



Steve Lucas, CEO

## SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE CAPITAL CREDITS ANYWAY?

It's October, and that means National Co-op Month is here again! We'll be honoring this special month by hosting Member Appreciation Celebrations at each of our locations: Lancaster, Gays Mills, and Darlington. You can read more details on page 18.

We also mark October Co-op Month each year by refunding capital credits to those members who are owed. We do this by way of a refund on the October energy bill.

Capital credits represent your ownership of the cooperative, and they're one of the most visible ways in which co-ops differ from other forms of business. Members' Economic Participation—which states that members contribute equitably and democratically control the capital of their cooperative—is the third of seven principles that guide all cooperatives.

This can seem like a complicated concept, especially if you're new to the cooperative world, so we've put together a list of questions and answers:

### What are capital credits?

Because Scenic Rivers Energy is a not-for-profit cooperative, it doesn't earn "profits." Instead, any revenues above the cost of doing business are considered "margins." These margins provide operating capital to the co-op to finance operations; they are allocated as capital credits and eventually returned to you based on your patronage.



## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning picture for October in SREC's 2018 Member Photo Contest is from Robert and Nancy Dowling, Gays Mills. They described it as follows: "Some call it the middle of nowhere...I call it the center of my world." The 2019 SREC member calendars will be distributed at this month's Member Appreciation Celebrations, or you can pick one up at any SREC office while supplies last.

### How are capital credits allocated and retired?

Operating margins left over at the end of the year are allocated, or assigned, to a capital credit account in your name based on the amount of energy you purchased. You receive a notice of capital credit allocation each year. SREC refunds capital credits on a percentage decided upon by the board of directors, based on what the board determines the co-op needs for a healthy operating capital. Active members receive their refund by way of a bill credit, while inactive members receive a check in the mail.

### Will I receive a check every year?

Not necessarily. The board of directors must authorize a retirement before you receive a refund. Also, amounts under \$10 are not returned; they're recorded and added to the following year, to be refunded when the amount reaches \$10.

### What happens to the capital credits of a member who dies?

Capital credits owed to members who are deceased may be refunded to legal heirs. Heirs must provide a copy of the death certificate along with legal documentation from the state, and active accounts must be paid in full.

### What if I have to separate a joint account's benefits?

If capital credits are to be split between formerly joint members, a form must be signed by both parties. For active accounts, a form must be completed by both parties to remove one member from the account if the capital credits are to remain with the other member on the account.

### What happens to my capital credits if I move off SREC lines?

Your capital credits remain on the books in your name and member number until they are retired. Because payments are typically made 18–20 years after credits are earned, you should be sure the co-op has your current address on file. As you can imagine, maintaining address files is a tremendous undertaking, so your assistance in keeping our files up-to-date is extremely important.

### What happens if you can't find the members who are owed capital credits?

We make every effort to locate all members and former members who are owed capital credits, but sometimes we are unable to. In other cases, we send a check to an inactive member and for whatever reason it isn't cashed. Those unclaimed capital credits are transferred to the Wisconsin Federated Youth Board Foundation, Inc., and used to fund the college scholarships we award to high school students each spring.

### Questions?

If you have any questions regarding capital credits, please contact Carrie at 800-236-2141, ext. 556.



# Bringing back *Monarchs*

## People missed the monarchs.

Absence—or at least increasing rarity—made hearts grow fonder for the familiar orange and black butterfly.

When the population dwindled, by some estimates from 50 to 90 percent over the past 20 years, people noticed.

This year, the news might be a little better, because people answered a call for help.

Some of the efforts are expansive, restoring the monarch habitat across acres and states.

Some of the efforts start in backyards, and strengthen the connection between people and monarchs.

For Lorri Cwynar, helping starts with finding monarch eggs, which are pearl-colored, about the size of the head of a pin, and on the underside of milkweed leaves.

“You can sometimes look for little holes like these,” said Cwynar of rural Argyle, pointing to where something, possibly a monarch caterpillar, made a meal.

At first, she left the eggs outside because “I wanted to let nature take its course.” But sometimes the eggs would disappear due to predators, and she brought them inside for protection.

Human intervention at vulnerable stages of the monarch’s life cycle can increase survival rates. Part of the reward is watching metamorphosis take place.

The eggs will hatch into caterpillars in three to five days. “They emerge and right away start eating little holes in the leaf,” Cwynar said. Monarch caterpillars “are very good eaters. They get to a certain size and they find a spot to make their chrysalis. They hang from their tail into this J form.”

The caterpillars are striped black, white, and yellow, and eat almost constantly. The chrysalis is a light jade green color, with gold flecks or bands, and they don’t eat in this stage.

The chrysalis stage takes about five days, and you can see wings forming, she said. Then the monarch hatches.

“They just transform. It is so amaz-



Lorri Cwynar carries a newly hatched monarch to flowers. Just a minute later, it took flight.

ing. All of the sudden, they just emerge out of that green casing. It’s so beautiful,” she said.

At first, it was hard to let the butterflies go. “But they want to go. They are fluttering around and you can tell they are anxious to go. It wouldn’t be right to keep them. Now it’s really exciting to let them go. They are going off on a new adventure. I just put them out on flowers and then they can go when they want to. Hopefully, they will do what they need to do and repopulate,” Cwynar said.

Milkweed is crucial to monarchs. It’s where they lay their eggs. Caterpillars eat it exclusively, while adult monarchs eat nectar from flowers. Common milkweed is what you see along the roadsides or in fields, but swamp milkweed also grows here. “You can plant milkweed in your yard and make a patch of it,” she said.

It’s easy to help monarchs, she said, and anyone can do it.

“You can’t help yourself when you get started. I just have an aquarium. You could use any kind of enclosure to keep them in one place. Just provide them fresh milkweed,” she said. Her aquarium



Left: Lorri Cwynar points to a small dot that is a monarch egg.

has rocks and seashells in the bottom and water tubes to keep the milkweed fresh.

“I think this year more than any of the past years, I’ve seen more monarchs flying around, which is hopeful,” she said. “It’s nice that other people are getting involved and inspired.”

More people are growing milkweed and lending a hand so the monarchs aren’t winging it on their own.

A cousin first suggested that Cwynar, who owns and operates Nature’s Gifts Greenhouse and Floral just outside of Darlington, would enjoy helping monarchs. The season begins mid- to late June, although she relies more on when milkweed starts to bloom than a date on the calendar.

It is a four-generation cycle, from spring to fall. The fourth generation

migrates to Mexico for the winter and returns north in the spring.

The monarch butterfly exhibits the most highly evolved migration pattern of any known species of butterfly or moth and perhaps any known insect, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

The final numbers for this year aren’t in, but “it’s better than the last couple years,” said Karen Oberhauser, director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum and an expert on monarchs. “It’s still not where it used to be. We need large-scale habitat restoration to bring the population back to a sustainable level.”

There are four things people can do to help get monarch numbers become stronger again, Oberhauser said.

First, establish habitat, and that means planting milkweed. Twenty spe-

cies of milkweed grow in Wisconsin, so if you feel common milkweed would be invasive in your garden, chose another. Milkweed patches can be small or large, on public or private land. “Monarchs will find it and use it,” she said. “That’s the only thing monarch caterpillars can eat.”

Second, help collect data on monarchs through citizen science opportunities. The website monarchjointventure.org has information on how help track breeding and migration, as well as facts and monitoring tips.

Talk to other people about monarchs, Oberhauser said. That’s not difficult, because “everyone has a monarch story. Some people have seen clusters during migration.” She had worried that monarchs would be out of sight, out of mind, but people did notice when they became scarcer.

Lastly, “support organizations that are working to conserve land,” Oberhauser said.

Monarchs are fascinating because they are beautiful, familiar, and even though they “weigh as much as a paperclip, they migrate over 1,000 to 2,000 miles,” she said. “Monarchs are a flagship species. Care for monarchs can translate into care for other parts of the natural world.”

1. Lorri Cwynar shows the underside of a milkweed leaf where she found a monarch butterfly egg. 2. Two monarch chrysalises cling to a sea shell.

4. A monarch caterpillar. 5. A just hatched monarch butterfly.





*You're invited to SREC's 2018*

# MEMBER APPRECIATION CELEBRATIONS

## October 16: Lancaster office

231 N. Sheridan Street, Lancaster

## October 17: Gays Mills office

15985 State Highway 131, Gays Mills

## October 18: Darlington office

300 Barth Drive, Darlington

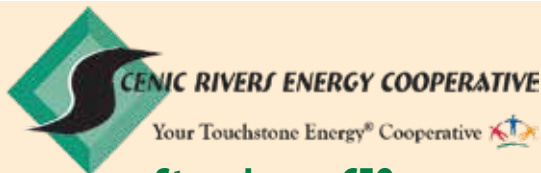
**4 to 7 p.m. at each location**

*Each member will receive a 2019 calendar with the winning photos from this year's contest!*



### Join us for:

- Dinner (shredded beef sandwiches, baked beans, cheesy potatoes, chips, fresh cheese curds, frosted brownies and beverages)
- Hotline demonstrations
- Free blood pressure checks provided by county nurses, as well as flu shots at members' cost
- Focus on Energy information
- Door prizes



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