



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Happy Holidays... **and THANK YOU!**

First, I'd like to personally wish each of you a Merry Christmas, and may your new year be filled with joy and happiness.

Beyond those direct wishes for you, there are others I can't personally reach but are no less important. I know that many people work tirelessly—and often go unnoticed—to make this time of year enjoyable for everyone. When we are enjoying time with friends and family celebrating the holidays, there are others, somewhere, who don't have that luxury and often it's because they are serving us. I can't help but think about the men and women of our armed forces protecting us and others, all the while thinking about their families and friends back home.

Others will also miss opportunities to be with friends and family during this special time of the year. The list is surprisingly long when you think about what is happening all around us throughout the holidays. Police, firefighters, emergency medical providers, doctors, nurses, caretakers, tow-truck drivers, bus drivers, retail workers serving our last-minute needs, and many more are working to ensure that we can enjoy this time of year. Closer to home and some I've seen countless times are utility workers, including our lineworkers, dispatchers, and outage management personnel. There is little doubt that our ability to gather with friends and family is supported by a host of others—and to those folks I'd like to say thank-you and let them know we appreciate their efforts.

Occasionally I hear someone remark "the world is getting smaller" and indeed it seems that way, but it is also a really big place with a lot individuals making a difference in our lives, no matter how small. I think this time of year is a really good time to reflect on our lives and how we, as well as others, can and do make a difference. It's a season of giving, and there is probably no better gift to someone than saying thanks for the difference they make—it fills their heart with joy knowing they are appreciated.

So, in following my own heart, I want to thank you, our members, not only for your support of Richland Electric Cooperative, our staff and directors, but for those things you do that make a positive difference in all of our lives—you indeed are appreciated. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Shannon Clark,
Manager/CEO



ELLEN BRINGS HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO MEMBERS AND STAFF



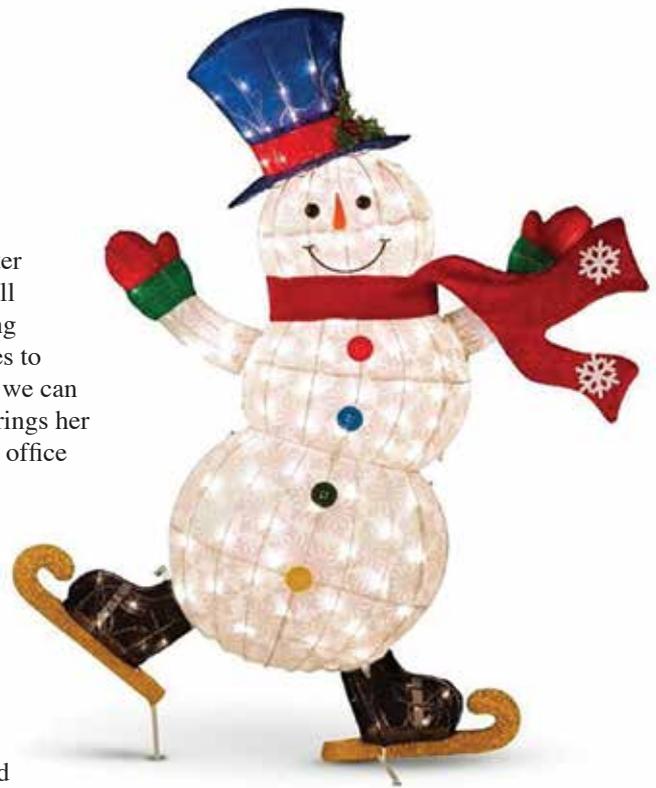
If you have been to Richland Electric Cooperative's offices during December in the past five years, you have probably noticed the growing Christmas

decoration display. You can thank our very own Ellen Deets for that. Ellen has a great passion for Christmas decorations as she usually begins decorating her own home in November. She stated, "People who decorate for Christmas early are happy people."

We do realize the great debate about when you should start decorating for

Christmas. Some wait until after Thanksgiving, while others will decorate immediately following Halloween. We are not the ones to decide which side is right, but we can say with certainty that Ellen brings her own brand of happiness to our office during the holidays.

Each year Ellen will shop for a new decoration. We have always had lights along the building, but she has taken the light display to new heights and has no plans of slowing down. It all started with a large snowman, then trees, then Christmas bulbs and presents. Now she has a very large Santa Claus and another snowman, this one on ice skates! This year she



has purchased a lamp post that will complement the rest of the display.

Ellen says she really enjoys this time of year and the decorating. "It is a lot of fun shopping for new decorations," she says. She added that she decorates early partly because it can get very cold quickly and holiday decorating is not nearly as fun in the cold. She purchases her decorations from Costco.

Ellen has done such a great job decorating the REC office that her efforts have been noticed by the Richland Center Rotary Lights. She's heard numerous times that rotary lights visitors are often told to look for the REC office decorations, as they will lead people directly to the Rotary Lights in the Park. I guess you could say that makes us the self-proclaimed "Gateway to the Rotary Lights in the Park."

We have always been very involved in the community and continually remind people that we are much more than just an electric cooperative. We are a fun organization and enjoy taking part in community events. If we can put a smile on someone's face, our day is made. And when it comes the holiday season, our decorations will bring a smile to many faces, all thanks to Ellen.

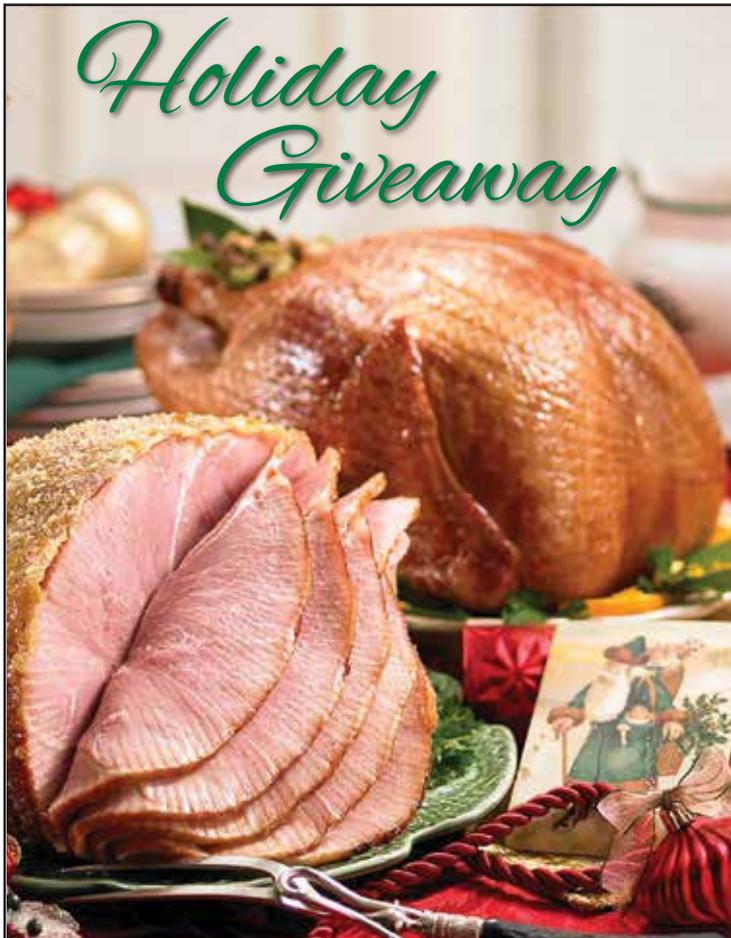




DECK THE HALLS SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use**.
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**.

For more **holiday safety tips** visit:



Holiday Giveaway

We are getting into the holiday spirit by doing a holiday give-away! This year we will be giving away a ham or turkey to two lucky winners for Christmas. The ham and turkey will be prepared by the Richland Locker. Just fill out the form below and bring it to the REC offices. The drawing will take place on DECEMBER 14. The winner will be able to pick their prize up directly from the Richland Locker. Prizes must be picked up December 19!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # _____

ACCOUNT # _____

EMAIL _____

Return this form to Richland Electric Cooperative,
1027 N. Jefferson St., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581.



THE FARM KITCHEN

Our farm kitchen was the heart of our farm when I was growing up. It was in the

kitchen where we ate our meals, shared what happened in school, warmed up after a cold round of chores, listened to the radio, and took phone calls from the big wooden party-line telephone that hung on the wall by the outside door. It was in the kitchen where Ma baked bread, cooked meals, and washed and ironed clothes. It was in the kitchen where we made big plans for the future and tried to dismiss disappointments that came often.

The kitchen was especially important in winter as it was one of two rooms in our big house that was heated. When visitors stopped by, we sat in the kitchen to talk. The Watkins man, who periodically visited our farm, displayed his products—liniment, salve, pepper, vanilla, and much more—on the kitchen table.

The two main features of the kitchen were the wooden kitchen table and the wood-burning cook stove. Our wooden kitchen table was large enough for eight people to sit around it. It was old, scarred, and sturdy. It sat in the center of the kitchen, moved only on wash day when more room was needed for the washing machine and tubs that Pa dragged into the room from the woodshed. Most of the time the table was covered with a red and black checked oil cloth. A kerosene lamp stood on the table every day during the winter months and many days in spring and fall as the kitchen was located on the west side of the house. A woodshed was attached to the west side of the kitchen, and a door led to the dining room on the east side. The outside door to the south opened onto a roofed but open porch.

It was on the kitchen table that Pa and Ma cut up a recently butchered hog, and ground meat with a hand-operated meat grinder that fastened to the table's edge. Ma kneaded bread on the kitchen table, rolled out cookies, and sewed various items of clothing for us, often with material she had gotten from cotton feed sacks with various designs imprinted on them. It was on the kitchen table that Ma sewed together my first Teddy Bear. The front and back of the little bear came imprinted on a feed sack. Ma cut out the pieces, sewed them together, and stuffed the little bear with cotton batting, the same stuffing she used when making quilts.

Ma folded clothes on the kitchen table, sat by it to peel potatoes, mended clothes, and darned socks there. She studied the Sears and Roebuck catalog at the kitchen table and made out orders for new socks, shirts, and whatever else in the way of clothing had worn out and needed replacing. The kitchen and the kitchen table provide so many memories.



Go to www.jerryapps.com for more information about Jerry's writing and television work. Contact Jerry at jerryappsauthor@gmail.com with questions or comments.

Shannon Clark, Manager/CEO

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www.rec.coop

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