



Community Cares Grant Applications Due Feb. 15

Riverland Community Cares is a grant program made possible by the members of Riverland Energy Cooperative. Participating members voluntarily contribute to Community Cares by allowing their monthly bills to be rounded up so that their change can help make an impact through the efforts of local groups and organizations, working to make our community a better place to live and work.

A Riverland Community Cares Board will review applications and distribute funds in March. The application deadline is **February 15, 2023**.

Eligibility:

1. Non-profit groups and organizations that serve communities located within the Riverland Energy Cooperative service area.
2. Projects that fit into one or more of these categories: Community Service, Economic Development, and Education and Youth.


Restrictions:

1. Contributions will generally be made to only non-profit organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).
2. Contributions will generally not be made for lobbying, political, and religious organizations; veteran, fraternal and labor organizations; fundraising dinners, and raffles.

Refer to the guidelines found on our website for more information on eligibility requirements. Grant applications can also be found on our website at riverlandenergy.com.



Riverland Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

CHALLENGES ON MULTIPLE FRONTS AFFECT RATES



By Interim General Manager
Tim Holtan

Riverland Energy has always strived to provide its members with the highest quality of service and the lowest possible cost. Today our world faces a volatile and uncertain future. Throughout this challenging period, we have maintained a watchful eye on market and industry changes. We have tried to protect our members from market volatility while still ensuring the reliable delivery of electricity.

Changes on so many different fronts have created new challenges for the cooperative. These include things like supply-chain issues, rising power supply costs, member rates, and storms and outages.

Over the last few years, we deliberately kept our rates level even as costs of supplies escalated and members affected by work closures stopped paying their bills during COVID-19. The pressure on our rates has been increasing this year as costs of power are rising. Inflation is hitting the cooperatives just like it is hitting you. Dairyland Power Cooperative, our power supplier, is informing us about the potential for higher costs of our generation. Power cost is more than half of all our expenses, so an increase in this area can be impactful.

Over the last year and a half, we have seen material prices rise quickly along with their corresponding delivery lead times. This has caused us to change the way we source materials. As an electric utility, we must maintain inventories to allow us not only to do our daily line construction and maintenance, but to be prepared to respond to storms and potential disasters where material can be wiped out in a couple of days. Suppliers simply do not have enough stock on hand for us to know we can rely on them in the event of a major weather event. We have to have supplies on hand, thus paying more for them. And like everyone else, fuel costs have affected us too, and we are incurring higher diesel and gasoline costs to run our trucks and some of our equipment.

We have not changed our rates in three years, and while the cooperative is strong financially, we have to keep up with the market forces that are impacting us. Members can expect a rate change this year, but we do not have the final numbers in place yet. We are still working on a new rate schedule, and any rate change will likely take effect in May 2023.

We understand that any change made to our rates can have a large impact on members experiencing financial difficulties, and for that, we are sympathetic. We will make every effort to ensure that we limit any increase to you, while ensuring the cooperative operates as efficiently as possible and maintains a sound financial position.

2023 Annual Meeting

Riverland Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 25 at the Arcadia High School.

Pancake Breakfast – 8:00–9:45 a.m.
Business Meeting – 10:00 a.m.

There will be door prize drawings, director elections, scholarship drawings, and an attendance gift. We will be streaming the meeting live on YouTube.

(You must be present at the Annual Meeting to be eligible to win the door prizes and scholarships)

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS: HOW TO VOTE

We will be using Survey & Ballot Systems for the election management services. They employ third-party audits, use best in-class security practices and have industry-leading encryption and authentication measures.

The 2023 election will be a “hybrid” election. This means that members will still get a paper ballot if there is a contested election, as well as the new online option and the ability to vote in person at the Annual Meeting. The first vote received will be the one that counts. Online and mail-in ballots will be accepted from March 10–March 22, 2023.

Diamond will tabulate all the ballots, both paper and online. Members will be able to access the online voting portal through SmartHub. More detailed information will be found in the annual report and March publications. You can also watch our social media sites and website, riverlandenergy.com, for information.

This year, members will be voting to fill three seats opening on the Riverland Energy Board of Directors. Districts 1, 6 & 7 will be elected for four-year terms. The results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 25.

ELECTIONS TO BE HELD FOR THREE DISTRICT BOARD SEATS

The District Committee of the cooperative will meet this month to nominate candidates for the Riverland Energy Cooperative Board of Directors election at the Annual Meeting on March 25. One director will be elected from District 1, District 6, and District 7 for four-year terms.

District 1 represents Towns of Maxville, Canton, Gilmanton, Dover, Mondovi, Modena and Naples, as well as portions of Towns of Durand, Lima, and Albany. District 6 represents Towns of Dodge, Trempealeau, Caledonia, and Gale in Trempealeau County; and a fringe of North Bend in Jackson County. District 7 represents the Town of Holland and surrounding areas of Holmen.

Director qualifications and expectations outlined in the cooperative’s policy are summarized here:

- Must be a bona-fide resident of the director district and eligible to vote at the membership meeting.
- Must be willing to abide by and uphold all Articles, Bylaws, and Policies of the cooperative to the best of your ability.
- Must be bondable.
- Must agree to disclose any potential conflicts of interest and abstain from voting on any issue, which may be construed as a conflict of interest.
- Cannot be employed or have financial interest in a competing enterprise.
- Cannot gain substantial revenue from the sale of goods or services to the cooperative.
- Must disclose if closely related to an employee of the cooperative.
- Must sign an application for serving on the board of directors.

In order to direct and discharge his/her performance of duties and obligations of the Board of Directors, candidates for the board of directors must understand and make every effort to comply with the following:

- Must agree to cooperate with other directors and support majority decisions.
- Must hold all information gained in the performance of duties in strict confidence.
- Must be willing to make a reasonable effort to attend director training and educational sessions.
- Must agree to prepare for, attend, and participate in regular and special board meetings.
- Must agree to be responsible for helping to set policy, but not be involved with day-to-day operations of the cooperative.
- Must be dedicated to the well-being of the cooperative, and the “Seven Cooperative Principles”.
- Must have high moral standards and a clear concept of director’s responsibilities and ethics.

Every member in District 1, 6, and 7 will receive a ballot at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting to elect a director in their district. Members can vote ahead online, or mail in their ballot. Voting instructions will be included with your ballot. Members can also vote in-person at the Annual Meeting.

We encourage everyone to take the time to review the candidate information in the annual report implemented in the March *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* magazine. After that, please vote. In the 85-year history of this cooperative, it has never been easier to cast your vote and make your voice heard.



2023 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Applications Due March 15

Traditional and At-Large Scholarships

Riverland Energy will award 30 \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors whose parent or guardian resides in Riverland Energy service territory. Two eligible graduating seniors from each of the following schools will be selected: Alma, C-FC, G-E-T, Independence, Osseo-Fairchild, Arcadia, Durand, Gilmanton, Mondovi, Whitehall, Blair-Taylor, Eleva-Strum, Holmen, and Onalaska. In addition, two at-large scholarships will be awarded to eligible seniors who live in our service territory, but don't attend any of the schools listed above.

Line Worker Scholarships

Two \$1,000 Line Worker Scholarships will be awarded to individuals pursuing a post-secondary education in an electrical line worker program. The applicant must be a senior in high school. The recipient will be chosen in a random drawing at the cooperative's annual meeting in conjunction with the general scholarships. The applicant can apply for both the general scholarship and the line worker scholarship, but will only be eligible to receive one.

The recipients will be chosen in a random drawing at the co-op's Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 25, 2023. The applicant, or the applicant's parent or guardian, must be present to win.

Non-traditional Scholarships

Riverland Energy will award up to three \$750 scholarships to an adult student who is either headed to college for the first time, returning to complete an interrupted education, or looking to return to college to improve his or her career opportunities. Recipients will be chosen in a random drawing at the Riverland Energy Board of Directors meeting from all completed and verified applications.

Deadline for all scholarship applications in March 15, 2023. Applications can be found on our website at riverlandenergy.com or through your high school guidance counselor.



NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW PRICING FOR EvergreenSM

A GREEN POWER PROGRAM

Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, Riverland Energy's Evergreen program is offering updated pricing for members of \$0.65 per 100 kilowatt-hour (kWh) block. Blocks were previously \$1 per 100 kWh block.

Since 1998, Evergreen has been a voluntary green power program that supports more renewable energy resources within Dairyland Power Cooperative's generation portfolio.

"We know many of our members want to support more renewable energy. However, to own their own system, such as solar or small wind, is not feasible either due to cost, maintenance, property restrictions or another reason. Evergreen is an easy and budget-friendly way for any cooperative member to 'be green,'" Interim Manager Tim Holtan said.

The retired renewable energy credits (RECs) assigned to Riverland Energy's Evergreen program are generated at Dairyland's renewable generation facilities and power purchase agreements, which include solar, wind, hydro, and biogas resources.

Evergreen blocks allocated to members are in addition to any federal or state requirements. Payment for a member's blocks will be included as a line item on their monthly electric bill and is in addition to the member's monthly electric bill. For more information about the Evergreen program, visit our website at www.riverlandenergy.com, or call us at 800-411-9115.

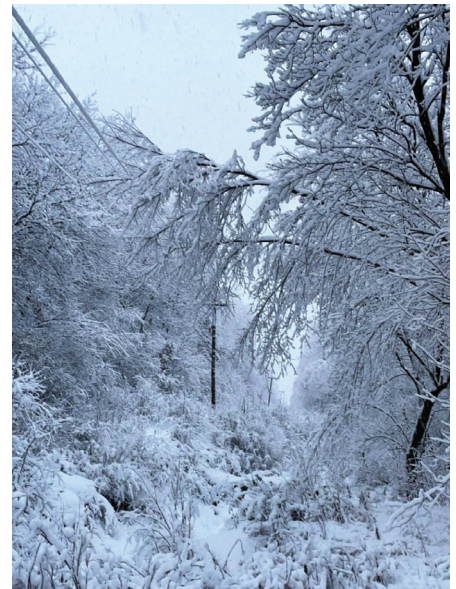
SAFETY TIP

STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES.

Car accidents are one of the main causes of downed power lines. Downed power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. Assume that any downed line you see is an energized power line, and report it immediately to the police, fire department, and your local electric utility.

Here are some tips to help you stay safe around downed power lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move at least 10 feet away from the line and anything touching it. The human body is a ready conductor of electricity.
- The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high-voltage zone to a low-voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even non-conductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.
- If you are in your car and it is in contact with the downed line, stay in your car. Tell others to stay away from your vehicle. If you must leave your car, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the live car and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the car to the earth. Shuffle away from the car.



HEAVY SNOW AND ICE CAUSE 3,000 OUTAGES

Thank you for your patience

Another December storm caused outages throughout our system on Dec. 15. Last year on Dec. 15, we had the first known derecho storm come through, causing over 6,000 outages. This year, on that same day, heavy snow and ice caused nearly 3,000 outages. We called for assistance through the Wisconsin Energy Cooperative Association, and MiEnergy of Rushford, MN, answered the call.

Conditions were not ideal with the snow and ice causing travel limitations, but all power was restored the next day. “We cannot thank our members enough for their patience, help, support, and understanding as the crews worked to get your power back on,” said Interim CEO/Operations Manager Tim Holtan.


Tim Holtan, Interim Manager

608-323-3381 • 1-800-411-9115 • www.riverlandenergy.com

Beth Alesch, Editor



**Riverland Energy
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Arcadia Office

N28988 State Road 93,
P.O. Box 277,
Arcadia, WI 54612

Holmen Office

1800 Granary St.
Holmen, WI 54636

Outages & Emergencies

Call 1-800-927-6206
24 hours a day

Office Hours

Arcadia: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Holmen: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Officers of the Board of Directors:

David Paudler, Onalaska, President
Dan Filla, Arcadia, Vice-President
Dennis Frame, Osseo,
Secretary/Treasurer