



Steve Lucas, CEO

SREC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: AN INVESTMENT IN OUR YOUTH

Regular readers of this publication know that electric co-ops invest in youth by providing leadership development opportunities and college scholarships. It's all part of the fifth of seven principles that all co-ops abide by: Education, Training, and Information. We have seen over the years that investing in our youth pays off, as many of these young members go on to apply their leadership skills in their own communities.

Starting on page 13 of this issue, you can read about the essay contest offered by our statewide agency, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, to teens who attend the annual co-op-sponsored Youth Leadership Program at UW-River Falls. Winners of this contest receive a college scholarship.

I'm very proud that SREC can count a number of its own young members as past winners of this contest, most recently

Venkat Reddy, who took third place with his essay entitled "The Value of Cooperation" in 2017.

SREC also offers college scholarships of its own. We offer a \$1,000 scholarship to a qualifying student of a member family in each of the high schools within our service territory. We also offer a scholarship to a home-schooled student and a non-traditional student. These scholarships are funded by unclaimed capital credits through the Federated Youth Foundation.

Scholarships are drawn for at our annual meeting, to be held this year on April 13 at the Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. However, you can start applying right now. Applications are available on our website, www.sre.coop. Applications are due at the SREC office on Monday, April 8.

If you have questions about SREC's scholarship program, please contact Carrie Olmstead at 608-723-2121 or 800-236-2141, ext. 556. I encourage all qualifying students to apply.

Calendar Contest Another SREC-sponsored opportunity I encourage members to participate in is our Member Photo Contest, which provides us with the beautiful pictures on the calendars we distribute each October at our Member Appreciation celebrations.

We began offering this contest a few years ago, and it's quickly become one of our favorite programs. It's a great way to recognize our members' talents and also to appreciate the beautiful scenery we get to enjoy here in southwest Wisconsin.

Our 2019 contest is now underway; please see our website for more details.

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

"The Roundtree Branch in winter," taken by Michael Momot of Platteville, is the winning photo for February in SREC's Member Photo Contest.



THEATER TAKES CENTER STAGE AT NORTH CRAWFORD

Rob Ghormley to close his career as theater director with Hamlet

For 35 years, the play's been the thing for Rob Ghormley. He will close his directing career in March with a production of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" at North Crawford High School.

"It's the one major Shakespeare play I've never done," he said. "I have the horses to do it. It's a really sensational crew."

Ghormley likes the challenge.

During his tenure, the theater program doubled the number of plays put on in a year by adding a spring play to the established fall musical.

Students choose to open enroll in North Crawford because of the theater program, said Brandon Bankes, a former Ghormley student.

Bankes did just that. A 2009 graduate of North Crawford, he added to his theater experience at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Now he teaches English and initiated a theater program in Bahrain.

Ghormley inspired and influenced "the entire path of my life," Bankes said, and is one of his mentors.

Theater teaches students to work under pressure on something bigger than themselves, Bankes said.



Rob Ghormley

"The skills you get out of that can't be taught. They have to be experienced. The play is the smallest part of it, and it's not even the goal," Bankes said. "What we tell our students is that they develop confidence and that confidence is good in any field."

Ghormley "comes up with innovative ideas that people haven't done before," Bankes said.

For Hamlet, Ghormley has added two female characters to give voice to "the thoughts of Hamlet."

"I think the female perspective will make the play even more universal than it is," Ghormley said. "We're going to try it."

Naomi Cobb will play one of the female characters. She was student director for "Beauty and the Beast" last fall.

"I learned how to manage people, the shortcomings of theater and how to compensate for it," she said.

And part of the job of student director is to act as understudy. She had to step in as Mrs. Potts in "Beauty and the Beast" when the student actor couldn't perform on opening night.

"It wasn't nerve wracking," she said, because she had prepared.

Just after the "Hamlet" cast was announced, students asked to learn about the sound system so next year's productions will have an experienced crew despite the loss of graduating seniors. And others were very interested in how to stage the sword fights in "Hamlet."

Theater is a creative collaboration of the music, art, English and technical education departments, Ghormley said.

"In a theater production, every kid has a job. For some of them, it's just to bring on a chair. In our productions, we want

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—Rob Ghormley

our set changes to be really fast. Our set changes become a dance. If a kid doesn't get up and move their piece, the whole thing stalls. If you don't do your little bit precisely and correctly, the whole thing shuts down. Everyone is valuable. Every person is really important," Ghormley said. "Sometimes we've had a full fourth of the student body in a play."

A play starts with words on a page. Everything else comes from imagination, he said. The cast rehearses every weekday for 10 weeks.

And daily in rehearsal, he sees lights ignite in students as they understand their character and create their own interpretation.

"In English class, you don't see that. As a teacher, you try to make an emotional connection with a student. That's hard to do, really, really hard to do. In my English class, I can hardly get kids to learn 10 lines of poetry for a grade. In a play, I can get them to memorize two and a half hours of Shakespeare and not even give them a

Some past theater productions at North Crawford High School, clockwise, starting right: *Pirates of Penzance* (2004), *Cinderella* (2009), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2018).

grade. It's because the whole community will see it. The idea of audience is so important. People want to look good in front of people," he said.

Unlike his students, Ghormley did not discover theater in high school.

"When I first started as a teacher, my school had a theater program run by a young woman who didn't know how to build anything. I saw them struggling and said 'I know how to build things.' I ended up becoming the technical director pretty quickly.

"So then when I moved to Wauzeka, they said 'We don't have a theater program. Would you like to start one?' All in all, I found I loved theater more than anything else I'd ever done. It's so engaging and creative. The kids just line up for it. The very instant we get done, they all come to me and say 'What's next?'"

He's directed 74 plays including "Ragtime," "Little Shop of Horrors," and "Les Miserables." But he loves Shakespeare above all else, for the "beauty of the language."

He doesn't encourage his students to become professional actors, he said. "Only 10 percent of actors are working at a given time. Ninety percent are unemployed," Ghormley said.

But he does encourage them to be part of the theater program.

He had thought about retiring completely, but he is retiring from directing.

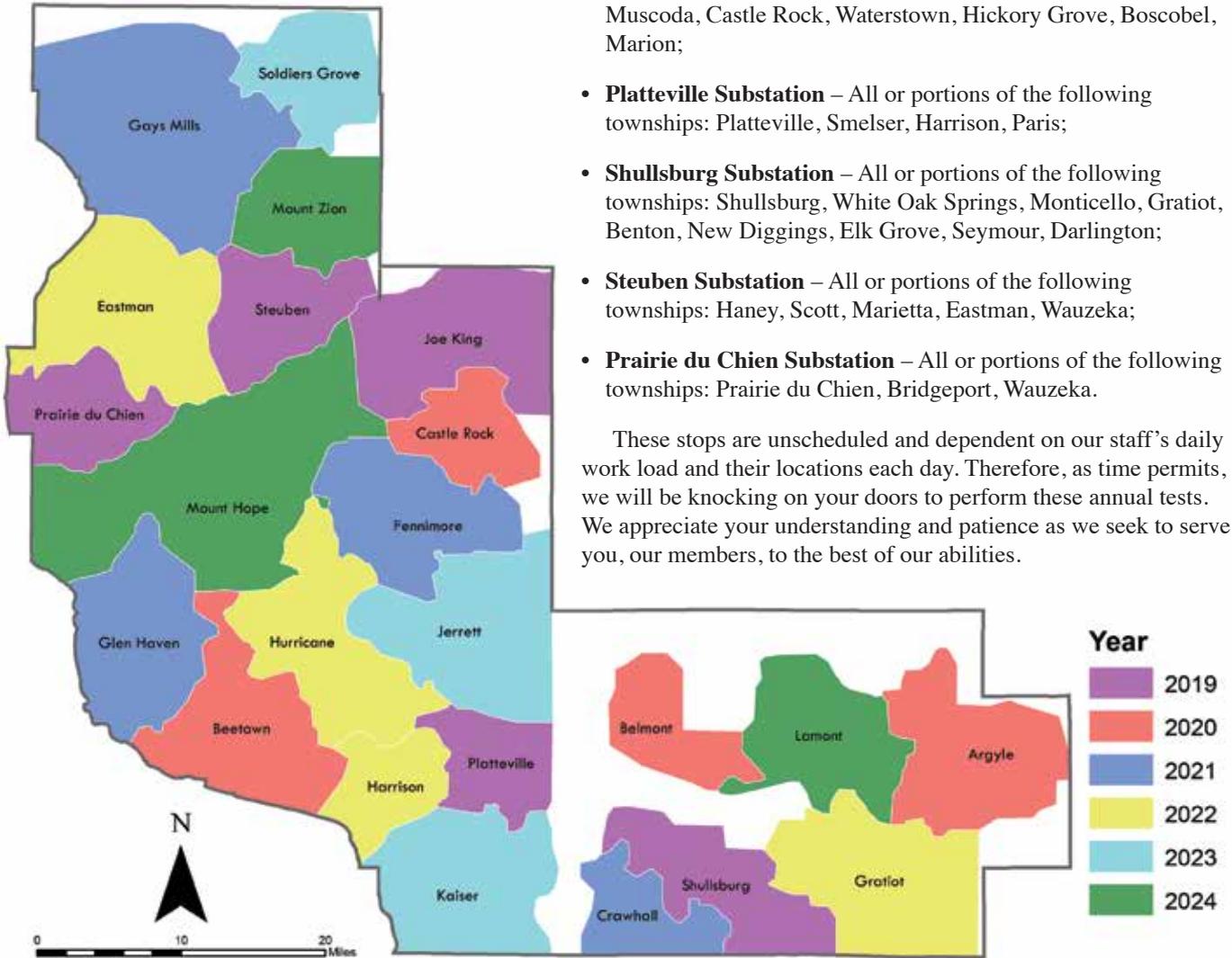
"I'm starting to feel my age. Frankly, I want to end doing well," he said.

"Hamlet" will be performed at 7 p.m. March 8, 9, 14, 15, and 16 at North Crawford High School. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students.—Mary Glindinning





2019 LOAD CONTROL TESTING

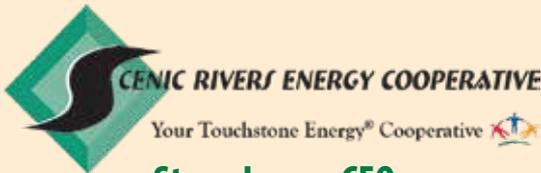


Annually, our staff checks and tests the load control meters on about 1,000 units in our service area. In 2019 we will be testing units in the following townships:

- **King Substation** – All or portions of the following townships: Muscodia, Castle Rock, Waterstown, Hickory Grove, Boscobel, Marion;
- **Platteville Substation** – All or portions of the following townships: Platteville, Smelser, Harrison, Paris;
- **Shullsburg Substation** – All or portions of the following townships: Shullsburg, White Oak Springs, Monticello, Gratiot, Benton, New Diggings, Elk Grove, Seymour, Darlington;
- **Steuben Substation** – All or portions of the following townships: Haney, Scott, Marietta, Eastman, Wauzeka;
- **Prairie du Chien Substation** – All or portions of the following townships: Prairie du Chien, Bridgeport, Wauzeka.

These stops are unscheduled and dependent on our staff’s daily work load and their locations each day. Therefore, as time permits, we will be knocking on your doors to perform these annual tests. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we seek to serve you, our members, to the best of our abilities.

KEEP WATCHING! Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative’s 2018 Annual Report will appear in the March issue of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, prior to the co-op’s annual meeting on Saturday, April 13, at the Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. To accommodate the co-op’s bylaws regarding notification of the annual meeting, the March issue will be arriving in mailboxes later than usual.



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