



AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

By Steve Lucas, CEO

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in-person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports.

In the past few months, we've received reports of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative (SREC) members being targeted through a phone scam known as the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information or your debit/credit card information to deposit the credit back to your account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, SREC will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

We want you to be aware of two other trending scam tactics. One is the disconnection threat where the scammers demand immediate payment and threaten to shut off power if the money is not received. Remember, SREC will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice. Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility. Scams like these are becoming increasingly common, so staying vigilant is essential.

Watch for the Following Red Flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings and suspicious email addresses.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM UTILITY SCAMS



Take Control of the Situation

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- **Take your time.** Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.
- **Be suspicious.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.
- **Never share personal information.** Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- **Request identification.** If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification. SREC employees will be in a marked vehicle and have photo identification that they can provide upon request. If you're in doubt, call our office and we can confirm whether or not it's our crew.
- **Confirm before you act.** If you receive a call from someone claiming to represent SREC or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly.

Utility scams may be reported to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov).

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call us at 800-236-2141. You may also view your account anytime with a free SmartHub account. Visit sre.smarthub.coop.

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE



Thirty-five scholarships, each worth \$1,000, will be awarded through a drawing at our 88th Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 12, 2025. The meeting will take place at the Grant County Youth and Ag Building in Lancaster, WI.

Applicants from each of the high schools listed below, plus an applicant from a pool of all home-schooled applicants, applicants that attend a school outside of those listed below, and non-traditional applicants will be chosen in a random drawing at the Annual Meeting:

Argyle	Fennimore	Potosi
Belmont	Highland	Prairie du Chien
Benton	Iowa Grant	River Ridge
Black Hawk	Kickapoo	Riverdale
Boscobel	Lancaster	Seneca
Cassville	Mineral Point	Shullsburg
Cuba City	North Crawford	Southwestern
Darlington	Pecatonica	Wauzeka-Stueben
DeSoto	Platteville	

All remaining scholarships and scholarships designated for a school with no applicants will be selected by a random drawing.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Deadline: April 7, 2025



Scan QR code or visit sre.coop/scholarship for more information or to apply online.

Applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail to the address provided. If you do not receive an e-mail by April 7, 2025, please call to verify we've received your application at 800-236-2141, x556.

Eligibility and Qualifications

To be eligible to receive a scholarship, the applicant's parent(s), legal guardian, or applicants themselves must have an active membership (primary residence) with Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

- The applicant must be enrolling in their first semester of college in the Fall of 2025 and be either:
 - A senior in high school; or
 - A senior in a home-schooled program; or
 - A non-traditional student entering their freshman year in a post secondary accredited program
- Applicant **must** be present at the SREC Annual Meeting held on April 12, 2025.
- After successful completion of the student's first semester (Fall 2025) of post-secondary education AND receiving at least 12 college credits at a minimum "C" average for that semester, a \$1,000 check will be made payable to the school for second semester tuition. If the student fails to meet these qualifications, the scholarship will be awarded to the alternate if they have met all the same requirements.
- To apply, fill out the application and return it to the address below. Application must be received **on or before April 7, 2025**, to qualify. Applications may also be completed online at sre.coop/scholarship, through school counselors, or picked up at our Lancaster and Darlington offices.

Mailing Address:

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative
ATTN: 2025 Scholarships
206 County Road K
Lancaster, WI 53813

E-mail Address: csolmstead@srec.net

If you have any questions regarding SREC scholarships, please contact Carrie at 800-236-2141, x556.

Funding Scholarships Through Unclaimed Capital Credits

Scholarships are uniquely funded by unclaimed capital credits. These unclaimed refunds, which would otherwise become dormant property, now find purpose in supporting our members' youth. These funds are put into an account held in trust by Federated Youth Foundation and have no effect on members' bills.

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE'S 2025 ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

SREC offers members money back for the purchase and installation of qualified energy-efficient items including appliances (washer, dryer, refrigerator, dishwashers, etc.), heat pumps, smart thermostats, lighting, water heaters, EV chargers, and more!

Energy Efficiency Program Notes:

Rebates are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis to current SREC members and are in place through December 31, 2025, or until funds are depleted by incentive or in total. In order to be eligible, rebate forms must be submitted to SREC within 3 months of the purchase or installation date. Additional terms and conditions may be found on rebate forms. Please read thoroughly before submitting.

Look for the Energy Star symbol to be eligible for most appliance rebates.

Rebate forms are available at our Lancaster and Darlington offices. Members may also find them online at sre.coop/energy-rebates.

For more information, call us at 800-236-2141.

LIGHTING

LED Exit Sign: 50% of cost cap	\$5/sign
LED Fixture: 50% of cost cap	\$.50 per 800 lumens
LED Lamp: 5 lamp minimum, 50% of cost cap	\$.50/lamp
Occupancy Motion Sensor <i>Doesn't include exterior motion detector fixtures, 50% of cost cap</i>	\$5/each



WATER HEATING

Commercial Water Heater 75-99 gallons	\$300
Commercial Water Heater 100+ gallons	\$600
Residential Water Heater 75-99 gallons <i>Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+</i>	\$300
Residential Water Heater 100+ gallons <i>Uniform Energy Factor 0.88+</i>	\$600
Heat Pump Water Heater <i>Integrated (all-in-one) units, Uniform Energy Factor 2.20+</i>	\$600

HVAC (Must provide AHRI Certified Reference Number)

Heat Pump: Air Source & Mini Split	\$200/ton
Heat Pump: Commercial Air Source & PTHPs	\$300/ton
Heat Pump: Geothermal	\$500/ton
New Furnace with Efficient ECM Blower Motor	\$35/ea.

AG/COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Circulation Fan <i>Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 pounds force/kW Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 pounds force/kW</i>	\$1/inch
Exhaust Fan <i>Fans < 36" must be ≥ 18 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP Fans ≥ 36" must be ≥ 21 cfm/watt @ 0.05" SP</i>	\$1/inch
Electric Forklift Battery Charger <i>Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative</i>	\$200/ea.
Dairy Plate Cooler/Well Water Pre-Cooler	\$500/ea.
Dairy Refrigeration Heat Recovery with Electric Backup <i>Used with controlled electric water heater as defined by co-op</i>	\$300/ea.
Low/Zero Energy Livestock Waterer <i>≤ 500 watts, insulated tank</i>	\$50/ea.
Scroll Refrigerant Compressor <i>\$1,000 cap per compressor</i>	\$30/HP
Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) <i>\$1,000 cap per drive; must provide motor size</i>	\$30/HP

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Electric Vehicle Charging Station <i>Must be "controlled" as defined by cooperative</i>	\$400/each
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APPLIANCES *Must be Energy Star Certified

All-in-One Washer/Dryer <i>Must use ventless heat pump drying</i>	\$50
Clothes Dryer	\$25
Clothes Washer	\$25
Dehumidifier	\$25
Dishwasher	\$25
Freezer	\$25
Inductive Range	\$25
Refrigerator	\$25
Recycling - Freezer <i>Must be working appliance</i>	\$25
Recycling - Refrigerator <i>Must be working appliance</i>	\$25
Recycling - Room Air Conditioner <i>Must be working appliance</i>	\$25



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



"Sundog" is this month's featured photo from Kelvin Baertschi, a member in Monroe, WI.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: energy.gov



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This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider