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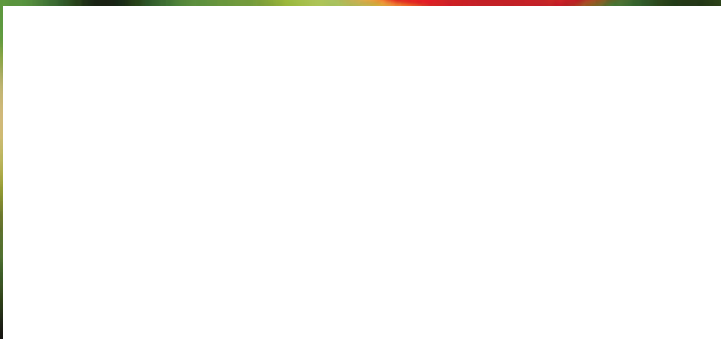


WILD WISCONSIN

BATTERY STORAGE OR GENERATOR?

WISCONSIN'S WAKEUP CALL

PICNIC RECIPES







# A CHARGED-UP CONVERSATION



REC members  
Aaron and Bonnie  
Jones with their  
new Rivian R1T  
truck.

## Members' inquiry leads to two-way EV learning opportunity

By Trevor Clark, Director of Outreach Services

**H**ave you ever had a conversation that when it is over you think to yourself, “That was a great conversation?” I’m sure we have all had them, but sometimes those conversations can result in something great. I have worked on the member services and communications side of Richland Electric for several years now and I have been fortunate enough to speak with wonderful people from members, non-members, community leaders, high school students and too many more to list. I value many of the conversations that I have even if they have no relationship to electricity or the cooperative—sometimes we need to slow down and just talk.

I would be lying if I told you that I look forward to every conversation with members, especially with how much the industry is changing. We do the best we can to stay up to date on the latest trends, but it can be difficult to know what information is accurate and what is not. In this case though, a simple conversation between myself and a member turned into a great partnership with new technology that will help us move forward and learn.

The new technology that I’m writing about is an electric

vehicle and charger. We all know that electric vehicles are currently all the rage, but the infrastructure just isn’t there yet. In January of this year I received an email through our website from a member who was interested in EV charging information. He had very simple questions. Will EV charging station incentives be continued in 2022? Do you have examples of what type of charging stations have integrated metering? What type of equipment is required for load control? Would incentives include the installation cost? Based on these questions I knew this member was very interested in an electric vehicle as they were already focused on charging questions.

The conversations through email eventually evolved into phone calls. Our discussions became even more real in about the third email when they informed me they were purchasing a Rivian R1T truck. That vehicle was one I was particularly excited about because the marketing is targeted to the adventurer or outdoorsman, and also because it was the only electric truck I had heard about prior to Ford and Chevrolet launching their EV programs. The other was the Tesla Cybertruck, and let’s just say I was not interested.

Aaron and Bonnie Jones originally hail from Houston, Texas, which threw me for a loop because as most of you





know, people from Wisconsin usually head south and then return in the summer. But it was great to hear that these two enjoyed the beauty of our area. Aaron is an architect who specialized in commercial facilities for higher education clients, and Bonnie spent her career as a geophysicist in the oil and gas industry.

When I asked them why they chose Richland County, they responded, “We discovered the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin in the summer of 2020 and fell in love with the rivers and hills, fishing and biking, the cheese, the

wildlife and the culture of the region.” All things that we Wisconsinites may take for granted, except for maybe the cheese. They decided to purchase property in June of 2021.

As the conversations continued it was easy to tell they were very interested in the energy industry. Bonnie even went so far as to say they consider themselves “energy geeks.”

“We installed photovoltaics on our roof in Houston to offset 90% of our residential electricity usage and the Rivian is our second EV. We previously owned a Chevy Bolt EV and a Toyota Prius hybrid before that,” Aaron said.

I asked them why they chose the Rivian R1T. “We wanted a pickup that looked and acted like a pickup, had four-wheel drive, could haul trailers, move our recreational gear etc. and Rivian was the only legitimate option at that time.” Aaron stated.

For many of us, Rivian is not a household name, and I think you will

Aaron and Bonnie Jones brought their new Rivian R1T to an REC board meeting so directors could check out the vehicle and learn more about what it means for the co-op as more members switch to EVs. The electric truck is roomy and offers plenty of storage space in areas where there would otherwise be an engine.

find more “new” vehicle manufacturers developing EVs. Rivian is a startup company that was created in 2009 as Mainstream Motors but in 2011 changed its name to Rivian. Ford and Amazon both have an investment in the company, but Ford has since decreased their

investment due to the developments of their own EV program. Amazon agreed to collaborate with Rivian to produce 100,000 electric delivery vehicles by 2030 and should have as many as 10,000 in operation in 2022.

I think what piqued my interest the most was how uncommon

these vehicles were; I did not expect to see one for several years. COVID-19 had a major impact on the production of the Rivian as many plants were forced to shut down, causing numerous delays and frustrated customers. Aaron and Bonnie decided to stand by their decision and continued to wait for their vehicle.

What started as a simple conversation

“We wanted a pickup that looked and acted like a pickup, had four-wheel drive, could haul trailers, move our recreational gear, etc., and Rivian was the only legitimate option at that time.”—Aaron Jones, REC member

80% of electric vehicle charging happens at home. Our local electric cooperatives can help you make your home “EV ready.”

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resulted in the cooperation between Aaron, Bonnie, and Richland Electric due to our involvement in the electric vehicle industry. For the last couple of years, we have informed our members and our board of directors that electric vehicles are coming, and fast. However, there has not been a lot of discussion with members interested in electric vehicles. Richland Electric and several other cooperatives throughout Wisconsin founded an electric charging network known as CHARGE that has since grown to around 90 cooperatives throughout the country. While large charger manufacturers are focused on cities and interstates for placing their chargers, we were not about to leave our members behind and focused more on the charging infrastructure in rural areas.

The discussions we had with Aaron and Bonnie thrust us into high gear by purchasing an 11.5kW charger that has since been installed at their home. The early conversations that we had with them allowed us enough time to learn about the charger, rates we would offer, the available charging times, and how we would be able to monitor the charger's output. Both parties agreed this would be a learning program for not only the cooperative but for the couple as well.

After a long three-year wait Aaron and Bonnie received the phone call

that their Rivian was scheduled to be delivered to their house in May. Director of Energy Services Mark Miller and I drove to their home to formulate a plan on the installation of their charger and to discuss how the charger would operate.

Within the next couple of weeks, the charger was installed, and the Rivian had arrived at its new home. It took everything I had not to drive to the Jones' home to see their new addition; however, I allowed them their time. Ultimately, time got the better of me as I invited them to the REC board meeting to show off their new truck.

As the board meeting began, I awaited their entrance at the REC Service Center. I was able to see a green truck, larger than a Ford Ranger but not as large as the F150. As I watched through the service center windows, it was no surprise that the only thing I was able to hear were the off-road tires as they drove across the pavement. You would never know the vehicle weighs 8,000 lbs. As the couple exited

the vehicle, it began to lower itself to ground, a feature that was unbeknownst to me. I later found out, depending on the model, the vehicle will rise and lower. For example, driving down the highway the vehicle will lower itself to be more efficient or aerodynamic, whereas if you go off-road it will raise itself to allow for more ground clearance.

A fair amount of joking was displayed as to how many different areas of the vehicle could serve as cooler space without the cooler. The spare tire area and frunk (front trunk) would all suffice as built-in coolers for your favorite beverages.

The vehicle captured the full attention of the board and a variety of questions were raised.

This is really a first for

The early conversations that we had with [the Joneses] allowed us enough time to learn about the charger, rates we would offer, the available charging times, and how we would be able to monitor the charger's output.

Richland Electric Cooperative as we have often discussed electric vehicles and when they might arrive in Richland County. Currently we have two electric vehicle chargers on our lines for which we have worked with the members as we develop various programs. The other charger is a Tesla.

The development of this conversation with the Joneses is exactly what we expect from our membership. We want you to ask questions. We may not have all the answers, but I can guarantee you we will do everything we can to get you answers. Often, we will reach out to colleagues at other cooperatives to ask if they have any experience with certain matters, or if they are doing anything differently. But we aren't able to read minds, and if you reach out to us we can hopefully point you in the right direction or provide the assistance you need.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Aaron and Bonnie and enjoyed the conversations we had. This is one small step for Richland Electric Cooperative involving electric vehicles, and I am looking forward to learning more as time moves on.

## Electric Vehicle Charging Levels

AC Level One	AC Level Two	DC Fast Charge
<b>VOLTAGE:</b> 120V 1-Phase AC	<b>VOLTAGE:</b> 208V or 240V 1-Phase AC	<b>VOLTAGE:</b> 208V or 480V 3-Phase AC
<b>AMPS:</b> 12-16 Amps	<b>AMPS:</b> 12-80 Amps (typ. 32 Amps)	<b>AMPS:</b> <100 Amps
<b>CHARGING LOADS:</b> 1.4 to 1.9 kW	<b>CHARGING LOADS:</b> 2.5 to 19.2 kW (typ. 6.6kW)	<b>CHARGING LOADS:</b> 50-350 kW
<b>VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:</b> 3-5 Miles per Hour	<b>VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:</b> 10-20 Miles per Hour <small>20+ for some EV models</small>	<b>VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:</b> 60-80 Miles in 20 Minutes

Sources: Advanced Energy and EPA



## MUSIC UP IN THE HOLLOW

By Al Cornell

I remember, from very early days, lying in bed and hearing Mom’s voice drift up the stairs as she sang “Mockingbird Hill.” But there wasn’t much music up the hollow. Maybe one night a week the Grand Old Opry was dialed up, originally on a battery-powered radio. After a bit, it was turned off because of the annoying static that always increased after dark.

Then one day, someone got interested in that old piece of furniture pushed into a corner of the back bedroom. There was just enough room behind it for the double-barreled shotgun. That gun was missing one firing pin, and we were told that the breach no longer closed tight. A hot blast was emitted from behind the shell casing the last time it was fired.

But that piece of furniture was a Victrola. In the past, it could be wound up and a 78-rpm record placed on the turntable. An arm that had a needle on its end could be swung over the record. The needle could be placed in the outmost groove of the record. As the turntable spun, the needle responded to tiny variations within the groove. These became songs emitted from the speaker. That was almost magical music.

But alas, the spring was broken, and the Victrola sat in silence for decades. Then Dad got to toying with it and figured out a way to direct drive the turntable by turning the crank. While the crank could no longer wind up the spring, turned slowly it spun the turntable at approximately the right speed. We took turns sitting and cranking out “Mockingbird Hill” and stuff from the roaring ’20s of last century.

In time, variation became more interesting than trying to maintain the right speed. You could slow it down and drag out the songs. You could speed it up and really make it rip. Do you remember the songs of the Chipmunks? We were making that music before it became a thing. Just

crank a little faster and bingo—the very same thing.

Then we moved up a notch and got an electric record player. It played 33, 45, and 78-rpm records. We could play a stack of 45s or put on a long-playing 33. We listened to Tennessee Ernie Ford boggy boggy. Johnny Cash could follow up with “The Wreck of Old ’97.” Later Marty Robbins sang “Red River Valley” from a corner of our living room, and Jimmy Dean entertained us with “Big Bad John.”

Sometime in the process of acquiring music, Mom opted for a series of 45-rpm fiddle tunes. They added some of that fast-paced fiddle music to our home.

I remember the name of just one of those fiddle tunes. A fiddle tune dating back to the early 1920s bore the name “Sally Johnson.” That seemed a little weird because the Johnson clan down the road had a little girl named Sally.

Those inner-brain synapses contain everything that we have filed away in gray matter. But how do they affect us? How much influence do they hold over how our lives unfold? Could that connection between a fiddle tune and a little girl down the road have anything to do with me placing a ring on her finger a few months after she graduated from high school? Now, 50 plus years later, I hear the melodious rhythm of her Angel Mode harp music emanating from her music room up this same hollow.

Do you have a knack for writing? If you’ve got an original story you’d like to share with your fellow members, we’d love to see it! Please send it to Trevor Clark via email, [tclark@rec.coop](mailto:tclark@rec.coop), or mail it to 30 E. Robb Rd., PO Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581.

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