

# HOLIDAYS AT THE CO-OP

## Rarely a time for rest



Steve Lucas, CEO

As our members are busy decorating, shopping, and baking for the holiday season, we at your cooperative are busy too. You may not be surprised to learn that keeping your lights on requires a great deal of planning. Some of that planning involves our linemen, the power lines, and the poles, and some planning involves you, the members. We've already scheduled our 2022 Annual Meeting for April 9 and now it is time to call for candidates for the Board of Directors.

If you reside in Districts, 2, 6, or 7 and you are interested in running for a seat on the SREC Board of Directors, you must act quickly. The deadline for turning in the necessary paperwork is Sunday, January 9, 2022. Potential candidates must be in good standing with the cooperative, cannot be an employee of the cooperative, and must meet other qualifications as well.

Potential candidates must gather a minimum of 15 signatures on the petition form in order to become eligible to run for a position on the board. Petitions must be signed by 15 members who reside in the district in which

the nominee resides. In the case of a joint membership, the signature of one or both joint members counts as one (1) signature per the Bylaws. The nominee must receive service from the cooperative, at the address in the district they are interested in representing. As provided by the Bylaws, directors receive a per diem for attendance at monthly board meetings. The current per diem is \$500 per meeting.

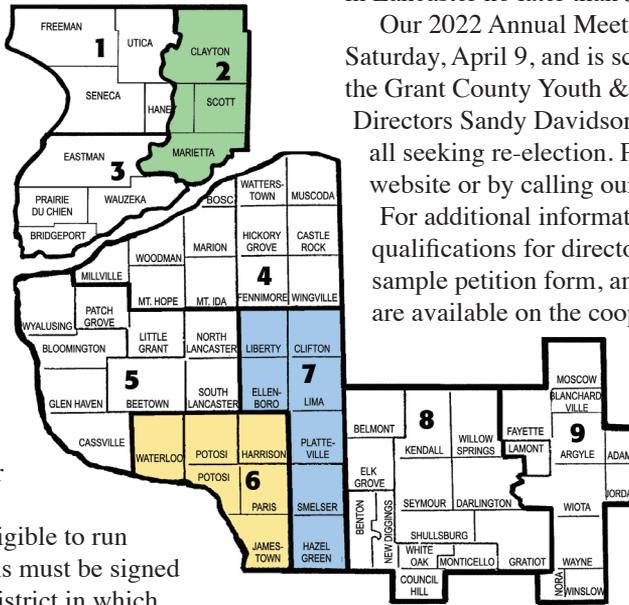
Completed petitions must be received at the SREC office in Lancaster no later than January 9, 2022.

Our 2022 Annual Meeting and election will be held on Saturday, April 9, and is scheduled to be held in person at the Grant County Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. Current Directors Sandy Davidson, Don Schaefer, and Lily Long are all seeking re-election. Petition forms are available on our website or by calling our offices.

For additional information about the petition process or qualifications for directors, please refer to the Bylaws, the sample petition form, and the director district map, which are available on the cooperative's website at [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop).

Please contact Judy at 800-236-2141 x554 with any questions.

This holiday season, we wish you and your loved ones peace, joy, and prosperity. Speaking on behalf of our team at Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, I know the future will be bright, because of you.



MY CO-OP





# BEAT HOLIDAY STRESS:

## Tips for a calmer season



Old songs call it the most wonderful time of the year, but the holiday season carries a high degree of stress for many people. The final months of the year include added pressures that may affect well-being, relationships, finances, and other factors that contribute to anything but a merry and bright time.

### Common Causes of Holiday Stress

Although it sounds obvious, the best way to manage stressors is to remove or avoid them as much as possible. (This is often easier said than done.) Are there holiday-related events or tasks that are daunting? If so, consider the cost of not doing them (if there is a cost) versus keeping them on your list of obligations.

An overbooked holiday schedule is not the only thing that can cause strife and discontent, however. Here are other seasonal but common causes of stress, anxiety or depression:

### Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

As daylight hours become shorter, the rates of depression increase. If you are diagnosed with SAD, follow your

doctor's advice. Options include light therapy, counseling, and medication.

### Unrealistic Expectations

These anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings can either come from external sources or ruminate in our minds. Outside expectations from family members, children, bosses, friends, and others can leave you feeling like you are not enough or that you are spread way too thin. Internal expectations can push you to do more than is healthy or reasonable. Consider reframing your thoughts and anticipating unreasonable expectations by:

- Knowing your limits for work hours, budgets, or patience with specific people or situations.
- Practicing or writing down polite refusals that you can use with others who pile on the pressure.
- Recognizing that it is okay to have negative thoughts and feelings sometimes.
- Realizing that while others may put their best holiday foot forward, this does not mean that they will have a perfect holiday season (which is also

unrealistic). Social media posts are not always as they appear.

### Financial Difficulties and Debt

Financial stress is often paired with unrealistic expectations. According to a Magnify Money survey conducted in 2020, more than 30% of shoppers went into an average of \$1,380 of debt for holiday gift buying and other expenses. This type of strain on your budget lasts far longer than the celebrations. Consider:

- Setting a limit before you begin to shop.
- Tracking expenses.
- Putting credit cards aside and using only cash for gift buying.
- Setting aside money each month as a Christmas or holiday fund.

### Loneliness and Family Issues

Memories of pleasant holidays or comparisons between your life and others' can exacerbate loneliness. With so much focus on sharing time with others, people without positive familial or social connections can experience more sadness during the holiday season. Consider:

- Creating new traditions with friends.
- Volunteering for an organization that



helps others, such as serving food on Christmas Day.

- Getting help if you need it by seeking out counseling.

### Tips to Alleviate Stress

If you find you are overstressed, that you just do not feel like yourself, or that all the joy has been zapped from the most wonderful time of the year, try out some of these stress-alleviating techniques.

- Identify negative self-talk and immediately refocus on a more positive message.
- Maintain a healthy eating and exercise regimen to minimize physical stress.
- Keep your distance from toxic or negative people. Focus on quality relationships.
- Use positive affirmations and take the time to pamper yourself.

The holiday season may come with more stressors than at other times of the year, but self-care, tempering expectations, reaching out to positive people, and sticking to financial and time budgets will help you avoid a blue Christmas and instead focus on the warmth of the season.

## ELF ON THE SHELF AND OTHER

# HOLIDAY STRESSORS



Feeling overwhelmed this holiday season? If so, you are not alone. According to a survey of 1,000 Americans 18-55 years old:

**50%**

say that holiday shoppers cause them the most stress

**27%**

with children begin to feel stressed by early November

### TOP TWO THINGS THEY WOULD REMOVE IF THEY COULD



Black Friday

**OR**

Elf on a Shelf



Dislike aside, the holiday season can cause added stress for many people

### TIPS TO COMBAT HOLIDAY STRESS



Identify negative self-talk and replace it with more positive messages



Maintain a healthy eating and exercise regimen



Keep your distance from toxic or negative people



Use positive affirmations and take time to pamper yourself

Survey Source: Total Brain



BE SAFE DURING THE  
**HO-HO-HOLIDAYS**  
10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY JOLLY



Before you plan out your new holiday lighting scheme or repeat last year's festive design, keep these 10 safety tips in mind when decorating outdoors:

- 1 Do not toss light strands up into the air. They could get too close to or come into contact with a power line.
- 2 Before using a ladder, always look up and assess all power line locations.
- 3 Carry a ladder horizontally when transporting it.
- 4 Keep at least 10 feet between yourself (and any item you are holding) and a power line.
- 5 Do not use staples or nails or tacks to secure light strands, cords, wires or extension cords.
- 6 String together no more than the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- 7 Plug all lights and extension cords into GFCI-protected outlets.
- 8 Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- 9 Do not use frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged cords, plugs or lights.
- 10 Use only lights and products certified by a reputable testing lab.



Safe LEARN MORE AT:  
Electricity.org®

**MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH**



The winning photo for December in SREC's 2020 Member Photo Contest was taken by Mark Steffensmeier of Bloomington. Winning photos are featured in our 2021 Member Photo Calendar.

**Energy Efficiency  
Tip of the Month**



**Heading out of town for the holiday season?**

Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles, and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they're not in use.



**CENIK RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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