provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit—it's to provide value, meet unique local needs, and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes Richland Electric different.

Our story began 90 years ago, in 1936, when neighbors

came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve. That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm. The employees answering your questions when you call. The team members volunteering at community events. The board members—your neighbors—who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's Richland Electric, your local credit union, or REI, cooperatives prove that when people work together everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible—and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.



Farm and Ranch **SAFETY** for Kids

TOP TIPS TO PROTECT KIDS ON THE FARM AND RANCH

Farms and ranches give kids unique opportunities to gain responsibility, independence, and strong work ethics. Growing up on a farm helps children develop problem-solving skills, build close family bonds, gain respect for the food cycle, and cultivate a deep passion for the land.

However, agriculture is also one of the most dangerous industries for youth in the U.S. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, with a child lost to an agriculture-related incident approximately every three days. Many of these tragedies occur when kids take on tasks that aren't suited to their age or abilities.

The impact of a farm injury or fatality extends beyond the individual, affecting families and entire communities. The emotional and mental toll can last a lifetime, underscoring the importance of making safety a priority for everyone.

By implementing safety strategies, farmers, ranchers, families and employees can reap the benefits of farm and ranch life while minimizing risks.

WHY ARE KIDS AT GREATER RISK?

Injuries often occur when children are doing something beyond their mental, physical, or emotional abilities. They are susceptible to certain types of accidents and injuries:

- Children often work on farms at young ages and in hazardous jobs.
- Their bodies and brains are still developing, affecting coordination, decision-making, and impulse control.
- Kids tire easily, are more likely to get distracted (think cell phones and social media), and may take risks to prove themselves.
- Many lack experience and may be reluctant to ask questions or admit uncertainty.



FARM SAFETY STARTS WITH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Talk regularly with your kids about farm safety. Clearly explain which areas are off limits, how to spot hazards, and why following rules is important. Frequent, open conversations help build safe habits and encourage kids to think before they act.

Conduct safety audits of your farm, ranch and home together. Identifying and fixing hazards not only protects your children but also helps them learn how to prevent injuries.

Supervision is key. Always keep an eye on children, especially around potential dangers. Remember, learning safe habits takes time and patience — be prepared to repeat instructions to encourage smart, lasting, and safe work habits.

Farming is more than a job; it's a way of life. By making safety a family priority, we can help ensure that future generations enjoy the rewards of farm life with fewer risks.



FIVE ESSENTIAL FARM SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS:

1. Keep kids off tractors. Tractors are involved in more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children under 15. Most kids are not tall enough or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate one if they meet safety guidelines for age, size, and maturity.
2. Supervise and restrict access. Young children should never be in work areas unsupervised. Fence off or lock hazardous areas like grain bins, animal pens, and equipment storage.
3. Assign age-appropriate tasks. Match chores to the child's abilities and maturity. Teens are more likely to take risks, so clear guidelines and supervision are essential.
4. Create a safe environment. Remove hazards such as slippery or uneven surfaces, keep equipment keys out of reach, and avoid repetitive motion. Provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes, and hearing protection.
5. Train and model safe behavior. Teach kids how to do tasks safely, practice together until they are proficient, and always demonstrate safe habits yourself. Kids learn by watching adults.

GRAIN BIN DANGERS

Grain bins are especially hazardous. Grain can act like quicksand, trapping and suffocating anyone who enters. Most youth grain entrapments are fatal. Kids should never enter grain bins or "walk down" grain, and all grain storage areas should be off limits and secured.

In 2010 in Mt. Carroll, Illinois, four young farm workers aged 14-20 were sent to loosen clumped grain from inside a grain bin. Three of the youth became entrapped in the grain. Two were engulfed and suffocated and the third was rescued following a six-hour mission. A settlement of \$16 million was awarded to the affected families. This case led to the formation of the Grain Handling Safety Council, www.GrainSafety.org.

TRICK OR TREAT

TRAIL IN THE PARK
OCTOBER 23RD
KROUSKOP PARK
4:30-6:00



October is co-op month, it's
also capital credits month!



What are capital credits?
Capital credits are a unique
benefit of your cooperative
membership. They are funds
that are paid back to our
members in the form of a bill
credit. Be sure to keep an eye
out on your October bill for
your bill credit.

Thank you for your
membership!

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Trina Duffy-Brauer, Editor



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BOTTLING SUCCESS

In August we were at it again, partnering with Water Billboards, we delivered 1,050 cases of water across five area schools. Over the 2026-2027 school year, every bottle you purchase will support your school. Added to that, Richland Electric Cooperative offers up to \$1,200 in dedicated scholarship funds to each school based on the amount of water ordered through our program. By choosing our water, you are directly investing in our students' classrooms and funding the scholarships that power their tomorrow.



COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINES THROUGH THE RAIN AT WALK WITH GRACE

Rain may have dampened the pavement at Krouskop Park, but it couldn't touch the community spirit at the 23rd annual Walk with GRACE (Greater Richland Area Cancer Elimination) event. Richland Electric Cooperative was incredibly proud to join hands with our Richland Center neighbors to support local cancer patients and fund vital research.

The wet conditions did nothing to deter the crowd that gathered to walk in honor of survivors, caretakers, and loved ones lost. Participating in this "power"ful event reminds us that when our community faces adversity—whether a medical battle or an unexpected storm—we show up for each other. Thank you to everyone who braved the weather with us; we are already looking forward to next year, rain or shine!



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