

When practicing farm safety, consider all equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.—*Photo Courtesy of Lance Cheung, USDA*



**Steve Lucas, CEO**

## TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST

**A**griculture is the backbone of our country. Our area communities, and our livelihood greatly depend on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous—even deadly—when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see accidents where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 9-1-1 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by

making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.

- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes, and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week, but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. Scenic Rivers Energy hopes you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.



**Farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.—*Photo courtesy of Bob Nichols, USDA***



# LOCAL STUDENTS REPRESENT SREC AT 2021 VIRTUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

## Two SREC Participants Elected to Statewide Youth Board

The 2021 Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) kicked off with a virtual dance party and then continued over two mornings with sessions focusing on leadership and the cooperative business model. Almost 50 students from 13 Wisconsin electric cooperatives participated. Scenic Rivers member representative Maddie Cooley of Platteville was instrumental in this year's event, having served on the statewide Youth Board.

"I enjoyed getting to know everyone and serving as a youth leader this year. Planning and running YLC expanded my leadership skills!" Maddie said.

Students who attended the event participated in sessions with WECA President and CEO Steve Freese as well as with State Senator Janet Bewley (D-Ashland) and State Representative Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer), who engaged the students in a lively Q & A. Other speakers included Craig Hillier, motivational speaker and author, who was upbeat and

engaging as he taught leadership and communication skills to the students.

One of the primary goals of YLC is to teach our young adults about the cooperative model. Discussions about the seven cooperative principles were held throughout the two days. Students had a chance to learn the basics of a cooperative, how they differ from other electric utilities, and what a CEO does. Participants watched safety videos and had long discussions about what to do should a car accident occur involving electricity.

Each year students run for Youth Board by giving speeches and winning enough votes from all participants to be elected. Two of our area students were elected to serve on the 2021-2022 WECA Youth Board. Jude Klär and Ally Ihm will be representing our service territory as the 2022 YLC is being planned.

Tina Walden, WECA executive assistant and youth coordinator, says she is planning, and hoping, for an in-person YLC next year.

Walden said the first-ever all-virtual event had some glitches due to broadband access, but overall was a great event.

"The students obviously had a lot of information thrown at them in a short time, but they handled it very well," she said.



*Maddie Cooley, Platteville*



"YLC was so fun! We had amazing speakers and I definitely enjoyed learning about how our cooperatives work. For it being an online camp, it was much more enjoyable than I first thought it was going to be. Running for Youth Board was so worth it and I encourage everybody who hasn't attended to sign up next year."

*Jude Klär, Cuba City*



"I enjoyed all the speakers we had during this event. I had lots of fun even though it was virtual. I can't wait to serve on the 2021-2022 Youth Board!"

*Ally Ihm, Cassville*

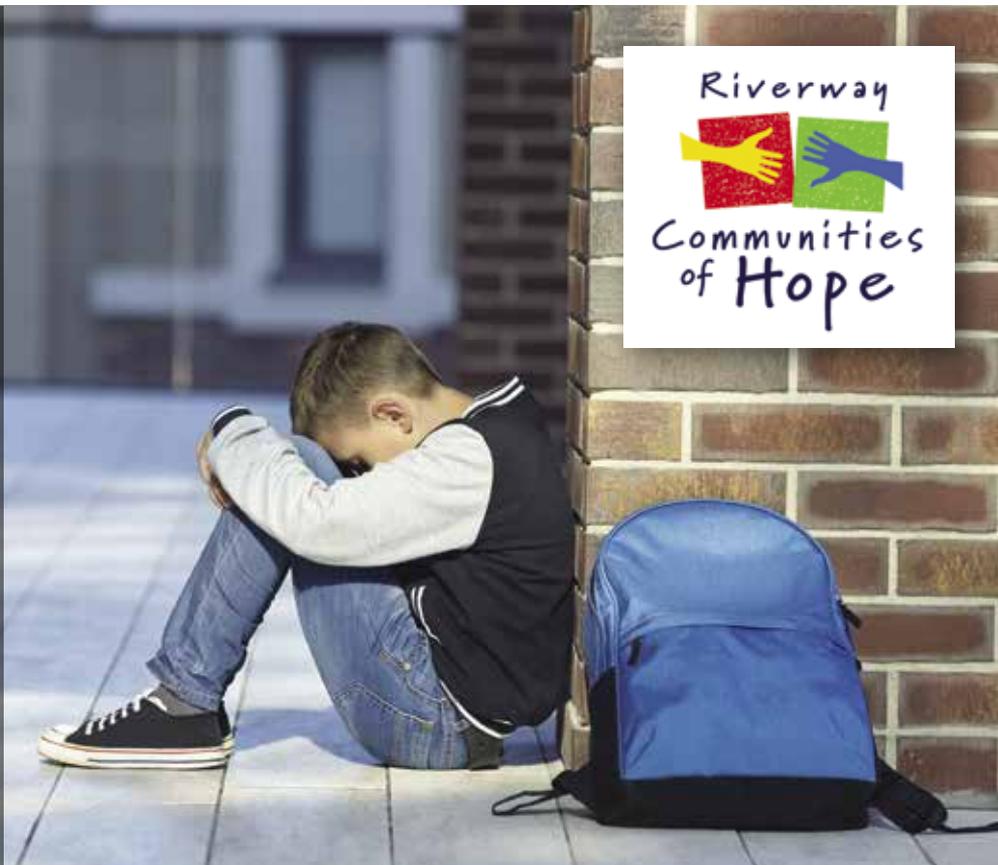


"I really enjoyed YLC this year although I wish it was in person. Everyone did a great job even in the virtual setting."

*McKenna Oyen, Muscoda*

# BACK TO SCHOOL WITH A LITTLE EXTRA HELP

**M**ost of our area schools are back in session again. New routines are being established, new friendships are being formed, and new stressors are being felt by many students.



As adults, we know that stress is a part of life. From time to time, adults need help with these stressors, especially when they are out of the ordinary or simply get to be too much. But what about the students in our service territory? Where should they turn for help when peer pressure, family problems, upheavals, or other challenges arise? You might say school staff, clergy members, medical professionals, or even just a friend. But what if just getting to that help is a barrier because the student lacks transportation, or what if there is another barrier that makes it impossible for a student to get the help they need?

Riverway Communities of Hope (RCoH) was formed with this need in mind. A local, non-profit organization formed by 92-year-old Muscoda native Mary Grimm (pictured at right), RCoH is dedicated to helping our area youth by providing funding for counseling services, life skills training, and supporting adult role models, which then builds a healthy future for our communities. By securing funding, the organization is able to work with the school districts of Southwest Wisconsin to provide mental health services, transportation assistance, and substance abuse treatment for families at no cost.



In 2008, Mary and co-founder Peggy Schmitt founded

RCoH to meet a need in their area as mental health services were located 40+ miles away. Many area youth who needed the services could not get that help. Mary could see how some were in critical need, and rather than ignore that need, she and Peggy held a “think tank” meeting. From there, Peggy, Mary and the other volunteers have dedicated themselves to helping young adults and their families throughout the past 13 years.

Peggy shared that since 2008 the organization has worked with 20 school districts in Southwest Wisconsin and has provided \$194,078 in direct assistance to families. All of the funds that are donated to the organization directly support the youth. For example, RCoH currently works with the Riverdale School District to provide safe, fun, and free after-school activities on early-release days. The organization, which is a 501c3, is completely run by volunteers who receive no compensation.

Mary wants to continue providing professional mental health services for our area students, especially when there are barriers such as transportation, funding needs, or mental health stigmas that need to be broken down. Mary said “save our kids” was and continues to be the core reason for the group.

“Helping our area youth to turn away from drugs, alcohol, or other self-destructive behaviors leads to healthier families and communities,” she pointed out.

RCoH can be found online at [www.riverwayhope.org](http://www.riverwayhope.org). Anyone who is interested in learning more, volunteering, or donating can call them at 608-537-2002 or email at [communities.of.hope@gmail.com](mailto:communities.of.hope@gmail.com).



## SUMMER ON-THE-JOB TRAINING MAKES IMPACT IN LANCASTER

Do you remember where you worked as a teenager? For many of us it was on the family farm, or a neighbor's farm. Perhaps it was at a local restaurant or grocery store. But, for Carter Vesperman of Lancaster, it was here at Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, where he's worked through the On-the-Job Training program.



Carter has been working out of the Lancaster office this summer, mostly in the vegetation management area out on the lines. He has reported to work each day with the linemen and other crew members, starting early in the morning and learning the day-to-day routine of our crews. Carter has learned about single-phase lines, meters, proper safety equipment, and so much more.

Jason Knapp, line superintendent, said that Carter has been a great asset this summer. He's a great young man and a good worker.

"Carter is a fast learner who listens carefully and pays attention to instructions," Jason said. "As our work can be dangerous, it is critical that our new employees take safety seriously from day one. Even as a student, Carter has not disappointed us."

Carter will be a senior this fall at Lancaster High School. He has already announced his intention of enrolling in an Electrical Power Distribution program following graduation.

"This opportunity has given me a real leg up on the skills I'll need," Vesperman said. "Knowing the difference between single-phase and three-phase lines, for example, will help me to succeed in college."

It is clear that Carter's desire to continue towards earning his Electrical Power Distribution degree has been cemented during his time with SREC.

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



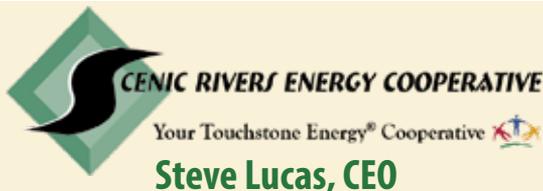
The winning photo for September in SREC's 2020 Member Photo Contest was taken by Anna Shultz of Gratiot. Winning photos are featured in our 2021 Member Photo Calendar.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)



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