

# WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE  
LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

## 2015 Member Photo Contest

### **“Rural Wisconsin”**

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative is holding our annual photo contest for members' photos to be featured in our 2016 calendar. Winning photos may be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications.

### **Photo Contest Criteria:**

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

### **Photo Contest Rules and Details:**

- Contest will run from February 1, 2015 until August 21, 2015; however, submitted photos can be taken outside of this date range.
- Three (3) photos per member will be accepted.
- All Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative members 18

years old and over are eligible to submit photos.

- Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative members under the age of 18 years old are 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 determine the winning photos.

### **Photo Contest Entry Options:**

- **Email:** Heidi Pierce - hpierce@srec.net
- **Mail:** 231 N. Sheridan Street, Lancaster, WI 53813
- **Drop Off:** Any of our three offices, please see below.
  - Lancaster (231 N. Sheridan Street) is open M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - Gays Mills (15985 State Hwy 131) is open M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - Darlington (300 Barth Drive) is open M-F 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### **Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month**



Source: EnergySavers.gov

Your home works hard for you. Consider giving it an energy checkup. Hire a professional energy auditor to diagnose where your house could be losing energy and where you can start saving money. Auditors check for air leaks, inspect insulation, survey heating and cooling equipment and more. After making efficiency upgrades, you could save 5-30 percent on your energy bills!

## **2015 Annual Meeting Saturday, April 11**

**Youth & Ag Building**  
916 East Elm Street, Lancaster, WI

9:00 a.m. Registration  
9:30 a.m. Meeting

Lunch catered by Rooster Andy's.

## Clearing for reliability

There are many ways that Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common – and crucial – ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing (or vegetation management).

A right of way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or disruption to electrical service. Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used as a way to support the growth of low growing plant species that will outcompete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous – even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power due to fallen trees.

Remember to contact Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the right-of-way zone on your own.

ROW clearing just makes sense. Visit [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop) to find out more about our vegetation management program and to receive information about how to keep the ROW in your service territory clear.

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.* ■

### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

#### *Why it Matters to You*

*Right of way (ROW):* Refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative maintains and clears. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals, or disruption to electrical service.

15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines. By managing vegetation, your electric cooperative keeps power *safe and reliable*.

## Copper theft a deadly game

**M**ADISON, Wis. (Feb. 13, 2015) – Thieves who broke into two western Wisconsin electrical substations to steal copper wire in recent weeks created potentially life-threatening hazards, and not just for themselves, statewide electric cooperative officials say.

Local interruptions of electric service, likely to result when utility equipment is stolen or disabled, create inconvenience, property damage and possible related monetary losses, and could even kill innocent people who depend on life-sustaining medical equipment that requires continuous electric power, according to Share Brandt, statewide manager of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association.

“People who break into substations to steal copper—more often than not to finance a drug habit—are risking not just their own lives but potentially the lives of others who could become random victims,” Brandt said.

Copper thefts have occurred at two Dairyland Power Cooperative substations in Pepin County during February. The purpose of the thefts is usually to sell the metal for scrap—riskier business since cooperatives and other utilities successfully lobbied eight years ago for tighter scrap-dealer record-keeping requirements under Wisconsin law, to assist law enforcement in tracking thieves.

Decades before that law change, the statewide cooperative association made a standing offer of a cash reward for anyone who provides information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person who willfully damages electric co-op property including system infrastructure,

and helping to bust copper thieves could qualify.

In 2011, a scrap dealer in Oconto County received a \$2,500 reward payment for information leading to the arrest and conviction of thieves who took 1,300 feet of aluminum wire from the electric cooperative that serves the area.

But jail time should be the least of a thief’s worries. No such incidents have been reported in Wisconsin, but a quick Google search reveals numerous examples of attempts to steal copper from power distribution facilities ending with the perpetrator dead by electrocution.

“People who see what appears to be odd activity around utility infrastructure, especially substations, should not hesitate to call their electric cooperative and describe what’s going on,” Brandt said. “You’re not being a bother to people when you report something that doesn’t look right, and you might prevent a crime or even save someone’s life.”

Contact: Share Brandt  
608-258-4409

share.brandt@cooperativenetwork.coop  
*The Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) has served as the statewide trade association for Wisconsin’s rural electric cooperatives since 1936. It is a division of Cooperative Network, which represents the interests of cooperative businesses in Minnesota and Wisconsin. For more information about WECA, visit [www.weca.coop](http://www.weca.coop). Learn about Cooperative Network at [www.cooperativenetwork.coop](http://www.cooperativenetwork.coop).* ■

## Wings Over Wisconsin – Southwest Chapter

### Seed Day

The Southwest Chapter of Wings Over Wisconsin is hosting their annual Seed Day on Friday, April 10 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative Lancaster site at 231 N. Sheridan. Corn, sorghum, and sunflower seed will be available free to landowners for planting on wildlife food plots. Food plots must not be harvested, but left for wildlife food and habitat.

A service is available to landowners to assist in establishing food plots. Our chapter has a 10-foot Great Plains no-till seeder, a 3-point broadcast seeder, and a John Deere 7000 2-row no-till corn/beans planter. This equipment is available for rent to members and non-members, for a fee plus delivery and pick-up charges. The seeder is also available for native prairie grass seeding. We encourage landowners to make long-term commitments to prairie grass plots.

Some seed is donated by local seed dealers, but most is purchased by our chapter with profits from our annual banquet.

For wildflower enthusiasts, we will also have for sale small quantities of flower seed, such as Purple Coneflower, Yellow Coneflower and Black-Eyed Susan.

Representatives from various conservation agencies will provide literature and answer questions from landowners during Seed Day.

Membership in Wings Over Wisconsin is not required to receive seed. However, new members are always welcomed.

This is the only day that free seed is available, so if you plan to plant this spring, please be there or send your representative to pick up seed.

Lunch will be served.

## Recipes

**Rita Kruser (Cuba City) said "We love this simple supper and maybe you will too. It's the root beer that gives it flavor. Very easy, just 4 ingredients!" Thanks for sharing Rita!**

### Pork and Buns

- 1 (2 pound) Pork Loin Roast
- 1 (12 ounces) can or bottle of Root Beer
- 1 (18 ounces) bottle of barbecue sauce (we use KC Masterpiece BBQ Sauce)
- 8 Hamburger buns, split and lightly toasted

### Directions

Place the pork in slow cooker; pour the root beer over meat. Cover and cook on low until well cooked and shreds easily, 6 to 7 hours. Drain well. Stir in barbeque sauce. Serve over hamburger buns. (Note: the length of time may vary according to individual slow cooker.) These are good served with chips and a dish of slaw.



**Thanks to Cathy Skaife (Platteville) for sharing a favorite cake recipe!**

### Banana Oatmeal Cake

- 1/3 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup pecans or walnuts
- 2 cups flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 cup mashed bananas (about 3 medium)
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla

### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a bundt cake pan. In a food processor, blend oats and nuts until finely ground. Transfer to a bowl and add flour, salt, baking powder and soda. In separate bowl, stir together milk, oil, bananas and sour cream. In a large bowl, using a mixer, beat butter and both sugars until light and creamy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add oats mixture just until mixed. Pour into bundt pan. Bake 50 to 55 minutes. Let cool on a rack for 20 minutes, unmold onto a plate. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.



**When mailing your payment, due to the way the mail is routed, please allow 3-4 days for delivery. Please go to [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop) and look under the Billing heading for alternative ways to pay your bill.**



## Vegetation Management

Zielies Tree Service, Inc. will be permitting and trimming on the Mt Hope Substation in 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](mailto:jgardner@srec.net) or call 800-236-2141, ext. 566.



*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 Lancaster 800-236-2141, Darlington 800-236-6656, and Gays Mills 888-735-4314.

[www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop)

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