



WHERE FUTURE LEADERS FIND THEIR SPARK

Youth Leadership Conference 2026



The Youth Leadership Conference was another success. Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative sponsored four local high school students to attend this year's conference at the University of Wisconsin–Stout July 14–16. They joined dozens of other high school students representing 20 Wisconsin electric cooperatives. The students built leadership skills, explored the cooperative business model, and prepared to become ambassadors for Wisconsin's electric cooperatives.

The three-day conference featured leadership development, team-building activities, district meetings, and presentations focused on personal growth, safety, and emerging technology. Students heard from motivational speaker Craig Hillier, who challenged them to become breakthrough leaders, and Hunter Gillett, who shared his inspiring story of resilience after surviving a plane crash. They also learned about safe driving from WECA's Ben Bella and explored how technology is shaping the future with Dairyland Power Cooperative Vice President and Chief Information Officer Nate Melby.

Current and former Youth Board members also shared how participating in the program has helped shape their education, careers and leadership journeys while encouraging students to take advantage of the many opportunities available through Wisconsin's electric cooperatives, including the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

We asked the four students to reflect on their YLC experience. Here's what they had to say:

What is your favorite part of attending YLC?

"My favorite part of attending YLC was meeting new people from all over the state and experiencing dorm life alongside like-minded people."

"My favorite part of attending YLC is meeting new people. This is my third year going, and this was the year I felt the most social and willing to open up to people. YLC forces you to meet new people without it being awkward. I love that by the end of camp, lifelong friends are made. I still stay in contact with the people I met my very first year."

"My favorite part of attending YLC was getting to meet new people that I wouldn't have otherwise!"



Local students pictured above: Sophia Burbach, Ava Burbach, Abby Droessler, and Erika Droessler.

What was the most impactful moment, speaker, or workshop for you and why?

“The most impactful moment for me was watching the youth board speeches. It was great to watch my peers put themselves out there and find creative ways to convince everyone to vote for them.”

“The most impactful speaker for me was this guy that talked about him getting in a plane crash. He went in and out of consciousness and ended up losing his best friend. This story was so real and makes you realize that you truly only have one life. The speaker was so motivational in explaining in detail on how he was able to battle through his fight and get back to his normal life.”

“For me the most impactful moment was hearing everyone’s strengths and weaknesses of being a leader. It really showed that you are not alone and that others also have some struggles when being in a leadership role.”

How would you summarize the core message of the conference in just one sentence?

“Be open, learn to work with others, and you grow as a leader along the way.”

“YLC teaches you to get out of your comfort zone and explore new experiences and meet new people; it is an opportunity of a lifetime that no one should give up.”

“The YLC conference helps to understand that everyone has the ability to be a successful leader when you take the initiative.”

What would you say to someone who is thinking about attending but is afraid to?

“You are guaranteed to make friends and memories. Lots of effort is put into keep everyone included, and as much as you learn, you also have fun.”

“If you are someone who is afraid to attend YLC, you shouldn’t be. Just this past year my roommate literally drove up with her mom and didn’t know anyone. She fit right in with us and had the best time. It is always scary to do something new, but you never know what could happen.”

“Just do it! If you’re scared, then do it scared.”



Above: Students worked together to complete hands-on team-building challenges that emphasized communication, problem-solving, and leadership. Activities throughout the conference encouraged participants to step outside their comfort zones while learning the value of teamwork.

Left: Motivational speaker Craig Hillier challenged students to become breakthrough leaders through an interactive presentation focused on leadership, confidence, and personal growth.



SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE'S

2026 ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Agricultural/Commercial/Industrial		
Circulation Fan	Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 pounds force/kW Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 pounds force/kW	\$1/inch
Exhaust Fan	Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP	\$1/inch
Electric Forklift Battery Charger	Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative	\$200 each
Dairy Plate Cooler / Well Water Pre-Cooler		\$500 each
Dairy Refrigeration Heat Recovery with Electric Backup	Used with controlled electric water heater as defined by co-op	\$300 each
Low/Zero Energy Livestock Waterer	≤ 500 watts, insulated tank	\$50 each
Scroll Refrigerant Compressor	\$1,000 cap per compressor	\$30/HP
Variable Frequency Drive (VFD)	\$1,000 cap per drive	\$30/HP
Appliances <i>*Must be Energy Star Certified</i>		
All-in One Washer/Dryer	Must use ventless heat pump drying	\$50 each
Clothes Dryer (electric)		\$25 each
Clothes Washer		\$25 each
Dehumidifier		\$25 each
Dishwasher		\$25 each
Freezer	≥ 10 cubic ft.	\$25 each
Inductive Range		\$25 each
Refrigerator	≥ 10 cubic ft.	\$25 each
Recycling - Freezer	Must be working appliance	\$25 each
Recycling - Refrigerator	Must be working appliance	\$25 each
Recycling - Room Air Conditioner	Must be working appliance	\$25 each
Conservation		
Electric Vehicle Charging Station	Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative	\$500 each
Electric Vehicle Charging Station - Installation Costs	For Secondary "controlled" meter as required by cooperative	\$200 cap
Electric Vehicle Smart Charger with integrated metering	Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative	\$1,000 each
HVAC		
Heat Pump - Air Source & Mini-Split		\$200/ton
Heat Pump - Commercial Air Source & PTHPs		\$200/ton
Heat Pump - Geothermal		\$400/ton
New Furnace with ECM Blower Motor	Variable speed motor (not multi-speed) <u>OR</u> Eae ≤ 670 kWh/year; member's primary heat source	\$35 each
Smart Thermostat	Honeywell or Emerson brand thermostat Enrolled in Load Management Program	\$25 each
Lighting		
LED Exit Sign	50% of cost cap	\$5/sign
LED Fixture	50% of cost cap	\$0.50 per 800 lumens
LED Bulb	5 bulb minimum, 50% of cost cap	\$0.50/bulb
Occupancy Sensor / Motion Sensor	Doesn't include motion detector bulbs or fixtures	\$5 each
Water Heating		
Commercial Water Heater 75-99 gallons		\$500 each
Commercial Water Heater 100+ gallons		\$800 each
Residential Water Heater 75-99 gallons	Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+	\$500 each
Residential Water Heater 100+ gallons	Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+	\$800 each
Heat Pump Water Heater	Integrated (all-in-one) units, Uniform Energy Factor 2.20+	\$500 each



For complete eligibility requirements and rebate applications, visit our website at sre.coop/energy-rebates or scan the QR code.



MEMBER PHOTO CONTEST

This year's theme is
Candid Moments

Do you have a photo that captures the beauty of life in our community? Our annual photo contest is underway, and we want to see the moments that make each day a little brighter. From children playing in the rain and farmers working in the fields to wildlife and scenic landscapes, share the photos that bring you joy!

Members are encouraged to submit photos representing all four seasons. The deadline to enter is October 30.

The winning photos will be featured in SREC publications, including our newsletter and this magazine. Members of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to enter!

Photo Contest Criteria:

- Taken in the SREC service area
- Horizontal (landscape) orientation
- May be in color or black and white
- High resolution (at least 300 dpi)
- Must own rights to photos

For more details, visit www.sre.coop/photo-contest.

Pictured above: "Feeding Calves" is one of our 2025 additional favorite photos from Kimberly Garrison, a member in Darlington, Wis.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Department of Energy

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



"Sunset Over Rye" is this month's featured photo from Pete Moris, a member in Mt. Hope, Wis.



Offices will be closed Monday, September 7 for Labor Day.

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Kami Biddick, Editor

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