



FIVE REASONS WE LOVE SERVING OUR MEMBERS

Steve Lucas, CEO

February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Presidents' Day, Black History Month and Valentine's Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy, and of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers, and other special people in our lives know we care about them—with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.



1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible, and safe electricity. Simply put, SREC exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1938—to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

2. You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back. A major part of our seven cooperative principles is to serve our community and look after the greater good. With your assistance, we're able to help the most vulnerable members of our community through food and toy drives and programs like Operation Round Up, which support our food pantries, EMS squads, and Fire and Rescue departments.

3. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors. They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through voting in director elections and weighing in on co-op and community issues.

4. You help us get it right. SREC members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball; our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees.

5. You and other SREC members make up the community we serve—and for us, it's all about community. Our employees live and work here too and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why SREC donates to local charities, schools, hospitals and we fund thousands of dollars in scholarships. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The winning photo for February in SREC's 2022 Member Photo Contest is "Hickory Grove Country Church," taken by Pat Wester of Fennimore. Winning photos are featured in our 2022 Member Photo Calendar.

Extraordinary People doing Ordinary Things

This is the second in a series in which we look into the lives of the people we may not notice but who make our communities stronger, by doing things we all rely on.



FEEDING THAT WHICH FEEDS US

A day in the life of an Animal Nutritionist

In our continuing series in which we look deeper into the lives of those “in our neighborhoods,” I met up with Mackenzie Torstenson at the Martin Family Dairy in rural Hazel Green. While Mackenzie is not a member of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, she plays a part in many of our members’ day-to-day success. She affects even more of us by addressing the nutrition needs of many dairy herds and other livestock in our service territory.

So, is she a veterinarian? No, she is an animal nutritionist and consults with many of our area dairy farmers to obtain the best results possible. With an animal science degree from UW-Platteville, Mackenzie specialized in meat and livestock management before graduating in 2015. She previously worked for an area veterinarian throughout her high school and college years, but realized that wasn’t what truly interested her.

After graduating, Mackenzie worked for Economy Feed Mill in Glen Haven. There she learned the ropes by working under Brooke Grinde. Brooke taught “that it is a privilege to be on these dairies.” It was clear to me that this attitude drives Mackenzie as I watched her work with the Martin herd and Brandon Martin, who runs and maintains the farm. She was knowledgeable and attentive to the herd’s needs, but more than anything she really cared about the animals’ health and well-being.

It may seem obvious that what we feed an animal affects its production and overall health. However, there are many more factors to be considered. Mackenzie addressed the total health of the herd and specifically looked at the environment

the cows were living in. Temperature is a big factor in January, and it can adversely affect milk output and quality. Therefore, while Mackenzie can’t control the weather, she can advise farmers on how to feed the herds the best nutrients they can. She discussed the moisture, protein, potassium, and other nutrient levels within the current feed mix. She went on to advise Brandon how the mix could be changed to get the desired results.

Where does all this data come from? How could she know all this? Not just by looking at the feed and the herd. Mackenzie uses a lot of science to determine how she advises her customers. Pulling samples from the herds, feed sources, and more is part of her day-to-day job. Getting those samples



Brandon Martin and Mackenzie Torstenson discuss the herd’s needs.



tested and then interpreting the results are a big part of the service she provides. The data helps Mackenzie and her customers know if the feed mix is optimum.

Digestibility of the mix was addressed, as cows like to sort through the feed for the bits they like best. Known as “refusal,” the cows were clearly digging through the feed mix to find their favorite morsels. Mackenzie addressed this by looking at what the cows were not eating and the lengths of those pieces. This information helped her to better advise Brandon in how to alter the mix. The mix is like a recipe, and

small alterations can have a lot of impact on the end results. Much like with baking bread, a good cook knows you only need to make small changes in order to get a different and ultimately better result.

Mackenzie also addressed the cows’ udder health, their mobility, the new calves, and rumination.

“It is my job to build the relationships and help the farm meet its goals. I am constantly earning the right to serve these farms.”

— Mackenzie Torstenson

Did you know that cows ruminate? I did not, or at least I didn’t know that’s what it’s called. Rumination is the action of chewing their “cud.” A cow’s pattern of rumination can tell a farmer a lot about the cow’s health and feed intake needs. Mackenzie explained that the herd’s consistent rumination while resting was an indication of good herd health.

After “walking the herd,” Mackenzie sat down with Brandon to review the latest test results. The question to answer was “what is limiting production?” They discussed the feed mix options available, the herd’s current needs, and how to meet those needs for the rest of winter. The data sheets looked very similar to test results you might see in your doctor’s office. It was clear that Mackenzie knew Brandon’s goals and that they worked well together to meet the needs of the herd.

Mackenzie visits many farms each week. She is easily



The Torstenson family: Jordan, Mackenzie, Jessa (6), and Lyla (3).

reached and attentive to the needs of her farms. She said that communication with each farm is the key to achieving their goals. Each farm has different desires and needs. Her job is to assist the farms in reaching these goals, not to push her own goals. She works to meet each farmer where they are and recognizes that each farmer has different goals. The field is constantly evolving and growing, and Mackenzie stays up to date on new products and practices. She strives to bring the best practices and knowledge to the farms she serves.

Mackenzie and her husband, Jordan, are parents to Jessa, 6, and Lyla, 3, and are expecting their first son later this spring. They farm and manage a herd of 175 goats at their home farm, Stone Ridge Meat Goats, near Mineral Point. If you get a chance to meet and work with Mackenzie, I know you’ll agree that she is a positive force here in our corner of the world.

—Judy Mims

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE’S ANNUAL MEETING

April 9, 2022

Youth and Ag Building, Lancaster, WI

Registration at 9 a.m.

Meeting starts at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting will be both virtual and in person.

**Scholarships, director elections, door prizes,
box lunch, and more!**



**SAVE
THE DATE**

52 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FROM SREC

The Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative Board of Directors will award 52 eligible students with \$1,000 scholarships at our 2022 Annual Meeting. Scholarships will be awarded via a drawing at the meeting held on Saturday, April 9, 2022, in person at the Grant County Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. At the time of the meeting, applicants will be eligible to receive a scholarship by being either:



- A senior in high school; or
- A senior in a home-schooled program; or
- A non-traditional student entering their freshmen year in a post-secondary accredited program.

Qualifications:

1. Only dependents of active members or active members of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative will be eligible

to receive scholarship money. (Dependents of employees and directors are eligible so long as they are active members of SREC.)

2. The application can be mailed or emailed to the addresses listed below and must be received on or before Monday, April 4, 2022, to qualify:

Mailing Address:

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative
Attn: 2022 Scholarships
231 N. Sheridan St.
Lancaster, WI 53813

Email Address: csolmstead@srec.net

SREC will mail or email a confirmation receipt to each student who applies. If you do not hear from SREC by April 4, 2022, please call us to verify receipt of your application.

3. The student must be present at the SREC Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 9, 2022.

4. After successful completion of their first semester (Fall 2022) of post-secondary education AND receiving at least 12 college credits at a minimum "C" average for that semester, a \$1,000 check will be made out to the school and the student for their second semester tuition. If the student fails to meet these qualifications, the scholarship will be awarded to the alternate, provided they have met the same requirements.

5. Simply fill out the application form and return it to the address stated earlier. Applications can also be picked up at our Lancaster or Darlington offices and are available online at www.sre.coop

If you have questions regarding the 2022 Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative Scholarship, please contact Carrie Olmstead at 608-723-2121 or 800-236-2141 ext. 556.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Parent Name (or legal guardian) _____

Address of Parent (if different from student) _____

Cooperative Billing Account Number _____

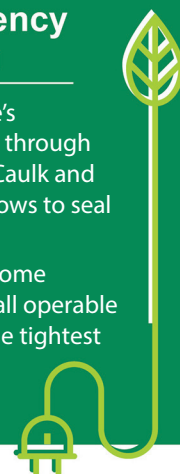
Name of High School _____

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

Source: Dept. of Energy



SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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