

# WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

## Four Tips for Winter Safety



It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. This makes sense because during the coldest months, consumers are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

**1. Don't overload outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections—they should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.

**2. Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least three feet away from flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.

**3. Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets that are more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads – look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, and never fold them when in use.

**4. Use portable generators safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances. Run it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents.

We want all our cooperative and community members to stay safe. If you have questions about your electrical service, please give us a call. We are here to help. ■



**DANGER!**  
Outlet Overload

Every year, U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated **25,900 home electrical fires**. These fires cause an estimated **280 deaths, 1,125 injuries and \$1.1 billion in property loss**.

Thirty-nine percent of home electrical fires involve outlets and receptacles, and other electrical wiring.

To ensure safety, you should only use about 80 percent of the available current for each electrical outlet in your home.

Are you overloading outlets?  
Use this formula to find out:

**WATTAGE/VOLTS=AMPS**

**Example:**  
Let's say you are using 2,000 watts of power (for one outlet). Divide the watts by the volts in your home (typically 120), and you come up with 16.6 amps of current being used. With a 20 amp electrical outlet, you are using about 80 percent of the available current.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, Home & Garden

# SREC OFFERS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS



College scholarships will be awarded through a drawing at the Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative 83rd Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 4, 2020. At the time of the annual meeting, to be eligible to receive a scholarship, the applicant must be either:

- a. a senior in high school;
  - b. a senior in a home-schooled program;
  - c. a non-traditional student entering their freshman year in a post-secondary accredited program
- After successful completion of their first semester (Fall 2020) of post-secondary school or college AND receiving credit for at least 12 credits at a minimum “C” average, a \$1,000 check will be made out to the student and the school for the second semester tuition. If the student fails to meet these qualifications, the scholarship will be awarded to the alternate if they have met all the same requirements.

## Qualifications:

1. Only dependents of members or members of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative will be eligible to receive scholarship money. (Family members of employees and directors are eligible as long as they are members of SREC.)
2. The application can be mailed or emailed to the addresses below and needs to be received **on or before March 30** to qualify:

Mailing Address: Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative  
Attn: 2020 Scholarships  
231 N. Sheridan St.  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
Email Address: csolmstead@srec.net

SREC will mail or email each student a letter to verify receipt of the application. If you do not hear from SREC by March 31, 2020, please call to verify SREC received your application.

3. The student must be present at the SREC Annual Meeting held on April 4, 2020, to win.
4. The student must receive college credit for at least 12 credits at a minimum “C” average to be awarded the scholarship.
5. Simply fill out the application form and return it to the address stated above. Applications can be picked up at any of the SREC three offices: Lancaster, Darlington, or Gays Mills or on our website @ [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop)

If you have questions regarding the 2020 Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative Scholarship, please contact Carrie Olmstead at 608-723-2121 or 800-236-2141 ext. 556.

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (or legal guardian) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
*(if different from student)*  
Cooperative Billing Account Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of High School \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline:  
March 30,  
2020**

## February Food Holidays

Need some inspiration in the kitchen this month? Try a meal on one of the following National Food Days, such as:

- Ice Cream for Breakfast Day - February 1
- Heavenly Hash Day - February 2
- Carrot Cake Day - February 3
- Homemade Soup Day - February 4
- Chocolate Fondue Day - February 5
- Fettuccine Alfredo Day - February 7
- Pizza Day - February 9
- Cream Cheese Brownie Day - February 10
- Plum Pudding Day - February 12
- Tortellini Day - February 13
- Cherry Pie Day - February 20
- Sticky Bun Day - February 21
- Banana Bread Day - February 23
- Chili Day - February 27
- Chocolate Souffle Day - February 28
- Surf and Turf Day - February 29



## 2020 MEMBER PHOTO CONTEST

Our annual member photo contest is now underway!



**Our focus this year is "Rural life—farm animals."**

Photos must be taken within the Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative service area. Winning photos will be featured in our 2021 calendar and may be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications. High-resolution photos must be submitted via email to [jmims@srec.net](mailto:jmims@srec.net).

*For a complete list of rules and criteria as well as downloadable forms, visit our website, [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop). Entry forms can also be picked up at our office, or we will email a copy to you.*

## SAVE THE DATE

APR  
4

**SREC's 2020 Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, April 4**

Lancaster Youth and Ag Building  
Scholarships, Board Elections...and more!

**Watch your March WECN for the 2019 Annual Report!**

NOTE: Due to bylaw requirements regarding notice of annual meeting, the March WECN with the annual report will be mailed **March 4**.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

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



# Soil Health & Diversity: Keeping Farms Economically and Ecologically Sustainable



Saturday, February 22, 2020 1-4PM  
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College  
Lenz Conference Center  
1800 Bronson Blvd., Fennimore, WI

## Speakers:

Scott Mericka - Grass Dairy, LLC, Dodgeville WI  
Mike Miles - Anathoth Community Farm, Luck WI

This event is free and open to the public.  
Presented by Grant County Rural Stewardship ■



# Vegetation Management

Zelie's Tree Service is trimming on the Gays Mills south circuit in Crawford County along County Road E, Taylor Ridge Road and County Road S over the next month.

It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. We appreciate your cooperation. **If you have questions, please contact Jay at [jgardner@srec.net](mailto:jgardner@srec.net) or call 800-236-2141 ext. 566.**

## WATT'S HAPPENING

Watt's Happening is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to Watt's Happening, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free 800-236-2141.

[www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop)

Steve Lucas . . . . . CEO

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