



Watt's Going On

Greg McFarland, General Manager/CEO
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The month of May brings us to another round of visits with our legislators in Washington, D.C. I, along with one of your directors and several other electric cooperative general managers, directors, and statewide representatives, will be meeting with Wisconsin's senators and congressional representatives during the annual National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference.

During this conference, we spend time on Capitol Hill talking with our representatives and their staff about legislative issues affecting electric cooperatives and their member-owners. Some people may say that traveling to Washington, D.C., is a waste of time. With that in mind, we are all aware that the politics of this business are more visible than ever and we need to be in front of our delegation, and the conference does seem to help.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing regulations that will halt the construction of new coal-fired power plants and is currently formulating mandates that could effectively shut down existing coal-fired plants. Eighty-seven percent of **your** electricity is

generated from coal. If these regulations move forward, you will see coal, a reliable source of energy, replaced with a volatile fossil fuel source. This past winter proves that such a move would jeopardize reliable and affordable electricity.

Environmental improvements on coal-fired power plants take time to implement, and as of today, technology is not commercially available. If these regulations are approved, you will see the cost of wholesale power jump 75 to 80 percent.

We continue to work endlessly for our member-owners, but we also need your support. You have until May 9, 2014, to submit comments to the EPA regarding proposed regulations in our industry. Thank you to those of you who sent in responses from the direct mailer we sent in March. If you haven't responded, we ask that you take time to read and sign the letter and send it back to our office. If you want, you can also submit comments to the EPA through **action.coop**. Tell your neighbors and friends—as their electric bill will also be affected—to support us as well.

May is Electrical Safety Month. As you read this issue, you will note the many tips reminding you to be safe around electricity. Remember to look up and around for power lines and call Diggers Hotline before putting your shovel in the ground.

We've waited a long time for spring to arrive—enjoy it and remember, safety always! ■

Students Wanted for Youth Leadership Conference

High school students from across Wisconsin will gather at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls July 16–18 for the 51st annual Youth Leadership Congress (YLC). This conference is sponsored by Wisconsin electric cooperatives, including Jackson Electric Cooperative.

Students will participate in team-

building activities, learn about cooperative principles, and have an opportunity to interview and campaign to be part of the Wisconsin Youth Board. All sessions are designed to develop the next generation of community leaders. Those students attending the conference also have an opportunity to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship offered by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association.

Jackson Electric Cooperative sponsors high school students who will be sophomores, juniors, or seniors in the fall to attend this event. Enrollment and transportation costs are covered by Jackson Electric Coop-



erative. If you're interested in attending the YLC, please contact Carol at **cblaken@jacelec.com** by May 30, 2014. For more information on YLC, go to **www.jacelec.com**. ■



If you're using a ladder or scaffold or carrying aluminum siding, poles, fencing, and even lumber, be aware and stay clear of power lines. *Source: esfi.org*

Mike Anderson Memorial Presented at Annual Meeting

The Mike Anderson Memorial was awarded to the Jackson County Interfaith Caregivers at Jackson Electric Cooperative's 77th Annual Meeting held on Tuesday, March 11, at the Lunda Theatre in Black River Falls.

Karen Foust, from the Interfaith Caregivers, accepted the newly established \$1,000 memorial from Jackson Electric Cooperative that was presented by Todd and Morgan Anderson, son and granddaughter of Mike



Karen Foust, left, accepts the Mike Anderson Memorial on behalf of the Jackson County Interfaith Caregivers, from Todd and Morgan Anderson.

Anderson. Because Anderson was very community-minded, the cooperative's board of directors wanted to honor his memory with a memorial. Anderson served as general manager for the cooperative from 1980 until retiring in 2004. He also served as interim manager between November 2008 and March 2009. Anderson passed away last August.

Continuing with the meeting, President Gary Woods stated the cooperative had a successful year financially in 2013. As a result, Jackson Electric returned \$657,000 back to its members in the form of capital credits, thus increasing the total amount returned since capital credit inception in 1965 to more than \$8 million. Members applauded when

Woods announced a rate increase is not anticipated in 2014. He reported the load management program has saved the cooperative \$540,000 in wholesale power costs. Members participating in the water heater and dual fuel programs saved \$166,000 and \$889,000, respectively. Power line maintenance continues throughout the coming year, and line construction will soon take place near the Garden Valley Town Hall. He assured those in attendance the board develops strategies to meet the changing needs and expectations of the membership.

General Manager/CEO Greg McFarland addressed potential Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations that could halt the construction of new coal-fired power plants and the shutdown of existing coal-fired plants. Potential regulations could increase the cost of power 75 to 80 percent. He stated, "We are not against environmental improvements, but we need time to implement changes. Currently, technology is not available to achieve new mandates that are being proposed."

Eighty-seven percent of the electricity distributed to members is generated from coal; nationwide, 37 percent of electricity is generated from coal.

McFarland asked the members to submit comments to the EPA via the website, action.coop, or by completing and signing Action cards that were available at the annual meeting.

McFarland presented the Youth Ambassador Scholarship to Brandi Shramek, daughter of Pat and Cindy Shramek of Alma Center. Brandi is a member of Jackson Electric Cooperative's Youth Ambassador Program and plans to attend Viterbo University this fall in a health-related field.

Several business items were approved during the meeting, including Article and Bylaw amendments, re-districting, and the ratification of three directors to serve on the board. Those directors ratified were Junior Jacobson, District 2; Jerry Huber, District 3; and Dan Smrekar, District 8.

A big-screen TV was won by Genell Severson of Hixton, and 15 \$100 cash prizes were won by members. Eugene Hart of Black River Falls won a \$50 energy credit. All registered members present for the meeting received a \$10 energy credit.

There were 244 voting members present, with 354 people in attendance.

Following the meeting, the board of directors elected Gary Woods, president and Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) representative; Jerry Huber, vice president and DPC alternate representative; and Dave Peasley, secretary/treasurer. ■

Revised Bylaw Books Available

At the March 11, 2014, annual meeting, amendments to the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were approved by the membership. A revised copy of the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are available from our office.

Inspect power tools and appliances for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housing, and repair or replace damaged items. *Source: esfi.org*



Tamper Resistant Receptacles Help Keep Your Home Safe

They may look like standard outlets, but tamper resistant receptacles, or TRRs, are different. Their most distinguishable feature—a built-in shutter system that prevents foreign objects from being inserted—sets them apart. Only a plug that applies simultaneous, equal pressure to both slots will disengage the cover plates, allowing access to the contact points. Without this synchronized pressure, the cover plates remain closed.

Children's curiosity can sometimes put them in peril, especially around electricity. Located in practically every room of the house, electrical outlets and receptacles are fixtures, but they're also potential hazards for children.

In recent years, more homes have been equipping their electrical outlets with TRRs, but in many public

facilities, like hospital pediatric wards, these safeguards have been required for more than 20 years. Their efficiency also prompted the National Electrical Code to make TRRs standard in all new home construction. Existing homes can be easily retrofitted with TRRs using the same installation guidelines that apply to standard receptacles. TRRs should only be installed by a licensed electrician and should carry a label from a nationally recognized, independent testing lab such as UL, ETL, or CSA.

TRRs by the Numbers

- Each year 2,400 children suffer severe shock and burns resulting from inserting objects into the slots of electrical receptacles. That's nearly seven children a day.
- It is estimated that 6–12 child fatalities result from children tampering with electrical receptacles.
- Installing a TRR in a new home costs only about 50 cents more than a traditional receptacle. Existing homes can be retrofitted for as little as \$2 per outlet.

For more information, visit www.esfi.org.—Source: NRECA Straight Talk ■

Be Safe Around Electricity



Approximately 320 students at the Melrose Elementary and Junior High Schools learned about electricity distribution and electrical safety during a demonstration conducted by Jackson Electric Cooperative's linemen Matt Bush, Jesse Hansen, and Steve Bucholz.

Teaching the community and youth about the importance of safety around power lines is the purpose of Jackson Electric Cooperative's safety demonstrations. Students witnessed the power and dangers of electric lines by viewing what happens when a tree branch, kite, or person (simulated by a hotdog) accidentally touches a power line energized to 7,200 volts. The linemen also discussed the safest way to exit a vehicle, if necessary, that accidentally makes contact with a power pole, causing power lines to fall on or near the vehicle.

To learn more about Jackson Electric Cooperative's safety demonstrations, go to www.jackelec.com/public_relations/safety_demonstrations. ■



Water does not mix with electricity. Avoid damp conditions—including wet grass—when using electricity. Source: esfi.org



You Commented. We're Responding.

Member Comment: "I am on dual fuel. They cut it off too much and we can't get off of it."

Our Response: The dual fuel program is a **voluntary** program, and you can drop the program at any time simply by asking us to remove you. If you are removed from the program, your electric heat will not be subject to load control. However, you will no longer receive the low dual fuel

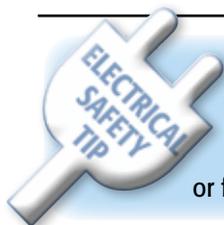
energy rate. Expect your heating costs to nearly double if you drop the dual fuel program.

The frequency, and to some degree, the duration of load control is weather driven. You can expect more load control to occur during an unusually cold winter like the one we just had. Electric heating systems were controlled 18 times for a total of 70 hours during the 2013–14 winter. If you consider the heating season to be five months long (November through March), that's 70 hours out of

3,600—a low percentage of the time.

Remember that winter load control usually occurs on the coldest nights of the winter for up to six hours. It's important that any person participating in the dual fuel program has an adequate fossil fuel back-up heating system to provide heat during the load control periods.

For more information on Jackson Electric Cooperative's Dual Fuel Program, go to www.jackelec.com/programs/dual_fuel_program or contact our office. ■



Always use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture. Source: esfi.org

Convenient Bill Paying Options Available

Several options are available to Jackson Electric Cooperative members to pay your monthly electric bill.

- Go to www.jackelec.com and click on the Bill4U tab to pay online using your bank account number or credit/debit card. This is a free and secure service offered to members. You can make a one-time payment, sign up for monthly automatic payment withdrawals, request paperless statements, and view your electric usage.
- Mail your payment to Jackson Electric Cooperative. Please include your signed check and payment stub, and be mindful of federal holidays when there is no mail delivery. Your payment is posted when we receive your payment—not on the postmarked date.
- Pay in person at Jackson Electric Cooperative. Be prepared to show your current electric bill or confirm your mailing address and the last four digits of your Social Security number. We ask this to protect your identity. VISA and MasterCard are accepted.
- A secure 24-hour drop box, located at Jackson Electric Cooperative's headquarters, is available to our members who are unable to make their payments during office hours.
- You may make special arrangements to pay your bill depending on your account history. To learn more about the payment options, go to jackelec.com/billing/payment_options. ■

Ask Your Cooperative

Steve Meyer, Member Services Director



Q: I need to buy a dehumidifier for my basement. How much electricity will it use and will I see a large increase in my monthly electric bill? Is there a rebate available for dehumidifiers?

A: Dehumidifiers that operate continuously in an area where it's very humid consume a considerable amount of energy. The size of the unit will affect the operating costs; a \$20 to \$50 monthly increase in energy costs is not unusual. Dehumidifiers have a compressor similar to a refrigerator; therefore, operating a dehumidifier uses energy similar to leaving the door open on your refrigerator.

Look for the Energy Star logo when purchasing a dehumidifier. According to the Energy Star website, Energy Star certified models have more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors, and fans than conventional models. This means they use less energy to remove moisture. Energy Star rated dehumidifiers qualify for a \$25 rebate from Jackson Electric Cooperative. Rebate forms are avail-

able on our website at www.jackelec.com or at the office.

If you have a question to ask Jackson Electric Cooperative, please submit to our office at P.O. Box 546, Black River Falls, WI 54615, or email cbblaken@jackelec.com and put in the subject line "Magazine Question." ■



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