

September 2018

WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN



SREC MEMBER APPRECIATION CELEBRATION

Members can enjoy a dinner on us of Shredded Beef Sandwiches, Cheesy Potatoes, Baked Beans, Chips, Fresh Cheese Curds, Frosted Brownies and beverages.

Tuesday, October 16th
Lancaster Office 4-7pm

Wednesday, October 17th
Gays Mills Office 4-7pm

Thursday, October 18th
Darlington Office 4-7pm

- Browse through displays to learn what kinds of services SREC offers.
- Learn how Focus on Energy can help you manage your energy costs.
- Hot Line Demonstrations
- Door Prizes and Giveaways
- Blood Pressure checks and flu shots (if available)

From Trial Size to Supersized: Solar Surges in Rural Communities

Five years ago, many people in the electric industry viewed solar energy as a kind of “boutique” resource—more an energy accessory than a real power supply option. But in the last half-decade, as the costs to install solar went down and electric utilities gained experience with this unique energy resource, there has been a dramatic transformation, and solar energy has made the jump to the big leagues.

At local electric cooperatives, consumer-members were asking questions about whether this new technology would be suitable either for their own home or for the cooperative.

Given the high cost to install solar, electric co-ops had questions about the economic feasibility of solar and its effect on the electric system. Even with federal tax incentives, the cost of solar was not competitive with other resources such as wind and natural gas.

Engineers also had questions. What happens to the system when the sun doesn't shine? Or even more tricky: what happens on those days when multiple clouds sail by, making a strobe light out of the sun?

To answer these questions, co-ops started installing small arrays, analyzing costs and efficiency. Five years ago, compared to other resources, many concluded solar was still simply too expensive.

The cost of panels and equipment was not the only reason solar was expensive. There were also soft costs, like training, business processes and software. There was little standardization among solar projects—every project was unique. Engineers and resource planners, unfamiliar with this technology, needed training and technical assistance. Financial partners still needed convincing when it came to investing in large-scale solar projects.

As the solar industry started growing, thanks in part to tax credits and other policy incentives, the cost of solar panels and other equipment started declining; the economics started changing.

In 2014, 17 electric co-ops joined with their national trade organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to collaborate on solar installations in 10 states whose combined solar capacity would be 23 megawatts. The goal of the project was to make solar more affordable for electric co-ops by driving down the soft costs.

The project, which received funding from the Department of Energy, aimed to create a network of experts within the cooperative community. By sharing information and expertise, co-op experts could make solar installations easier and less financially risky for other co-ops to follow suit.

Over the course of this project, the cost of solar fell dramatically. For example, one co-op that built a solar installation at the beginning of the project and another one two years later, found the cost was half what it had been two years earlier. In 2013, the cost was \$4.50 per watt of installed solar, and in 2016, the cost was \$1.74 per watt.

As more electric co-ops gained experience and shared information about what worked and what didn't, the risks that come with innovation and change also went down. Solar became more doable for cooperatives large and small.

With the decline in costs and the increase in knowledge and understanding, solar has taken off in rural communities. The proof is in the numbers. Today, America's electric co-ops own or purchase more than nine times as much photovoltaic solar power as they did in 2013. And by the end of 2019, the combined solar capacity of America's electric cooperatives is expected to surpass a gigawatt.

Tracy Warren writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. ■

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Turn off kitchen, bath and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you're done cooking or bathing. When replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.

Source: energy.gov



Tips for a Safe Harvest



Harvest season brings hard work and can be an exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:



Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.



Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.



Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.



Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.



If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.

JOURNEYMAN LINEWORKER *(Darlington, WI)*

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative (SREC), headquartered in Lancaster, WI with offices in Gays Mills and Darlington. We are seeking a qualified Journeyman lineworker for the Darlington location. Prefer Journeyman lineworker with electric utility experience.

Minimum Qualifications: Journeyman must have successfully passed state examination for journeyman lineworker. This usually requires four (4) years of documented apprenticeship training/experience. Requires valid Class A CDL driver's license. Requires relocation to within a 20 mile radius of the reporting location. Normal work week is Monday through Friday with on-call responsibilities.

We offer a competitive salary commensurate with experience and qualifications and an excellent benefits program.

To apply, submit a cover letter, resume, references (3 professional, 2 personal) and a SREC application found on www.sre.coop under "Careers" and send it by email to hpierce@srec.net or mail to:

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative
ATTN: H. Pierce
231 N. Sheridan St
Lancaster, WI 53813

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Recipes

Thank you Cathy Skaife (Platteville) for sharing your 3 Bean Salad with us!

3 Bean Salad

- 1 (14.5 oz.) can green beans
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can wax beans
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can kidney beans
- 1 green pepper (chopped)
- 4 stalks celery (sliced)
- 1 medium onion (diced)
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup water



Drain beans. In a large bowl, mix celery, onion, green pepper and beans. In a small bowl, mix sugar, salt, oil, vinegar and water. Mix well and pour over bean mixture. Best if made 1 - 2 days before. I have also used black beans, pinto beans, and northern beans.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative (SREC), is headquartered in Lancaster, WI with offices in Gays Mills and Darlington. We are seeking a qualified Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Provide leadership, guidance and direction in all financial aspects of SREC. Reports to CEO; is a member of executive team.

Requires Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or business related PLUS a minimum of ten (10) years progressively responsibly relevant work experience. CPA a plus.

Full compensation package.

Please visit www.sre.coop (under careers section). Submit letter, resume and application to:

SREC CFO Recruitment
PO Box 215
Potosi, WI 53820

Note: We will initially review applications in mid-September. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Vegetation Management

Zielie's Tree Service will be trimming on the Beetown Substation in Grant County.

Mi-Tech Services should be finishing up pole testing in Franklin, Kickapoo, Utica and Clayton Townships in Crawford County.

DJB Inspections should be inspecting underground transformers and cabinets in Muscoda, Castle Rock, Watterstown and Hickory Grove Townships in northern Grant County.

It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions, please contact Jay at jgardner@srec.net or call 800-236-2141, ext. 566.

WATT'S HAPPENING

Watt's Happening is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to *Watt's Happening*, c/o Heidi Pierce, Editor, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free 800-236-2141.

www.sre.coop

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Heidi Pierce Editor

Our board of directors consists of Chuck Simmons, Don Schaefer, Sandra Davidson, Ellen Conley, Jack Larson, Larry Butson, Delbert Reuter, Steve Carpenter and Marcus Saegrove.



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