



Steve Lucas, CEO

SAFETY ABOVE ALL ELSE

“Safety” is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. However, safety is a serious issue here at Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Our mission is to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electricity to our members, but equally important, we want to return our workers home safely to their loved ones at the end of the day. We also want to keep all of our members and the community at large safe from all the electrical hazards that are inherently present in our line of work. To do this requires constant focus, dedication, and vigilance, as well as ongoing education.

Following National Safety Standards

Over its 81-year history, your electric cooperative has established a culture of safety. SREC is accredited under the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), a national program that follows specific guidelines and protocols for electric safety that are considered best practices. Our lineworkers wear personal protective equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock. Our lineworkers follow specific protocols when dealing with electricity, and they have regular meetings where they receive safety training.

Keeping the Community Safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. Educating the community, especially youth, about the importance of electrical safety is a priority for us. We provide electrical safety literature to area schools. Our linemen also present electrical safety demonstrations in schools and for community events. If you are part of a school or community organization that is interested in educational materials or demonstrations, you need only to contact our office at 1-800-236-2141.

We also help to educate the public about the importance of staying safe around electricity through information we provide in this magazine, in our monthly newsletters that are bundled with your bill each month, and through our website, www.sre.coop. As members of SREC, you also have access to many safety resources through our partnership with Safe Electricity, at safeelectricity.org.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, so it's an especially good time to point out all of these resources. However, keep in mind that the safety sources we provide

are always available because electrical safety is something we think about year-round, not just during May.

Working Together to Stay Safe

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents, and electrocution in their own homes. However, many of these accidents are preventable.

Efforts to avoid electrical mishaps can be as simple as making sure your outlets are not overloaded; cords are continually checked for wear and tear, and replaced if necessary; and ground-fault circuit interrupters are used with receptacles near water, outdoors, or in garages and unfinished basements.

You can help us as well by reporting any downed power lines, unlocked substations, or padmount transformers that look amiss. Don't try to fix any of these situations yourself; please contact us right away and we will take care of it safely.

Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety.



MEMBER PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

Ana Ramaker of Prairie du Chien took the winning picture for May in SREC's 2017 Member Photo Contest. She says of this photo, "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." The 2018 Member Photo Contest is underway; please visit our website, www.sre.coop, for contest details and application forms.



CLARENCE AHRENS

'A co-op man all the way'



Lowell Ahrens of Prairie du Chien, son of Clarence Ahrens, longtime director of the former Crawford Electric Cooperative, displays the sign declaring his father's farm to be "all-electric."

If there was a cooperative hall of fame in Wisconsin, Clarence Ahrens would be in it.

So said Marvin A. Schaars, who taught courses on cooperatives for 48 years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and co-authored the textbook "Economics of Cooperative Marketing."

Ahrens, of rural Prairie du Chien, was a student of Schaars' who was a pioneer and architect of cooperatives in Wisconsin, Schaars said.

"My dad was a co-op man all the way," said Lowell Ahrens, of rural Prairie du Chien. "He lived co-ops. He was a co-op man all his life."

Clarence Ahrens died in 1988 at the age of 82, leaving a legacy of serving of co-op boards, including local and state electric cooperatives.

Schaars profiled him, among others who "went the extra mile," in a 1975 booklet called "Profiles of Wisconsin's Cooperative Leaders and Milestones of Cooperatives in Wisconsin," which is preserved at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Clarence Ahrens was very proud to be awarded a sign declaring his was an all-electric farm, posting it prominently. "He was one of the first to have an all-electric farm," Lowell Ahrens said. "You had to meet criteria. Everything had to be electric, even the water heater for the pigs out on pasture."

The farm had cows, pigs, chickens, and "even a few rabbits when we were kids," Lowell Ahrens said.

His father graduated from a two-year agricultural short course at UW in 1928. Part of the curriculum was a course on cooperatives taught by Schaars.

A generation later, Lowell Ahrens took the same class taught by the same teacher. He asked the professor if he remembered his father, to which Schaars replied, "Certainly."

The cooperatives course was required in the School of Agriculture. "That's what really helped the co-ops in Wisconsin, I'm sure. Students had to take the class," Lowell Ahrens said.

Schaars wrote that cooperatives were "a major social and economic cause," and in his brochure praised those who established cooperatives and helped sustain them.

"Many dedicated persons have given freely of their time and effort to organize, direct, and spearhead cooperatives in their communities. Too often, these persons are unsung heroes and are not adequately recognized for their significant contributions to society," Schaars wrote.

Clarence Ahrens was director of the Crawford Electric Co-

Clarence Ahrens was very proud to be awarded a sign declaring his was an all-electric farm.

op and president of the statewide Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives Association from 1961 to 1968.

It was a co-op that brought electricity to the farm where he displayed the sign.

“They helped the average guy and not just the ones near the power lines,” Lowell Ahrens said.

His father served on other cooperative boards.

“He has served as a director of the Tri-State Breeders Cooperative Association of Westby, Wisconsin, as its president for a number of years. Mr. Ahrens was instrumental in effecting a merger of the Southern Wisconsin Breeders Cooperative and the Tri-State Association and in doing so revealed his leadership qualities. He has also been a member of the Farmers Home Administration Committee of Crawford County,” Schaars wrote.

Clarence Ahrens was also active as treasurer of the Crawford County Historical Society, as a 4-H leader and leader in his church, charitable and civic groups.

“That was just in his nature” to volunteer for causes he believed in, Lowell Ahrens said. He devoted a lot of time to meetings, including national conferences.

Schaars called him “a man of the highest integrity and willingness to serve others without attempting to glorify

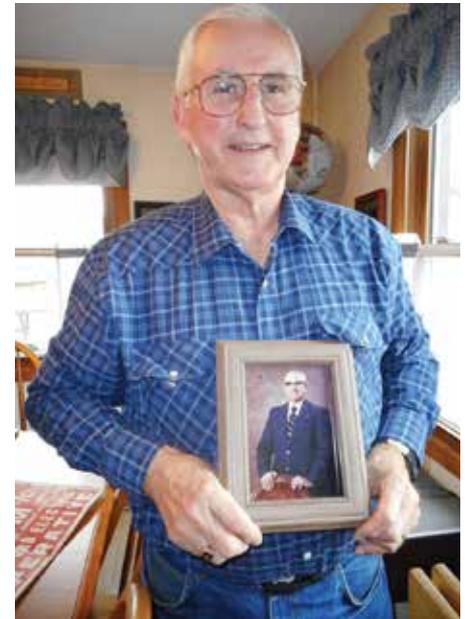
himself.” The supervisor of one of the federal agencies in Crawford County in commenting on Mr. Ahrens stated “I believe that Clarence Ahrens is an outstanding example of a farmer and a leader of rural living who has shown unselfish devotion to Crawford County and the state of Wisconsin.”

He was a progressive farmer, the first of his family to go to college and a member of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. He grew certified seed oats, tested his soils to see what additives were needed, and bought certified boars for his swine program.

In 1963, the University of Wisconsin awarded Clarence Ahrens “honorary recognition for his many achievements and leadership qualities.”

Lowell Ahrens remembers the event at the Great Hall of Memorial Union on the UW campus greatly pleased his father.

Lowell Ahrens graduated from UW with a degree in animal husbandry (now called animal science) in 1960. He farmed with his father, then returned to the university for his master’s in agricultural education in 1968. He became young and adult farmer instructor at Southwest Technical College in Fennimore, then became ag coordinator and then taught dairy herd management until



Lowell Ahrens holds a photograph of his father, Clarence Ahrens, who strongly believed in cooperatives and served on several cooperative boards.

he retired in 2000.

He learned to value cooperatives as well, and when traveling always looks for gas stations fueled by cooperatives. He appreciates the equality.

“I really like the importance of the individual. Every member has a vote, and they’re all equal,” he said.—*Mary Glindinning*



SREC offers you an easy way to manage your energy bill, all from the convenience of your smartphone, tablet, or computer.

With SmartHub, you can:

- Pay your energy bill online
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It’s easy, too! All you need to do to get started is visit our website, www.sre.coop, click on the SmartHub logo under Links, and follow the directions to sign up for and log into your own account. For mobile access, download the free application in the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

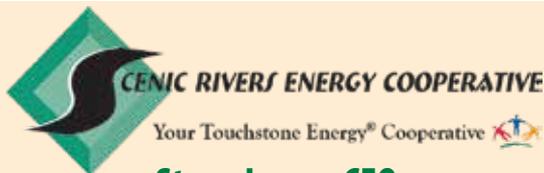
Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative awarded 52 \$1,000 college scholarships to member high school students. Scholarships were presented at the co-op's 81st annual meeting Saturday, April 14, at the Youth & Ag Building in Lancaster. More annual meeting news will appear in the June 2018 *WECN*.



Front row, left to right: Allison Horne, Darlington H.S.; Amanda Schmidt, Boscobel H.S.; Allison Stader, Lancaster H.S.; Morgan Biba, Highland H.S.; Hannah Udelhoven, Potosi H.S.; Allison Ploessl, River Ridge H.S.; Madilyn Digman, Cuba City H.S.; Bradley Budden, Platteville H.S.; Bryce Flanagan, Argyle H.S.; Kama Tesar, Prairie du Chien H.S. Back row: Nathan Hull, Black Hawk H.S.; Brandon Bickford, Iowa-Grant H.S.; Braydon Friar, North Crawford H.S.; Patrick Marfilus, Wauzeka-Stueben H.S.; Sophie Sherry, Kickapoo H.S.; Brandon Kinyon, Cassville H.S.; Garrett Cornell, Fennimore H.S.; Derek Leibfried, Southwestern H.S.; Brad Frazier, Riverdale H.S.; Brianna Leahy, Shullsburg H.S.; Jacob Wedig, Belmont H.S.; Mason Welter, Westosha Central; Dustin Hamm, Benton H.S.



Front row, left to right: Kristal Fishler, Prairie du Chien H.S.; Chelsie Golackson, Darlington H.S.; Jared Knapp, Black Hawk H.S.; Anna Schmitz, Potosi H.S.; Kelsey Carey, Cuba City H.S.; Brook Gassman, Platteville H.S.; Madelyn Hampton, Lancaster H.S.; Britney Baker, Platteville H.S.; Emma Lawrence, Benton H.S.; Elizabeth Walker, Lancaster H.S.; Emilee Klaas, Fennimore H.S.; Gracie Mercer, Fennimore H.S.; Katelyn Quick, River Ridge H.S.; Brooklyn Parker, River Ridge H.S.; Kindie Cook, Shullsburg H.S. Back row: Emmelyn Wagner, Potosi H.S.; Dylan Zasada, Darlington H.S.; Curtis Blosch, Darlington H.S.; Austin Schmitz, Potosi H.S.; Dylan Stietz, Argyle H.S.; Alexia Jansen, Cuba City H.S.; Skye Digman, Platteville H.S.; Elliot Anderson, home-schooled; Austin Mumm, Lancaster H.S.; Kassandra Palzkill, Belmont H.S.; Ashley Mick, Fennimore H.S.; Venkat Reddy, Platteville H.S.; Brandon Hoffman, Lancaster H.S.; Joseph Terranova, Madison East H.S.



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