

Steve Lucas, CEO

## MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

**Did you know that according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 47,700 home fires in the United States are caused by electrical**

**failure or malfunction each year? Or that these fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries, and \$1.4 billion in property damage each year?**

I offer these statistics not to scare anyone, but to make everyone aware of the importance of staying safe around electricity. Here at SREC, we recognize the importance of safety every day, but this month presents a prime opportunity to promote electrical safety, as May is recognized each year as National Electrical Safety Month.

We take the safety of both our employees and our members very seriously. Our line personnel frequently participate in public safety education events such as the Crawford and Grant County safety days each spring as well as hotline demonstrations at area elementary schools. We can also provide schools with electrical safety literature. Any school or community organization that would like to host a safety demonstration should contact the co-op and we'll be happy to arrange one.

We also have other resources to help keep you safe not just around power lines, but in your own homes. We offer safety tips on our website, through our monthly newsletter, and via partner organizations such as Safe Electricity. Although the statistics are sobering, fortunately, the solutions are many.

For example, those 47,700 home electrical fires I mentioned earlier? According to the NFPA, half of them could be

prevented with Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs), which are little devices that interrupt power when an arc fault—a dangerous electrical problem caused by damaged, overheated, or stressed electrical wiring or devices—is detected in the circuit.

Another example: Roughly 3,300 of those home fires I just discussed originate in extension cords each year, according to the Electric Safety Foundation International. But these fires too can be prevented with a little care taken to the extension

cords you're using. Make sure your extension cord is properly rated for its intended use and that it's in good condition, with no cracked or frayed sockets. As much as you might want to hide them, do not run extension

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cords through walls or under rugs. If an extension cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which may result in a fire hazard.

Also, avoid overloading extension cords and plugging several of them together. A good guideline to keep in mind is that if you find yourself relying heavily on extensions cords, you likely have too few outlets to address your needs and should really consider having additional outlets installed.

These are just a few simple home safety tips to keep in mind. Please contact us or visit [www.safeelectricity.com](http://www.safeelectricity.com) or [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) for more information. Stay safe.

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning photo from SREC's first-ever Member Photo Contest for May is from Mark and Tiara Brothen from Viroqua. This photo was taken at a farm in Vernon County and was submitted with the following thought: "Choose to be beautiful even when life is a bit prickly."

Each of the winning photos is included in our 2016 member calendar. Don't miss our 2016 Member Photo Contest, which is well underway. Your photo could be featured in our 2017 calendar! Please turn to page 18 for contest details.





# THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR SREC

## Members learn of solar project at 79th annual meeting

SREC members attending the cooperative's 79th annual meeting April 9 learned they will soon have the option of purchasing locally produced solar energy thanks to a solar expansion project initiated by Dairyland Power Cooperative, SREC's wholesale energy provider.

CEO Steve Lucas told the approximately 400 people who gathered at the Youth and Ag Building in Lancaster that Dairyland has entered into purchase power agreements with two solar developers to acquire more than 15 megawatts of power. This power will be produced at 12 new solar sites throughout Wisconsin, including one adjacent to SREC's Eastman substation in Crawford County.

"Out of the 15 megawatts of solar power that Dairyland is going to be buying, our co-op is getting 1 megawatt of it," Lucas said. "That 1 megawatt of power is roughly 8 acres of solar panels."

Lucas said the project is especially attractive for SREC members because Dairyland will not own the solar facilities; a company called SoCore Energy out of Chicago will own them,

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**– CEO Steve Lucas**

and Dairyland will purchase the power produced at them.

"We get the benefit without the cost," he pointed out. "The thing that I'm most proud of for our co-op is that we get the benefit locally."

The solar project, which should be underway some time in the fourth quarter of this year, will push Dairyland's renewable power sources to 20 percent of its total energy portfolio by 2020, Lucas said. Currently, Dairyland obtains 12 percent of its energy from renewable sources, which is ahead of minimum mandates. Lucas said the expanded solar project will help maintain a diversified mix of energy sources needed to maintain reliability and affordable costs.

"This is a great thing for this region," Lucas said. "It's not the answer—this is *part* of the answer. It's going to take everything to meet the growing demands [for energy], so it's just a part of the puzzle. But now we can say it's *our* part of the puzzle."

Lucas also addressed reliability in a question-and-answer period. Asked about cutting trees, Lucas discussed how keeping a clear right-of-way is key to reliable service, as trees are the



Winning scholarships at this year's annual meeting were, front row, left to right: Rylie Laufenberg, Cassville H.S.; Brooke Bender, Fennimore H.S.; Joyanna Steiner, Prairie du Chien H.S.; Nicole Fritz, Platteville H.S.; Haley Yelinek, Iowa-Grant H.S.; Katelyn Timmerman, Cuba City H.S.; Katie Hinderman, Potosi H.S.; Riley Hawkinson, Argyle H.S.; Konnor Kiley, River Ridge H.S., Ill.; Ashlea Gebhard, Boscobel H.S.; Jada Hicks, Shullsburg H.S.; Karli Wachter, River Ridge H.S.; and Maria Skemp, Prairie du Chien H.S. Back row, left to right: Micheal Biba, Highland H.S.; Cal Randall, North Crawford H.S.; Samantha Groom, Wauzeka H.S.; Nicole Manders, Seneca H.S.; Michelle Budden, Southwestern H.S.; John Giesen, Lancaster H.S.; Chase Stietz, Blackhawk H.S.; Conrad Blossch, Darlington H.S.; Nathan Knebel, Belmont H.S.; Jeffrey Hrubes, Riverdale H.S.; Andrew Donovan, Wahlert Catholic H.S.; Kyle Tranel, Southwestern H.S.; and Kurt Tranel, Southwestern H.S.



1. LED Lucy and CFL Charlie were on hand again this year to greet members. 2. CEO Steve Lucas answered questions from the crowd touching on a variety of issues from trees to which presidential candidate is best for cooperatives. Lucas left the latter question for each member to decide for himself/herself but encouraged all members to make their voices heard and vote. 3. Each member attending the meeting was given a 60-watt LED bulb. 4. State Rep. Lee Nerison was on hand. 5. Members enjoyed conversation and coffee (or in this case, water) before the meeting, and a chicken dinner after.

number-one cause of blinking lights. He reminded members of last spring’s tornado that caused widespread outages. Within 10–15 hours, every SREC member’s power was restored, while some consumers of a neighboring utility were without lights for five days.

“The reason for that is we cut trees,” Lucas said. “It’s important. That tree in your yard that we have to cut affects more than just you because the line doesn’t just stop at your house.”

Lucas was also asked about rates. He explained the co-op is due to have another cost-of-service study done later this year to examine the cooperative’s costs and rate structures. He noted that many factors are out of the co-op’s control, and increasing regulation will most certainly affect rates.

“I will guarantee you this much,”

Lucas added. “We will keep the rates as low as humanely possible while still able to keep the lights on.”

Jack Larson gave the audit report and told members their co-op is in strong financial shape.

In her treasurer’s report, Director Sandra Davidson reviewed highlights of the co-op’s financial reports, pointing to efforts the co-op has taken to refinance its long-term debts, resulting in significant savings.

She also said that SREC has retired \$1 million in capital credits each year for the past several years, which ranks the co-op among the highest in the state for capital credit returns.

In director elections, members returned three incumbents to the board. Davidson won the only contested race in District 2, defeating challenger

Ken Cornish. Don Schaefer and Larry Butson ran unopposed in Districts 6 and 7, respectively. A reorganization meeting held shortly after the meeting kept incumbent officers in place, with Chuck Simmons as chairman, Schaefer as vice chairman, Davidson as secretary-treasurer, and Ellen Conley as assistant secretary-treasurer.

A highlight of every annual meeting is the awarding of college scholarships to high school seniors. A \$750 scholarship was awarded to one senior from each high school within the co-op’s service territory, with several at-large scholarships awarded as well. Scholarship monies come from unclaimed capital credits via the Federated Youth Foundation.

Drawings were held for door prizes before members adjourned for dinner.



## STUDENTS: REGISTER NOW FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

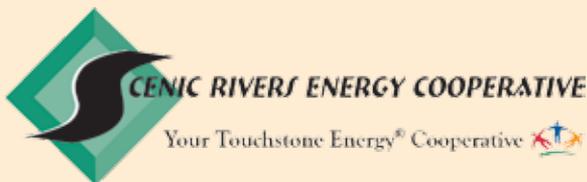
Member high school students who are looking for an exciting and fun opportunity this summer are invited to participate in the Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) July 13–15 at UW–River Falls.

This is a dynamic event for teens across Wisconsin to develop their leadership skills while learning about the cooperative form of business. The program is planned by teens who were elected to the youth board at the previous year's YLC. These board members have an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., in June as part of the National Youth Tour. Last year, SREC's own Allison Stader was elected to the youth board and will join other student leaders across the country on the National Youth Tour this summer.

"I cannot express enough how many more teens I want to participate in this opportunity," Stader said after last summer's YLC. "I can only say when given the chance, take it and run with it!"

YLC is open to students entering grades 10, 11, or 12 next fall whose parents or grandparents are members of SREC. Registration costs are covered by Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. SREC will even provide transportation to and from UW–River Falls.

Interested students should contact Heidi at SREC, 608-723-2121 or 800-236-2141, or [hpierce@srec.net](mailto:hpierce@srec.net).



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## 2016 MEMBER PHOTO CONTEST

### Photo Contest Criteria:

- Photos must be taken within the Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative service area.
- Photos should capture scenic life in rural Wisconsin (seasons, wildlife, landscape, etc.).
- Photos must be horizontal (landscape).
- Photos can be in color or black and white.
- Photos must be at least 300 dpi and 8"x10".

### Photo Contest Rules and Details:

- Contest will run through August 21, 2016; however, submitted photos can be taken outside of this date range.
- Three (3) photos per member will be accepted.
- All SREC members 18 years old and over are eligible to submit photos.
- An SREC member under the age of 18 years old is eligible to participate, but must submit a parent/guardian form with entry.
- A completed entry form must accompany each photo.
- Member must own rights to photo.
- SREC employees will choose winning photos.

Entry forms can be downloaded from [www.srec.coop](http://www.srec.coop), picked up at a SREC office, or emailed to you.

**Please email all photos to [hpierce@srec.net](mailto:hpierce@srec.net).**

**NOTE: To be of sufficient quality for publication in the calendar, photos MUST be at least 300 dpi.**

### Board of Directors

Chuck Simmons, Chairman  
Donald Schaefer, Vice Chairman  
Sandra Davidson, Secretary–Treasurer  
Ellen Conley, Asst. Secretary–Treasurer  
Larry Butson, Director  
Steve Carpenter, Director  
Delbert Reuter, Director  
David Stute, Director  
Marcus Saegrove, Director