



Steve Lucas, CEO

As we begin a new year, there are many things to look forward to. Perhaps, after the holidays, you are looking forward to warmer weather, but we all know winter in Wisconsin is just getting started. We know that ice and other severe winter weather can result in power outages, and we are always standing by to restore power, if necessary, but there are things you can do as well.

Supplies for the storm: At home, have enough nonperishable food, water, and medical supplies/medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing one gallon of water per person per day.

Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charger sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them as well. Also have these items ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets, and warm clothing.

Readyng the house: Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

Prepare your vehicle with an emergency kit: According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs), and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots, and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

Prepare your vehicle: Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than

minus 30 degrees, and keep the gas tank at least half full.

Know that when the power goes out, we will work hard to restore it safely and efficiently. Please call us at any time to report an outage at 800-236-2141.

Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:

	Snowbrush Shovel Windshield washer fluid Cat litter for traction
	Warm clothing Blankets Drinking water Nonperishable foods
	Properly inflated spare tire Wheel wrench & tripod jack Jumper cables Fire extinguisher
	Reflective triangles Reflective vest Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)
	First-aid kit Flashlight and batteries Compass Car charger for cell phone

Extraordinary People Doing Ordinary Things

This is the fifth part of the series in which we look into the lives of the people we may not notice, but who make our communities stronger, by doing things we all rely on.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Did you know what you wanted to “be” when you grew up? I remember being slightly jealous of my friends who just knew and many of them followed through to have careers as nurses, teachers, firefighters, and police officers. As kids, we couldn’t possibly understand how very important being a public servant would be and yet as adults we would be lost without them. As adults, we recognize the humble volunteers, givers and helpers in our lives, but sometimes we forget to look deeper.

Captain Rick Place of the Grant County Sheriff’s Office is an unassuming and kind person who is much more than meets the eye. As we spoke, and he quietly answered my questions, I realized that many people probably don’t know all that he does, because he simply doesn’t talk about himself. Not unlike many in our communities, Rick has worked together with others to care for our neighbors because it is the kind of world he wants to live in.

Sheriff Rick grew up in rural Fennimore, not much differently than many of us, on a family farm. He knew early on that farming wasn’t for him. As he stated, he “wanted to help people and thought that police work looked intriguing.” He attended Madison Area Technical College, earning his Associate Degree, and by 1990 he was working part-time for the Grant County Sheriff’s Department. He was hired full-time as a deputy the following year and worked the road patrols like many new hires. Shortly thereafter, his career path took a little turn that in retrospect, one can see affected his future in many ways.

In 1996 Rick was assigned to serve as the area D.A.R.E. officer. Most of us probably remember the D.A.R.E. program as an intervention to teach our kids about the dangers of drugs, gangs, and violent behavior. Rick did not elaborate on the years that he served as a D.A.R.E. officer in our schools, but if



Captain Rick Place

you read on, you’ll see that he has continued to work with the youth in our area.

Rick was assigned to the detective unit in 2009, where he served for 10+ years. He was promoted to sergeant in 2019 and then to captain in 2020. Rick found the work to be much more challenging than expected. Investigating crimes, testifying at trials, writing reports, and working with others in the department all came with the job. Through it all, what came as a surprise were the relationships and connections that Rick formed. More on that later.

Coach In 1996, when Rick first started with the D.A.R.E. program, he also began his coaching career as JV baseball coach in Fennimore. While Rick was clear that he was paid for his coaching work, and that those who volunteer should receive accolades more than he should, I don’t know any school coaches in the region who don’t give above and beyond to their student athletes. Paid or unpaid, coaches influence our young adults in a multitude of ways. Giving students a chance to compete, be part of a team, and learn life skills that they will need to succeed—our area coaches do this and deserve



Coach Rick Place has coached many high school teams including baseball, softball, and girls and boys basketball.

to be acknowledged. However, based on the comments I've heard from area parents, Coach Place has been, and continues to be, an exceptional coach.

Rick hasn't stop coaching, yet. He has held positions at Lancaster Schools, Fennimore Schools, and UW-Platteville over the past 25+ years, mostly with baseball teams, but he listed middle school basketball, softball, and high school football coaching too. He coached both girls' and boys' teams which included hundreds of student athletes including his son, Isaiah, and daughter, Tatianna.

While working with UW-Platteville's baseball program, Rick was invited to assist with Brewers spring training. Over two seasons he worked with such notable players as Ryan Braun, Rickie Weeks, Corey Hart, and Mandy Maldonado. Bringing what he learned home to Grant County, Rick returned to coaching at the high school level where he continues to make an impact.

Family Man As if working full-time and coaching year-round weren't enough to keep Rick busy, he and his wife, Stacey, are parents as well. Rick described his relationship with his kids with great pride, adding that they connect daily with Isaiah and Tatianna, who are both in college now. Stacey is a licensed physical therapist and instructor at Southwest Technical College. So, you could say that "teaching" is just a way of life for them.

Victim Advocate I hesitated to ask, but I think many of us would want to know if there was a particularly memorable case in Rick's work history. Yes, he was quick to answer that the "Montfort incident impacted me more than any other." The tragic shooting occurred on January 2, 2015. While Rick could have focused on the terrible outcome, he instead spoke of Joey. After three years in an intensive care facility, Joey not only survived, but thrived and returned home in 2018.

Rick spoke about the intense case, as the eighth anniversary approaches, with a quiet tone. He didn't focus on the tragedy, but rather emphasized the connections and recovery that all those impacted have experienced. He speaks to the family annually, including Joey, who inspired so many with his miraculous recovery. Rick stated that "we built relationships after the tragedy and recovered together. The shared memories and those relationships are the most rewarding."

Captain Craig Reukauf and retired Chief Deputy Jack Johnson were very involved in that case as well. All three were recognized by the Wisconsin Victim/Witness Professional Association and received the 2015 Crime Victim Service Award for Outstanding Victim Advocacy by Law Enforcement.

Kudos In Rick's current role with the sheriff's office, he works with the dispatchers, deputies, and many other unsung heroes. He named others throughout our communities who serve unselfishly to make our lives better and brighter: EMTs, firefighters, those who support our area charities, and so many others. Clearly, Rick is a team player down to his core and he'd want his colleagues and other public servants to know how much we all appreciate the work they do.—*Judy Mims*



Grant County Sheriff's Department detectives Rick Place (from left) and Craig Reukauf and Chief Deputy Jack Johnson visited Joey in 2016.



New Cell Phone for Christmas?

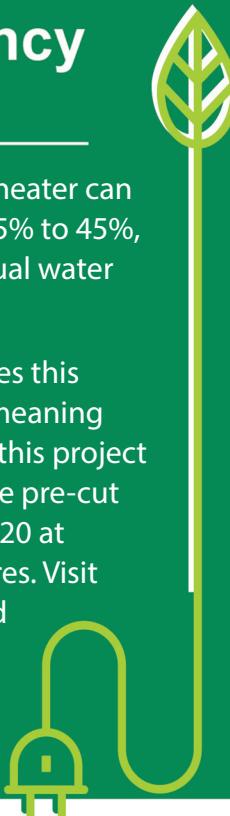
If you were one of many members who received a new phone for Christmas, did you also change your phone number? Maybe you discontinued your landline in the past year as well. Remember to contact our office if you changed any of your personal contact information. Our records are only as good as the information you provide. If work is being done in your area, we'd like to let you know in advance and provide you with the very best customer service possible. However, we know that many of the phone numbers we have on file are disconnected or changed. To make changes, please call us at 800-236-2141 or email us at srec@srec.net. It's that easy!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Insulating your electric water heater can reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%, saving you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs.

The Department of Energy rates this project as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home-improvement stores. Visit energy.gov for project tips and additional considerations.

Source: energy.gov



FROM THE ARCHIVES



Do you know more about this photo?

We believe it is from 1951, and the members are proudly showing their new TV (black and white, we would bet). Contact Judy at 800-236-2141 x554 if you can tell us more.



SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

206 County Road K
Lancaster, WI 53813
lancaster@srec.net

300 Barth Drive
P.O. Box 127
Darlington, WI 53530
darlington@srec.net

Steve Lucas, CEO

Judy Mims, Editor

608-723-2121 • 800-236-2141 • www.sre.coop

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