



## COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY UNDER REVIEW



**Kevin Babcock,**  
General Manager/  
CEO

At the annual meeting held in March and in the April issue of this magazine, I referenced that a cost-of-service/rate study was being conducted for the cooperative. At the regular April board meeting, a representative from the firm that was contracted to conduct this study presented rate recommendations

to the directors. A final proposal will be sent to your board of directors for action at their May regular board meeting. Even though we don't anticipate a rate adjustment for general service residential members, there may be adjustments made to other rate classes. Members will be notified of any rate adjustments through a direct mail piece, along with this magazine.

The objective of a cost-of-service study is to identify the cost of providing service to each rate class based on electric load and service attributes and to meet the cooperative's revenue requirements. Rates are analyzed so they are fair and equitable to all rate classes. Much time and consideration is being invested into the design of rate strategies because it directly affects you, the member. We appreciate your patience with this process.

June is well known for the beginning of summer storm season. Summer storms are unpredictable and it's best you're prepared in the event of a lengthy power outage during a storm. Generators are a great backup if your home or business loses power during a storm. Before purchasing a generator, think about where you'll put a generator to use during an outage. It should be located outside in a dry area and on a level surface. You'll need to decide what electronics and appliances are the most important to you during an outage to determine if a portable generator will meet your needs. If you purchase a permanent generator, it needs to be properly wired directly into your home by a qualified electrician.

Most importantly, keep safety in mind when operating your generator. Read, follow, and understand all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator.

I encourage you to attend the Jackson County On-The-Farm Breakfast at the Paul and Judy Olson and Jim and Alan Ideker farms located in the Skutley Coulee area, just outside of Taylor. On-the-farm breakfasts are starting to fade, and Jackson County is one of the few counties in the state that offer June Dairy Days breakfast on the farm. Take your family out for breakfast on June 4 and enjoy learning more about Wisconsin agriculture.

## COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

### Electric cooperatives support local fire and EMS department

Three local electric cooperatives teamed up to give the Osseo Fire and EMS Department some help with a donation towards the construction of a new facility. Together, Riverland Energy Cooperative, Arcadia; Jackson Electric Cooperative, Black River Falls; and Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, Eau Claire gave a \$4,500 donation to the department.

A new station has been a need for quite some time, not only to improve response times but also to provide adequate space for trucks and equipment.

"A new facility would allow our volunteers to better meet the emergency service needs of our growing community. Our community has always supplied us with great equipment to serve them. The equipment has just outgrown our current facilities. The new facility would be safer, offer quicker response times, and give us more space to train our volunteers. It also would allow for better

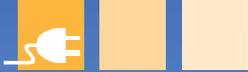
equipment maintenance and care," Chief Nels Gunderson said. "We would like to thank the cooperatives for their assistance in this important long-term public safety project."

The funds for the donation come from each of the cooperative's unclaimed capital credits.

(Photo and article courtesy of Beth Alesch, Riverland Energy)



Left to right: Lynn Thompson, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative President/CEO; Nels Gunderson, Osseo Fire Department Chief; Kevin Babcock, Jackson Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO; and Jerry Sorenson, Riverland Energy General Manager.



# Mentoring a younger farm family to help support their vision

## Two dairy farm families to host the Jackson County On-The-Farm Breakfast



Nestled in Skutley Coulee, located just outside of Taylor off of Hwy. N, a traditional family farm operation is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Just down and across Skutley Road is a modern family dairy farm operation celebrating its second anniversary this coming November. A combination of these two farming operations' milestones will highlight this year's Jackson County On-The-Farm Breakfast. Hosts will be Paul and Judy Olson and Jim and Alan Ideker.

What makes this story so interesting and, in a sense, modest, is the two families didn't know each other until just eight years ago. It was then that Jim Ideker and his brother, Alan, were participating in the Land Stewardship Program (LSP) in Minnesota. This program offers a range of training for beginning farmers and provides a network of farmers throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin who conduct field days, share their skills, and offer support. Throughout this course, beginning farmers understand their goals, establish a strong business plan, and start building their operation. While working for several farmers in their area, Jim and Alan sought out

this program because they had a desire to start their own dairy operation.

Paul Olson, who is involved with the National Farmers Organization (NFO), was asked to speak at the LSP. At that time, Paul participated in many panel discussions for the NFO and Organic Valley. It was after Paul's presentation that the Ideker brothers' fate changed, and so the story continues.

In 1916, Paul's grandparents, Matt and Minnie, purchased 40 acres of land in Skutley Coulee from Sever Skutley. The Olsons purchased an additional 60 acres, totaling 100 acres in the Olson farming operation. In 1940, Edwin and Elsie Olson, Paul's parents, purchased the farm. Paul purchased the family farm in 1972 from his parents and soon after built a dairy barn and silo at that site.



Paul and his wife, Judy, worked side by side for nearly 43 years on the farm. They raised three children, Scott, Troy, and Lisa, who helped on the farm when growing up. They have since left the area, but return to the farm with grandchildren Ava, Casey, and Kailee, to help when needed. The Olsons' tie-stall barn housed 80 cows, they raised their heifers, fed-out beef cattle, and for many years had a farrow-to-finish hog operation. Additional land was purchased throughout the years, and sheds, grain bins, and Harvestores were constructed on the original farm. The farm became certified organic in 2003.

Paul and Judy also rented land near Highway 95, north of Taylor. In November 2008, the tie-stall barn at that location was filled with 45 milking cows. The owners of those cows were—you may have guessed—Jim and Alan Ideker. The Idekers soon outgrew that barn and rented the neighbor's barn where 38 additional cows were milked. It will be two years in November that the two herds will have been combined,



Paul and Judy Olson invite you to their farm in Skutley Coulee to enjoy the breakfast and view Paul's IH tractor collection.

and the modern-day milking parlor and 200 free-stall barn was built across the road, in Skutley Coulee, from Paul and Judy's home farm. Within this past year, the Ideker brothers purchased the Olson's 80-cow herd. The herd and land remain certified organic.

Jim and Alan, along with Alan's wife, Maria who is employed off the farm, and sister, Melanie, all help in the operation of the farm. Alan's seven-month-old son, Noah, also enjoys farm life. Moving from Hokah, Minn. and from a family of 11 siblings, the Idekers have made Skutley Coulee their home.

They milk 161 grade Holsteins, with a few other dairy breeds sprinkled in the mix, two times a day in a double-eight milking parlor. They have 28 dry cows, as of this writing. They feed their cows a high forage total mixed ration (TMR), thus giving them milk production of an average of 69 pounds per cow. All their heifers and cows are artificially inseminated (AI) and they breed for strength and longevity. Heifer calves are raised for replacements and the bull calves are sold.

The Idekers own and rent a total of 1,100 acres. They grow corn, hay, barley, and winter wheat, with some of the acreage used as rotational pasture for the stock. All crops are used for feed for the dairy.

**Getting to the Jackson County On-The-Farm Breakfast:**

Buses will be transporting guests from the site of the former Taylor High School, located at 141 Pearl Street in Taylor, to the Paul and Judy Olson farm, just off of Skutley Road. Handicap parking is available at the farm with valid permit. From there, breakfast-goers will be traveling by tractor-pulled wagons to view the Ideker parlor and free-stall facilities.

The Jackson County On-The-Farm Dairy Breakfast will be Saturday, June 4. Serving will be from 6 to 11 a.m. Enjoy a pancake and sausage breakfast. Cost for adults is \$5; children under 12, \$2.



Paul and Judy look forward to enjoying more time with their three children and three grandchildren.

Jim says his knowledge of dairy farming comes from his past work with farmers, but he also found people who were good at what they did, such as the veterinarian and nutritionist, and asked for their advice. Paul and Judy, who are clearly passionate about the industry, have also mentored the brothers.

Even though the cows have moved across the road, Paul and Judy continue to stay busy. They own and manage a 10,000 organic chicken layer barn just down the road from the home farm, and the Idekers grow corn for the hens. Since 2000, Paul has served as president of the NFO and also enjoys collecting International tractors, which will be on display at the breakfast. Because of Paul's travel commitment for the NFO, Judy made many of the management decisions to aid in the overall success of the farming operation. Both Paul and Judy look forward to having more time to travel and spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Both the Olsons and Idekers welcome you to their farms and hope you enjoy this annual Jackson County event. [P. 8](#)

MY CO-OP



1. Jim and Alan Ideker's milking parlor and free-stall facility, located on Skutley Road in Taylor. 2. The free-stall facility is where the milking cows are housed. The cows are fed a high-forage TMR and are bed with sand. Jim Ideker believes the sand bedding not only provides cow comfort, but partially contributes the bedding to a low somatic cell count and little trouble with heel "hairy" warts on the cows. 3. Young stock housed at the Olson farm is raised and cared for by the Idekers. 4. The 10,000 organic hen layer facility is located near the Olson home farm on Skutley Road.



## FACILITY CHARGE SERIES CONTINUES...

The electric grid requires a large amount of money to build and maintain in order to make power available at your location. These costs are included as part of the facility charge and are shared equally among all meters on Jackson Electric lines. The facility charge does not include the actual amount of electricity you use. That is the energy charge that is billed in kilowatt-hours (kWhs).



The cost to purchase and maintain transformers is included in the facility charge. Transformers change electricity from high to low voltage. Electricity travels on long-distance lines at a high voltage when it is transmitted from a power plant to a substation. At the substation, the electricity is “stepped-down” to a lower voltage using a transformer, then distributed to the power lines you see alongside the roadways. Transformers located on power poles and/or the pad-mount transformer located in your yard step down electricity to a safe level for use in your home or business. The padmount transformer, which is located in your yard, is protected by a green box and is used with underground cable.

Jackson Electric has a total of 6,712

### Facility Charge

The cost of making power available at your location.



Shared equally among 7,500 meters

overhead and padmount transformers on its system. The cost to purchase and maintain those transformers is shared equally by all 7,500 meters on Jackson Electric’s lines.

## ELECTRIC CONSUMPTION WITH DEHUMIDIFIERS



By Ron Blado, Member Services Manager

You may see an increase in your electric bill during the summer months and the cause may be the use of a dehumidifier. To get an idea of the impact the dehumidifier will have on your electric bill, we need to

know the wattage of the unit and hours of run time.

To estimate how much the use of a dehumidifier may increase your monthly electric bill, you first need to know the watts of your unit. This information is typically printed on the dehumidifier box or visible on the unit itself. Watts

may vary slightly from brand to brand on new models, and older models will likely use more energy, especially if they haven’t been maintained. Humidity settings on the dehumidifier, chosen by the homeowner, will determine hours of run time.

For example, you purchase an Energy Star rated 50-pint dehumidifier. This specific brand of dehumidifier uses 530 watts. There is a lot of humidity in your home, so the dehumidifier is set to operate 24 hours a day for 30 days. With this scenario, you can expect to pay an additional \$48 to \$50 on your monthly electric bill due to the operation of the dehumidifier.



Is the operation of a dehumidifier worth the additional energy cost? I guess that answer depends on the homeowner. Dehumidifiers provide a vital function in regards to moisture control that can affect not only how a house performs for efficiency, but also provide a better, healthier living environment for the inhabitants. When purchasing a dehumidifier, determine the size of the area the unit will be operating in and look for the Energy Star logo for the most efficient models.



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800.370.4607

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Diggers Hotline 800.242.8511

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