


Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* September 2022 NEWS



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**MIDWEST LEADS
ELECTRIC SCHOOL
BUS TRANSITION**

**WILD WISCONSIN
PHOTO CONTEST WINNER**

THE HEART OF CLEGHORN

**REC BRINGING TOUCHSTONE
ENERGY BALLOON BACK TO
VIOLA HORSE & COLT SHOW**





TOUCHSTONE ENERGY BALLOON WILL RETURN TO THE VIOLA HORSE & COLT SHOW



Once again, Richland Electric Cooperative has partnered with Vernon Electric Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative to bring to the Touchstone Energy Balloon to the Viola Horse and Colt Show September 23–24.

Weather permitting, guests will have the opportunity to take a tethered ride in the hot-air balloon and enjoy a bird’s-eye view of the showgrounds. The balloon’s basket, with the burners sending huge flames whooshing into the sky, will also be featured in Saturday’s grand parade.

The 91st Viola Horse and Colt Show will feature exhibits and activities including a horse show, rodeo, tractor pull, midway carnival, arts & crafts show, live music, and the event’s popular grand parade. For more information visit <http://wp.horseandcoltshow.com>



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MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 8!

That’s when we’ll be gathering together at the REC service center at 30 E. Robb Road in Richland Center to celebrate Co-op Month with a Member Appreciation Picnic!

Come join us from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for fun, food, and—even better—fellowship, live and in person!

We’ll be serving up grilled brats, hot dogs, chicken breasts, pulled pork, potato salad, beans & cheese curds.

Hope to see you there!

THE POWER OF PREPARATION

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever, it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water, and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, Dunn Energy wants to remind members of our community about the power of preparation. While you don't have to achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety, and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.

Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio, and phone chargers.
- Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in a safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- Fill your car with gas.
- Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

Care for Vulnerable Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to

check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication, and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

Keeping Four-Legged Family Members Safe

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress especially if you need to make a decision during an emergency.

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications, and other supplies).

At Dunn Energy, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.

4 Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

24 OR **48** Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!

Icons: eggs, milk, fish, cheese.



KNOW THE SIGNS OF A SCAM



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM UTILITY SCAMMERS



- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers.
- Don't click on links in emails or messages.



- Don't give out your personal data.
- Don't wire money to a stranger



- End the conversation.
- Block the sender.
- Report the incident to Richland Electric Cooperative.

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas, or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school, and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone, or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text, or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 608-647-3173. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, www.rec.coop. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. Remember, Richland Electric Cooperative (REC) will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

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Some scammers may falsely claim you have been *overcharged* on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a Social Security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, REC will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. REC linemen often wear high-visibility clothing with the REC logo, and all others will make appointments with you prior to meeting with you. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

WELCOME TO REC, KAREN OLSON

Please help us welcome Karen Olson to the Richland Electric Cooperative (REC) team. Karen joined our team on July 11 as our accounting assistant.

Karen lives in the Soldiers Grove area with her husband (Roger). They have two grown children and two grandchildren, a boy and a girl. She was employed as a medical transcriptionist for 30 years and has experienced two buyouts from the companies she was employed by. Following her years as a medical transcriptionist she was hired by Vernon County in their zoning and sanitation department but later transferred to the highway department. While employed with Vernon



County she was also working on finalizing her associate degree in accounting at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, which she achieved in December 2020.

Karen said she always saw herself in an accounting position and when the position opened at REC, she applied knowing this opportunity would allow her to utilize her accounting degree.

While speaking with Karen, it was obvious that she is very motivated. The typical question that always arises while doing interview is “what do you like to do for fun?” We joked when she responded with “who has time for that?” She and her husband also live on a farm. However, she did state that she gave up a few things to be able to spend more time with her grandchildren, which we can all understand. We are very happy to have Karen as part of the REC team!

BEWARE of dangers above. Your LIFE depends on it.

Farm Safety &
Health Week
Sept. 18–24

Fall harvest is the most likely time of year for farm-related accidents and fatalities. Be aware of your surroundings.

*Look up and look out
for power lines.*

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org.



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