



# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

**T**here's an old political saying, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This adage is the perfect answer to the question, "Why vote?" It's a blunt description of what happens when you don't engage in the political process.

If you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate that shares your views and concerns, you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future.

## Your Vision, Your Vote

While local elections may not be as exciting as the high-profile presidential election, they are just as critical. Local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life.

Like the national level, local elections represent who we are as a community, and more importantly, where we want to go. Whether it's an election for a mayor, sheriff, state representative, school board, or an electric co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

Voting keeps elected officials accountable. Elections are a direct and tangible source of feedback. For example, Richland Electric Cooperative board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community.

## Staying in Sync with the Community

Ultimately, the role of the co-op board is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the members we serve. REC board members provide their perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more

informed decisions on long-term investments.

However, boards are not perfect, and we need you, the members of the co-op, to help keep the system in check. We depend on you and your neighbors to vote so that we can stay on course and ensure that we are in sync with the community that we serve.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process, because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

By voting in national, state and local elections, you are serving as a role model for your family, friends and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot and get out and vote!



**VOTE**



# POWER ON: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to you, the members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community—and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides *all* co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Richland Electric Cooperative and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving a special community like ours.

Who would have fathomed in March,

that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and REC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Each lineman drives home a cooperative truck and other employees were spread out throughout the office to maintain separation, while other staff is now working remotely. We unfortunately closed our office to walk-in traffic. Our board meetings have become 100% virtual. However, we were able to host a very creative drive-in annual

meeting that is still garnering national attention. For the health and safety of everyone, we think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements.

And while we certainly missed visiting with you in person, we found new ways to stay connected. We are more engaged on social media than ever. We launched a new website. We created a fun drawing and trivia contest to give back to our members. We are constantly evolving and learning new ways to reach our members.

I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast about REC but to explain how much we care about this community—because we live here too.

Then. Now. Always.  
We're proud to power your life.  
October is National Co-op Month.



## #PowerOn

# HAVE A **SAFE** HUNTING SEASON

## Knowing the basic rules of firearm safety is essential

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction
- Be certain of your target and what's beyond it
- Keep your gear in good working order
- Inspect your clothing and other equipment for signs of wear and tear
- Transport guns safely

## Tree Stand Safety

- Climb and hunt sober
- Always check the condition of your tree before you climb
- Test the hardware
- Get a full-body fall restraint harness
- Attach an extra foot strap to your fall-restraint harness
- Exercise caution when climbing or descending and when climbing in and out of your tree stand or platform
- Use a short tether
- Use a haul line
- Have a recovery and escape plan
- Make sure you can communicate

*Courtesy of Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin*



# THE JOYS OF SAUERKRAUT

**When I was growing up, if you were German (and a lot of us in central Wisconsin were), you knew about cabbage, and you especially knew about sauerkraut. If you didn't like sauerkraut, you got over it, for if you were hungry, especially in the wintertime, you ate sauerkraut.**

Along with her tomato seeds, Ma planted cabbage seeds on Saint Patrick's Day. She grew two varieties, an early maturing variety and a late variety. As the seedlings sprouted and grew in a south window of our kitchen, Ma tended them as lovingly as she cared for newly hatched chicks.

She set the cabbage plants out in the garden by late April to early May, as cabbage is a cool weather crop and can survive a light frost. Ma planted them in a row stretching from one end of the garden to the other and then hoed the little plants regularly, replacing the occasional one that died or succumbed to a hungry rabbit. By the beginning of September, the early cabbage was ready to harvest, the green heads as large as an adult's head, plump and firm. Ma made coleslaw and sometimes prepared boiled cabbage from this early variety.

In October the late cabbage was ready, big leafy, heavy heads that we cut off with a big butcher knife, tossed into bushel baskets, and carried to the kitchen where our homemade sauerkraut manufactory had been set up. Making sauerkraut was a family project, with Pa working at the cabbage slicer—he said it was too dangerous for us kids to use; Ma tucking the shredded cabbage into the five-gallon Red Wing crock; one of the twins handing heads of cabbage to Pa and the other, following Ma's directions, sprinkling canning salt on each layer of shredded cabbage in the crock. I tamped the cabbage in the crock with a big piece

of stove wood. The smell of fresh cabbage filled the room, as we five worked for a couple hours, or until we ran out of cabbage or the crock was full. The kraut was ready for eating in four to six weeks. It will keep indefinitely in the crock as long as the top is not exposed to air. The kraut can be removed from the crock and canned, as my mother did, or frozen.

By late October we were feasting on sauerkraut at least once a week. Ma had many ways of preparing it: baked sauerkraut, fried sauerkraut, sauerkraut and pork chops, sauerkraut and ham, sauerkraut and pork hocks, sauerkraut cake, and sometimes just a bowl of plain old tart-tasting kraut fresh out of the crock. The crock of sauerkraut sat in the pantry, just off the kitchen. When you entered our farm kitchen in winter, you immediately caught the smell of two things, oak smoke from the wood burning cook stove, and the pungent smell of sauerkraut.



Go to [www.jerryapps.com](http://www.jerryapps.com) to learn more about Jerry's work.

**Shannon Clark, Manager/CEO**

1027 N. Jefferson St., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581


608-647-3173

[www.rec.coop](http://www.rec.coop)

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