

2008

Richland Electric Cooperative

From the Manager... Pieces of a Puzzle

Long winter days, snowdrifts and school closings used to mean breaking out the jigsaw puzzles. I doubt that very many family dining room tables are reserved for jigsaw puzzles any longer, probably due to video games, satellite television and four-wheel drives. As a kid, I remember about the only time we didn't sit at the dining room table for the family meal was in the dead of winter when puzzle pieces took up the whole table.

There was always a sense of accomplishment when the last piece of the puzzle was securely put into place and that pile of barely recognizable cardboard formed a dazzling picture. From the first piece, usually a corner, to the very last we worked slowly and deliberately to put each piece into place.

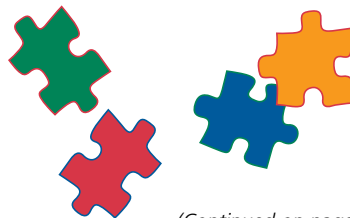
In 2007, Richland Electric Cooperative put the finishing touches on several key projects and it kind of reminded me of those winter-time puzzles. For years we've been working with some small, and some not-so-small projects that we knew would eventually lead to a bigger picture.

At times, we did things- that to some - appeared to be more than what was needed at the time. For

instance when we rebuilt a power line that would serve the then new Richland High School, it was sized considerably larger than needed at the time. We knew that in the not to distant future that power line would not only serve this new building but also become part of a larger back-up system for our Rockbridge substation.

Another time we installed adjustable equipment where people, unaware of the entire plan, felt that fixed position equipment would work just fine. It would have then, but not today. As a result, the extra money we spent for flexibility then has saved us thousands of extra dollars today.

Our recent Rural Electric Safety Accreditation was possible because we took many little actions along the way which when combined resulted in an outstanding safety program. It was far more effective than trying to take on big action, spend a lot of extra money and accomplish it all at once.



(Continued on page 4.)

CALENDAR *of events*

February

- 6 Exploring the Idea of Starting a Small Business-Richland Chamber Office- 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- 17 The Windsome Wood Chamber Players-Peace United Methodist Church 2:00 p.m.

March

- 14 "O Delicious Bake Sale" by Ocooch Mountain Humane Society
Richland County Bank- 8 a.m. until gone
- 14-22 "The Keys"-Easter Passion Drama-Richland Center Fellowship
4th, 19th & 21st @ 7:00p.m.
15th, 16th & 22nd @ 2:00 p.m.
- 28 WRCO Radio Show Fundraiser-
WRCO Radio- 7:00-9:00p.m.

April

- 5 Solid Brass-Richland Center City Auditorium-7:00 p.m.
- 10-12 Animal House by Ocooch Mountain Humane Society-
parking lot at Ed's
Family Foods, Richland Center-10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- 12-13 Home & Recreation Expo-Richland Middle School - 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
(Saturday) 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
(Sunday)
- 22 "Disney's 101 Dalmatians Kids"-
Richland Center High School
Auditorium- 9:45 a.m. and
7:00 p.m.-Musical presented
by Doudna Elementary School
Grades 4 & 5

A New Year's Resolution That Makes Safety Sense!



Eliminate electrical hazards in your home

Tens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home, but most can be easily

prevented with a few simple steps.

Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards is a New Year's resolution that makes sense!

"Electrical accidents and fires kill more than a thousand people, and result in tens of thousands of injuries each year," says Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity. "Overloaded outlets, misused and faulty cords and electrical devices are leading causes of home electrical shocks and fires."

Safe Electricity suggests teaching your children how to be safe around electricity. As part of the new "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, the program urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children are aware of these hazards. Use this electrical safety checklist to help protect your home and loved ones:

- Electrical outlets – Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, make sure unused outlets are covered.
- Plugs – Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- Cords – Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- Extension cords – Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from

shock and mouth burn injuries.

- Light bulbs – Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements and are screwed securely in place. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended and consider replacing burned-out bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, which can last ten times as long and use one-fourth the energy of an incandescent bulb.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.
- Circuit breakers/Fuses – Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.
- Appliances/Electronics – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.
- Electrical wiring - Wiring defects are a major cause of residential blazes. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, wires, or lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are warm to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.
- Service capacity – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, you may need to increase electrical service and add new branch circuits. A qualified,

licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

- Portable generators – Be sure your generator is properly grounded and is not plugged into a home outlet or connected directly to your home's wiring system. A transfer switch should always be installed to protect you, your neighbors, and repair crews from serious injury resulting from backfeed. Follow all manufacturer's installation instructions and if have questions call a licensed electrician for help. Also notify your local utility that a backup generator has been installed.

Keeping you safe all year is the goal of Safe Electricity, an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of several dozen organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.

Scholarship applications due soon!

March 14, 2008 is the deadline to get scholarship applications into our office.

Scholarships are available to members and children of members whom receive electric service from Richland Electric Cooperative and are continuing their education beyond high school.

The application form includes a page to be completed by the student and two recommendations to be completed by an educator or advisor. The entire form is due in the office on or before March 14, 2008. Those received late will be automatically disqualified.

Richland Electric Cooperative is dedicated to helping members and their families in a financial way to further their education.

Remember-please get them in on or before **March 14th, 2008.**



Winter Flooding

Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carry safety risks. As part of the new "Teach Learn Care" TLC Campaign, Safe Electricity urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children are aware of these hazards as well. "The prospect of an electrical accident is probably not on top of mind when you're dealing with a flooded basement, room or even outdoors," said Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity. "But it's the first thing you should think of before you step foot in the water."

Safety measures to keep in mind include:

- Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.
- Never use electric appliances or touch electric wires, switches or fuses when you're wet or when you're standing in water.
- Keep electric tools and equipment at

least 10 feet away from wet surfaces. Do not use electric yard tools if it's raining or the ground is wet.

- If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

"A good safety measure is to have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) professionally installed on outlets," Hall said. "These safety devices can cut off power quickly if there's a problem."

GFCIs are recommended for outdoor outlets, and outlets near wet areas of the home such as kitchen, bath and laundry room.

Accidents and fires involving electricity result in more than a thousands deaths, and ten thousand injuries each year.

Prevention of electricity-related tragedies is the goal of Safe Electricity. For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

"Teach Learn Care" TLC is a public service campaign of Safe Electricity, an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of several dozen organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.

2008 Christmas Coloring Contest Winners!

Beverly Harper
Eric Ruetten
Echoe Mulholland
Kayla Monson
Colt Pecan
Anne Schulze
Abby Rothering
Daniel Schulze
Jessalyn Hostetler
Jasmine Anderson
Samantha Hertrampf
Janessa Hostetler
Jenelle Anderson
Autumn Moeckler
Kathy Moeckler



COOK'S CORNER



Stuffed Vienna Bread

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 loaf French bread | 1 c. melted, butter |
| 1 lb. shredded swiss cheese | 1 T. dry mustard |
| 8 oz. chopped, mushrooms | 1 1/2 tsp. lemon juice |
| 3 chopped, scallions | poppy seeds |
| 1 tsp. seasoned salt | |



Score loaf of bread into 1 inch cubes (do not cut all the way through). Stuff with swiss cheese and mushrooms. Sprinkle over that the scallions, poppy seeds, and seasoned salt. Mix melted butter, mustard, and lemon juice. Pour all over bread and wrap securely in foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Can be made up to 1 day ahead and refrigerated, however, cooking time will increase to 50 min-1 hour.

If you would like to submit a recipe, send it to...

Richland Electric Cooperative; P.O. Box 439; Richland Center, WI 53581

DIGGERS HOTLINE

This service is for locating REC owned underground wires. There is no charge for this service. Use it before you do any digging. The number is:

1-800-242-8511 or 811

Even though the new 811 number has gone into effect, the old number is still in use for people in rural areas that may not be able to access 811.

Annual Meeting March 27th

What the Richland Electric Cooperative can do for you, election of Directors, and a good lunch are all things you find at REC'S annual meeting to be held on Thursday, March 27th. Music, entertainment, and door prizes will also be included in the days meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Richland Center Community Center located at 600 W. Seminary Street. The meeting begins at 10:30 a.m. with lunch being served around 11:30.

Enjoy meeting and talking with directors and staff of Richland Electric Cooperative.

We look forward to seeing you there!

March 27th
Richland Center Community Center
10:30 a.m.

We hope to see you there!

From the Manager...

(continued from cover...)

Pieces of a Puzzle

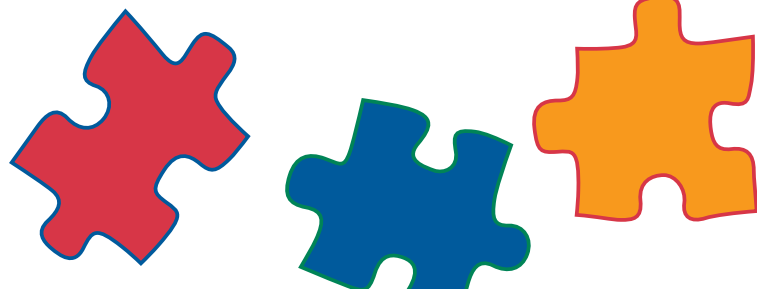
Our automated meter reading project has been done for a couple of years, but even it fit into a bigger plan. When we were able to purchase a system that could 'fit' into our future plans we moved forward but not just to meet the needs of the day, but also meet the needs of the future.

Now, we find ourselves making another deliberate step that has been in the works for several years. Our members can now view and pay their bill online if they so desire. While we could have provided this earlier, we couldn't do it in a manner we thought was efficient or in a way that ensured our members online safety. Instead of being the leader here we chose to wait and

let others develop the technology knowing full well that technology costs typically go down when widely deployed.

Unlike the jigsaw puzzle where the picture on the box served as a guide, we had to create the vision of what our future would look like first, then we would be guided by that vision to put the pieces together. It's a strategy that has worked well, even when you couldn't see how that one piece fit into the big picture, you knew it would, somewhere.

As always if you have comments or questions please feel free to give me a call or send me an email to sclark@mwt.net.



2008
Richland Electric Cooperative

1027 N. Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 439; Richland Center, WI 53581

www.richec.com

Office Hours

Monday-Friday; 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Outages

Call (608) 647-3173; 24 Hours

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Cooperative**

**Genuine
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Genuine Telecom offers local phone, high-speed internet and digital tv.

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It's that convenient.

**Please call the office
for more details.
608-647-2345**