


Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* May 2022 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

GLACIER'S GIFTS EXPLORE THE GEOLOGICAL WONDERS ALONG THE CHIPPEWA MORaine

A NEW LOOK AT NUCLEAR POWER

SHINE A LIGHT ON HOME SECURITY

BEEF RECIPES





HOW TIME FLIES...

By Shannon Clark, CEO/General Manager

Over the last several months I've penned several articles that were forward-looking. In this article I'm going to take the opposite approach and spend some time looking back and it will come from a very personal perspective. At this year's annual meeting it has been, or depending on when you read this, will be announced that I am retiring at the end of this year. It's been nearly 32 years since I first walked through the door here as an employee and 25 years that I have been honored to be the CEO & general manager. I have every confidence that Amy Martin, who has been selected as my replacement, will continue to not only lead Richland Electric Cooperative (REC), but also have REC be a leader in the industry.

My retirement date has been set for several years now. When I approached the board about when I planned to retire it was nearly four years in advance. Knowing that I, and others including our Chief Operations Officer Larry Hallett, would all be departing at roughly the same time meant the cooperative had to have a solid plan to ensure continuity. The board implemented a succession planning process with quarterly milestones to track the progress of turning over a new leaf and, from my point of view, it took a lot of the pressure off.

Personally, the move is bittersweet. Many years ago, I set a life goal of retiring before a normal retirement age and my family and I have worked hard to make that a reality. I have watched too many of my family pass on early in life without having the ability to enjoy a retirement. Hopefully, I'll break that ancestral trend, but one never knows. What I do know for certain is how deeply I care about this cooperative, and retirement will not be better than working here—it will just be different.

There are many memories that I will take with me as I travel a different path. I'll remember all the events that have occurred such as major storms and outages where I witnessed firsthand how our board and employees came together to solve problems and keep the lights on. Despite differences at times, when called to action they always pulled together to serve members while still watching out for each other. I'll remember the many times a member met the crews with cookies or water as they worked through the night, or when someone took the time to write a thank-you to those of us who felt we were "just doing our job."

As the manager here I have had so many opportunities and been blessed to work with some of the best people in world. Some are employees, some are directors, but so many are just ordinary people whose paths crossed with mine, all working to make the lives of others better every day.

I must admit the most common question I ask myself is "What did I ever do that allowed me the opportunity to have this be my career?" I hearken back to my teenage years, most of them spent working in the tobacco field, raising a few farm animals, and doing chores every day like so many of our members spent their teenage years. An unfortunate turn of events kept me from going down my chosen path and somehow, I landed here. I didn't come here as anyone special. I wasn't particularly well

It's been an
honor and a
privilege to be
able to serve the
members of REC.

suited at the time for a career in the energy industry. All I knew was the value of work, respect for others, and my responsibilities as young married man with a second child on the way. Yet, here I am some 30-plus years later.

Any success I have enjoyed as an individual has all been made possible by my wife of 37 years, Tammy; my children, who have always recognized "the co-op" as a way of life; my parents, who instilled the values needed to get through life including the recognition that God makes all things possible; and the members, board, and staff at REC. I've seen a lot of people come and go and all of them made an impact. Some interactions were better than others. Not everything was, as they say, sunshine and roses. But, there was always something to be learned from every interaction.

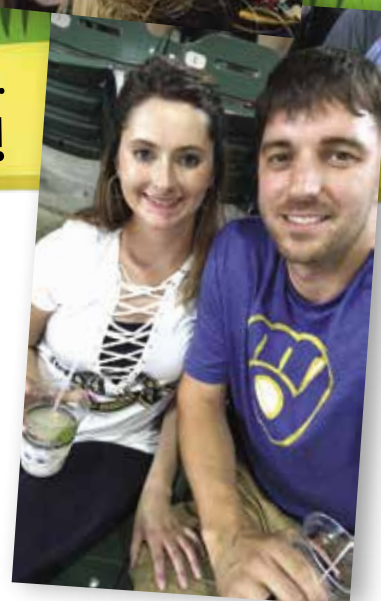
It's been an honor and a privilege to be able to serve the members of REC. Some of you I feel I've helped along the way, many of you have helped me, and some were probably disappointed. Too often I've heard the phrase, "You can't please everyone." My response has always been, "That doesn't mean we shouldn't try."

In closing, above all I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve REC. I know that my life has been blessed in part because of you. Your business with REC made my work possible, and that work has had many rewards for which I am forever grateful. Thank you!



It's beginning to a lot like... **BASEBALL SEASON!**

Once again we will have tickets available for our members. If you are interested in attending a Brewers game this season, please take the quiz. Anyone who submits the questionnaire will be eligible for Brewers tickets. The most correct answers will get first dibs. We will also do FLASH giveaways and we encourage you to follow us on Facebook so you don't miss out on those opportunities.



1. Who is the Brewers' all-time home run leader?

2. Which Brewer is the all-time hit leader for the organization?

A. Robin Yount B. Paul Molitor C. Ryan Braun D. Cecil Cooper

3. Who won the first MVP for the Brewers?

4. Which pitcher is the Brewers all-time strikeout leader?

A. Yovani Gallardo B. Ben Sheets C. Teddy Higuera D. Moose Haas

5. What was the name of the stadium the Brewers played in from 1970–2000?

Name _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please return to Richland Electric Cooperative, 30 E. Robb Rd., Richland Center, WI 53581



We Trees, Too.

We know everyone in our community enjoys the beauty and shade trees provide. But trees and power lines can be a dangerous mix without regular trimming during the growing season.

If you see us out in the community trimming, remember the many benefits it brings:

- Keeps power lines clear of tree limbs
- Helps us restore power outages more quickly
- Keeps crews and members of our community safe
- Reduces unexpected costs for repairs

Trimming improves service reliability for you, the members we serve.



LOW TREE ZONE

Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.

Over 40 ft.

Plant Trees Safely



Rural Writers

A SPLIT RAIL FENCE AND BABY GROUSE

By Al Cornell

Dad walked along our east line fence, and I tagged along. That fence separated our ridge cropland from our neighbor's pastured woodlot. Dad was determining if the fence was in good enough condition to protect our crops from those pasturing Holsteins.

A hundred yards of the neighbor's portion of that fence was split rail. That was the only section of regular old-time split rail that I recall seeing. It was old and deteriorating. A barbed wire had been strung along the top of it to offset its condition.

I now marvel at the effort that had gone into that portion of fence. The one-man chainsaw was invented many years after that fence had been built. There was felling and bucking by axe and saw. Next the bolts of perhaps 15 feet had to be split. Hence 15-foot sections were zig-zagged together to give the fence stability. Even cutting and splitting the posts for a barbed wire fence was intensive work. When one-dollar steel posts became available, most rural folks found a way to fund that change.

Just after we passed the split rail section of the line fence, we came to the old homestead site on our side of the fence. Folks by the surname Abel had lived there in the 1800s. They sold their 40 to my great-great-granddad Morgan. They had planted flowers and fruit trees. Due to their walnut planting, that site is still referred to as "the walnuts." And their two conifers were unique among the trees on our farm.

Only a small portion of the house remained. We always picked up small stones and dropped them down the deep ridgetop well. The volume of the "twangs" against the casing diminished as the rocks accelerated to the splash over 100 feet down.

We called the conifer that stood next to the house an arborvitae. The second was a white spruce to which the line fence was nailed. It had a hollow base with a small upward pointing, wedge-shaped opening at ground level.

Suddenly, a hen grouse began flopping away from us in the sparse spring ground cover. I was captivated, amazed by that strange event. I knew nothing about a bird feigning injury to lead predators away from their young. I supposed something bad had happened to that poor little chicken-like bird.

Then I felt Dad's hand on my shoulder and looked down to see what he was pointing toward. About eight darling tan with brown stripe cotton balls on toothpick sized legs were beating it up the dirt ramp that led through the little opening into the hollow at the base of the spruce. The front end of each was adorned with a tiny peach colored beak and black beady eyes. Sure, baby chicks and ducklings are cute, but these things had no equal on the face of the earth. I was struck. Good thing Dad was wise to that feigning trick of the hen, or I would have just stared as she flapped away from us.

That was my call of the wild. There were wonders in the woods, and I needed to keep my eyes wide open.



WELCOME, ASHLEY

Please help us welcome our newest lineman, Ashley Wirtz. Ashley joined our team in April we are happy to have him. He and his wife, Wendy, reside in Muscoda, and he was employed by Muscoda utilities for 12 years. He did his line worker apprenticeship program through Chippewa Valley Technical School and has been a journeyman lineman since April of 2019.

He received his EMT certification in 2019 and is also a member of the Fire Department. He has one son and four stepdaughters. He also has four grandchildren: three girls and one boy. In his free time, he enjoys going for rides on his Harley.


We are happy to have Ashley on our team. If you see him and any other linemen out working out in the field, be sure to say hi and thank them.

Shannon Clark, Manager/CEO

30 E. Robb Rd., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581


608-647-3173

www.rec.coop

Find us on Facebook 



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Board of Directors

Calvin Sebranek, President • Daniel Hillberry, Vice President • Judy Murphy, Secretary • Tim Tiller, Treasurer
Don Huffman, Jim Goplin, Steven Fuller, Jeff Monson, Kevin Kepler