



RECOGNIZING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Members gather for Richland Electric's 83rd annual meeting

The 83rd annual meeting of Richland Electric Cooperative, held April 6 at the Richland Center High School, was a tribute to co-op service both past and present. Members and guests who attended the meeting passed a resolution honoring longtime director Gerald Wendorf, who retired after 33 years of service on the board (see sidebar), and welcomed a new director to succeed him.

In addition, the meeting was conducted in the now-familiar breakfast-and-business format, but it also showcased the co-op's newest investment—a brand-new digger truck. Delivered just three days before the annual meeting, the new truck took about 18 months to build and replaces a truck that was in service for 20 years. CEO/General Manager Shannon Clark jokingly asked members not to use their screwdrivers to collect pieces of the new truck.

The day began with members collecting scratch-off tickets at the registration table for a choice of attendance gifts including REC mugs and LED light bulbs. From there, members proceeded

to the cafeteria where they were served a breakfast of cinnamon rolls, fresh fruit, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, and hash browns prepared by RCHS Food Service Director Nellie Tyl and her staff.

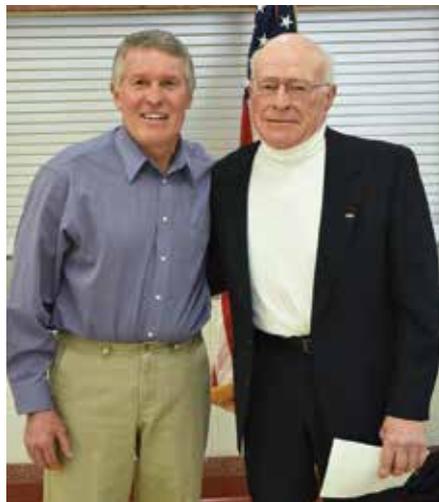
Three years ago REC switched its meeting format from the lengthy

gathering of years past, which could last several hours, to short business meetings conducted in the cafeteria while members enjoy breakfast. It does not appear that we will reverse this decision any time soon, as most members have indicated they prefer the shortened format.

At approximately 8:30 a.m. President Calvin Sebranek called the meeting to order and asked Ron Fruit of WRCO to deliver the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Fruit's awe-inspiring words spoke to the well-being of REC directors, linemen, staff, and members.

After members approved reports and other business as printed in the annual report, Clark introduced new journeyman lineman Zach Swenson, who replaced longtime lineman Ken Wymer after Ken's retirement. Clark also recognized apprentice linemen Jim Kaderavek and Casey Bartels for successfully passing their journeyman test. Both received scores above 95 percent.

Elections saw one contested race to replace the seat vacated by Wendorf, whose retirement was effective as of



Kevin Kepler, left, was elected to succeed Gerald Wendorf, right, on the REC board of directors. Wendorf retired after 33 years of service on the board.



REC was proud to have Sen. Howard Marklein in attendance at the annual meeting. Marklein was recently presented with a WECA Enlightened Legislator of the Year Award, recognizing him for his support on behalf of positions advocated by Wisconsin's rural electric cooperatives.

the annual meeting. In the past, retiring directors have received a Terry Redlin print on behalf of REC. However, Wendorf has been heavily involved with the Kickapoo Area School District and asked that REC donate to the Kickapoo Elementary Title 1 program on his behalf instead. We are happy to oblige.

For the director elections, the mail-in ballots were counted by WCCU Credit Union, which turned over 672 acceptable ballots to REC in a sealed envelope. Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) President and CEO Steve Freese was asked to present the results. Incumbent directors Don Huffman and Tim Tiller were unopposed and will continue to serve on the board for the next three years. In the only contested race, two very capable candidates — Steve Carrow and Kevin Kepler — agreed to run for the open director seat. Kepler was elected to the board with 411 votes to Carrow's 250. We thank Carrow for agreeing to run for the board.

The annual meeting concluded at

approximately 9:30 a.m. We thank the Richland Center School District for all the help in facilitating our annual meeting, but mostly we thank the many members who attended and took part in the business of their cooperative. We look forward to seeing you all at the 84th annual meeting next year! 📺



The youngest members kept themselves busy during the business meeting with co-op coloring books.

Members pass resolution honoring George Wendorf



Richland Electric Cooperative Member Resolution Resolution Honoring Gerald Wendorf

Richland Electric Cooperative has been serving the greater Richland County, Wisconsin area since 1936. The cooperative continues to serve the community by providing safe, reliable and affordable electric energy and more.

The role that Richland Electric Cooperative has served throughout its history has been determined by our members. Members drive every decision made by their elected board of directors.

Gerald Wendorf was elected to the Richland Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in 1986 and has served until this day, April 6th, 2019. In his 33 years as a director he has been a vital part of many successful efforts to improve the lives of cooperative members and others in the community.

Driven by the mission, values and principles of our cooperative, Director Wendorf has always been relied upon to ensure that our members receive the best service possible from their cooperative.

The members of Richland Electric Cooperative extend their sincere gratitude to Wendorf for his commitment, service and friendship throughout his tenure as a director of this cooperative. His leadership and direction will benefit this cooperative and its members for many generations.

This resolution was passed unanimously by the members of Richland Electric Cooperative at their 2019 Annual Meeting held on April 6, 2019.

Calvin Sebranek

Calvin Sebranek, President

Judy Murphy

Judy Murphy, Secretary

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

Tips for spotting potential electrical hazards in your home

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering baby monitors, cell phones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at Richland Electric Cooperative (REC), we think it's a great time to look around your home and check for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, these devices aren't designed to last or work forever. Failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets (or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom, or laundry room) often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years,

but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help protect expensive electronics like televisions, home entertainment systems, and computers from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an underwired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Dunn Energy, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional, or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for your purpose. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked, or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped, or loose, it will not provide the protection it's designed for. Always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is essential for modern living, and REC is committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable power to all our members. We hope you'll keep these safety tips in mind so you can note any potential hazards *before* damage occurs.





HAYWIRE

I was talking with a group of old-timer farmers the other day and the discussion got around to haywire. As is often the case when a bunch of old-timers get together we got to talking about how things are changing so fast these days we don't have time to wrap our minds around what is coming on and what is being left behind.

Take haywire for instance. The younger folks these days don't know much if anything about how and why haywire has crept into our language. Even the dictionary doesn't mention the root of the word. I looked it up. Haywire is defined as "being out of order or having gone wrong or emotionally or mentally upset or out of control."

So let's go back to 1946, the year after WWII ended. Many of the farmers in my home community in Waushara County were buying their first tractors, mostly Farmall and John Deere, with a sprinkling of Allis Chambers, Oliver, and Minneapolis-Moline. Along with tractors came a shift in haymaking from putting up loose hay to hay bales.

We never owned a hay baler on the home farm. Dad hired a neighbor, John Swendrzynski. John had a brand-spanking new J. I. Case, wire-tie hay baler, and an equally new Oliver tractor to pull it. The baler was powered by a roaring Wisconsin engine that sat on the front of the machine. Here's how it worked. One man drove the tractor, and two men sat on either side of the baler. One man pushed two strands of haywire through the freshly formed bale and the man sitting opposite him "tied" the wire together. Two strands of haywire wrapped around each bale. Yes, haywire was used in making hay bales.

I was the guy doing the "wire tying," a dusty, dirty job

but quite satisfying, because now we no longer had to rake, bunch, and haul loose hay to the barn. All we needed to do was load the hay bales on a wagon, now pulled by a tractor, and unload them in the hay mow.

Of course, when we fed the hay to the cows, we removed the haywire, and we saved it. After a year or two we had an enormous amount—and we used it for everything. When something went "haywire," meaning it came apart or broke, we often could fix it with a strand of haywire. We wired up broken machinery. Wired up broken fences. Wired up a muffler that fell off our old car. We hay wired everything that needed immediate fixing. Some farmers became known as "haywire" farmers because, according to their critics, their entire farm was held together with haywire.

So, if you didn't know it, the dictionary definition of haywire should refer to the days of wire-tie hay bales, and the many uses for the wire once it was removed and the bales fed.



For more about Jerry's writing, go to www.jerryapps.com. Look for his newest book, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Wisconsin," just off the presses.]

Shannon Clark, Manager/CEO

1027 N. Jefferson St., P.O. Box 439, Richland Center, WI 53581

608-647-3173

www.rec.coop

Find us on Facebook



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Board of Directors

Calvin Sebranek, President • Daniel Hillberry, Vice President • Judy Murphy, Secretary • Tim Tiller, Treasurer
Gerald Wendorf, Don Huffman, Jim Goplin, Steven Fuller, Jeff Monson