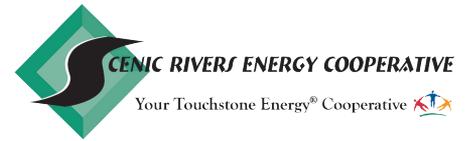




RECENT HEATWAVE EXPOSES GRID VULNERABILITIES



Steve Lucas, CEO

The official start to summer was weeks away, but a heat wave hit our area in May. Dormant air conditioners and fans weren't the only things being put to the test as record heat melted the region. So now that we are entering what is traditionally the hottest part of our year, it is time to talk about Peak Alerts, Summer Shift, and Max Generation Warnings.

In May, the regional electric grid, managed by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator), was strained with unexpectedly high electricity demand. Combined with the limited electricity available at that same time and a Maximum Generation (Max Gen) Warning was declared. We worked closely with our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), to be prepared in case there was a need to reduce our cooperative's electricity demand. We were not called upon to reduce our load, but the possibility that we will have to yet this summer is very real.

Here at SREC we know that every Max Gen Warning is unique. We are prepared to react to emergency grid conditions in real time and may have to call upon our members to start reducing their electricity demand at a moment's notice. We run annual drills with our staff and members to prepare for any potential event where we need to reduce our electricity load. Using our load management program for this purpose ensures we can quickly reduce demand to avoid overloading generation resources. Using load management for Max Gen purposes supports grid reliability by reducing our electricity demand to levels that can be met by available generation resources. If demand exceeds what the grid can fulfill, rolling blackouts can occur.

Experiencing a Max Gen Warning so early in the season could be a sign of things to come. A press release from MISO in late April and the short-term outlook from the U.S. Energy Information Administration this spring warned of a possible shortage of available electricity during peak demand this summer. Some key reasons for the projected shortfall include:

- Increasing transmission power line and grid congestion;
- Coal-fired and nuclear power plant retirements outpacing the installation of new generation resources;
- A significant amount of new generation resources coming online are wind and solar, which are intermittent and not always available when needed;
- Electricity consumption continues to return to pre-COVID-19 pandemic patterns, increasing in the commercial and industrial sectors.

The fact is, we are facing the possibility of power shortages this summer. These shortages are expected based on a projected deficit between what MISO and DPC can produce and what the electricity demands will potentially be. This deficit leaves us all at an increased risk of rolling blackouts.

SREC members can help reduce demand during the highest electricity peaks and aid our ability to keep the lights on. Participating in the summer shift (see the ad on page 18 for details) and cutting electricity use during Peak Alerts can help us avoid rolling blackouts. When we all work together, we can enjoy the fun that the summer season brings, without the worry. No matter what, you can trust that the employees here at SREC are working hard to keep your lights, fans, and air conditioners running this summer.

TODAY | 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

PEAK ALERT!



Due to high demand on the regional grid, please shift flexible electricity use until after 6 p.m.

Look for this on SREC's Facebook page!

How can I conserve electricity?

- Sign up to have your central air controlled. Incentives follow!
- Leave home to run errands.
- Run the dishwasher after 6 p.m.; open the door to let dishes air dry.
- Do laundry before or after the Peak Alert and hang up clothes to air dry. Use cold water when you wash clothes.
- Avoid using multiple large appliances simultaneously.
- Use the microwave or grill instead of the oven to cook; go on a picnic for dinner.
- Find a new book or magazine to read instead of watching TV.

Extraordinary People Doing Ordinary Things

This is the third in a 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.

111 YEARS OF SERVICE MAKE IMMEASURABLE IMPACT

Millions of children around the country ride the bus to and from school. These children, their parents, and the school staff rely heavily on bus drivers to deliver this precious cargo safely. Yet, how often have you thought about the men and women who drive the bus? Perhaps you remember your bus driver from your youth. I do, but at the time, I didn't consider the impact he had on my life. (Thor Romanek, if you grew up in the Wauzeka-Stauben School District.)

For those who grew up riding the same bus route, K through 12, you may have had several bus drivers. All gave of themselves to serve their community by "simply" driving a bus. Early in the morning, through all kinds of weather, and sometimes late at night they were there. But, Illene and Leonard Olson of rural Crawford County gave a wee bit more to the Seneca School District.

As I write this, June 4, Illene and Leonard are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. During their marriage, they both served as bus drivers for Seneca, Illene for 55 years and Leonard for 56 years. They rose early to handle farm chores, then drove their respective bus routes before returning home to raise their four children and work the land. Illene also worked for 30+ years at Prairie Memorial Hospital (now known as Crossing Rivers) and the hospice program. Like many of their generation, they worked hard day in and day out and built more than just a family farm.

Over these years, they watched as up to three generations of rural families grew up. Some moved on or stayed local, some raised new families and farms, but through all this the Olsons became an



Illene looks over a stack of drawings, letters, and gifts presented to her and her husband, Leonard, from some of the children they've transported to school every day on the buses they drove.

integral part of this small community. Illene stated she and Leonard have attended hundreds if not thousands of celebrations for these kids over the years, including graduations, weddings, and much more. The connection with the kids is what kept Illene and Leonard driving year after year. "I have so many, many, many good memories that I'll cherish," Illene said.

David Boland, Seneca School District administrator, was one of the students Illene drove to and from school. "It's a big job, with big responsibilities," stated Boland. "They were a friendly face each morning and afternoon for many students."

When discussing their impending retirements with Boland, both Illene and Leonard stated that the kids kept them young. Illene recounted the many times she would listen to a student talk about their school day. They were always excited about what happened each day. "They'd come on after school, so

energetic, talking a mile a minute," she said.

Illene recognized that much of what they said might be forgotten when the younger ones got home, so it wasn't uncommon for her to call up the parents and share information with them. Both Leonard and Illene listened to many students as they drove the miles each day. It was clear that the "bus kids" were an extension of the Olson family.

In fact, Leonard and Illene used their time to help teach valuable lessons to their bus riders. Leonard was known for reminding students to always tell the truth, as "the story gets harder to keep straight the longer the lie goes on," said Illene.

Helping the kids to see each other for who they are and not what they look like was also important to Illene.

It is clear from the many gifts, letters, and handmade cards they've received that the Olsons touched the lives of each student they drove. Illene believes it

started with the “good morning” greeting and smile for each student. Knowing each student’s first name, smiling, and helping the students to start each day at Seneca Schools in a positive way were goals for Illene. Now she knows that the smiles she gave have been returned many times and were the biggest reason she kept driving the bus.

Illene didn’t mention a single hard trip, scary moment, or near miss. She did recount the old chains for the buses. “They were hard work to get on, but sure made getting up and down the hills a bit easier,” said Illene. “Now the buses are better than ever: heated seats, engine brakes, and more, which make the new buses like Cadillacs!”

She had high praise for Southwest Bus Service, which keeps the buses running safely and works with Seneca Schools as well as others in our area.

When Illene started driving bus with Leonard, she was a trendsetter. As a woman, her paychecks went to Leonard and some felt she shouldn’t drive the bus. But Leonard encouraged her to keep driving and together they had quite an impact on the lives of those around them. Now the time has come for them to slow



Leonard and Illene Olson each drove school buses throughout their 60-year marriage.

down and “smell the roses,” said Illene.

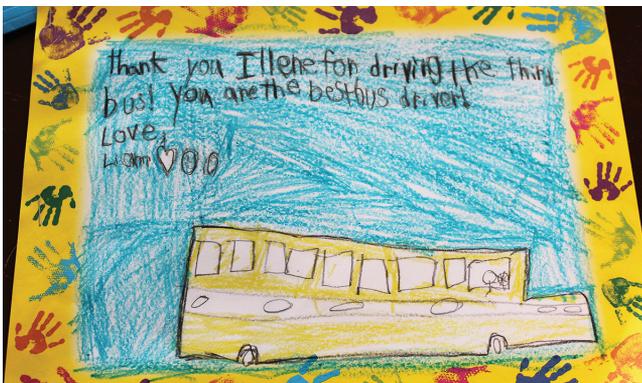
“We are focused on Leonard’s health, our five grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and we have one more great-grandchild coming in the fall,” she said.

Illene and Leonard witnessed a lot of joy and laughter as bus drivers. Celebrations for team wins and the pride that comes when students earn

high marks in class were plentiful, but they also witnessed many tears. Helping the kids through their hurts and disappointments came naturally to the Olsons. It was harder to comfort the children as the times changed, and even more so recently through the COVID pandemic, but the Olsons were there with kind words, gentle advice, and a steadfast presence that the students could rely on.

Illene reflected on the many times the smiles she got brightened her day, put a pep in her step, and helped her to meet the challenges in her daily life. However, Illene and Leonard might never truly know the effect they had on so many. I would be willing to bet there is virtually no way to quantify the impact 111 years of “simply driving the bus” has had on the lives that Leonard and Illene touched. In fact, I’d say that impact is immeasurable!

Interested in driving the bus in your area? Contact your local school district. Many are hiring for the 2022–23 school year. Illene and Leonard hope more people will try driving a bus. “People have a tremendous opportunity to make a positive impact on children,” Illene said.—*Judy Mims*



Tokens of affection Illene received upon driving her last school bus attest to the impact she and Leonard have had on the children they’ve driven for more than half a century. Between the two of them, they’ve clocked a whopping 111 years of driving school buses in the Seneca School District.

SUMMER SHIFT: SMALL STEPS FOR SAVINGS

The goal of the Summer Shift program is to shift non-essential electricity use to before 11 a.m. or after 7 p.m., June through August. These are times when electricity use is not at its peak and, therefore, is not as expensive. So, how does Summer Shift work?

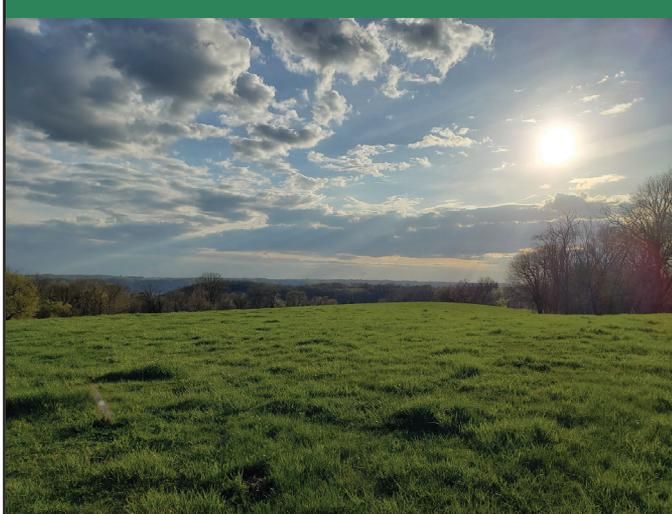


When a member chooses to shift their electricity use, it helps spread out electricity use throughout the day. The less electricity cooperative members use when prices are at their highest, the more stable we can keep our retail rates. The more members who choose to participate, the more impactful these savings become.

Tips:

- Set your thermostat to 78 degrees (or a level that is comfortable for the home, but a few degrees higher than normal). Closing curtains and shades will help the home feel cooler, longer. A ceiling fan or table fan throughout the afternoon will help circulate air.
- Set up a schedule for your smart thermostat and smart lighting options, ensuring a minimal amount of energy is used between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Charge electric vehicles overnight
- Set the water heater to 120 degrees
- Washing dishes in an ENERGY STAR dishwasher instead of by hand can save a home \$111 per year
- Open the dishwasher after the wash cycle to let dishes air dry

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The winning photo for July in SREC's 2022 Member Photo Contest is "Sunset" by Bobbi Jo Gofus of Bagley. Winning photos are featured in our 2022 Member Photo Calendar.

WE'RE MOVING INTO OUR NEW BUILDING!

**Lancaster Office
move date –
July 18 – 22***



The Lancaster office will be closed for walk-in traffic as we relocate to our new headquarters on the north side of Lancaster. The Lancaster drop box at the Sheridan Street address will remain open and payments will be posted to accounts daily. Our Gays Mills and Darlington offices will be assisting members as we move to our new headquarters.

**Tentative and subject to change*



CENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Steve Lucas, CEO

231 N. Sheridan St.
Lancaster, WI 53813
lancaster@srec.net

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

15985 St. Hwy. 131
Gays Mills, WI 54631
gaysmills@srec.net

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

This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider

Board of Directors

Chuck Simmons, Chairman
Sandra Davidson, Vice Chair
Steve Carpenter, Secretary–Treasurer
Donald Schaefer, Asst. Secretary–Treasurer
Ellen Conley, Director
Lily Long, Director
Delbert Reuter, Director
Jack Larson, Director
Marcus Saegrove, Director