



ENERGY ASSISTANCE EXTENDED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Administration has adjusted the eligibility requirements for residents who are seeking heating and electric assistance through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). Eligibility will now be based on the household's previous month of income, rather than the former requirement of the previous three months of income. This will allow those who are recently affected by COVID-19 to receive assistance quickly. Energy assistance will be open through September 30 for the heating season 2019–2020, with the 2020–2021 season beginning October 1.

Trempealeau County

Trempealeau Co. Social Services:
(715) 538-2311

Western Wisconsin E.O.C.:
(715) 985-2391

Buffalo County

Buffalo County Human Services:
(608) 685-4412

La Crosse County

La Crosse Co. Human Services:
(608) 784-4357

Salvation Army: (608) 782-6126

CouleeCap: (608) 634-4575



Riverland Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY



Jerry Sorenson,
General Manager

The cooperative is making every effort to plan and execute the 2020 Annual Meeting in conjunction with our Member Appreciation Event on Wednesday, September 23. We are closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and continue to prioritize the health and safety of our members, staff, and event participants. Local, state and national orders, recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization, and local county health agencies all inform our decisions regarding our events. At the time of this article, our service counties, Buffalo, La Crosse, and Trempealeau, are all in the high risk level for Covid-19 spread. This means that the recommendations for gatherings include 50 people or fewer for outdoor events, and fewer than 15 for indoor events. If we are unable to hold our Member Appreciation Event, we will be holding the annual meeting virtually.

I strongly encourage you to stay tuned to this newsletter, our website, and social media for changes and updates to our events.

RIVERLAND ENERGY BOARD APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

Riverland Energy Cooperative's Board of Directors voted to appoint Bryce Lisowski to the District 2 board seat. The District 2 seat was left vacant by the resignation of Director Beth Ede.

Lisowski has been a lifelong member of Riverland Energy Cooperative and served on the Junior Board (currently known as the Youth Ambassador Program) when he was in high school. He received a Bachelor's Degree from St. Mary's University in Winona and has been a postmaster in Alma for 10 years. His community and leadership roles include president of the Buffalo County Housing Board, active Knights of Columbus member, former State Special Olympics coordinator, La Crosse Diocesan program coordinator, and serving on the Parish and Finance Council at his church. He is married to Mary, and together they have five children and 15 grandchildren.

Lisowski will serve out the District 2 term. He will be up for re-election in 2022, voted on by Riverland Energy Cooperative members at the annual meeting election.





Crews work to replace five poles that were taken down in a brief storm that passed through the Centerville/Trempealeau area in July.

KEEPING THE SYSTEM SAFE AND RELIABLE DURING SUMMER STORM SEASON

The primary objective of all electric utilities is to provide safe and reliable electricity. Although this is a year-round focus for Riverland Energy Cooperative, the weather of the summer months creates an environment conducive for the most activity. To achieve the highest possible reliability, we focus on constructing a resilient electric grid, investing in appropriate maintenance, and having highly trained staff to address issues that arise.

On a yearly basis we make investments in the electric grid in our service territory. These investments include upgrades to current electrical lines and equipment, installing new line, adding substations if needed, and vegetation management. We balance the timing of these upgrades with our overall budget, in an effort to maintain stable electric rates. Much of the work is completed by Riverland linemen and technicians, but some of the work is contracted out to other companies to assist with the amount of work necessary.

On a yearly basis, Riverland Energy conducts a variety of maintenance of our grid. This includes employees patrolling the line to look for issues and testing field equipment and substations. Another key component is trimming trees that get too close to the electrical lines. We believe proactive maintenance is key to help reduce the potential for future outages.

Unfortunately, even with all the right investments in infrastructure and maintenance, outages still occur. There are many causes of outages, but outages related to animals, trees, and weather top the list. It's during these times we rely on the dedication and skill of our team—specifically our dispatchers,

linemen, and technicians. They often work in complex scenarios and less-than-ideal conditions. Whether it's dark, raining, windy, and cold or mosquitos swarming, they keep at it until power to all members has been restored.

From an organizational perspective, our first objective during an outage is to work safely. We all understand mistakes happen when we rush to get stuff done—whether at home or work. Mistakes when working with electricity are unforgiving. For that reason, those working with electricity take the time necessary to keep themselves, and our members, safe during the outage restoration process.

We take our responsibility to serve you with safe and reliable electricity very seriously, and we believe we are making the necessary investments and conducting the necessary maintenance to serve you into the future.





COVID-19 FRAUD AND SCAM



As the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the United States, phone scammers have seized the opportunity to prey on consumers. The Federal Communications (FCC) has received reports of scams including free home testing kits, promoting bogus cures, selling health insurance, and exploiting virus-related fears.

As Riverland Energy Cooperative and other utilities resume disconnections for non-payment, members are increasingly being targeted by utility scammers—particularly scammers who are threatening immediate disconnection, knowing many members have past-due accounts due to COVID-19 hardships. Riverland Energy encourages our members to always be aware of potential scams. If you think you've been a victim of a coronavirus scam, contact law enforcement immediately.

Common Utility Scams to be Aware of:

Overpayment Trick: Scammers call claiming you overpaid your bill, asking for your personal banking information. If you make an overpayment, Riverland Energy will never contact you. We will automatically apply the credit to future charges on your account.

Disconnection Deception: Scammers call and threaten service disconnection, demanding immediate payment. Demands for immediate payment over the phone through prepaid cards, gift cards, or other unusual methods are scams. If you have a past-due balance, Riverland Energy will mail or email notices first, followed up by an automated phone call. Riverland Energy will never call and ask for immediate payment.

Smishing: Scammers attempt smishing (short for SMS phishing) to trick mobile phone users into sharing personal information. Riverland Energy will never text you to collect personal information.

Please contact Riverland Energy at 800-411-9115 if you have any questions related to your electric bill.

Protect against scams:

- Do not respond to calls or texts from unknown numbers or any others that appear suspicious.
- Never share your personal or financial information via email or text message or over the phone.
- Be cautious if you're being pressured to share any information or make a payment immediately.
- Scammers often spoof phone numbers to trick you into answering or responding. Remember that government agencies will never call you to ask for personal information or money.
- Do not click any links in messages. If a friend sends you a message with a suspicious link that seems out of character, call them to make sure their accounts weren't compromised.
- Always check on a charity (for example, by calling or looking at its actual website) before donating.



CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION MEANS BETTER SERVICE

At Riverland Energy Cooperative, we are constantly striving to improve our efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for you. We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your

help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications

for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events, and activities.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair, or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages or email—but only if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use, billing, or discrepancies on your account. Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. Many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system. We will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by Riverland Energy to send important information to you.

Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information through our website, by phone, or through SmartHub. By doing so, you help us improve service and efficiency to better serve you.

Community Cares
Spare change for community needs.

COMMUNITY CARES GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE AUG. 28

Download an application from our website at www.riverlandenergy.com

Jerry Sorenson, General Manager

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Beth Alesch, Editor



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Outages & Emergencies

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

Office Hours

7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

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