

# JOIN THE FUN!

Please join us Saturday, October 12, as we celebrate October Co-op Month with a picnic to show our appreciation for YOU, our members!

We'll be serving grilled brats, hot dogs, chicken breasts, pulled pork, potato salad, beans, and cheese curds.

We'll have a few new surprises as well! Kids can burn off some energy in our bounce house, and take home their very own Richland Electric Cooperative hard hat!

Adults can visit with Focus on Energy representatives and swap some of their old incandescent light bulbs for FREE energy-efficient LED bulbs! (see below for details)



**Richland Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

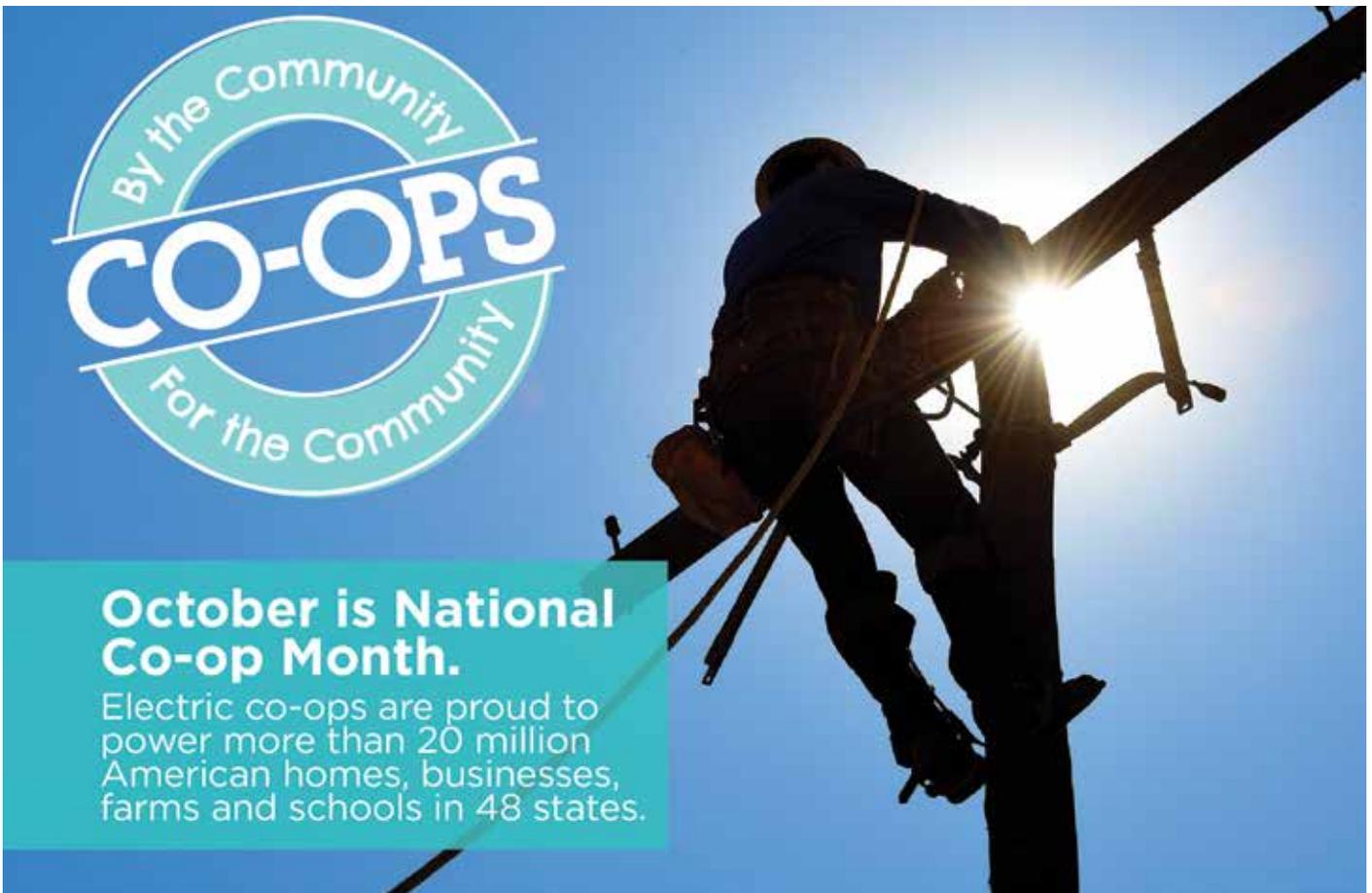
**Member Appreciation Picnic**  
Saturday, October 12 • 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Richland Electric Cooperative Service Center  
(30 E. Robb Road, Richland Center)



## Want some FREE light bulbs?

FOCUS ON ENERGY® will be on hand with information to help you save energy, and some FREE energy-saving LED bulbs! Stop by and exchange up to 12 screw-in incandescent or halogen bulbs for FREE LEDs! You will also be able to purchase discounted energy-efficient products, including single and multi-pack LED lightbulbs, or a \$10 LED Starter Kit with 10 LEDs, one three-way light bulb and a desk lamp.





When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween, and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason—it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Richland Electric Cooperative (REC), celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how REC was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. REC's leadership team and employees live

right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, lives locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels, or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as high-speed broadband, community solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades, and electric vehicle programs.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." We sponsor a wide variety of local events such as Four Seasons of Fun, Richland Hospital Foundation, and high school events. We created the REC

Bottled Water program that provides local high schools with bottled water with their logo for their events. Proceeds from all purchased water are returned to the schools in the form of a scholarship for students. We participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of REC as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you—because your electric co-op was built *by* the community, *for* the community.



Safety is the number-one priority here at Richland Electric Cooperative. That's obvious when it comes to our linemen, whose occupation is considered one of the most dangerous in the United States. The work is dangerous, but our linemen implement steps and precautions to ensure their safety. There are no shortcuts when it comes to linework. The equipment our linemen use is routinely inspected, and they participate in monthly safety training sessions.

However, safety goes well beyond linework. The culture of safety has been adopted throughout the entire cooperative—through its employees, directors, and even their families. Our office workers also participate in regular training sessions covering topics such as CPR/First Aid/AED, proper use of a fire extinguisher, preventing slips/trips/falls, and communication.

Safety training also provides our staff with the tools to help in situations beyond the co-op. For example, lineman Mike Horter recently came across a tractor accident and was first to arrive on the scene. He was able to provide aid to the man involved in the accident until first responders arrived. In keeping with his training, Mike phoned the office to have someone there dial 911 so he could focus on rendering aid. The response was prompt, as less than 10 minutes later the sirens could be heard as emergency personnel passed the REC office on their way to the scene of the accident.

Mike was well prepared to handle this situation because of our constant training and attention to detail. Without it, this situation could have been much worse.

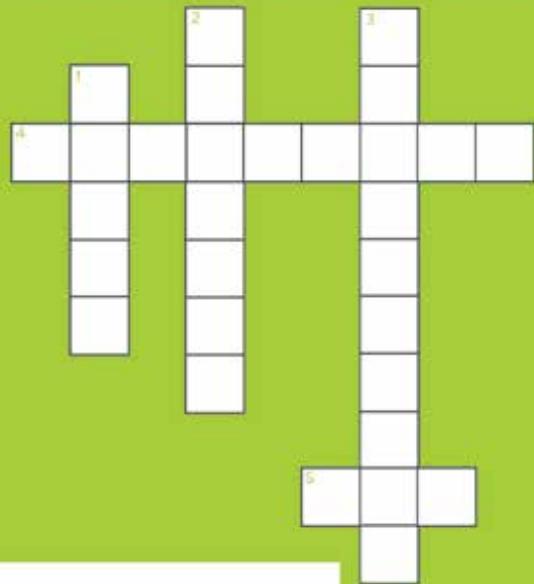
## CO-OP MONTH CROSSWORD

October is National Co-op Month! Complete the crossword puzzle at right to learn about ways co-ops are unique. Need a hint? Use the word bank.



### WORD BANK:

- LED
- MEMBERS
- LOCAL
- COMMUNITY
- PRINCIPLES



### CLUES:

- 1. DOWN:** Co-ops are \_\_\_\_\_ organizations and businesses, so they understand the communities they serve.
- 2. DOWN:** Co-ops don't have customers; they have \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3. DOWN:** All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. ACROSS:** "Concern for \_\_\_\_\_" is the seventh cooperative principle.
- 5. ACROSS:** Co-ops are \_\_\_\_\_ by the members they serve.

### ANSWER KEY

- 1. DOWN: LOCAL
- 2. DOWN: MEMBERS
- 3. DOWN: PRINCIPLES
- 4. ACROSS: COMMUNITY
- 5. ACROSS: LED





## REMEMBERING THE ONE-ROOM COUNTRY SCHOOLS

**With schools once more open for the fall term, it seems appropriate to recall what school was like for country kids when I was a youngster.**

I remember that late August morning well. It dawned warm and hazy, like so many mornings that hot and dry summer of 1939. I waited at the end of the sandy driveway that led to our farmstead. I wore a new pair of bib overalls, a blue denim shirt, and new brown shoes that pinched my feet. I dreaded the day that my overalls were washed, for in the washing their newness disappeared as did their specialness.

I remember my mother sitting on the porch of our faded, white, two-story farm house, husking sweet corn. My mother insisted that I comb my hair, which I reluctantly did before clamping on my cap. A cap was wonderful for little boys who hated combing their hair, but now I had to comb mine before I could wear my cap. Soon other children in the neighborhood appeared, and I joined them in my walk to the one-room country school, which, for me, was only about a mile away. Some of the kids had to walk more than two miles. No one knew about school buses. For eight years I attended this little one-room school. It made a great difference in my life for it was here that I learned how to read, how to spell, how to add and subtract, how to write and so much more.

One of the first things settlers who arrived in Wisconsin did was to build a school, a one-room building with all eight grades in one room with one teacher. For many years these schools, located about four miles apart, had no electricity, central heating, indoor plumbing, or lunch programs. The teachers, most of them women, began teaching with only one or two years of training beyond

high school. Many were still in their late teens when they started teaching at a country school.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic, the three R's, were heavily emphasized, but so was spelling and geography, history and science, and yes, art and music. Students had at least four opportunities to master a subject—when they heard the class ahead of them discuss it, when their class discussed it, when the class behind them discussed it, and when they tried to help a slower student understand it. As the teacher had many students to teach in all eight grades, students learned to help themselves and to help each other as well.

Not only were the one-room schools places for learning, they also served as community gathering places. Country schools also provided an identity for rural communities. People referred to where they lived by the name of their school. When these schools closed and children were bussed to nearby village schools, much more was lost than merely a school.



For more about Jerry's writing, go to [www.jerryapps.com](http://www.jerryapps.com).

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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