



**Riverland Energy Cooperative**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



**Jerry Sorenson,**  
General Manager

## Member Satisfaction Survey

Every few years, Riverland Energy Cooperative takes part in a customer satisfaction survey. The results of this survey determine the cooperative's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score. The

ACSI is an independent national benchmark of customer satisfaction. The survey helps us gauge how we are doing in the eyes of our member-owners. This is one way we can tell if we are doing our job or falling short.

We are extremely pleased to receive an ACSI score of 86, which is two points higher than our last survey. That compares to the Touchstone Energy® cooperatives' average of 78 and investor-owned utilities' average score of 74.

On a scale of one (not satisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), here are the results in four key areas measured in the ACSI:

Overall satisfaction.....	8.98
Meeting expectations.....	8.32
Close to ideal utility .....	8.69
Would choose REC .....	8.28

### Member Satisfaction Quality Attributes

During the survey, members were asked to evaluate 18 performance quality attributes related to the four key drivers. Listed below are the highest mean (average) ratings from 10 of the attributes using a 5-point scale where 1 means "very poor" and 5 means "excellent".



- Having friendly, courteous employees (4.74)
- Having employees who are highly trained and professional (4.72)
- Keeping longer outages to a minimum (4.63)
- Restoring power quickly after an outage (4.59)
- Supporting the local community (4.59)
- Having convenient payment options (4.59)
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum (4.56)
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (4.55)
- Resolving any issues or problems (4.54)
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed (4.53)
- Operating with concern for the environment (4.52)

Thank you to everyone who took the time to take the survey!

## Member Appreciation Day Event

**Wednesday,  
September 15, 2021**

### Danzinger's Vineyard

**Alma, WI  
4-7 p.m.**

**Free meal to include hotdogs or brats**  
**Entertainment by Mac Cherry**  
**Balloons by Kevin**  
**Games and prizes**  
**Lineman trucks, safety display, and equipment**  
**Solar and EV informational booth**

**All activities will be held outside**

*Please watch our website and social media sites for updates regarding any changes due to the ongoing health pandemic*

**MY CO-OP**





# OPENING THE DOOR FOR OPPORTUNITY: *Riverland Energy's Youth Ambassador Program*

By Samantha Benish

High school. In two simple words, hundreds of fond memories come flooding back to mind: winning the championship sports game, enduring challenging classes, and spending valuable time with forgotten friends. As society and schools have adapted throughout the years, exciting new opportunities have arisen. Among the many clubs and extracurricular activities rests a program that has brought adventure for the young minds of Wisconsin—the Youth Ambassador Program.

Riverland Energy's own Youth Ambassador Program is an educational experience that is designed specifically for high school juniors. The program allows students to interact and work with other students to explore the world of electric cooperatives. By digging hands-on, the program grants youth the opportunity to explore the business infrastructure and field operations of cooperatives. The program itself runs from early November to the following spring. Ambassadors meet once a month across the regional area to explore Riverland Energy's renewable energy sites, power plants, and offices.

Current and alumni ambassadors have grown in their personal relationships, leadership skills, and knowledge about electric cooperatives. 2019-2020 youth ambassador Max Benish elaborates on his experience as a youth ambassador: "It was one of the best experiences of my high school career. I was able to meet new people from other schools and learn about what makes our community grow. I would highly recommend it for upcoming juniors."

Alumni of the program have gone on to use their skills at the collegiate level, growing the name of electric cooperatives across the nation. Maya Smith was a youth ambassador from 2016 to 2017, and she reflects fondly on the experience. "I was excited to understand how energy was dispersed in my community," she says. "I enjoyed going to the meetings and meeting new people!"

The excitement and involvement does not stop at the end of junior year—the Youth Ambassador Program is simply a stepping stone for further opportunities. At the end of the program, youth ambassadors have the option to attend the Youth Leadership Conference at the University of Wisconsin—River Falls. Held each July, the conference examines the scope of electric cooperatives and how they affect everyday life. Youth ambassadors from across the state of Wisconsin spend a weekend together diving into the value and power of cooperation. The conference provides a fun, engaging way to introduce students to national cooperatives and college life. It also provides an opportunity for scholarships, awards, and an all-expense paid-trip to Washington, D.C., to represent the state of Wisconsin at the National Youth Conference.

The Youth Ambassador Program allows students across the state to explore the opportunities behind cooperatives. The program grants access to abundant resources that other clubs do not. By allowing teamwork and communication to flourish, the Youth Ambassador Program provides a platform for growth—not just for high school, but for the rest of life.

## CO-OP YOUTH AMBASSADOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Learn what makes cooperatives unique.



**Perks:**

- Attend youth leadership conferences
- Meet new friends
- Network with other students
- Earn awards & scholarships
- Earn a trip to Washington, D.C.
- Lunch provided at all meetings
- Get paid per diem and mileage

Riverland Energy Cooperative encourages high school juniors interested in learning about cooperatives, enhancing leadership skills, gaining personal growth, and working with others to apply to become a Cooperative Youth Ambassador.



The program focuses on:

- Cooperative business model
- Electrical safety
- Career options
- Renewable and sustainable energy
- Teamwork
- Leadership



HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS!

Deadline to apply:  
October 1, 2021



800-411-9115



www.riverlandenergy.com

To apply: Must be a junior in high school the 2021-22 school year

Apply online at:  
[www.riverlandenergy.com/youthambassador](http://www.riverlandenergy.com/youthambassador)  
or ask your guidance counselor

Questions:  
email [balesch@riverlandenergy.com](mailto:balesch@riverlandenergy.com)  
[www.riverlandenergy.com](http://www.riverlandenergy.com)

# VIRTUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS HELD JULY 13-14

## Distinguished Youth Ambassador Scholarship Recipients Announced

The 2021 WECA Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) was held virtually on July 13 and 14. Participating high school students honed their leadership skills through a variety of sessions, including discussions with state legislators as well as a lively session with motivational speaker Craig Hillier. Riverland Energy youth ambassadors had the option of joining as a group at the Riverland Arcadia office for the virtual



L-R: Alex Madden, Katherine Thompson, Zoe LaDuke, Aiden Sonsalla, and Justin Fromstad. Not pictured is Isaac Mikelson.

conference to interact as a small group.

Youth Ambassadors receiving the Distinguished Scholarship Awards and of \$250 include Alex Madden, Katherine

Thompson, Zoe LaDuke, Aiden Sonsalla, Justin Fromstad, and Isaac Mikelson.

The scholarship awards are for students who go above and beyond during their time as a youth ambassador, including attending youth conferences. “The last couple of years was hard to get the kids together with the pandemic, so we thought recognizing the students who attended the youth conference would be one way to make up for that,” said General Manager Jerry Sorenson. “Both the 2020 and 2021 youth ambassadors were recognized.”

We congratulate these and thank them, and all the youth ambassadors for their commitment and dedication as a Cooperative Youth Ambassador.



## STAY SAFE THIS HARVEST SEASON

Photo credit: Bob Nichols, USDA

Every year, we see accidents where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 9-1-1 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes, and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week, but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.



Offices closed for  
**LABOR** Day

Riverland Energy offices will be closed Monday, September 6, in observance of Labor Day. Normal business hours will resume Tuesday, September 7.

Line crews are on-call to respond to any outages or emergencies. You can report an outage through SmartHub, by texting 55050 (must be signed up for this service), or by calling us at (800) 927-6206. Visit our website's Outage Center for more details.



## CREDITS TOWARD HOME ENERGY AUDITS AVAILABLE

If your electric bill seems higher than normal and you haven't changed any routines in your home, it may be time to look into having an energy assessment, and perhaps an audit by a certified energy auditor.

Riverland Energy Cooperative is your liaison for professional home energy audits by a certified energy auditor. Riverland Energy offers a \$150 credit toward the cost of the home energy audit. The audit must be done by a state-certified energy audit specialist. The bill for the audit will be sent to Riverland Energy Cooperative and will be charged to your electric bill, less the \$150 credit.

An energy audit takes approximately two to three hours and includes:

- Blower door test (check air sealing, air exchanges/hour)
- Measuring attic insulation
- Using an infrared camera to check insulation/cold spots on floors and walls
- A detailed list of energy-saving measures
- One follow-up visit for re-testing after recommended correction measure have been made

Energy assessments can be performed any season.

Once the energy assessment is complete, the certified energy auditor will prepare a complete report for the homeowner and Riverland Energy. Recommendations are also provided within the report to help homeowners identify any improvements that can be made to help save energy and reduce electric bills. REC provides up to \$500 rebate towards the cost of energy-saving measures implemented from the auditor's recommendations, based on approved invoices. Qualifications can be found on the rebate form.

If you're interested in receiving an energy assessment/audit, please contact Riverland Energy at 800-411-9115 and ask for Tammy H. She will help assess your general situation and provide the certified energy auditor with your contact information. The auditor will contact you to schedule an appointment.



### Want a chance at \$25 off your electric bill?

Just submit a photo of Wisconsin's Natural Beauty for this month's photo contest before September 25!

The member whose photo has the most votes will win a \$25 electric bill credit! Each member who submits a photo will be put into a drawing at the end of the contest for a chance to win a \$250 electric bill credit. Go to our Facebook page to submit a photo and vote.

### 24-HOUR OUTAGE REPORTING

*When the lights go out, so do we*

Call even if you think your neighbors have reported the outage. Leave one light on so you know when power has been restored. Have an emergency kit repaired.

Report your outage at 800-927-6206 or through SmartHub.



### Jerry Sorenson, General Manager

608-323-3381 • 1-800-411-9115 • [www.riverlandenergy.com](http://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.–4:00 p.m.  
Holmen: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

#### Officers of the Board of Directors:

David Paudler, Onalaska, President  
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Dennis Frame, Osseo,  
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