Announcement

Due to safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, Richland Electric Cooperative has postponed their 2020 Annual Meeting to a later date. Richland Electric Cooperative’s number one priority will ALWAYS be safety for that of our members and employees. We will reschedule the annual meeting at a later date when we feel it is safe for everyone to attend. We encourage our members to continue to submit their ballots. We appreciate your support and understanding.

Additional details about other co-op services on following pages

Richland Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 439 • 1027 North Jefferson
Richland Center, WI 53581
Phone (608) 647-3173 • www.rec.coop
Richland Electric Cooperative Response To Covid-19

As a member-owned electric cooperative we believe it is absolutely necessary to inform members about actions we are taking to ensure the safety and well-being of our members, staff and the public as it relates to Covid-19.

Our first obligation is to ensure our continued focus on safety. Normally, our safety programs center around accident prevention. In this case however, we must widen our view to include the risk of illness.

What’s Been Done.

Our employees have been trained to help mitigate risks associated with viral transmission. By now, nearly everyone has at least heard of the basic sanitation techniques necessary to avoid contracting or spreading illness. These techniques are not new and have been taught to our employees for many years. Basic training included items the public has also been hearing such as hand-washing, covering your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, staying home when sick, and surface cleaning to name a few.

We’ve updated our pandemic plan which uses, as a primary defense, the separation of employees from one another. At this time, we are no longer holding employee team meetings in person, we are no longer sharing equipment to the extent possible, and we are cancelling all non-essential business travel out of our community. We are also preparing in order to be ready to implement the next step of our pandemic plan if needed.

Why We Are Doing What We Are.

Because we provide an essential service, electricity, we must do more than basic training and basic infection mitigation. As a small cooperative we simply must implement programs to ensure that your electric cooperative is able to respond to outages, accidents or other service affecting situations on a moments notice. Our ability to do this could be hampered if we experience illness rates that affect 25% or more of our workforce. While we often deal with one or two people unavailable for work due to illness, our ability is significantly reduced when 5 or more are ill at the same time. We must work to prevent the transmission of illness from employee to employee. We would like to keep any employee from becoming ill, but that is likely an unrealistic goal, but we will still strive for this outcome.

What We May Do.

As the need dictates, and likely before we have any known infections of Covid-19 in our area we will implement our most rigid pandemic plan. During this phase we will close our office to the public and implement our remote workforce regimen. Administrative staff would work from home via systems we already have in place and line crews would be dispatched from their home with a cooperative provided vehicle which they will treat as their own personal space. Both of these actions will reduce or eliminate physical staff interaction. We have multiple means of communication designed to work in cases such as these. During this time all necessary interaction with members and the general public will be by telephone, electronic communication and mass media.

How We Will Continue To Do Business

If we have implemented changes to our office hours, members who need to reach us will continue to be able to call our office at 608-647-3173 or visit our website and Facebook page for other contact options. We will
regularly update members via our web page and Facebook, on the local radio station WRCO which is 100.9 FM, and via a recording available by phone.

Members needing to pay bills may do so electronically using our Smart Hub app, Pay-by-Phone or ACH. Check payments can be mailed or be deposited in our after-hour deposit box as usual. We will not process cash payments during this time except when our drive-up window is open. Members can visit www.rec.coop to enroll in various alternative payment options. Members needing to sign up for new service or change service will be provided with options by mail, electronic mail or phone. In limited times we may also be available via our drive-up window located at our headquarters in Richland Center. More details and options to accommodate member’s needs may become available at a later time.

When We Will Take Action.

As already mentioned, we have already taken some actions to minimize our risk, but these are merely preliminary actions involving planning and education.

What might trigger Richland Electric Cooperative to implement our most rigorous pandemic plan? There are currently three reasons that would definitely cause this action; any employee or resident immediate family member of an employee being diagnosed with Covid-19, the closure of any public school in our service area, and any local, state or federal quarantine or mandate in our service area. Additionally, there may be times before these actions where in consultation with our staff, management and board and other experts that we believe it is in the best interest of our members.

How Long Could This Last

While our pandemic plan could be inconvenient for some, we would not rush to an early termination of our acting plan without clear and convincing evidence the pandemic has passed in our community. We will likely phase normal operations back into place in the reverse order of how we started. The first items to be restored would be normal service options to our members, then we may resume interacting with our regional partners, and finally we would resume normal business travel. At this point, we simply don’t know when, if it all, the plan would be implemented and we certainly don’t have any idea when normal operations would resume if the plan is implemented.

Cooperation Will Help Us All

The circumstances we are facing today are unprecedented in the 80+ year history of Richland Electric Cooperative. Most of us have never faced issues like this in our lifetime. Our planning has been done without ever knowing how the plan would work in a real scenario and we hoped we would never need to know. Our planning and practicing our plan through drills has given us a high degree of confidence in our ability to continue to meet our mission. We recognize though that things will likely change and we will have to adapt to scenarios we didn’t anticipate.

Please keep in mind that this is new to all of us, and we will undoubtedly need your patience and understanding as we get through this together. We, like you, have many unanswered questions but we are confident that cooperation and communication will guide us through these challenging times.

On behalf of the board of directors, management and staff we want you to know we have dedicated ourselves to our members and we promise to do the very best we can.

Thank you.
When the Richland Electric Cooperative office is closed, utility operations will still be ongoing. We may have limited staff but will do our best to meet our member’s needs. We ask that you please be patient if you are calling the office and understand someone will get back to you. We encourage our members to look at all the options available for payment.

SmartHub – Manage your account, report service issues, view and pay your bill, receive keep notices, and monitor your usage 24/7.

If making a payment with a card please use our automated system: 1-844-843-6845. Note if you call the office they will direct you to this number anyways. Please help free up our phone line by calling directly.

Please visit our Facebook page and website for frequent updates. You may also message us on Facebook. We encourage you to “like” and “share” our updates. This will help us spread the word to our members faster.

Please listen to WRCO 100.9 FM as we will contact them for updates.

You can still call our office number at 608-647-3173 but please be patient. You may be asked to leave a message and a representative will get back to you. To report an outage please call 608-647-3173 or 1-800-813-2841.

You can also make your payment at the office by utilizing our drive-up window on the north side of the building, or drop box located in our entry way at the office.