



# 2016 Richland Electric Cooperative

## From the Manager... Perpetual Change

Every day, all around us, the world is changing and it has been since the beginning of time. Some changes we like and embrace and yet other changes we resist with all the effort we can muster. Regardless of our satisfaction with the status quo we are constantly facing change. Personally, I believe our acceptance of change is somewhat related to our age, likely because we have learned what is comfortable and what isn't. In some cases, our energy level has diminished and we have learned to manage the status quo. Taking on something new seems like a lot of extra work and we question our ability to get it all done.

Utilities in general are perceived to be slow adopters of change, often resisting anything that upsets the status quo. When new ideas and new technologies are introduced utilities often take a 'go slow' approach. This response is driven in part by their responsibility to provide nearly ubiquitous and uninterrupted service. Processes and technologies that haven't been fully evaluated could lead to unintended consequences which result in service outages. But, in some cases, it is simply built into an organizations culture to resist change.

Cooperative utilities—such as Richland Electric Cooperative and other area telephone and electric cooperatives— have generally been viewed as leaders when it comes to changes that benefit consumers. That's likely because the people they serve are not only consumers; they are members who own the cooperative. Nationwide cooperative utilities are leading in the way in areas such as rural broadband deployment, implementation of local renewable energy projects, advanced metering technologies, and cyber security for critical infrastructure.

Leading efforts to proactively implement positive change does not come without challenges. On many occasions the

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## CALENDAR of events

### September

- 14-16 Ocooch Mountain Humane Society Animal House
- 17 Richland Area Farmers Market
- 23-24 Viola Horse and Colt Show
- 30-Oct. 2  
Wheels of time Antique Tractor Show

### October

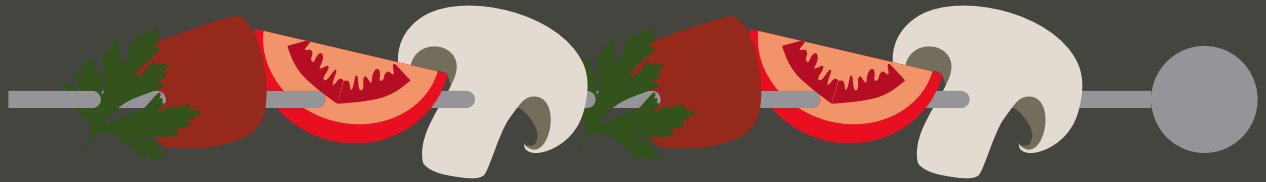
- 1 Richland Area Farmers Market  
Color for Coats Run
- 8 Hybrid Redneck Rally
- 8 REC Member Appreciation Picnic
- 30 Guinness World Record- Most carved pumpkins in line or chain
- 31 Richland Community Halloween Spooktacular

### November

- 19 Richland Center Annual Craft Fairs
- 23 -Dec. 31  
Rotary Lights in the Park
- 24. Thanksgiving- Rec Offices Closed
- 25 REC offices Closed

# PICNIC TIME

## Member Appreciation Picnic



### **Saturday, October 8th, 2016**

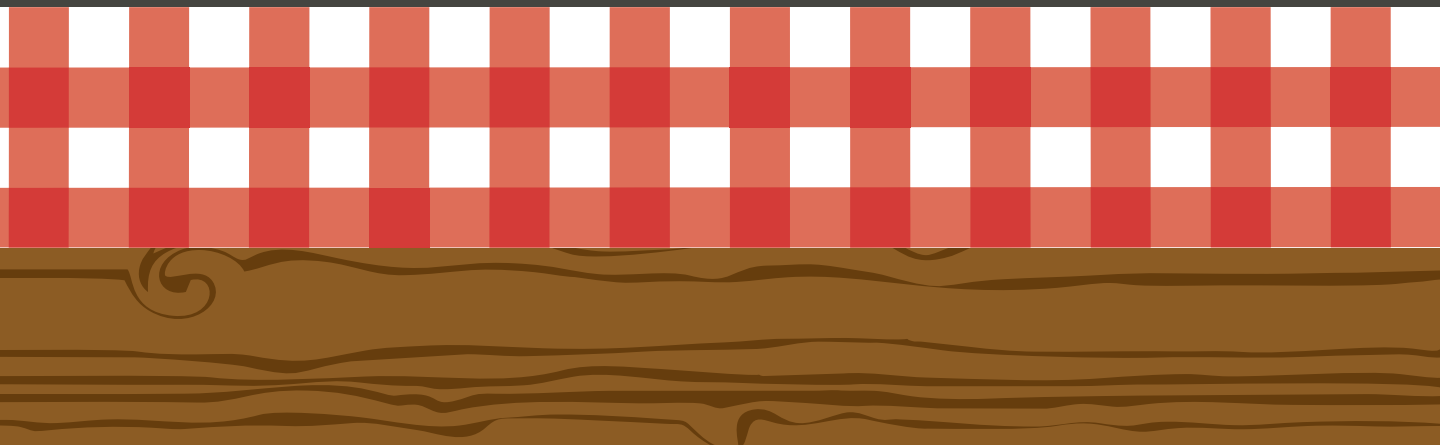
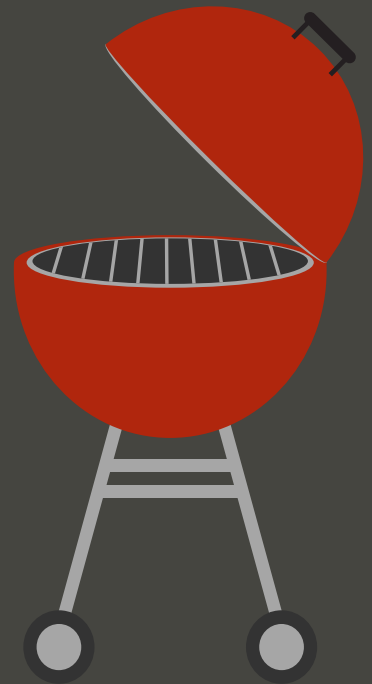
Please mark your calendar for Saturday, October 8th to join us for our REC Annual Member Appreciation picnic. It will be held at the Richland Electric Cooperative warehouse at 30 E. Robb Road in Richland Center. The picnic gives us a chance to meet and visit with our members and is held in October to commemorate Cooperative Month.

Our menu includes grilled chicken breast sandwiches, pork, hotdogs, brats, potato salad, beans, cheese curds, apples and beverages. The food is prepared and served by REC directors and employees with picnic beginning at 11:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m.

Please reserve October 8th for the picnic and bring your family to join us for good food and friendship and allow us to say "thank you" for being a member of Richland Electric Cooperative! To help show the cooperative spirit, we are asking everyone attending the picnic to bring a non-perishable food item or cash donation for the Richland County Food Pantry.

### **Richland Electric Cooperative Warehouse**

30 E Robb Rd, Richland Center  
**11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.**



# Richland Electric Cooperative

## Transition Energy Frequently Asked Questions

<b>What is the price per panel subscription?</b>	\$699
<b>How much energy will each panel produce?</b>	We estimate that in a normal year each panel will produce around 475 kilowatt hours but that is not guaranteed. It will depend on the amount of sunshine we have in a given year.
<b>How many panel subscriptions can I buy?</b>	We would like as many members as possible to have the opportunity to participate in this program but we have a limited number of solar panels, therefore during the initial offering members can buy the lesser of a) 10 panel subscriptions or b) 50% of their annual consumption. (Example: Member uses 4750 kwh per year they can buy expected production of 2375 kwh/475= 5 panel subscriptions)
<b>Will there be an opportunity to buy more panel subscriptions in the future?</b>	Maybe, it depends on the subscription rate of our initial offering.
<b>What do I need to do to sign up and buy panel subscriptions?</b>	Contact the REC office and express your interest now! Final subscription details will be available by our Annual Meeting held on April 2nd.
<b>How long will the panels last?</b>	When you purchase a subscription to a panel you will receive the energy output of that panel for 25 years.
<b>Do I have to pay for maintenance or operations cost?</b>	The cost of ongoing maintenance and operations for 25 years is included in the purchase price of \$699
<b>Can I take the federal investment tax credit for my purchase?</b>	No. As part of the developer agreement the purchase price of \$699 has been reached assuming the tax credit will be claimed by a tax equity investor.
<b>Do I own the panels?</b>	No. You are purchasing the all of the energy output of the panel for 25 years, not the physical hardware.
<b>Who actually owns the panels?</b>	SoCore Energy, our partner in this project.
<b>Does the panel output degrade over time as the panel ages?</b>	Yes, we estimate the production will decrease by about .5 % per year.
<b>Does maintenance include removing snow from panels in the winter?</b>	No. We rely on Mother Nature to melt snow because mechanically removing snow can physically damage the panels.
<b>Is wind/hail/lightning damage repaired?</b>	Yes, under the maintenance agreement these types of damages will be repaired or replacements made in a reasonable amount of time.
<b>Where are the panels manufactured?</b>	Panels are manufactured all over the world. Some are manufactured in the United States, some in Germany and other European countries, and some in the Asia-Pacific, including China. It's often difficult to determine exactly where panels are fully manufactured because some are made up entirely from Asia-Pacific components but assembled in another country and labeled as being made there. The main focus of SoCore Energy, our developer is to obtain high-quality panels that have a proven track record and are backed by financially stable, reputable companies.
<b>If I buy a panel subscription and later decide to move or sell the panel subscription, what options do I have?</b>	There are specific transfer rules being developed now which will: a) prohibit the sale of the panel to anyone who is not a member of Richland Electric Cooperative, b) allow the sale or transfer directly to another member who, with the addition of the panel will not exceed the limits of the initial offering and completes a REC subscription agreement c) provide for the sale of the panel back to the Richland Electric Cooperative at a price that factors in depreciation and other items. Other opportunities or restrictions may apply as we finalize the details of the program.
<b>How much will I be paid for the energy my panel(s) subscriptions produce?</b>	Energy produced in the current month will be multiplied by the energy rate you are paying for energy you buy from Richland Electric Cooperative. For example, if your energy bill shows you are paying 12.95 cents per kilowatt hour and your panel produces 40 kilowatt hours, your bill will be credited .1295 X 40 or \$5.18.
<b>What if my panel(s) subscriptions produce more energy than I consume in a month?</b>	This shouldn't happen except in very rare cases since you were only allowed to buy panels up to 50% of your total annual consumption. In those rare cases you will see a reduced credit applied to your bill for the excess energy. If this occurs regularly you may want to consider selling or transferring your panel(s) as the return on your investment may not meet your goals.
<b>I already have solar or wind installed on my property and it is being bought back by Richland Electric Cooperative via your existing net-metering program. Can I participate?</b>	You should call our office to learn more but the initial offering combines the Transition Energy Program panel(s) subscriptions with your privately owned distributed generation and if the total is more than 50% of your annual consumption you may not participate.

**Disclaimer: All information provided in this chart is subject to change without notice**

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## From the Manager... Perpetual Change

original change created even more changes that weren't always anticipated, nor welcomed. Electric utilities nationwide are now grappling with balancing the enthusiasm and promise offered by the greater use of renewable energy such as solar and wind with the way to integrate these technologies into the existing infrastructure still required for reliability. It becomes even more complex when member-owned and operated renewable systems desire to integrate into the existing infrastructure. In some cases, the need to integrate is driven by economics, yet other times it is driven by the need for power when their systems aren't producing energy, or both. In any event, developing fair and equitable rates for all members, producers or consumers or any combination thereof is challenging.

Our foray into community-owned renewable energy produced by solar panels, aptly named Transition Energy is a way for us, and our members to learn how to manage change from an older model of energy distribution to a newer one. It is a way for us to learn about transitional change and we may get it right immediately, or we may have make adjustments from time to time as we learn.

An example of making changes on the fly was our decision to increase the size of our solar project because of a late-breaking opportunity with Dairyland Power. Had this change not occurred we would have likely sold-out of subscriptions before meeting member demand and two single projects would have been more expensive, per subscription than one larger one.

If you haven't yet considered participating in Transition Energy I encourage you to do so as demand has remained strong. You can find information on our website including a live video feed of the construction taking place. You can also call our office and we'll be happy to send you information. Oh yes, we like visitors too if simply want to stop and discuss your options.

As always if you have comments or questions please feel free to call or email me directly to sclark@rec.coop.



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**2016**  
Richland Electric Cooperative

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**Office Hours**

Monday–Friday; 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Outages**

Call (608) 647-3173; 24 Hours

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