

WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

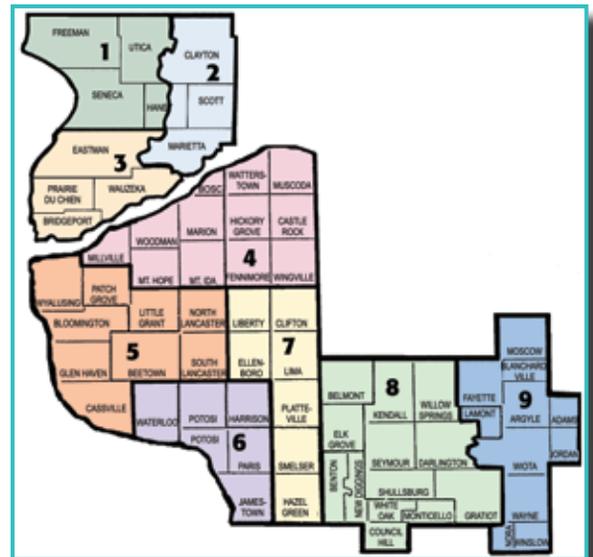
Notification of Election of Directors

The terms of the directors in Districts 2, 6, and 7 expire at the 2019 annual meeting, when elections will be held for those position. All three incumbent directors are seeking re-election- Sandra Davidson (District 2), Don Schaefer (District 6), and Larry Butson (District 7). The Bylaws provide for nomination of candidates by petition. A petition must meet the following requirements:

- The petition must be signed by 15 or more members of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative. You may begin getting signatures for your petition upon receipt of this notice.
- The members signing the petition must reside in the same district the nominee would represent.
- In the case of a joint membership or a tenancy in common membership, one or all of the joint or common members may sign the petition, but whether only one signs or all sign it only counts as one (1) signature.
- The petition must be delivered to the Cooperative's headquarters in Lancaster at least 90 days prior to the annual meeting (April 13, 2019) – that is, no later than 4pm on January 11, 2019.
- A sample petition form is available on the cooperative's website at www.sre.coop or on request.

To be eligible to run for director, a candidate must meet all of the qualifications set forth in the Bylaws. Those qualifications include:

- The candidate must be a member of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, s/he must reside in the district to be represented and receive service from the cooperative at that residence. (See the map of the director districts included as part of this notice.)
- The candidate cannot:
 - be employed by or have a financial interest in a business that competes with the Cooperative or that sells energy or supplies to the Cooperative;
 - hold or be a candidate for a public office that is elected on a party ticket;
 - have been employed by the Cooperative anytime in the past 5 years;
 - participated as a party or a witness in any litigation against the Cooperative in the past 5 years;
 - be delinquent more than 90 days on the payment of any amount owed the Cooperative; or



- have been convicted of any offense involving dishonesty.
- The candidate must participate in an orientation process to assure an understanding of the responsibilities of directors (unless s/he is currently serving as a director). Information about that orientation will be provided to all qualified candidates nominated by petitions as described above.

In the case of a joint tenancy or tenancy in common membership, all the joint or common members must meet all of those qualifications in order for any one of the joint or common members to be eligible to be nominated.

As provided by the Bylaws, directors receive a per diem for attendance at monthly board meetings. The current per diem is \$500 per meeting.

For additional information about the petition process or the qualifications for director, please refer to the Bylaws, the sample petition form and the director district map that are available on the Cooperative's website at www.sre.coop. ■

Home Automation Provides More Control for Consumers

Home automation systems are placing the powers of control in the hands of co-op members, but many questions remain about the best ways to use them to save money and energy.

“Most smart home technology is about comfort and convenience. Consumers interested in saving money on monthly energy purchases should look at internet-connected thermostats first,” said Brian Sloboda, program and product line manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

“Around half of all thermostats sold today are smart thermostats. These devices can learn your preferences and adjust the thermostat when you are not home,” Sloboda said. “These devices have the potential to reduce air conditioning energy consumption by 10 percent. During winter months, the thermostats could save 7 percent on energy used to heat the home.”

Sloboda has watched home automation systems evolve over the years. He is particularly interested in identifying ways to enhance efficiency and potential savings for co-op members.

“Laundry, dishwashing and water heating can be set to occur outside of your co-op’s peak demand periods, which typically are during weekday business hours,” said Sloboda.

NRECA is currently working with one of the Department of Energy’s national laboratories on a demonstration project examining energy-saving options that could time shift some activities, but actual cost savings for the consumer is likely to be limited.

“Pool pumps, dishwashers, thermostats and car chargers can learn their owners’ behavior and then communicate with the utility, so the data can be used for demand response,” Sloboda said. “The goal of the work by the lab is to determine if a system like this can be implemented without inconveniencing the consumer, providing energy demand savings to the utility.”

Finding Value in Energy Savings

Security system notifications and thermostat controls that adapt to home automation are among the most popular options available. But some consumers are tackling other tasks in ways that actually could help them save or manage energy use effectively.

“There are different kinds of smart when it comes to smart appliances and devices,” said Peter May-Ostendorp, principal researcher at Xergy Consulting, which specializes in emerging technologies for energy savings in buildings, including homes.

“For some, smart simply means ‘we connected this thing to the network,’ which adds minimal value to the consumer,” said May-Ostendorp, who also is an energy technology consultant to NRECA. “In other products, smart means that there is some intelligence either built into the product or connected via the cloud that enables a taste of artificial intelligence.”

But not every product using artificial intelligence is designed to save energy. In many instances, energy use is secondary to convenience or connectivity features.

Making Connections

“Most smart devices have nothing to do with energy use, grid management or other resource conservation, like saving water,” said May-Ostendorp. “Generally, the benefits—dollar savings to the consumer—have not been proven, with the exception of smart thermostats, grid-connected water heaters and similar devices.”

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), interest in connected or smart appliances is trending upward among consumers, and manufacturers are responding with a growing list of products.

“If you are thinking of purchasing a smart appliance or thermostat, look for one that is ENERGY STAR®-certified with connected functionality,” wrote EPA officials asked about the technology. “Those that meet our criteria are designed to encourage interoperability and offer the following features: low energy use, energy use reporting and consumer ownership of all data.”

Besides smart thermostats, the products available now include, room air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers, laundry equipment, light bulbs and fixtures, and power strips.

“While owning a smart product doesn’t automatically save you energy, if YOU are smart about using them, they can make a significant difference in your home,” wrote the EPA.

That means making the investment payoff could take a few lifestyle changes. But dashboards, accessible from computers or tablets, and apps available for smartphones can help.

“I don’t think many people want infinite control over dozens of appliances and systems in their homes,” said Spencer Sator, president and CEO of Crimson Consulting, another NRECA energy efficiency advisor.

“What we really want is ‘set it and forget it,’ features that we don’t have to actively manage,” said Sator. “The best devices get installed, adjusted and the consumer can walk away and still potentially save some energy.”

According to Sator, consumers are looking for simplicity. That's feeding the popularity of virtual assistant technologies, like Amazon's Alexa and Echo, Google Assistant and Apple HomeKit. Other companies, including Samsung, Logitech and Wink are also offering home-management hubs and platforms designed to help manage connected technology.

Convenience and programming simplicity are among the most important factors fueling consumer acceptance of what Sator describes as "home ecosystem" products. Home security controls, including locks, alarm systems and lighting are also popular features.

"We're seeing adoption of the technology not necessarily for energy-saving reasons, but for life-enhancing applications, including some that help elderly consumers maintain independence in their homes," Sator said.

Energy advisors agree that controlling devices from various manufacturers that perform different functions with a single system enhances the value of home automation systems.

Command and Control

The challenges for consumers are deciding which features meet their expectations and justify the added investment in automation, and how well various products work together under management of a particular hub device or app.

"This is still the Wild West, from a technology value perspective," said Sator. "When you consider available options and actual performance of the devices available, some gadgets perform well and can save consumers money and energy, while others don't measure up to the hype."

With more than 900 manufacturers marketing about 4,100 connected devices, voice command technology is seen as one way to avoid collections of various remotes that typically wind up cast aside in favor of multifunction control devices.

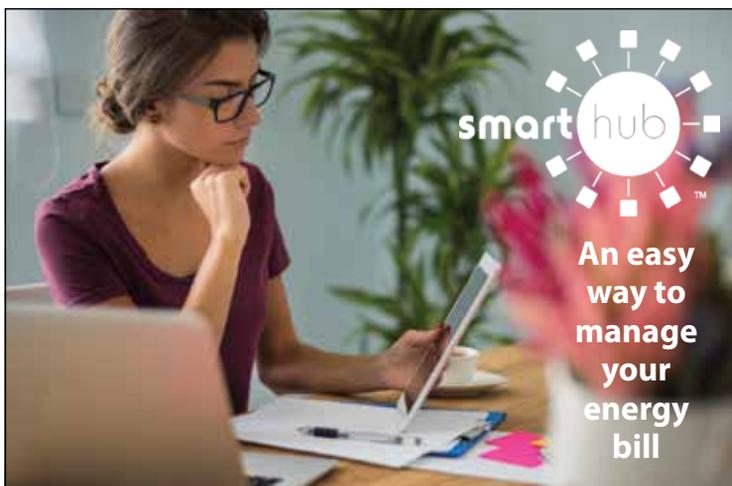
"The Jetsons-like experience—where your Fitbit recognizes you're awake, tells the coffee to brew, queues up your morning news on a smart speaker, ramps up the heating setpoint—isn't really happening," said Exergy Consulting's May-Ostendorp. "People have thought that Alexa or Google Home might be the answer, but do we all really want to talk to our home, Star Trek style, to accomplish basic tasks?"

In fact, smart speaker technology is primarily used to answer questions, check the

weather, get news updates or play music. According to a survey conducted in five major industrialized nations, including the United States, 65 percent of those asked cited those functions, while only six percent reported using the technology to control lighting, televisions or other connected devices.

"No one wants a hodge-podge of technologies that can't communicate with each other," said Crimson Consulting's Sator, adding that the necessary hubs and powered interfaces to connect the devices could actually boost overall energy use. "The technology isn't very smart if devices can't work together."

Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. ■



Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative now offers a FREE service that will help you manage your energy bill, all from the convenience of your smartphone, tablet, or computer.

With SmartHub, you can:

- Pay your energy bill online
- View your billing history
- Check your energy usage at any time
- Monitor your daily usage
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It's easy, too! All you need to do to get started is visit our website, www.sre.coop, click on the SmartHub logo under Links, and follow the directions to sign up for and log into your own account. For mobile access, download the free application in the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace.



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Electrical Safety Checklist

Nearly half of all home fires occur during winter months. Take a few minutes to identify and correct any potential electrical hazards to ensure the safety of your home.

SWITCHES AND OUTLETS

- **Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?** YES NO
Warm switches or outlets indicate an unsafe wiring condition.
- **Are any outlets or switches discolored?** YES NO
Discoloration indicates dangerous heat buildup at these connections.
- **Do plugs fit snugly into outlets?** YES NO
Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.

CORDS

- **Are any cords cracked, frayed or damaged?** YES NO
Damaged cords can expose wires, causing shock or fire hazard.
- **Are any cords pinched by furniture or windows, or attached to anything with staples or nails?** YES NO
Pinching and/or stapling cords can damage the insulation, causing shock or fire hazard.
- **Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis?** YES NO
Extension cords should only be used temporarily.

ELECTRIC PANEL

- **Do you have recurring tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses?** YES NO
If yes, this could indicate you're exceeding a safe level of electrical current.
- **Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)?** YES NO
AFCIs provide greater fire protection.
Check your circuit breakers for the AFCI label.

Please note this is not a comprehensive safety checklist.
Visit ESFI.org for more information.
Source: ESFI



*May your
days be merry
and bright!*

Vegetation Management

Zielie's Tree Service will be finishing up the north and west circuits out of the Beetown Substation in Grant County. They will be finished with all tree trimming by the end of December.

DJB Inspections LLC completed the underground maintenance in Lafayette County.

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 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

Steve Lucas CEO

Our board of directors consists of Chuck Simmons, Don Schaefer, Sandra Davidson, Ellen Conley, Jack Larson, Larry Butson, Delbert Reuter, Steve Carpenter and Marcus Saegrove.



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