



Kevin Babcock,
General Manager/
CEO

ENJOY THE COUNTY FAIR

When the first week of August rolls around and you live in Jackson County, you know when you enter the city limits of Black River Falls that the Jackson County Fair is in full swing. The livestock trailers and campers align the edge of the fairgrounds, carnival rides light up the night sky, and the aroma of fair food fills the air. Brings back memories.

This past summer Jackson Electric had the opportunity to hire a multi-media communications intern. The main focus of this internship was to establish social media platforms for member communications; the other focus was feature writing. In this issue, Maddy, our summer intern, put together an interesting article about the history of the Jackson County Fair. She researched past fairs and interviewed one of the past board members. We hope you enjoy reading her article as much as she enjoyed writing it.

This year's fair, in the Jackson County Historical Society's building, will feature Jackson Electric Cooperative. Our summer intern put together a display about Jackson Electric. I don't want to tell you too much about the display, but I will say it may initiate conversation from those who remember or

have heard stories about what life was like before electricity came to rural areas. Also, at the display is a cut-away of a lineman (pictured below) where kids, or adults, can have their photo taken. Make sure you bring your cameras and share your photos on our Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram sites and hashtag it #futurejaceleclineman.

Fairs bring families and friends together. Spend the day together enjoying each other's company, whether it's in the barns or on a ride. For many exhibitors it will be their first year. It's always fun to watch the reactions of the exhibitors.

And, lastly, you will soon be receiving with your billing statement a notice for Jackson Electric's Member Picnic in the Park. The picnic will be held on Tuesday, August 16, at the Lunda Park Upper Shelter, serving from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Once again, Jackson Electric employees and directors will be serving a picnic-style meal in appreciation of your loyal membership. Starting at 7 p.m., Them Coulee Boys will be performing at the Lunda Park's band shell. Good food, good music—there's no better way to spend a Tuesday evening. If you have a smart phone and the QR code app, click on the QR code on the picnic notice on this page. That code will link you to Jackson Electric's Facebook page for more picnic information.



Jackson Electric Cooperative's annual **Member Picnic in the Park** Tuesday, August 16

at the Lunda Park Upper Shelter, Black River Falls
Serving 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

- Pulled pork sandwiches, potato salad, cole slaw, beans, beverage, and ice cream
- Take your photo with a lineman photo prop
- Face painting for the young and old
- Bring a lawn chair and listen to music by Them Coulee Boys at the park's band shell following the picnic starting at 7 p.m.

Do you have a relative who may have lived on Jackson Electric's lines in the 1930s? If so, we may still have their original membership card

and/or certificate.

We'll have the cards available for you to view, and take for your personal scrapbook, at the picnic.



JACKSON ELECTRIC WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEE

When you walk through the doors of Jackson Electric Cooperative, you will be greeted by a new face. Thereasa Rieck was recently hired as a customer service representative. She will be responsible for directing phone calls and greeting members and others when they walk through the cooperative's doors.



Thereasa graduated from Black River Falls High School in 2006 and is currently pursuing a degree in accounting from Western Technical College. She enjoys spending time with her two sons, crocheting, cooking, camping, playing softball, and coaching Little League baseball. Welcome, Thereasa.

PHOTO CONTEST REMINDER

We are looking for your best photography shots to hang on the walls of Jackson Electric. Members are encouraged to take photos in Jackson Electric's service territory and submit your favorites to Jackson Electric. Every month, until June 30, 2017, a winning photo will be selected and the member-photographer will receive a \$25 energy credit.

Go to www.jackelec.com or contact our office for photo contest rules and release for photo use.





A Fair worth waiting for

In 1859, the corner of North 8th and Harrison Streets in Black River Falls marked the site of the first Jackson County Fair. This corner also marked the beginning of a tradition that community members continue to wait eagerly for each and every year. The fair’s history shows that many things have changed since 1859, but one thing has stayed the same—the fair’s ability to bring together and educate the community, leaving them craving the fair for next year.

The Rough Beginning

The first years of the Jackson County Fair hold very few records. But luckily, the book titled “Stories of Pioneer Days in the Black River Valley” by Abner Polley gives a closer look at the first fairs. Polley’s stories tell of the time commitment required of families to attend the fair. They packed themselves and their belongings into wagons pulled by oxen, traveling for

miles. Despite the difficulty in traveling, the fair was the most anticipated event of the year.

The Jackson County Fair felt a heavy impact from the Civil War. Polley writes, “The Civil War took every man of military age early in 1861.” In 1861, the fair suffered low attendance and had only two exhibits. The first Agricultural Society in charge of organizing the fair disbanded, and the fair that once took place in downtown Black River Falls was no longer.

A new start for the fair came in July of 1867. A group of delegates from several townships met to create a new Agricultural Society with the purpose of reorganizing the fair. With the bylaws drafted, and the constitution signed, the new society signed a 99-year lease of 40 acres of land to become the new site of the Jackson County Fair. To this day the fair is still held at this site, located across from the new Lunda Community Center. Under the new society, and at a new location, nearly 6,000 people attended the 1867 fair in October. The fair was back and this time it was here to stay.

Through the Years

The entertainment at the fair has ceased to amaze attendees through the years. Fairgoers look forward to the regularly scheduled events, such as the crowning of Miss Jackson County and livestock auction on a yearly basis. The fair also has featured entertainment that keeps fairgoers coming back for more.

1867: A grandstand and judge’s stand were two of the first buildings constructed on the new fairgrounds. During these early years of the fair, bicycle races, horse pulls, tug-of-war competitions, livestock exhibits, and showing oxen teams were some of the highlighted events that took place.

1913: The Jackson County Fair featured the first airplane to ever be in Jackson County. The airplane was to offer four flights during the fair; however, the pilot experienced complications during the first flight and crashed his plane. The pilot remained unharmed, and though unable to fly the plane, he left it on the fairgrounds for fairgoers to view.

1920s: Steam engines ran the first amusement rides offered at the fair because electricity was not available. This also meant the fair came to a close around 6 p.m. every night when it started to get dark.

1935: The fair has some of its most recognized entertainment. The famous comedian George Gobel performed, as well as musicians Lu-Lu Belle and the Hoosier Hot Shots.



1911: The first automobile is exhibited at the fair. The automobile was a bright red, one-cylinder Northern. Fairgoers could pay 25 cents to have their picture taken with it.

WWI: The fairgrounds was used as a training base for volunteers in the service. Men from all over the country came to Black River Falls to train for two months. The kitchen in the grandstand came in handy during this time.

1928: The first 4-H food stand opens.

1930: A dance pavilion is constructed. Dances took place every night of the fair and were highly anticipated events. After the end of prohibition in 1933, beer was sold in the dance pavilion.

Community Education

The Jackson County Fair educates just as much as it entertains. Through exhibits at the fair, youth are able to learn valuable life lessons that will contribute to their future. Lillian Hart, who spent her childhood showing exhibits for the 4-H club, The Irving Stick Tights, and spent her adult life at the fair as a University Extension office employee as well as a fair board member, gives an example how the fair educates youth showing animals about a future in agriculture: “It’s a learning process while growing up, and you’ll decide if you want to continue on that way of working and having animals.”

Youth are not the only ones who can gain knowledge at the fair. Exhibits in agriculture, photography, and even baking offer educational opportunities to people of all ages. Demonstrations from local organizations that have educational potential as well take place every year.

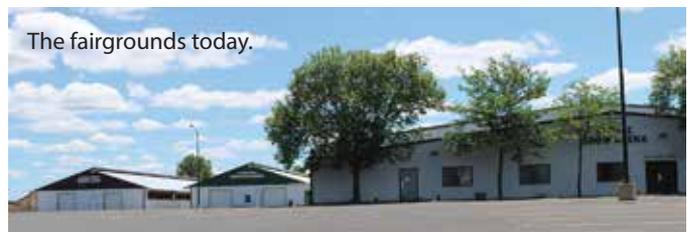
The Jackson County Fair has been a heavily anticipated event since 1859. From bicycle races and tug-of-war, to demolition derbies and amusement rides, the Jackson County Fair has a long and rich history of bringing together the community for a weekend of entertainment and friendly competition. Since 1859, the Jackson County Fair has proven time and time again that it is a fair worth waiting for. 📺

—Madeline Higley

Multi-Media Communications Summer Intern



Then and now: 8th and Harrison Streets corner in Black River Falls was where the first Jackson County Fair was held.



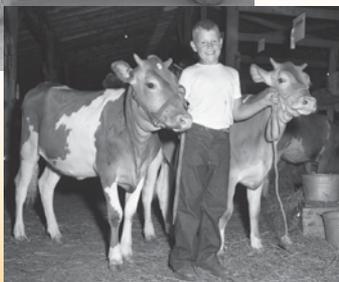
The fairgrounds today.

1949: The polio epidemic is in full swing. The fair is cancelled and people are afraid to leave their homes. This is the only year the fair has been cancelled.



1974: The first public restrooms with hot water showers are built on the fairgrounds.

1972: The first livestock auction takes place.



1977: The fair offers helicopter and hot air balloon rides. This is also the first year the demolition derby is held.



1985: Funded by personal donations, a new 60-stall draft horse barn is built.



2003: The secretary’s office, which was the oldest fairground building in the State of Wisconsin, had to be demolished after an unsuccessful attempt to move the building. Arlen Stern donated a new secretary’s office with an attached room to store the Miss Jackson County float.



1960s: Popular events at the fair are tractor pulls, magic shows, fireworks, wrestling matches, live music, Miss Jackson County, milking competitions, and dances in the pavilion.

1973: A Kiddie Barn is built.

1982: The multi-purpose building is constructed. It contained an arena with two show rings, 40 box horse stalls, 30 draft horse stalls, restrooms, and a 4-H food stand with a dining room.

1994: The first rodeo is featured at the fair.



2009: A groundbreaking ceremony is held for the construction of a new dairy barn, livestock barn, horse barn, small animal barn, grandstand, and ice arena.



LEAD LINEMAN GETS READY TO RETIRE HIS TOOL BELT

A lineman's job isn't always the most highly acknowledged. Restoring power and maintaining power lines in all types of weather didn't hinder Steve Tenner's aspiration to be a lineman. Steve, Jackson Electric's lead lineman, desired to be a lineman because he was partial to working outdoors and he enjoyed the people he worked with. On August 9, Steve will hang up his lineman tool belt and begin his first day of retirement.

After 38-1/2 years of working at Jackson Electric Cooperative, Steve believes one of his most memorable events was the flood of 1993, also known to many as the Father's Day flood. At that time, Jackson Electric was located in downtown Black River Falls, not far from the Black River. He recalls that the crew was out restoring power when they received a call to return to the office. The Black River dam in Black River Falls was ready to give way, and the crew needed to get vehicles and equipment moved to higher ground, fearing the damaged dam would cause a flood.

Steve also cites the many storms that caused power outages for not only

Jackson Electric's members, but for members of other electric cooperatives. He and another crew member traveled to Bayfield Electric Cooperative's service territory in 1984 after a July 4 storm that left members without power for nearly a week. And, because it was a holiday weekend in a tourist area, it was nearly impossible to find lodging for the crew.

Steve was also one of the two Jackson Electric crew members who traveled to Rochester, Minn., to aid in power restoration for People's Electric Cooperative after an ice storm hit that area in 1989. They left the day after Thanksgiving and returned back home about four days later.

Closer to home in the spring of 1998, a storm hit in the southern part of the Jackson Electric's system, causing lengthy power outages to those members for nearly one week. Jackson Electric called in assistance from 12 other electric cooperatives to aid in power restoration. Steve recalls, the night before and earlier that day, the Jackson Electric crew was restoring power to members in the opposite section of the system following an earlier storm. Just



High in the sky in the bucket, Steve gives the photographer a wave in 1987.

when they thought their work was done, a second storm hit in the Melrose area and the outage calls came in.

As one can imagine, after working at the same place for 38-1/2 years, several changes occurred. Steve says he remembers the co-op's line crew maintaining the right-of-way corridors. They would always have a chainsaw handy in case they saw a tree that needed to be removed from the corridor. Today, the co-op hires an outside contractor to maintain the power line corridors on a rotational basis. He also remembers when bucket trucks were only used to change transformers. Steve says he did his fair share of climbing poles.

Retirement will bring a host of travel opportunities for Steve and his wife, Judy. They have two sons—one who lives in New Mexico, the other in Oregon—who they plan to visit. They also plan to sightsee in some states they haven't had a chance to travel to yet.

Steve started at Jackson Electric as a groundman and received his journeyman lineman card in November 1984. He was named lead lineman of the crew in 2008.



Left: Every year, some of the line crew travel to their secret local fishing spot for a fishing contest. The contest is usually between the younger and more mature crew members. Lineman Steve Bucholz, left, and Steve Tenner took the largest fish honors. Right: Steve and meter technician Don Fortun are caught sneaking a sandwich at an annual member picnic.



Editor's Note: The employees and directors at Jackson Electric Cooperative wish Steve an enjoyable and healthy retirement. Thanks for the many years of service.



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Kevin Babcock, General Manager/CEO

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