



# ANALYZING OUR RATES



By Tim Holtan, CEO

**W**e know our members put a lot of trust in us to be responsible with their money. We bear this trust in mind each time we purchase new equipment or invest in upgrades for our infrastructure. The same is true for when we determine rates for electric service our members depend on. As a not-for-profit utility, we never charge more than is needed to maintain and operate our electric system responsibly. With any business, revenue needs to cover expenses. Prior to 2023, our rates had been steady since 2019, despite increasing costs to provide power to our members.

Last spring, Riverland Energy retained an independent firm to conduct a comprehensive electric cost-of-service study (COSS). In our industry, these studies are standard procedure every few years to serve as a basis for rate structure. The COSS takes revenue requirements for a utility and allocates costs across the various customer classes—residential, business, commercial, and industrial. Results ensure that proposed rates are fair and equitable for all members. Each member should pay his/her fair share of costs without having one class subsidizing another.

The board of directors and management have been working over the last few months to examine our COSS results and how we can adjust rates closer to COSS results.

The COSS revealed a redistribution of costs compared to revenues is necessary to ensure that each rate class is paying for the proper costs associated with that class of service. The COSS also revealed that a Demand Charge (a charge based on the maximum power requirement recorded by the meter over a specific time frame during the billing period) should be added to the rate classes.

Currently, members see a Demand Charge on their bill as a zero charge. Demand is the maximum rate at which your

household consumed electricity during the billing month, but only during the peak daily hours (6 a.m. – 9 p.m.).

The demand charge aligns costs more accurately and fairly for members since the co-op has to size the electrical system based on the amount of demand each member puts on the system. This cost has historically been part of the kWh charge as we were not able to meter it separately. We are now able to take the amount billed out of the kWh charge. The technology in our new metering system now allows us to

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determine the demand each member is incurring on the system. This rate structure can provide members more control over their bills since it is possible to reduce demand by shifting or staging usage to avoid using all electrical devices at the same time. Any usage between 9 p.m. – 6 a.m.

does not contribute to the monthly demand on your bill as this is when the overall system demand is low.

The highest one-hour monthly point of peak demand usage during those hours (measured in kW) is multiplied by the peak demand rate to determine the monthly peak demand charge.

Your board of directors voted on a rate adjustment, and/or rate modifications, at the January board meeting (held after this magazine was printed) based on the COSS. Once the rate adjustment is determined, along with new optional rates to help members reduce their monthly bills, we will break down different rate classes. We aim to keep the increase as low as reasonably possible without sacrificing safety, reliability, or service to our members. As we examine our circumstances from several perspectives, we will base decisions on the healthy growth of our cooperative and the best interests of our members.

## 2024 Annual Meeting

Riverland Energy Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, March 23, at the Arcadia High School.

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

There will be door prize drawings, 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.)*

There are no director elections this year.

# RIVERLAND COMMUNITY CARES GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE

**R**iverland Community Cares is a way REC members can come together to make a difference in our community. Extra change generated from rounding up the monthly bills of participating members is used to fund requests by local charitable organizations. These small amounts—between \$0.01 to \$0.99—all add up to make an impact.

**How to Participate:** To be a part of this voluntary program, sign up through our website, check the box on your billing statement, or sign up through SmartHub.

**How to get Funding:** If you have a community project or organization that needs funding, complete the application online, or call and request one, and submit it with supporting documentation for consideration.

**Contribution Guidelines:** Contributions will be distributed primarily in the local areas served by Riverland Energy Cooperative. Donations will be limited to non-profit, charitable organization. Non-profit organizations that have been granted IRS Code 501(c)(3) status will be given priority.

Applications for funding will be accepted until February 15, 2024.

## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY



### G-E-T World of Work Day

Jordan Lien, manager of human resources, and Brandon Foss, meter technician, attended G-E-T High School's World of Work in November. Students visited their table to learn about careers in the electric utility industry.



### A Season of Merry

A Riverland Energy bucket truck and the co-op's EV made their way through lighted parades to kick off the holiday season in December. Cooperative employees participated in holiday parades in Holmen, Onalaska, and Whitehall.



### Busy Elves

The Youth Ambassadors shopped for families in need of assistance with Christmas gifts and other items for the holiday season. We partnered with two organizations in Trempealeau and Buffalo County to spread cheer and brighten Christmas season for families in need. We're grateful for these organizations and our youth ambassadors who care about our communities.





### Congratulations, Brody!

Riverland Energy apprentice lineman Brody Back graduated from the Apprentice Lineworker Program, certifying him as a journeyman lineman. A lineman apprenticeship takes 8,000 hours of hands-on work and training classes. Brody has been an apprentice lineman for Riverland Energy for the past three years. Congratulations, Brody!

## SNOW REMOVAL SAFETY

### Where do we put all this snow?

**K**eeP safety in mind when clearing snow from your driveway and other areas around your home or business. Members need to be mindful of the location of power equipment and make sure it is clear and accessible for Riverland Energy Cooperative crews. Please take note of the locations of pad-mounted transformers, meters, regulators, cabinets, poles, and overhead wires before moving snow.

Snow piled on electrical equipment not only impacts your safety, but also has the potential to affect electric service to hundreds of homes and businesses in your neighborhood. Please allow at least 10 feet in front of power equipment and 3 feet on the sides and back for line workers to be able to access the area in the event of an emergency.

In addition to paying attention to ground-level equipment, be sure to look up and be aware of overhead power lines, especially when removing snow from your roof. Also, members with large tractor-mounted snowblowers should be aware of the direction of the chute's position to avoid blowing a large stream of snow at overhead lines. The snow may not damage the poles, but the solid stream will knock high-voltage fuses out of their holders, causing an outage, or rocks in the stream of snow can hit and chip/break porcelain insulators, which will also lead to an outage. As we all know, outages in cold winter weather tend to take a little longer to restore due to the conditions.

## 2024 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

**Applications  
Due March 15**



### Traditional and At-Large Scholarships

Riverland Energy will award 32 \$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 an eligible senior who lives in our service territory, but doesn't attend any of the schools listed above.

### One \$5,000 Luck of the Draw Scholarship

Riverland Energy will draw one additional \$5,000 scholarship from all of the qualified applicants.

The recipients will be chosen in a random drawing at the annual meeting on Saturday, March 23, 2024. 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 is March 15, 2024. Applications can be found on our website at [riverlandenergy.com](http://riverlandenergy.com) or through your high school guidance counselor.

# HOW EXTREME WINTER WEATHER IMPACTS RELIABILITY

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Riverland Energy, we work closely with our local generation and transmission cooperative, Dairyland Power Cooperative, in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than Riverland Energy and Dairyland Power.

In winter months, when even more

electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and we will inform you about the situation.

Riverland Energy and Dairyland Power take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts, and disaster response planning, but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.
- Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens, and dryers.
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

## ENTER OUR PHOTO CONTEST

FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$25 ELECTRIC BILL CREDIT

Congratulations to Lance LaDuke for getting the most votes in our December photo contest!

Submit your best photo and encourage your friends to vote! The photo receiving most votes will win a \$25 electric bill credit and will be printed in our magazine, along with a few other favorites. By entering, you will also be entered into a drawing for a \$250 electric bill credit.

The February theme is Winter Wonderland. Photos can be submitted through February 25. Go to our Facebook page or website to submit and vote.

### Other December Favorites:



Brinna Nisbit



Brittany Marten



Thomas Ciekiewicz


**Tim Holtan, CEO**

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**Riverland Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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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:

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