



Steve Lucas, CEO

THE COMMITMENT OF AN ELECTRIC LINeworkER

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But our electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

Scenic Rivers Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings, or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

Family Support System

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience, and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during

severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineworker may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

Community Commitment

Here at SREC and across the country, electric co-op lineworkers' mission-focused mentality of helping others often extends beyond their commitment to their work at the co-op. Lineworkers are often familiar figures in the community. Our lineworkers present how to work with electricity safely each year to our area schools and to our members. Many of our lineworkers are active in their home communities as volunteers in various organizations, giving back to their family, friends, and neighbors.

Thank You

Monday, April 8, is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of SREC's lineworkers, both on and off the job, we encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in town, please offer them a thank you as well.



MEMBER PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

"A barn by the road," taken by Gary Cohen of Blanchardville, was the winning photo for March in SREC's Member Photo Contest. April's winning picture was taken by Ana Ramaker of New Holstein. She labeled this photo "To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a flower." The 2019 Member Photo Contest is underway. Please go to www.sre.coop for contest details and downloadable forms.



GETTING DOWN TO EARTH

Local students connect with nature at Earth Day celebration

It's a great big world, but sometimes getting down to earth is the best way to start to explore it.

On April 25, fifth-graders from all Lafayette County schools will gather at Blackhawk Memorial Park near Woodford to learn about the planet, starting with their backyard.

Students will learn about the fun you can have out in the local flora and fauna, and why preserving it is important at the Lafayette County Earth Day celebration.

“The main thing is to teach them about outdoor activities and why it is important to preserve natural resources...” —Melissa Bartz, District Conservationist

“The main thing is to teach them about outdoor activities and why it is important to preserve natural resources so they can see the benefits,” said Melissa Bartz, district conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. “The activities span a wide range of interests. And we want

to show them why we do what we do, why we preserve and enhance the quality of soil and water.

“Just seeing kids learn is probably the most gratifying thing. Some of them are learning to fish for the first time,” said Bartz, who coordinates the Earth Day celebration.

Presenters volunteer their time for the day-long event, which began in 1988. “They are more than willing and happy

to do it,” Bartz said.

“Helping kids connect with nature is near and dear to my heart, and this opportunity is so close and reaches so many kids,” said Mark LaBarbera, founder of the Outdoor Heritage Education Center organization, member of the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, and member of several area conservation groups.

He brings a 27-foot enclosed “Touch of the Wild” trailer filled with mounted animals. The sign at the entrance that says “Please touch” is often misread because so many signs that kids see say don’t touch, he said.

“Students can walk through and touch animals from all over the world and Wisconsin,” he said. “When they actually walk inside the trailer, they can’t believe the size of all the animals, including a full body wolf. They get to see them up close. It’s really different than seeing them on television or video. They notice the difference in the hides between a buffalo, which lives in cold weather, and tigers and lions, who live in warm weather.

“It engages the kids, raising their interest in fish, wildlife, and nature. It helps to connect with nature, outdoor skills, and conservation early in life. They’re more likely to value, protect, and conserve the resources and nature-based activities that are familiar to them. They may go away from it during the teen years, but some will come back to it, and those values will be something they’ll probably keep for the rest of their lives,” LaBarbera said.

Arleigh Bondele, of the Gratiot Conservation Club, presents a seminar on Indian artifacts. He brings the large collection of arrowheads he and his mother collected on their farm on the banks of the Pecatonica River.

“They are usually so interested. I tell you I really feel on that Earth Day, kids learn more in one day than in class,” he said.

Students are surprised to learn how old the artifacts are. Bondele’s oldest arrowhead is 12,000 years old.

“For one thing, I don’t think they realized how many American Indians lived near here and how long they were here,” he said.

About 14 stations greet the 250 students.

“I always wish I had time to go to all the stations,” because he could learn, too, Bondele said.

Stations include how to make homemade maple syrup; a sawmill where the grains of different types of wood are explored; bat houses; beehives; archery, where students can shoot a bow and arrow; fishing; a BB gun shoot; water ecology, where students can study a water sample from the lake; and a history of the park.

Students explore mounted animals in the “Touch of the Wild” trailer.

(photos courtesy of Mark LaBarbera)

Opposite page: Students learn about fishing at a station hosted by the Lafayette County Conservation Alliance.

(photo courtesy of Melissa Bartz)

And “they learn why trapping is important to control population,” Bartz said.

Steve Staver, of the Shullsburg Conservation Club, Lafayette County Sportsmen Alliance, and Wisconsin Conservation Congress, has been a presenter for more than 20 years.

“To me, it’s about introducing them to outdoor activities versus video games, an activity they do outside that isn’t sitting inside,” he said.

Staver makes 18 wild game calls, mostly by hand and mouth, and asks the students to identify them.

“It’s enjoyable to see the look on kids’ faces when you blow something they don’t know,” Staver said. “Some of them have no idea what a turkey

is. I try to explain to them how these calls work,” and the difference between feeding, mating, and locating calls.

The weather is usually perfect, and it’s fitting to keep the Earth Day momentum going here, Bartz said.

“Earth Day started in Wisconsin. We just kind of grow up knowing about it,” Bartz said.

U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin founded Earth Day in 1970 as a “national teach-in on the environment.” Twenty million people participated. It is credited with launching the modern environmental movement.

Now Earth Day is a global event, with celebrations in 190 countries. The 2019 theme is “Protect Our Species.”—*Mary Glindinning*





YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

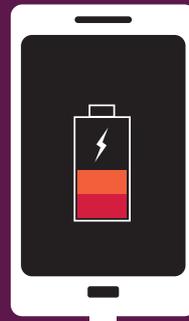


July 24–26, 2019 • UW–River Falls

SREC has another great opportunity for our members and specifically for their high school students. The annual Youth Leadership Congress, sponsored by Wisconsin’s electric co-ops and facilitated by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, will be held this summer at UW-River Falls. For three days, July 24 through 26, over 100 high school students from around the state will come together for fun, leadership development, and cooperative education.

The three-day Youth Leadership Congress has been held at UW-River Falls each summer since 1963. Last year’s event attracted more than 122 students sponsored by 17 cooperatives. Activities focus on maximizing leadership potential, understanding cooperatives and co-op governance—the students organize and operate a functioning cooperative during the event—effective communication, and turning mistakes into stepping stones for success. The event offers a head start in understanding cooperative business principles for the upcoming generation of co-op leaders.

Perhaps the best part is that there is no cost to participating students. Costs are covered by Wisconsin’s electric co-ops and the Federated Youth Foundation. SREC will provide transportation to and from the conference. To learn more or to apply to attend, visit our website at www.sre.coop. You can also contact Judy Martin at 608-723-2121.

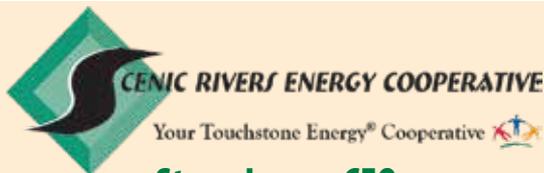


TIPS TO SAFELY CHARGE YOUR ELECTRONICS



- Sale** Don't buy cheaply made, off-brand charging cubes and cables. They can be **potential fire hazards**, cause electrocution, or damage the device.
-  Throw away charger blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and **make sure they are not hot** when charging devices.
- NOT IN BED** Only charge devices on a **hard, flat, noncombustible surface** to allow for adequate ventilation.
-  **Do not touch** any electronic devices that are charging **when you are wet** or standing in water.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org



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