



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD



Steve Lucas, CEO

At this time of year, when we ring out the old and ring in the new, many of us either celebrated the New Year at a party or we watched others celebrating via the TV. We may have shared what happened

in our own lives this past year and we probably heard what happened to others. We listed our hopes for the coming year and we listened to what others hope for in the New Year. Here at SREC, we do the same thing.

When I think of the New Year, I think of a car. In a car, we look forward through the windshield and we look back through the rear-view mirror to see where we have been. In the rear-view mirror, that was 2019, we can see what we accomplished. Here at SREC we added new services for our members including a live outage map that you can view on our website. We also energized new homes, farms, and businesses throughout our service territory. Maintaining our 4,000-plus miles of line required continual focus and effort from our operations department. Our crews and staff are proud to keep your power on through some rough storms and historical temperatures (remember the Polar Vortex) all while working for everyone's safety.

Facing forward in the car and looking through the windshield into 2020, we will continue to do much of the same. We will maintain the lines, poles, and infrastructure required to bring you reliable electricity. We will be here when you have questions or concerns. We will do all that it takes to bring you reliable electric service at the most competitive rates.



But not unlike any road that one might travel, we have some curves and bumps ahead of us. In the past years, we have worked internally to ease over these bumps by working harder and more efficiently. We have reduced overhead in order to avoid raising rates, and we will continue to look at ways to cut expenses every chance we get. However, bumps, curves, and other unexpected turns on the road have continued to come from outside sources. We fully expect these pressures to continue to come from various directions, including the government regulators, our energy suppliers, and as a result of environmental legislation.

Therefore, we have commissioned a cost-of-service study. This study will help us to determine what it truly costs to provide our members with power. It will also help us to evaluate what our rate structure should be going forward. As technology has changed the way that we live, our rates should also evolve to meet tomorrow's members' needs. Just as everyone does not drive the same make and model of car, our membership deserves to have options when it comes to rates.

We know that we cannot sacrifice the integrity of our infrastructure by neglecting necessary maintenance. To do so could cause outages, more costly repairs and unnecessary duress for our members. We will never forego providing our members with safe and reliable service in order to save a few dollars. Therefore, we are looking hard at how we can best meet the needs of our members by continuing to provide you with electricity at a competitive rate. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

MY CO-OP

KEEP SAFE DURING WINTER STORMS



Unless it's an emergency, stay home during ice and snow storms, and wait until roads are passable. Heavy snow and ice can bring down power lines, creating hazardous conditions.



Have a storm kit prepared with food, medicine, first aid supplies, battery operated clock radio, and other items you may need if you can't leave your home for several days.



When using a portable generator for power, always place it outside, well away from the garage, doors, windows and air-intake vents.



Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups. Test them to make sure they work.



Never use a stove to heat your home.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org



Taxidermist's mounts are works of **SCIENCE AND ART**

The animals are frozen in time, sometimes in mid-pounce. Brian Olson approaches each project in his taxidermy shop with the knowledge that even with 30 years of experience, nature provides endless variety. Each project has its own character and challenges.

Each animal has its own individual traits, Olson said. They might hold their ears differently, or their eyes are shaped a bit differently than others of the same species.

"I'm trying to recreate this to best of my ability, not just make a bunch of stuff to hang on the wall. You kind of owe it to the animal," he said.

In his work, he learns about biology, zoology, geography, geology, and art.

"You really have to study and know anatomy," Olson said. "You can put an animal mount on a pedestal base, but that doesn't make it correct. You need to dissect a deer, look close, take notes. It depends on what level you want to take it to. You study all the little details. It takes years, or sometimes the right person teaching you can accelerate it pretty quickly."

Sometimes the mount is sentimental, such as a child's first fish or dad's last deer.

"A trophy is different to everybody," he said. Some people have one in their home, and some people build trophy rooms.

Olson's Taxidermy shop is nearly equidistant from Platteville, Potosi, and Lancaster, on SREC lines. But all of Olson's work is commissioned, and some comes from states as far away as Tennessee and Texas.

Brian Olson shows the variety of work he does in his shop, with ribbons from competitions lining the walls.

"I started this as a hobby in 1982 or '83. I was a senior in high school. My brother took a mail-order class out of the back of a magazine" and he wanted to help out, he said.

Then Jim Hanson of Mineral Point, where Olson grew up, taught him more taxidermy techniques. He took the meat-cutting classes at Southwest Technical College in Fennimore and worked at Knebel's Processing Plant in Belmont.

"I learned a lot about anatomy and bones. My hobby turned into a full profession," he said.

"I want to give them an attitude. That's where the art comes in."

—Brian Olson

He started with a lot of birds, and took six to his first world show competition, bringing back six blue ribbons. But he discovered he prefers larger animals.

Some customers are second generation, with the third just beginning to hunt.

In 1992, Olson started his business full-time in the basement of his house. In 2000, he built a shop with one room for works in progress, one room for finished projects, and lots of windows.

The light allows him to do detailed work such as air brushing color around eyes to bring life back to the animal.

"I want to give them an attitude. That's where the art

comes in,” he said.

In 2018, he finished three moose mounts and “18 bears, 12 of them full-body mounts.” For the moose, he makes the antlers detachable for ease in transport and getting through doors and around staircases.

“The procedure is pretty much the same, just the weight and size changes,” he said. Animals are not stuffed, he said, but “you are putting back what you took out.”

An African lion, posed just as it catches an impala, took about three weeks to complete. Stainless steel rods helped achieve the pose.

But whitetail deer are the bulk of his business, and he’s mounted more than 3,000 in his career. In an average year, Olson finishes 100 whitetail deer mounts in his shop.

The antlers and tanned hide arrive and he begins work. The hide is glued on to a Styrofoam form. He makes his own forms because “I just found a lot of those forms just don’t fit our deer.”

His forms for Midwest deer are marketed by Matuska Taxidermy in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

“I’m working with glue and foam and clay,” he said.

A base or pedestal for full-body mounts has habitat authenticity to where the animal lived. Olson makes fiberglass molds of rocks sculpted from clay and then recreates the rocks.

One whitetail deer has a base made of oak leaves, welded into place. The flora is realistic and accurate to the habitat. During a trip to the tundra, he took photographs to remember the wildflowers, grasses, and plants. It’s a challenge to distill thousands of acres into a base, he said.

During a trip to Alaska, Olson visited a farm where injured caribou live to take photos. Seeing a live animal “gives you

so much more to go by. Caribou eyes are brown, not gray,” he said.

Olson competes in a show about once a year and judges a couple shows a year. Last year, he competed in the Wisconsin State Taxidermy Competition and won three specialty awards and state champion of the life-size mammal division.

The busiest time is right after hunting season. Some of the projects are once-in-a-lifetime for the hunter. If not done correctly, the mounts won’t hold up, Olson said.

Each is different, because a year-old deer looks different from a 5-year-old deer, and he wants that to be apparent in the finished product.

“If I’m going to turn it into a factory, I may as well work in a factory,” Olson said.—*Mary Glindinning*



Above: Brian Olson shows how antlers can be detached from a moose mount to make it easier to transport.

Far left: An African lion catches an impala in this pose.

Left: Olson created oak leaves to stand at the base of this mount.



DIRECTOR CANDIDATE PAPERWORK DUE JANUARY 4

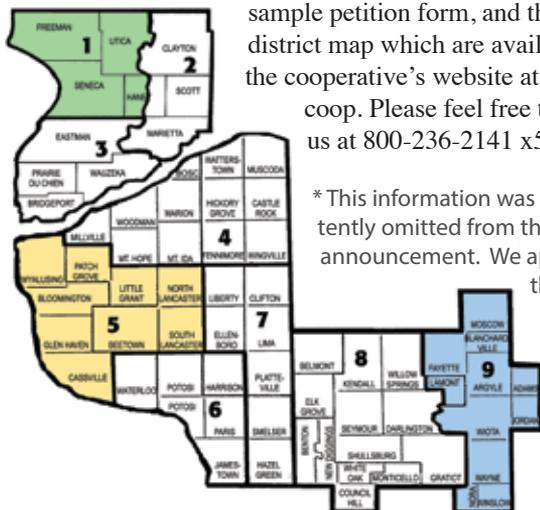
If you reside in Districts, 1, 5, or 9 and you are interested in running for a seat on the SREC Board of Directors, you must act quickly. The deadline for turning in the necessary paperwork is Friday, January 4.

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 4.

Our 2020 Annual Meeting and election will be held on Saturday, April 4, at the Grant County Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. Current incumbents Marcus Saegrove, Delbert Reuter, and Jack Larson are all seeking re-election. Petition forms are available on our website or at our offices.

For additional information about the petition process or qualifications for director, 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. Please feel free to contact us at 800-236-2141 x554 as well.



* This information was inadvertently omitted from the December announcement. We apologize for the error.

SAVE THE DATE



SREC's 2020 Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 4

Lancaster Youth and Ag Building

Scholarships,
Board Elections...and more!

Watch your March *WECN* for the 2019 Annual Report!

A likely story...

Do you know a SREC member with an interesting hobby or business who you would like to see featured in this magazine? Please let us know! Call (800) 236-2141, ext. 554, or email jmims@srec.net.



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning picture for January in SREC's 2020 Member Photo Contest is "Spring Snowstorm in the Valley," taken by Jamee Stanley, Soldiers Grove. We still have 2020 calendars available at the offices; pick yours up while supplies last!



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