



## BE PREPARED WITH AN EMERGENCY PLAN



Steve Lucas, CEO

Sometimes, Mother Nature just hits hard and it's all we can do to keep up. We were reminded of that in July when our service area got hit with a fierce storm accompanied by an intense dumping of large volumes of rain. That

storm hit on a Wednesday, causing outages across the system. We had just finished getting everyone's power back on and repairing the damage when we got hit again two days later, this time even harder. At one point we had as many as 5,000 members out of power.

Fortunately, we have an emergency plan in place for just such an occasion. Our emergency plan includes ROPE, or Restoration of Power in an Emergency. This program is a great example of the sixth cooperative principle, Cooperation Among Cooperatives. When one area gets hit with a storm that's too much for one co-op to handle in a timely manner, that co-op can activate ROPE, which calls for crews from a neighboring co-op to help with power restoral.

Our own SREC crew members have answered the call for help from other co-ops through this program; in July it was our turn to ask for a hand. Four operations personnel from Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative joined our own crews that week to help restore power. We are extremely grateful for their assistance.

Given the severity of the storm and its subsequent damage, we are very pleased to report that everyone's power was back on by 4 p.m. on that Saturday. However, we realize that for

some people even enduring a few hours without power can be more than just an inconvenience. This storm certainly exposed the need for some members to have an emergency plan in place for extended power outages caused by extreme natural occurrences that are beyond our control.

If you have an urgent need for a constant power supply—for example, if someone in your household relies on life-support equipment, or if you need watering tanks and ventilators for your livestock—we recommend that you consider purchasing a standby generator so you have a backup power source in the event of an extended outage.

Generators can be purchased at most home-improvement stores, but installing a generator is not a job for rookies. It's extremely important to follow all safety guidelines when installing and operating a generator. We recommend having a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely run a generator.

We also recommend that you have a family emergency plan in place in the event of a severe storm and/or extended outage. If you have vulnerable members of the family and you don't have a generator, keep on hand the contact information of a friend or neighbor who does, with whom you might be able to stay until power is restored. It's also a good idea to keep a list of emergency contact numbers on hand as well as a first-aid kit and a supply of nonperishable foods.

Our goal is to provide you with safe, reliable electricity, but we can't guarantee uninterrupted service 100 percent of the time. We urge you to be prepared for when those times occur.

## Mark your calendars for SREC's MEMBER APPRECIATION CELEBRATIONS!

Help us celebrate October Co-op Month by joining us for dinner at one of our three locations!

October 17: Lancaster  
October 18: Gays Mills  
October 19: Darlington  
4–7 p.m. at each location



## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning photo from SREC's Member Photo Contest for September was taken by Michael Bradley in Lafayette County. Our 2017 Member Photo Contest is now complete. You can pick up your 2018 member calendar, featuring the winning photos from the 2017 contest, at one of our Member Appreciation Celebrations in October. Watch next month's issue for details!



## SREC students shine at Youth Leadership Congress

Representing Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative at this year's Youth Leadership Congress were, left to right: Elizabeth Tesar, Natalie Wood, Reagan Russell, Venkat Reddy, Cheyanne Carlin and Kama Tesar.

**Six high school students from SREC member families sharpened their leadership skills, learned about the cooperative form of business, and developed fast new friendships at the 54th annual Youth Leadership Congress (YLC), held on the campus of UW-River Falls July 26–28.**

These member students joined about 120 teens from around the state at the three-day event, coordinated by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association on behalf of the state's electric cooperatives. The program, developed by the high school students elected to the Youth Board at the previous year's YLC, included a mix of team-building activities, hands-on workshop sessions, and presentations by professional speakers as well as cooperative employees.

Motivational speaker Craig Hillier returned to the YLC this year to challenge students to make a difference in their schools and communities. Also returning this year was hypnotist Dr. Al Snyder from Mondovi, whose highly entertaining program kept students laughing.

Professor Dr. David Trechter from the UW-River Falls College of Agriculture talked about the cooperative business model and the impact cooperatives have on our everyday lives. At the banquet, YLC delegates learned the fine points of formal dinner etiquette from UW-River Falls Professor Melissa Wilson.

Students interested in attending the 2018 Youth Leadership Congress can learn more through their school or directly from this magazine and SREC's website, [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop), in the spring. The tentative dates for next year's program are July 25–27, 2018.



### Cheyanne Carlin (Boscobel)

Going to this camp has really opened my eyes to the world of cooperatives and has made me realize that working in one could definitely be in my future. I not only learned what a cooperative was, but also why they're so important to those in rural areas. I'm extremely grateful that Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative gave me this wonderful opportunity to learn more about cooperatives.



**Natalie Wood (Platteville)**

I really enjoyed Youth Leadership Congress. I learned so much about co-ops and how to be a great leader. It is definitely an amazing experience that everyone should participate in. I had so much fun meeting new people and making new friends. I am so grateful that I could be a part of this amazing program and I urge everyone to try it. Thank you to all those who made this possible!

**Reagan Russell (Shullsburg)**

I found the three-day camp to be fun and educational. It was a great way to meet new people and learn.



**Kama Tesar (Wauzeka)**

I really enjoyed this program because I learned a lot about myself and other people. I met new friends! It was a very open environment. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity, I am very, very thankful. I hope I can work in a cooperative someday!

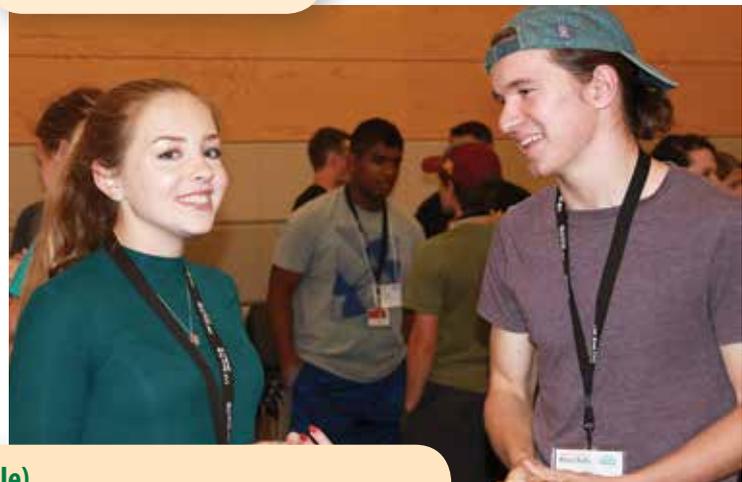
**Elizabeth Tesar (Wauzeka)**

I really liked the conference, and it opened me up to a lot of opportunities. Overall, I had a great time, and I learned a lot.



**Venkat Reddy (Platteville)**

The Youth Leadership Conference was a great experience for me, allowing me to develop my leadership skills and to meet a ton of new people. I would definitely recommend any student who has the opportunity to go to accept the invitation. You'll be glad you went!





# LONGTIME CO-OP DIRECTOR PASSES

## Gerald Koeller's service spanned 30 years, two mergers, many changes

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative was fortunate to have benefitted from the leadership of former director Gerald Koeller, who died July 18 at age 90.

During his 30 years as a director, Koeller helped guide the co-op through a merger with the former Lafayette Electric in 1989 and then another merger with the former Crawford Electric in 1999, forming Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative. He was also a longtime representative on the board of directors of Dairyland Power Cooperative, SREC's wholesale power provider, serving as the Dairyland board president and later board chairman.

His many accomplishments earned him the Ally of Cooperative Electrification (ACE) award, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the statewide electric cooperative association, in 2001.

"Gerald was a true and dedicated director and was instrumental with the merger of Grant/Lafayette and Crawford, in which many meetings took place between the two co-ops," said SREC Director Sandy Davidson. Davidson was formerly a director of Crawford Electric Cooperative; she had worked with Koeller the longest of all the current SREC directors, from the merger with Crawford Electric in 1999 until Koeller retired from the SREC board in 2010.

However, Koeller is remembered for much more than the accolades he earned, the difficult decisions he was never afraid to make, or the many large projects and initiatives in which he had a hand. Koeller embraced the many changes he saw during his long tenure as a director; Davidson pointed out that "Gerald was also acceptable of a woman being on the board."

Koeller was also known for his sense of humor and the helping hand he extended to new directors. Director Ellen Conley recalled the kindness Koeller showed to her when she was first elected to the board 13-plus years ago.

"As a newcomer—I came on the board for SREC in

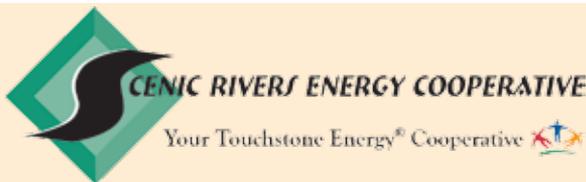


Gerald Koeller (left) was presented with the Ally of Cooperative Electrification (ACE) award, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), in 2001. Presenting the award was Robert Kretzschmar, then president of the WECA board of directors.

2003—Gerald quickly became my mentor," she said. "He sat across from me at our board meetings. Gerald could see my wheels turning as I was new, and if I didn't understand something he would stop the meeting and explain it.

"Everyone who knew Gerald looked up to him," Conley added. "He was a good guy with a goofy sense of humor and a serious side all at the same time. He had a kind heart—a lot of good qualities."

SREC is a better place because of all those good qualities Koeller shared with us over the years.



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