



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

COOPERATION AMONG MORE THAN COOPERATIVES



By Trevor Clark, Director of Outreach Services

Thou shall not speak its name. I wonder if we stop talking about COVID-19 the illness will magically disappear. You know, the more attention that we bring to it the worse that it gets. Wouldn't that be something? Kind of like spilling water on Gizmo the mogwai

that caused the creation of gremlins. *Note: This is not a suggestion to not shower—please continue to do that.* Obviously, I am fantasizing a twist to keep the subject of COVID-19 from dominating this article. But unfortunately, that is not possible in today's reality.

For the past 18 months COVID-19 has had a stranglehold on literally the world. I think we all believed that the end might be in sight until the Delta variant reared its ugly head, just like one of those festering pimples that you pop too early only to have it come back a few days later. We were excited to have our doors open for a few months and it was great to see members walk into our office once again.

You, as members, have been nothing less than fantastic. I am certain that you do not hear that enough. You have been extremely understanding given the circumstances and I hope that we have continued to provide the quality of service that you are used to. Did you know that we have had a drive-up window for many, many years? We sure have, but unfortunately, we put it out of commission because our speaker did not work well, and during the winter months it is quite cold in that part of the building. You must remember, we have been in that building since 1936. We have often been told that things have a way of coming back around even if we don't want them to. Fortunately, the drive-up window has been a great trend to bring back.

In a previous article I stated how resilient children are, but it is worth noting how resilient adults are as well; we just don't give ourselves enough credit because we expect it of ourselves. We must be role models for our kids. So, I guess you could say they get it from us. Take a second and look back at the past 18 months and think of some of the things you wouldn't have done, had it not been for the virus. Was there some project you were able to finish? Did you refinance your home? Did you go to a Brewer game? Take a road trip? I bet there are some interesting stories if you think about it.

At the co-op we did a few things we never would have done as well. We hosted two drive-in annual meetings and learned that many members enjoyed listening to the broadcast on WRCO 1707.7. We even received comments that members listened to it from their tractors. Now if that doesn't scream rural Wisconsin, I don't know what does. We played a part in the creation of CHARGE, an electric

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vehicle charging network created by Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois electric cooperatives. We supported local businesses by purchasing gift cards to give to members, became season ticket holders to the Milwaukee Brewers (great investment since they are winning), cooperated with Vernon Electric and

Dairyland Power to bring the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon to the Viola Horse & Colt Show, and we've begun the process of building a new headquarters. Sometimes we must take a leap of faith.

When you read the last paragraph, you may have noticed that almost all of those are in cooperation with another



Who knew it was even possible to participate in a co-op annual meeting from the comfort of your own vehicle? Holding a drive-in annual meeting, with the help of WRCO 1707.7, was just one of the creative, collaborative ideas Richland Electric launched—or was part of launching—during the pandemic.

MY CO-OP



organization: WRCO, regional electric cooperatives, local electric cooperatives, and local businesses. October has numerous titles such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Cybersecurity Awareness Month, Pear and Pineapple Month, and a slue of others that can be found on nationaldaycalendar.com. But October is also National Co-op Month, which I'm sure you already knew since the REC picnic is ALWAYS held in October.

If you recall, last year we were forced to cancel our member appreciation picnic. This year is no different, due to that ugly illness that we won't name because frankly I'm sick of it (no pun intended). However, we are still here for you and we are thinking of not only you, but our community as well. We received a lot of positive feedback from our gift card give-away last year and we want to do that again. We are going to give away a \$50 gift card to a local business every day in the month of October! Some of you may have already sent in your sign-up form, but in case you missed it we added it to this edition as well.

Unlike last year, our grand prize is dedicated to the children. And for all you smarty-pants out there, I mean children who live in the house and are NOT older. Eighteen years old is the max age because we understand most children will turn 18 their senior year. For all of those who caught the fact that I did not specify.... well played, you got me.

In the spirit of co-op month I encourage you to sign up for the drawing but to also follow us on



social media. We will announce the winners daily on our Facebook page, but we'll be giving some exciting updates as well. I heard some whisperings that we may be giving away postseason baseball tickets. There are a lot of exciting things happening and we want you to be a part of them.

In closing, thank you once again for being so understanding, and know that it does not go unnoticed. The board of directors and staff of Richland Electric Cooperative hope that you and your loved ones continue to be safe. We will get through this together.



Member Appreciation Drawing Form

Please fill out and return this form to participate in our daily drawings for \$50 gift cards from local businesses or bill credits during the month of October. To participate in the drawing for the GRAND PRIZE of a bike for kids (must be members of the household, up to age 18), please fill out and return this form to Richland Electric Cooperative.

Name _____

Phone No. _____ Email _____

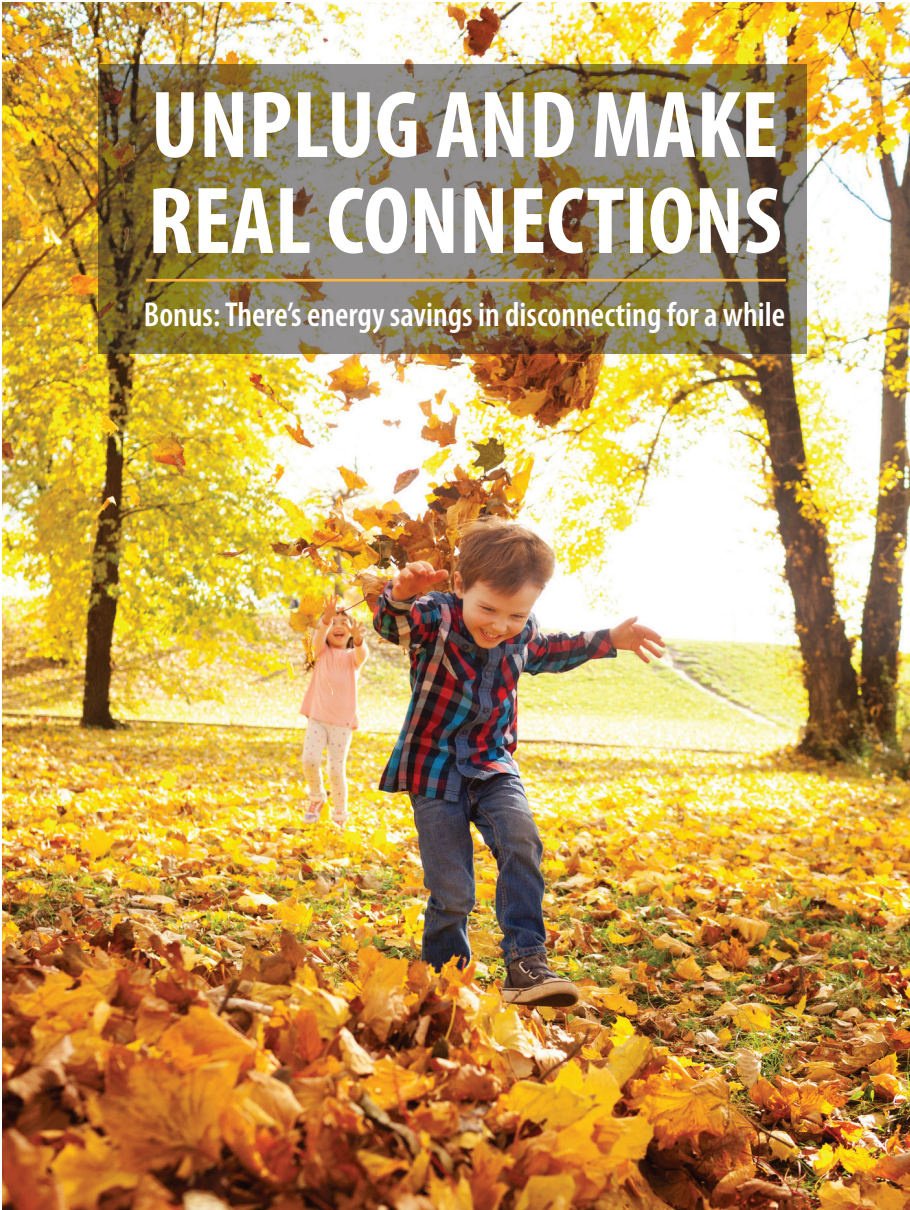
If your child is participating in the drawing for a bike, please fill out the following:

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____

Return to Richland Electric Cooperative, 1027 N. Jefferson St., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581

UNPLUG AND MAKE REAL CONNECTIONS

Bonus: There's energy savings in disconnecting for a while



Most adults have a vague memory of a time when “checking for messages” meant listening to an answering machine. We carried on with our days without relying on cell phones and managed just fine. But today, we are more connected than ever through our smart phones and other devices.

Our phones are so much more now—from cameras to calendars to social media connections—and truly disconnecting from them can be tough. But it's even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It's difficult for them to imagine life without computers,

gaming devices, tablets or cell phones.

But there's great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it's for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply does not allow. They are able to experience life in the moment and allow their creativity and energy to break free.

We have access to great community programs and organizations like 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Little League, and many others that provide children with a safe place to play and learn, while cultivating new skills and interests.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics. Children can investigate areas they might not otherwise have access to and discover new interests and passions. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It's no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career. Community programs also foster important leadership development and public speaking skills. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and interpersonal skills that enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve interpersonal relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games to craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for some family fun. We do live in Wisconsin after all, and you cannot beat the beauty of our outdoors in the fall. Remember to rake those leaves into as big of pile as possible for your kids to enjoy.

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid “vampire” energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your TV is waiting to receive a signal from the remote and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update.

Let's encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in. To play and be part of an organization that helps them connect with others and find meaningful interactions and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, Richland Electric Cooperative is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy saving programs and services. While we'd love to see you in person, we're also just a call or click away.



CHICKENS AND A DUCK

By Al Cornell

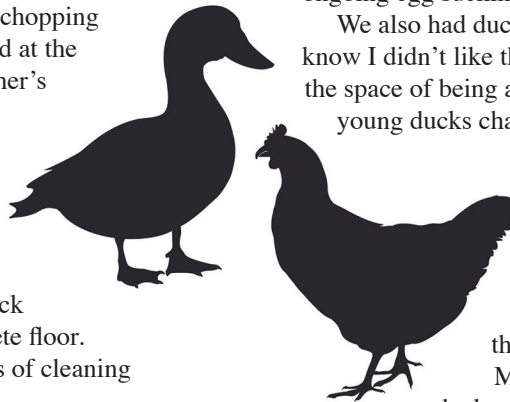
That big old bully rooster jumped on top of a little hen. I grabbed him by the tail and started pulling as hard as I could. Dad and Terry walked by and started laughing at me. Though it seemed clear to me that I was attempting to administer justice, their laughing left me wondering if I misunderstood something. Growing up on a farm does not mean that you got these things all figured out without some defining moments.

After cows and pigs, chickens were the next most vital part of the livestock. Chicken dinner was a common noon meal, and one learned early how to get a young rooster to stretch his neck out on the chopping block. While many eggs met their end at the table, others were sold to Pulvermacher's in Richland Center. A slatted board and wire crate about 18 inches square and a foot deep held layers of eggs on top of inserts.

When you entered the chicken house, the first area had a dirt floor and nest boxes along the walls. In back of that was a roost area with a concrete floor. That flooring made easier the process of cleaning out the chicken manure.

Among the earliest chores for a farm kid was gathering the eggs. Usually that was simple. You took a bucket, carefully checked the boxes and removed all the eggs, and carried them back to the house.

However, inevitably, some hen would transition from layer to setter. She would diligently defend the eggs she was setting on at the time. While an older person easily handled that situation, the small, tender hands of a child would get nailed by that ugly beak.



More than once, I wrestled an old biddy out of a nest box, toted her to where cold water was pouring into the cow tank, and held her head under the flow for a couple minutes. I do not think it ever cured one of her setting instinct, but I had to try to gain rank in the pecking order.

At one point, we had a dog that apparently listened to country music and got some inspiration from Johnny Cash's Dirty Old Egg Sucking Dog. We never had to get the "riffle and send him to that great chicken house in the sky." However, measures were put in place to prevent the ongoing egg sucking.

We also had ducks. I ate just enough duck eggs to know I didn't like them. Mostly, the ducks just occupied the space of being another farm animal. I recall a line of young ducks chasing after Terry as he called, "Ducky, ducky, ducky," and led them to where he fed them.

At one point, our duck population had dropped to one hen. She roosted with the chickens, fed in the farmyard with the chickens, and thought she was a chicken.

Mom's cousin, Virginia Blood, had ducks. We got a drake from the Bloods and turned him out where the chickens were. He immediately picked an individual out of the group that he wanted to be close to. That hen duck had no clue why he chose her from the flock. She just kept moving away. Soon she was going places the chickens never went. She headed up the hill behind the house. He chased. She ran.

That went on for a couple days. Eventually, she quit running and sometime later we again enjoyed having ducklings on the farmstead.

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