



Why we celebrate cooperatives

Every October, cooperatives from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month. The purpose of this annual celebration is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind you, the members of the co-op, about Richland Electric Cooperative's (REC) purpose.

We must admit that occasionally, we too have been somewhat cynical of the many different “days” and “months” that are celebrated, but National Cooperative Month is truly an opportunity to celebrate.

Celebrating National Cooperative Month informs others about our unique business model, which is based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

For co-op employees and members who are familiar with the principles, the month of October is a great opportunity to renew our connection to each other and the purpose of our co-op. REC shall continually work to be of the greatest value to the people in the communities it serves by delivering products, services, and technologies with integrity.

To celebrate National Cooperative Month, REC will be hosting our annual member appreciation picnic on October 14, 2017, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at our service center, 30 E. Robb Road.

In the United States, there are more than 29,000 co-ops

serving in every single industry. Many co-ops from different sectors join together during the month of October to educate members in the community about cooperatives.

There are more co-ops in our local community than most people realize. Telephone cooperatives such as Richland-

Grant and La Valle telephone cooperatives. Agricultural cooperatives such as Premier Cooperative. Credit unions such as Westby Co-op Credit Union. Co-ops are even represented on the shelves at our

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local grocery stores, such as Land O'Lakes, Welch's, Organic Valley, Cabot Cheese, Sunkist, Ocean Spray, and many more.

According to the latest data, more than 130 million people belong to a co-op in the United States alone, and co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans.

This speaks to the heart of why we must take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the cooperative business model. So, plan your own co-op celebration by purchasing co-op products, look to do business with co-ops right here in our local community, and be an active member of REC.



Help us raise money for G.R.A.C.E

Cooperative Month also shares October with Breast Cancer Awareness. REC and Genuine Telecom will be collecting donations throughout the month of October for G.R.A.C.E (Greater Richland Area Cancer Elimination). We will match up to \$2,500 of the total donations. Please stop into the REC and Genuine Telecom offices to make your donation. Please make checks payable to G.R.A.C.E.

We will also be collecting donations at the REC Member Appreciation picnic on October 14, 2017, from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Please come out and enjoy a great meal and help us with a donation. We hope to see you all there!





Take time to reap a **SAFE HARVEST**

It can be an exciting and exhausting time—the culmination of a season of hard work. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes. Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment.





“Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busyness of harvest time, it’s easy for farm workers to forget about the power lines overhead,” says Richard McCracken of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. “But failure to notice them can be a deadly oversight.”

Review with all workers the farm activities that take place around power lines. Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance. Keep equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines—above, below, and to the side—a 360-degree rule.

“Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it’s only a few feet,” says Bob Aherin, PhD, CSP & University of Illinois professor and Agricultural Safety & Health Program leader. “Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight, or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result. Also use extreme caution when raising the bed of a grain truck.”

Farm workers should take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Don’t use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

Operators of farm equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line: Stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away, and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so.

“If the power line is energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and ground, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result,” Aherin said. “Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there’s fire or imminent risk of fire.”

If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.

For more information about farm electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org (Spanish versions of this information are also available on the website).



SHIVEREE

Arlin Handrich farmed a half-

mile east of us. He lived with his mother and everyone in the community had decided that he would forever be a bachelor. Then he surprised us. He didn't let the neighbors know the real reason he was trekking off to Milwaukee, which is a considerable distance from Wild Rose.

He left for the big city on the last weekend in May 1947. And he returned with his bride whom he had married on May 28. Unbelievable. We'd all given up on him. And here he was, grinning from ear to ear with his new wife, Lorraine, on his arm, when we next saw him. I never did hear how it all came about. I figured that once you got to age 30, whether you were a man or a woman that was it. You would spend the rest of your life as a single person. Arlin Handrich proved us all wrong and I was impressed.

Well, Arlin and Lorraine hadn't been back to the Handrich farm but a day or two when I overheard Pa and Bill Miller, our neighbor to the south, talking about the need for a shivaree. I'd never attended a shivaree before so I was looking forward to it. It sounded like more fun than most things we did around our farm community in those days. Word soon spread that on Tuesday evening we should all gather at the Handrich farm around 9 p.m. or so, when we thought they had gone to bed. Just about every neighbor turned out, men and women, boys and girls. We parked the cars some distance down the road, and we all quietly walked toward the Handrich house. When we saw the light in the upstairs bedroom go out, we knew it was time. Pa and Bill Miller were in charge, so we all waited for the signal—there must have been 15 or 20 of us. We each had something that made noise. Shotguns. Sticks pounding on pots and pans. A deer rifle or two. A few firecrackers left over from the previous year's Fourth of July celebration.

When Pa gave the signal “now,” the quiet evening exploded with noise. Shotguns going off. Deer rifles shooting into the air. The ringing noise from pots and pans. And loud yelling, “Shivaree, shivaree.”

Within a minute or two, the upstairs light came on once more, then the downstairs light. Arlin and Lorraine appeared at the door, smiling from ear to ear. Arlin knew that a shivaree was coming, he just didn't know when. I'm sure Lorraine, a city girl, wondered what kind of neighborhood she had moved into. She soon found out it was the neighbor's way of celebrating a new marriage, and, in this case, welcoming Lorraine to the neighborhood.

The expectation was that the newly married couple would provide beer for the adults and soft drinks for the children. The neighbors brought sandwiches, cookies, and cakes to add to the celebration. It was a wonderful time, albeit a bit noisy at first. (Excerpted from *Old Farm Country Cookbook*, Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2017. www.jerryapps.com)



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