

## Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

# 83rd Annual Meeting Highlights

Vernon Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting of its members was held at the Westby headquarters on March 23. Highlights from new CEO & General Manager, Craig Buros's Report:

- VEC ranked as one of the top electric co-ops in the nation with low "controllable expenses"
- Refunding \$602,000 in capital credits to members in 2019
- Twenty-one scholarships were awarded to local high school students
- Quickly and safely recovered from 140 flood-related outages in August and September
- Completed replacement of over 12,500 meters with new advanced meter infrastructure technology
- Real-time automatic outage notification and detailed electric use now available online through the SmartHub app
- Beneficial Electrification will play a key role in reducing overall emissions and environmental impacts as we look to reduce and replace our use of fossil fuels
- Electric vehicles are becoming more common. Charging during off peak times will help consumers save money
- VEC's first electric vehicle charging station installed in office parking lot

Following the Annual Meeting, the Board re-elected Bernadine Hornby, President; Richard Nemeec, Vice President; David Dregne, Secretary; and David Olson, Treasurer.



Directors Bernadine Hornby, Dan Giese, James Goodman, and David Dregne were re-elected to three-year terms on the Board.



\$750 Scholarship recipients, from l to r, back row: Blake Brooks, Sparta HS; Nicholas Stekel, Hillsboro HS; Payton Auel, Hillsboro HS; Jessica Coulthard, Kickapoo HS; Alexis Mahan, Westby HS; Andrew Jacobson, Wonewoc-Center HS; Isaiah Zink, De Soto HS; Chase Voelker, De Soto HS; Braxton Cary, Viroqua HS; Lucas Oldham, Viroqua HS (\$1,000 Line Worker Scholarship). Front row, l to r: Lauren Lansing, Central HS; Anna Gorski, West Salem HS; Makayla Gretebeck, Westby HS; Skyler Bagstad, Westby HS; Ashley Gander, Viroqua HS; Ashley Kempf, Cashton HS. Not pictured: Ava McLain and Bryant Meyer, Aquinas HS; Cynda Protsman, Luther HS; Lauren Christensen, At-Large; and Danielle Wilcox, Wonewoc-Center HS

## ElectricSense Marketplace

Is it time for an energy-efficient upgrade? Vernon Electric Cooperative has teamed up with four other electric cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin to create ElectricSense – an online store that will deliver energy-efficient light bulbs and water-saving products right to your door.

ElectricSense was designed with member convenience in mind. The online store offers products that are eligible for Vernon Electric's incentive program. In addition to free shipping on all orders over \$25, the prices listed on ElectricSense are discounted to automatically reflect available incentives. This will save both the member and Cooperative time by not having to fill out and process separate incentive forms.

"One of the worst feelings I have in a day is when a member submits an incentive form and required paperwork, but the product they purchased doesn't qualify," said Dave Maxwell, Vernon Electric's Director of Marketing & Communications. "The ElectricSense

store gives members peace-of-mind that any of the products they purchase are eligible for our incentives, which they receive immediately in the form of a discounted price."

Lighting options on the site range from the traditional LED "bulb" shape to globe lamps, flood lamps, dimmable lamps and even T8 long-tube fluorescent replacement lamps. Two different retrofit kits are also available to replace outdated fluorescent lighting systems. Water-saving products include multiple options for low-flow showerheads and faucets.

Members can browse the ElectricSense store at <https://electricsense.amcgmarketplace.com>. To purchase a product, a member must create an account and identify as a Vernon Electric Co-op member; the store accepts VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and PayPal.

**ElectricSense**

# Rate Adjustment Update

**R**eliability, sustainability, and affordability are top priorities for Vernon Electric Co-op's Board. Despite being one of the top electric co-ops in the nation for controlling costs, Vernon Electric Co-op will need a slight increase in rates. For the average consumer, rates will increase just under 3%. The rate adjustment will affect both the Facility Charge and the cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh). For members using

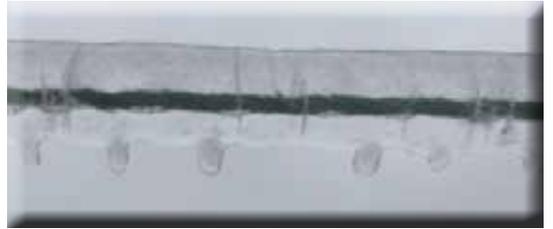
1,000 kWh per month, this would amount to a \$4.50 monthly increase.

Vernon Electric's board and employees will continue to work hard to keep controllable costs down. A detailed rate schedule will be included in next month's newsletter and our website. The new rates go into effect May 1, 2019.

## Out Like a Lion, Again!

**V**ernon Electric Co-op members were hit with another viscous ice and wind storm on April 11. It was almost exactly one-year ago, on April 13, 2018, a similar storm came through. But this one was much worse causing thicker ice-buildup and wind-gusts nearing 50 mph. All electric utilities in the area saw damage to power lines, including Vernon Electric. Transmission lines from other companies feeding Vernon Electric substations went down leaving thousands in the dark starting about 6 a.m. on a Thursday morning, just as folks were getting ready for work and school. For many, power was not restored until the next day.

Vernon Electric crews responded to many broken poles, wires down on roads, low-hanging wires, and trees on lines. The icy roads and strong winds slowed the recovery. The strong winds did not let up until nightfall, causing more outages throughout the day. Crews would get one line back up and two more would go down. Vernon Electric crews were joined by

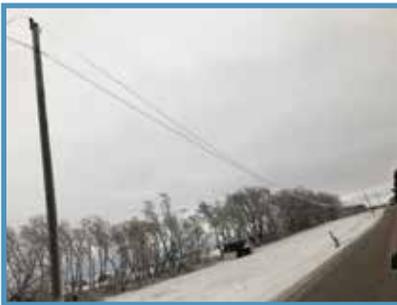


*Thick ice build-up added hundreds of pounds to each section of line between poles.*

crews from Richland Electric Cooperative (based out of Richland Center) and Riverland Energy Cooperative (based out of Arcadia) on the morning of April 12 to assist with power restoration.

Crews had just about everyone's power restored by the end of the day on April 12. A big "thank you" goes out to our crews, along with the Richland Electric and Riverland Energy crews who worked long hours with little food or sleep. Their strong work-ethic and dedication to help others is much appreciated.

*Broken poles, downed lines, and low-hanging wires created hazards to the public throughout the region.*



## Housing Assistance Available to Low-Income Residents

**T**he Foundation for Rural Housing is funded by a grant from the Critical Assistance Program, Community Service Block Grant, Electric Cooperatives and other private donations. Their primary goal of their critical assistance program is to prevent homelessness. They work with clients to assure their one-time payment will make a long-term difference in achieving housing stability.

### Services available:

- Delinquent Rental Assistance (up to \$400)
  - Must be at risk of homelessness
  - Cannot live in Section 8 housing or subsidized housing
  - No hotel or boarding house payments
- Security Deposit (up to \$400)
  - Must have valid reason for moving (not because you want to change apartments)
  - Must be at risk of homelessness
- Mortgage Assistance (up to \$1,000)
  - Must be at risk of foreclosure (generally 3-months behind on payments)
  - Home must be owner-occupied
- Utility Assistance (up to \$400)

- Must be on a budget plan and show you have made 3 payments on the plan
- You cannot live in Section 8 housing or subsidized housing
- Property Tax Assistance (up to \$1,000)
  - Must be at risk of property lien (generally 2-years behind)
  - Home must be owner-occupied

### Eligibility Requirements

- Client must be able to show they can continue to pay their housing expenses going forward
- Client must show they are spending 30% of their gross income on housing
- Housing cost must be less than 50% of their household gross income
- Client must provide complete application with verification of income for all household members over the age of 18
- Other conditions may apply and may vary by client and situation

More information available from the Foundation for Rural Housing, PO Box 314, Oregon, WI.  
1-888-238-2084; wrh@wisconsinruralhousing.org;  
www.wisconsinruralhousing.org.

**Watt's  
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The information in this newsletter has been prepared for you by David Maxwell, Marketing and Communications. Comments or questions regarding information contained here should be directed to:

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