



Steve Lucas, CEO

MORE THAN JUST ELECTRICITY

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative provides you with safe and dependable electric service. That's what all electric utilities strive to do.

What sets us apart is that we provide much more than just electric service.

That's not something all electric utilities do, but it is something all electric *cooperative* utilities do. Here are a few examples:

Community Support—An electric co-op is part of the community it serves. It's not governed by far-off investors; the people who work here and serve on the board of directors live in the same communities you do, and it matters to us all that we take an active role in keeping our communities strong. One way we do that is through our Operation Roundup program. By agreeing to round up your electric bill to the next dollar amount, with the difference placed in a special fund, we're able to help support our communities' food pantries, hospitals, fire and rescue squads, and other worthy organizations with a contribution that averages just \$6 a year per member.

Youth Development – Just a few weeks ago, a group of high school students from the schools within our service territory returned from the annual Youth Leadership Congress, a three-day event that teaches students about the cooperative difference and helps them develop their leadership skills. In



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning photo from SREC's Member Photo Contest for August was taken by Jamee Stanley of Soldiers Grove. These are Marquette grapes from Stanley's vineyard on the ridge. Please share your pictures with us by entering the 2017 Member Photo Contest, which runs until August 21. See page 18 for contest details.



the seven years that I've served as CEO of this cooperative, I've heard only enthusiastic, rave reviews of this event from the students who have attended.

Youth Leadership Congress is a special opportunity all on its own, but it can lead to even more. Seven students each year are elected to a Statewide Youth Board, and these students are able to participate in the National Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., the following June. With more than 100 students attending the Youth Leadership Congress, it's not easy making it to the seven-member board, but a SREC student has been elected to that board three times in recent years.

SREC lineworkers put on an electric safety demonstration at the Crawford and Grant Safety Days each year.



Safety Education – Safety is our number-one priority here at SREC, and that applies to the public as well as to the employees. Our lineworkers regularly put on electric safety demonstrations at local schools and community organizations to help teach people, especially children, how to stay safe around electricity.

Scholarships – Each year, we give a college scholarship to a high school senior from each high school in our three-county service territory. This year's scholarships were in the amount of \$750 each. We are able to provide these scholarships thanks to the cooperative way. Any margins left after the cost of doing business are returned to the members in the form of capital credits. We make every effort to find everyone who is owed capital credits, but inevitably some are never found, and some choose to leave their margins with the cooperative. These unclaimed credits are used to fund our scholarship program.

So as you can see, there's a lot more to electric cooperatives than electricity. But we provide you with that, too!



WINE DOWN at Whispering Winds

Jim Eisele got started in winemaking because of a cable TV call. Really. "I used to work for cable TV and I was at this customer's house, and as I was doing the installation all I could smell was wine," he explained. "So I asked him about it, and he said, 'Well, when we're done I'll show you.'"

That was in about 1995, and Eisele's been making wine ever since. At first winemaking was just a hobby that he'd work on in the basement of his home, producing enough wine for himself and some family and friends. However, this hobby soon outgrew both his basement and his base of recipients. "I just started making too much wine," he laughed.

So Eisele bought some property in rural Fennimore, along Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative lines, and built his own personal winery.

In 2007, Eisele's Whispering Winds Winery was opened to the public, and it's been growing ever since as Eisele has experimented with different wine flavors and added touches to his property that have made it a destination as well as a place to buy unique local wine.

Three years ago he added a deck outside the tasting room that offers a place for guests to sit and enjoy the beautiful hill-top view as they sip a glass of wine. This summer he's added



Winemaker Jim Eisele serves up 12 different varieties of wine in the tasting room at Whispering Winds Winery in Fennimore. Guests can also choose to sip some wine while enjoying the view from the deck outside the tasting room.



outdoor games such as bean bag toss and giant-sized Jenga bricks that guests are free to use while they're enjoying a glass of wine.

Fruity Flavors The new features have added to the whole experience of visiting Whispering Winds Winery, but the wines themselves are still the main attraction. Eisele produces about 2,000 gallons of wine each year, offering unique grape and fruit wines, both red and white varieties.

Among the most popular are his signature Drupleberry wine, made with blueberries, blackberries, red raspberries, and strawberries, as well as Rhuberry, a strawberry and rhubarb wine. Another customer favorite is Mango Madness, made with mangos, strawberries, and peach.

The wines are available for sale at 23 locations throughout southwest and south central Wisconsin, but many people choose to visit the winery and purchase on site. On a typical summer weekend day Whispering Winds Winery is host to 50 to 70 visitors, many of them wine enthusiasts who travel from places including Chicago, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities.

Wine Trail If they're so inclined, visitors can make Whispering Winds Winery just one stop on a whole wine-tasting adventure by traveling the Southwest Wisconsin Wine Trail, a consortium of six Wisconsin wineries that are located within the Upper Mississippi River Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area).



Wine isn't the only thing Jim Eisele makes. He also creates handcrafted wooden vases using local wood. These vases can be purchased at Whispering Winds Winery.

The six wineries that make up the Southwest Wisconsin Wine Trail host a series of summer wine-tasting events, with the final one coming up August 19 and 20. At each of these four events, wines are paired with Wisconsin food products. The August event, billed as The Wurst-Wine Trail EVER!, pairs some of Wisconsin's fine bratwurst, salami, and sausages with wines at each stop along the trail.

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Tickets for these special Wine Trail events may be purchased at the first winery a guest visits over the weekend, with a complimentary souvenir wine glass offered to each guest on the final stop.

In addition to belonging to the Southwest Wisconsin Wine Trail, Whispering Winds Winery is a member of the Badger State Winery Cooperative, a non-profit farm cooperative that helps small wineries distribute wine and hard ciders to retailers.

Orchard and Other Plans Eisele has been adding to his winery ever since he first opened to the public, and he has plans for even more improvements. He's started a small orchard of plums and berries with an eye toward eventually making wine with some of his own fruit. He's also added some apple trees and plans to experiment with apple cider.

Other plans call for adding on to the tasting room to better accommodate gatherings such as birthday and anniversary parties, for which Eisele gets frequent requests. He also plans to add more outdoor games for guests to enjoy during their visit.

And to think, it all started with a single, fortuitous cable TV call.—*Mary Erickson*

Whispering Winds Winery is located at 13541 Blue School Road, Fennimore. Summer hours are Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To learn more, visit whisperingwindswinery.com or call 608-943-9941. To learn more about the Southwest Wisconsin Wine Trail, visit www.swwiwinetrail.com or visit [swwiwinetrail](https://www.facebook.com/swwiwinetrail) on Facebook.



Last chance to enter our 2017 Member Photo Contest!

There's still time to enter your photos in our 2017 Member Photo Contest, but you'll need to act quickly: The contest closes August 21! Winning photos will be featured in our 2018 calendar, and they may also be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications.

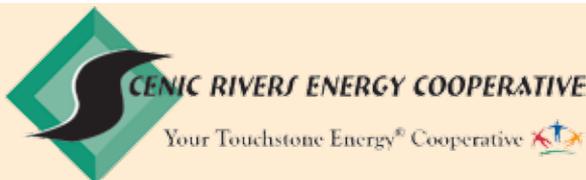
Photo Contest Criteria:

- Photos must be taken within the Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative service area.
- Photos should capture life in rural Wisconsin (seasons, wildlife, landscape, etc.).
- Photos must have a horizontal (landscape) orientation.
- Photos can be in color or black and white.
- Photos must be high resolution—at least 300 dpi and 8"x10".
- Photos must be emailed to hpierce@srec.net.

Photo Contest Rules and Details:

- Contest runs until August 21, 2017; however, submitted photos can be taken outside of this date range.
- Three photos per member will be accepted.
- All Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative members 18 years old and over are eligible to submit photos.
- All Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative members under the age of 18 years old is eligible to participate, but must submit a parent/guardian form with entry.
- A completed entry form must accompany each photo.
- Member must own rights to photo.
- SREC employees will determine the winning photos.

Entry form can be downloaded from our website, www.sre.coop or picked up at our office. We can also e-mail you a copy. Photos and entry forms may be emailed to [Heidi Pierce, hpierce@srec.net](mailto:Heidi.Pierce@srec.net).



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