

Steve Lucas, CEO

THE PATH TO EFFICIENCY INDEPENDENCE

While fireworks and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes to mind when discussing energy efficiency. Perhaps it should. If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency, combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately helps our country on a path toward greater energy independence. And that's worth celebrating.

Benefits of Efficiency At its essence, greater efficiency means less energy is used for the production of goods and services. For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit—more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for all co-op members.

On a national level, energy efficiency, sometimes called the “fifth fuel,” has a more profound impact. It can potentially boost the economy by allowing consumers and businesses to invest in other areas. Greater energy efficiency may slow the rate at which domestic energy is depleted, and therefore reduce or diminish the need for foreign energy.

Take Charge Every American can take charge of his or her own energy use, regardless of individual circumstances. Small steps can lead to a big difference for you and your neighbors, whether across the road or across the country.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with a physical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less efficient appliance with a new ENERGY STAR model or upgrading to new, insulated windows. These measures can be costly, but Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative can help. We offer energy rebates that can help members with the cost of large projects such as replacing old, inefficient appliances, or installing a new heating and air-conditioning system. Some rebates even help with smaller projects such as swapping out any remaining incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with energy efficient LEDs.

We offer energy rebates that can help members with the cost of large projects...

Please visit our website, www.srec.net, and click on Energy Rebates under Programs and Services to see if your purchase qualifies for rebate.

Smart Control The second way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, from utilizing smart thermostat technology to very simple steps like turning the lights off when everyone's left a room and saving energy-intensive chores like laundry for off-peak hours. We routinely offer energy-saving tips in this magazine; in our newsletter, *Watt's Happening*; and through our participation in Focus on Energy.

Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, SREC can help you on the journey. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning photo from SREC's Member Photo Contest for July was taken by Jeff Kopsell in the Town of Wiota. He labeled this picture “Sunrise over County Road N.” If you're a shutterbug yourself, please share your pictures with us by entering the 2017 Member Photo Contest, which runs until August 21. Winning photos will appear in our 2018 member calendar. Visit our website, www.sre.coop, for contest details and downloadable forms.





Reliving Our Heritage

Historical re-enactment weekend returns to Boscobel

The Civil War will be returning to Boscobel this summer, one year after the community's former Muskets and Memories Civil War Era Re-enactment fired its final volley.

That widely popular event has been replaced with Reliving Our Heritage—A Living History Timeline, which will feature re-enactment groups representing not only various Civil War units, but also re-enactors of wars involving U.S. military personnel starting with the French and Indian War all the way through current conflicts.

Held August 5 and 6 at the Kronshage Park, Reliving Our Heritage will be a weekend-long tribute to all veterans, with a special focus on family-friendly, educational opportunities.

"I hope that when people walk out of here, they'll say 'Wow, we fought these wars and we're living here today because these people sacrificed themselves for a greater cause,'" said Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative member Bob Walsh.

Walsh is a re-enactor himself who, along with his wife, Luba, was involved with Muskets and Memories for many years. They are among a dedicated group of about 20 people who have been working since January to develop and organize the newly reincarnated event.

Reliving Our Heritage will retain some of the most popular activities from Muskets and Memories, including the military/civilian ball, pie social, ladies garden party, and battle re-enactments that fill the park with the sounds and smells of cannons and muskets. However, some new events and exhibits have been added, including a special children's tent with hands-on learning activities.

A highlight of this inaugural Reliving Our Heritage event will be an exhibit dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American servicemen to serve as military aviators in the U.S. armed forces, who served with distinction during World War II. This display will include a World War II fighter plane. Some Tuskegee Airmen veterans could also be on hand, pending availability.

Welcome Return That Kronshage Park will once again be filled with people in period clothing come August is welcome news to more than just the committee of volunteers working tirelessly to make it happen.

Muskets and Memories typically attracted up to 1,000 par-

ticipants representing infantry, cavalry, artillery, and medical units from the North and South, as well as 8,000 or so spectators who gathered to watch the live re-enactments and get a feel for what life was like during the Civil War. But as do many long-running events, Muskets and Memories simply ran its course.

August 2016 was the first in many years without a re-enactment in Boscobel, and the absence was felt both by the community and the many groups that participated.

"This was the best large re-enactment in the upper Midwest," said Barb Thyren, a Boscobel resident and a re-enactor herself. "All summer long at the different events we were at, everybody kept saying, 'Can't you bring Boscobel back? When is Boscobel coming back?'"

Thyren sought out Jean Patten, who had played an active role with past Muskets and Memories weekends, even organizing the entire event in 2013. They joined forces and assembled a group of volunteers to create a new re-enactment event with a bit of a different focus.

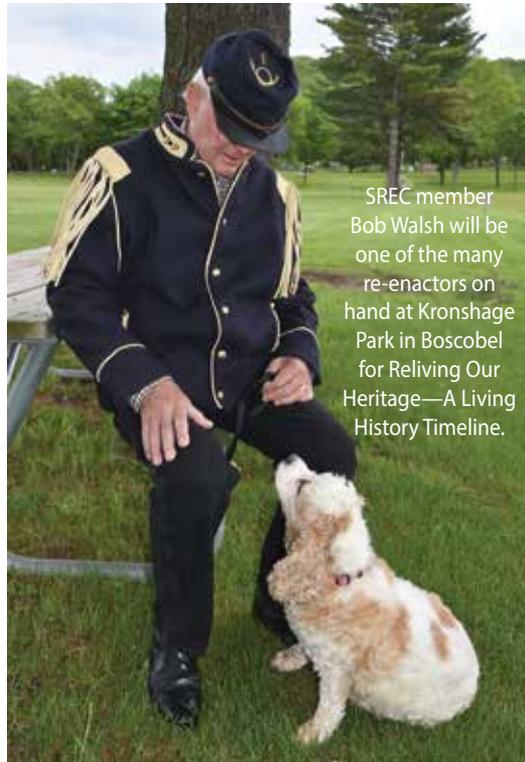
Branching Out Among the changes organizers have made is an effort to extend the celebration beyond Kronshage Park by partnering with other groups in Boscobel to make Reliving Our Heritage a community-wide event. A parade is planned for Saturday morning, ending at The Boscobel Heritage Depot Museum downtown, where

the community's farmer's park and possibly other activities will be in full swing.

Organizers also reached out to area schools to encourage youth attendance, putting on demonstrations and promoting the new youth education activities that are being planned. Among them is a scavenger hunt that will take students through the entire timeline of re-enactments and displays.

Another new idea—one that's in the very early stages of development—is a plan to partner with area universities to offer internship opportunities for college students.

What will remain the same, however, is that history will come alive in the hills of Kronshage Park come August, just as it has for the past 20-plus years.—*Mary Erickson*



SREC member Bob Walsh will be one of the many re-enactors on hand at Kronshage Park in Boscobel for Reliving Our Heritage—A Living History Timeline.

To learn more about Reliving Our Heritage—A Living History Timeline, call Barb at 608-375-5700 or Jean at 608-485-1611, visit the website www.relivingourheritage.com, or visit Reliving Our Heritage on Facebook.

Pictures of the Past

Collection of iconic Kammerude paintings on display at Lafayette County Historical Society Museum

To study a Laverne Kammerude painting is to step back in time to a different era of rural life, when family farms dotted the landscape, fieldwork was done without the benefit of tractors and other modern equipment, and neighbors joined together for threshing bees that were as much a social opportunity as they were work.

These were scenes Kammerude saw in his everyday life, growing up on his family farm in Blanchardville. He was a farmer first, only taking up painting after he retired from farming, when he was in his mid-50s. He likely never imagined that he'd make a name for himself as an artist, with his paintings still gathering a following today, 28 years after his death in 1989.

Anyone wanting to step back into the time that's so meticulously brought to life in Kammerude's artwork needs only to step into the Lafayette County Historical Society Museum in Darlington, which has acquired 14 originals of Kammerude's well-known oil paintings. Some of these paintings depict specific rural scenes from Lafayette County, and others show images of farm life that would be recognizable to anyone who lived and worked on a small Midwestern farm in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s.

"We are fortunate to have the originals on display here, and we also sell prints," said SREC member Judy Hastie, president of the Lafayette County Historical Society.

Unlikely Journey The museum—and everyone who appreciates Kammerude's unique art, for that matter—has one man to thank for the opportunity to enjoy the paintings. Gerald Regan, formerly of Mineral Point, can be credited with introducing Kammerude's work to a wider audience. He was working as a salesman for Surge Dairy Equipment Company back in 1976 when a Kammerude painting hanging on the wall of the Production Credit Office in Dodgeville caught his eye.

"I saw this painting on the wall of a little boy and a mother and dad husking corn out, and it was really well done," he recalled. "I said, 'Where do you get a painting like that?' And the guy said, 'Oh, the old guy down there by Blanchardville painted that and gave it to us, so we hung it up.' So I went right down there to see him and I commissioned three different paintings."

Regan had no art background himself, but he appreciated the quality of the detailed brush strokes and was especially drawn to the nostalgic subject matter of Kammerude's paintings.

"I was born in 1930," he explained. "I grew up in that era and I really loved it because of the neighborhoods. In our neighborhood there were about 10 farms, and everybody had about 25 cows, a few sows, chickens, and kids. For some reason I just really loved that era."

Regan suspected that others would love Kammerude's paintings for the

same reasons he did, so he had some prints made of three of the five paintings he ended up hanging on the wall of his own office and took his chances at a farm show in Illinois. He bought a tent and some easels to display the paintings, and in just the first day of the show he made up his investment with sales.

"It came all of a sudden that I found out that I really had an artist like nobody else had, so after I retired from the (Surge Dairy Equipment) Company I started going to steam shows to sell the prints," Regan said. "I started doing that, and I just couldn't believe how many people liked them."

All from Memory Kammerude's artwork is noteworthy because of its exacting detail, but it's especially remarkable when one considers that his talent was just a natural gift, largely hidden for many years. Not only did Kammerude create his paintings without a single ▶



Gerald Regan, who spent years marketing farmer-turned-artist Laverne Kammerude's artwork, donated his collection of original Kammerude paintings to the Lafayette County Historical Society, where they are on display in the museum.



bit of formal art training and only a third-grade education, but he created them decades after the era depicted in them had passed. Every image he painted was done from memory; he painted what he knew and remembered.

Regan said when he began commissioning paintings from Kammerude, he would suggest topics, such as a scene showing silo filling or threshing. Kammerude would then bring the scene to life by pulling details from his childhood memories, creating a story with every painting.



Regan points out the details in a Laverne Kammerude print, available at the Lafayette County Historical Society Museum.

Kammerude earned official acclaim for his artwork, although Regan said the painter was always humble and avoided attention, apparently incredulous that he was being paid to paint. He won the 1986 Wisconsin State Heritage Award and earned recognition from the Wisconsin Art Board. Some of his paintings adorned

the governor's office in Madison for years; many of his prints still hang in the offices of local and regional businesses as well as governmental offices.

And now, the paintings hang in the Lafayette County Historical Society Museum for all to enjoy. Regan donated his original Kammerude paintings to the historical society. Museum Director Fran Fink said the organization also recently acquired a substantial collection of prints, which it sells as a fund-raiser for the Lafayette County Historical Society.

All are welcome to visit the museum and step back in time through the work of one of southwest Wisconsin's most unlikely artists. —*Mary Erickson*

The Lafayette County Historical Society Museum is located at 525 North Main Street, Darlington. It's open Monday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. or by appointment. Admission is free but donations are appreciated. For more information, call 608-776-8340 or visit www.lafayettehistorical.com.

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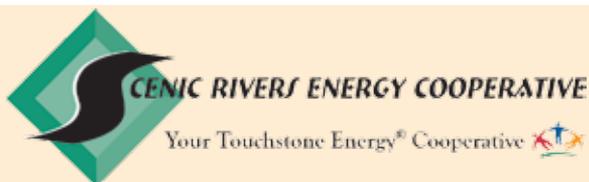
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