



WORKING WITH LOCAL LEGISLATORS

Steve Lucas, CEO

“All politics is local.” This observation by the late Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., former Speaker of the House of Representatives, means that even national politics have a local impact, and people care most about issues that directly affect them. Indirectly, this famous adage underscores the importance and value of local politics.

At Scenic Rivers, we think it’s critical to develop and cultivate relationships with local legislators because they craft, introduce, and vote on legislation that impacts the local business climate, the environment, and quality of life for our community. That’s why we work closely with our local elected officials. After all, our purpose is to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy, but our mission is to help our community thrive.

SREC is a local business that powers economic development and prosperity for our region. As a cooperative, we have deep roots here, and we listen closely to our members to better understand the needs of the community. Our leadership, board members, and employees live and work right here in the community we serve.

We strive to be an advocate for our community, ensuring that local legislators know, understand, and act on the issues that are important to our area.

Providing Industry Guidance and Expertise

As a practical matter, we recognize that most legislators are “generalists,” yet they vote on a wide range of issues. Their expertise may not include the changing energy industry, which is why many cooperatives provide guidance and expertise from subject matter experts who’ve been in the energy industry for many years.

Today’s energy landscape is an increasingly complex topic covering not only the traditional engineering and vegetation management aspects of the industry, but also encompasses technology, cybersecurity, the electrification of the transportation sector, and more.

Our experts provide briefings and backgrounders to legislators, committees and staff, and we offer expert testimony for hearings and other legislative or regulatory meetings or gatherings. And because we’re involved in economic development and we know local community leaders, we can provide insight on how issues and policies under discussion might impact our region.

Representing Your Best Interests

We strive to be a trusted resource on energy issues. Because of our deep roots in the community, we have a firm understanding of local issues and needs. We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our consumer-members. This means we are able to cultivate and foster positive, productive relationships with legislators who know and trust us, because we’re advocating on behalf of the community we serve.

We’re proud to power your life and bring good things to the community. We will continue to advocate on your behalf and improve the quality of life for all. Until next time, we will continue to work hard to keep your lights on.

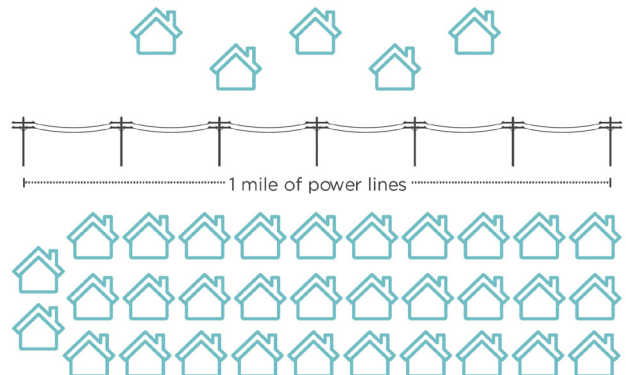
We strive to be an advocate for our community, ensuring that local legislators know, understand, and act on the issues that are important to our area.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Did you know electric co-ops power fewer consumers per mile of line compared to other utilities?

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Serves 5 consumer-members per miles of line



OTHER ELECTRIC UTILITIES

Serve 32 consumers per mile of line

Extraordinary People doing Ordinary Things

This is the first 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.

FOR THE LOVE OF SNOW

It was a brisk November morning when I stopped in to see the crew at the Crawford County Highway Department. I was greeted by C.C., the resident cat. C.C. was happy to get a scratch or two while I waited to speak with the staff. While C.C. and I got on just fine, my goal was to learn more about driving a snow plow, and for that, I was meeting with Joe Havlik.

As the snowy season here in Southwest Wisconsin was approaching, I found myself thinking about snow. As a child, I was enamored with it. I loved playing in it: building forts, throwing it, eating it (the white stuff only!), and sledding down a steep slope on our family farm. As I grew older, I got the *privilege* of cleaning it off my own car, shoveling my own driveway and sidewalk, and eventually using a snowblower to do the heavier work. These thoughts brought me to the men and women who drive the plows.

Do you like driving a plow in the dark and cold when the road is rather unsafe? Joe's quick response was "Yes. It's peaceful and quiet. There is nothing like the sight of snow flying and glistening off the blade."

He admitted, though, that no one likes getting called out in the middle of the night, just to go down an icy hill. His regular route takes him throughout northern Crawford County, and the hill on Zintz Road takes extra caution to navigate and plow.

Joe grew up in Crawford County and graduated from North Crawford High School, but work took him out of state for over 20 years. He and his wife, Lisa, were happy to move back a few years ago in order to be closer to family. Joe has worked

for the county for just three years, and he said it is the best job he's ever had.

"The crew and my boss are just great people to work with," Joe said.

How did you learn to drive a plow? Joe said he learned a lot as a farm kid, but that supervisors train new snowplow drivers. Drivers need to know some basics in how to maintain the trucks, fill the beds with salt or sand, put on the chains, and keep the machine operating safely. The county employs full-time mechanics to handle large repairs and welders to repair plow blades. Then, it is important to get practice on the "easier" roads. Experience is the best teacher, but Joe

Joe Havlik has been driving snow plows for Crawford County for three years.



acknowledged sometimes you just “drive by the seat of your pants.”

Joe emphasized that there is a lot to watch and pay attention to while driving a plow. A driver needs to see the road, which can be invisible, by spotting the landmarks, signs, guardrails, and more all in an instant. Watching to see what is flying up off the blade can tell the driver if he is too far off onto the shoulder of the road. Knowing what traffic is coming at you, is in front of you, and behind you all changes how a plow driver maneuvers the truck.

A word about safety. As you might imagine, safety is a big concern for the drivers, and training is ongoing year-round. Joe stressed that going slowly, being alert, maintaining visibility, and keeping distance between vehicles are all critical to everyone’s safety. He admitted to damaging one mailbox in his time, but “it was the mailbox or the oncoming traffic.” I think we can all agree that Joe made the right choice.

Drivers might wonder about passing a slow-moving plow, but Joe advises against it. “We go slow, 25 – 30 mph, to let the sand and salt fall on the road. Any faster and it would just fly off.”

Snowplow drivers deal with snow in ways the rest of us could never imagine. They see it blowing hard enough to induce vertigo, and snow blindness is a real hazard. They navigate the roads without the help of lines, and sometimes the guardrails are buried too. These men and women, who live and work in our communities, are doing a task that benefits us all, and while it is clearly hard, cold, and stressful work, the crew in Crawford County is a cheerful bunch. They take note of coming storms and get extra rest in advance, even turning off the Sunday football games when they need to be at their best, if the time comes.

When emergencies arise, Joe and the other drivers can be counted on to get the roads clear, including private drives if the ambulance or fire trucks need access right away. Snowplow drivers are very aware of the need to get an ambulance through the snow, and have been known to lead emergency vehicles right to the hospital doors. At times like that, these men and women do not worry about jurisdiction and will simply plow the road.

When the snow is gone. The crews work year-round and when the snow is gone, there is always lots of work to do. Mowing, clearing brush, and maintaining



The Crawford County Highway Department is the home base for snowplow drivers like Joe Havlik and also for C.C., the resident cat.

the roads are all part of the job. Joe and others on the crew get called when trees come down in the roadways, and they patrol all the county roads each day, sometimes while it is still very dark and early in the morning. Additionally, the crew handles “critter litter,” commonly called road kill. (I have to admit, I always wondered who took care of those carcasses.)


If you have the occasion to stop at the highway department, be sure to give C.C. an extra scratch behind the ears. You probably won’t find many crew members in the office, as they are most often out on the job throughout the county. However, when you see them on the roadway, be sure to give a wave in recognition of the work they do which benefits us all.—*Judy Mims*

DON'T

Trucks release salt and sand from the back of the truck - if you're too close to the truck, materials could hit your windshield & obstruct visibility.

Crowd the Plow!

NEVER PASS Plow on the RIGHT
Plows push snow to right shoulder & may use a wing (often 6-8 feet long) which is difficult to see.



BLIND SPOT

Plow trucks travel between 25-35 MPH
Allow enough time & space to safely stop/slow down.

BLIND SPOT

Don't assume the plow driver can see your vehicle. The driver's field of vision is limited. You may see them, but they may not see you.

Maintain at least 200-foot distance from plow truck to:

1. ensure the driver can see you at all times
2. allow time for you to slow down or stop
3. avoid obstructing visibility from material release or cloud of snow

Remember: Plow trucks may need to “back up” at intersections during storm response - make sure to leave them room to do so.

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The winning photo for January in SREC's 2022 Member Photo Contest is "Freezing Fog," taken by John Anderson of Cuba City. Winning photos are featured in our 2022 Member Photo Calendar.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning, or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters, and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

U.S. Department of Energy



Mark your calendars for Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative's Annual Meeting


April 9, 2022

Youth and Ag
Building,
Lancaster, WI

more details coming soon



SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Steve Lucas, CEO

231 N. Sheridan St.
Lancaster, WI 53813
lancaster@srec.net

300 Barth Drive
P.O. Box 127
Darlington, WI 53530
darlington@srec.net

15985 St. Hwy. 131
Gays Mills, WI 54631
gaysmills@srec.net

608-723-2121 • 800-236-2141 • www.sre.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider

Board of Directors

Chuck Simmons, Chairman
Donald Schaefer, Vice Chairman
Sandra Davidson, Secretary-Treasurer
Ellen Conley, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
Lily Long, Director
Steve Carpenter, Director
Delbert Reuter, Director
Jack Larson, Director
Marcus Saegrove, Director